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Participants' perceptions of affirmative action programmes in South Africa

Castle, Penelope Jane

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'timetable' systems[6] associated with affirmative action in the USA have become notorious for discriminating against white men, and have been seen to entrench negative attitudes towards the employability and educability of ethnic minorities and women. Still, the legal and social coercion implicit in affirmative action policies are credited by some writers (Thomas, 1990; Jones, 1986) with having brought about a more 'diverse' workforce and student body in the USA.[7] Thomas (1990) observes that this diversity is driven partly by the legal and social strictures of affirmative action, and partly by demographics. The population of the USA is becoming more and more culturally diverse as a consequence of immigration and the relatively high birth rates of minority groups. In addition to these influences, American companies are struggling to compete successfully for markets and labour, both domestically and internationally, and are undergoing changes in perception about how work is done, and by whom (Kanter, 1984; Pascale, 1985). This trend contributes positively to the recruitment of blacks, hispanics, women and immigrants, and thus to the diversity of the workforce.

In the USA these days affirmative action is increasingly perceived as a powerful, but artificial and transitional intervention which corrected unequal employment and university admission patterns at the expense of white males.[8] Driven by the new Republican-dominated Congress and by economic uncertainties, Americans have embarked on a reassessment of affirmative action which may lead to its abandonment.[9] In any case, now that the workforce is more diverse, attention has shifted from affirmative action to 'managing diversity'[10]. The new

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[6] The quota system calls for a specific percentage or proportion of positions at all levels in an organization to be filled by women or members of minority groups. The percentage stipulated is roughly equivalent to the percentage of women and minority members in the geographical community from which the employer traditionally draws its workforce. Timetables are set up to guide minority appointment and advancement within an organization or institution.

[7] 'Diversity' usually refers to skin colour and gender, but may also encompass age, race, religious affiliation, sexual orientation and social class (Thomas, 1990).

[8] Walker sums up the opposing positions on affirmative action as "those who want to drop affirmative action because they say it has failed and that African-Americans are beyond help, and others who want to drop it on the ground that it has succeeded too well, and given them too much" (1995).

[9] California is expected to lead the way in 1996 with a referendum on whether the allocation of public jobs and resources should be colour and gender blind. The United States Supreme Court may also roll back its 1980 decision permitting the federal government to discriminate in favour of minority groups in awarding contracts.

[10] Thomas (1990) defines managing diversity as a process of getting from a heterogeneous workforce the same productivity, commitment, quality and profit that one gets from a homogeneous workforce.

educational opportunities to much of the population,[3] has hindered South Africa from developing a highly skilled labour force, a strategy pursued successfully by many other countries, especially in South East Asia. So, in the large financial, commercial and industrial organizations which dominate the formal labour market in South Africa, less than five percent of the managers are black, even when this percentage comprises Asian and coloured managers as well as Africans[4] (Jordaan, 1995). This percentage is shocking, given that Africans comprise nearly three quarters of South Africa's population, and whites less than one fifth. Thus a major challenge in South Africa in the 1990s is that of enabling black people to take leadership positions in important sectors of community life, including the business sector.

At this point it may be helpful to make some observations about the way the term 'affirmative action' is used inside and beyond South Africa's borders. In the West affirmative action is understood to mean government or institutional policies directed towards equalizing opportunities - particularly in the workplace and in higher education - for minority groups and women. Policies aiming to eliminate institutional discrimination have been developed and implemented in the USA, Canada, Australia and the UK in the past three decades (Hugo, 1992, 1986; Jones, 1991; Weiner 1993). Despite lengthy experience, surprisingly little is known about the outcomes of these programmes, perhaps because their effects cannot easily be disentangled from those of other social policies.[5] Affirmative action is generally considered appropriate and effective when it promotes the aggressive recruitment of workers, students and faculty members from among ethnic minorities and women. But the 'quota' and

[3] Recent statistics show how bad things are. Literacy rates, defined by the number of people who have completed standard six, stand at 97% for whites, 79% for Indians, 56% for coloureds and 43% for Africans. Only 8% of adult Africans in the 25 to 64 age range have passed matric. The figure for whites in the same range is 61% (Krige, 1995).

[4] In this thesis, the term 'black' refers to the indigenous African population as well as coloured and Asian South Africans. In business organizations, however, 'black' usually refers to ethnic Africans only. According to Bowmaker-Falconer and Searll (1995), African managers represented 3% of all managers in the private sector in March 1995, up from 2% the previous year. Women of all races represent about 10% of all managers.

[5] In the United States, for example, Congress enacted a comprehensive civil rights statute in 1964 which was the first attempt by the federal government to address inequalities in employment. The introduction of affirmative action coincided with a massive expansion of the welfare state - President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society - and the costly and divisive war in Vietnam.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Affirmative action is a policy which stirs controversy. Debates over the necessity, advisability and effectiveness of affirmative action programmes to redress inequalities in South African society are a popular theme of television chat shows, radio phone-in programmes, academic seminars and conferences. In 1993, when this research project was launched, the publicity surrounding affirmative action rose to a fanfare as the policy proposals of various constituents in the process of negotiating a new constitution for the country were announced. Interest groups such as the Black Management Forum (BMF) and the South African Chamber of Business (SACOB), the employers' federation, made an urgent call on members to put affirmative action programmes in place, mindful that the new government might impose quotas,[1] and that most competitive business organizations had an inadequate record in the area of affirmative action.

Before entering into a discussion of the affirmative action programmes provided by the business sector, it is useful to review briefly the context in which they operate. In the past, successive governments in South Africa provided dramatically lower levels of social services and physical infrastructure for blacks than for whites. Among the consequences of this today are lower educational achievements, lower levels of health, lower incomes and higher levels of unemployment for blacks. The years of apartheid have contributed to problems for the business sector as well. South Africa's earnings are heavily dependent on raw material exports, particularly in the mining industry, which has been characterized by fluctuations in prices, profits and employment. The economic isolation brought on by apartheid led South Africa to develop a self-sufficient manufacturing sector, but the firms in that sector are characterized by short production runs and low productivity.[2] Apartheid, by denying

[1] The ANC-led government has frequently indicated that it wishes to avoid legislated racial quotas in the private sector, but in the mid 1990s expectations of business leaders remained high.

[2] See 'A survey of South Africa: the joys of normality' in The Economist, May 20 1995: 9-14.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ANC	African National Congress
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BMF	Black Management Forum
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
FABCOS	Foundation for African Business and Consumer Services
DET	Department of Education and Training
HRD	Human Resources Development
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
NAFCOC	National African Federated Chamber of Commerce
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEPI	National Education Policy Initiative
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACOB	South African Chamber of Business

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In the course of conducting this research and writing the thesis, material from Chapters Three, Five and Six respectively was published as follows:

'Competing concepts of affirmative action'. Perspectives in Education, 15 (2) 1994: 265-284.

'Affirmative action in three developing countries: lessons from Zimbabwe, Namibia and Malaysia'. South African Journal of Labour Relations, 19 (1) 1995: 6-34.

'Black managers in corporate affirmative action programmes: social background, upbringing and education'. Proceedings of the International Conference on Adult Education and Training and its Role in Reconstruction and Development. Cape Town: University of the Western Cape, Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, 7-10 November 1995.

Indeed, corporate affirmative action programmes run counter to these broad aims by monopolizing expenditure and momentum at the top of the system. So, instead of being a tool of transformative change, corporate affirmative action programmes may best be described as reform initiatives which reduce race and class conflict by regulating differences of interest and power in society. There remains a necessity for interventions to address the needs of those untouched by corporate affirmative action programmes.

ERIC Keywords: Adult education; affirmative action; blacks; equal opportunities (jobs)

ABSTRACT

A major challenge in South Africa in the 1990s is that of assisting black people to take leadership positions in important sectors of community life, including the business sector. To address this need, companies are drawing up affirmative action programmes which have educational aims, such as leadership development, skills training and integration into Western corporate culture. As these companies draw up and implement their plans, it becomes important to consider the perceptions of both the planners and the 'beneficiaries' of these programmes. This study set out to question participants about the meaning and impact of affirmative action on themselves, on the organizations in which they are employed and on South African society generally.

The research uses the frameworks of critical education theory and qualitative research to enquire into the historical and present contexts of affirmative action in South Africa; international models of affirmative action; the social background of participants in affirmative action programmes; participants' perceptions of the programmes in which they are engaged; social outcomes of affirmative action; and participants' ideas for changes and improvements to programmes.

The research method consisted of in-depth interviews with forty-six managers involved in affirmative action programmes in four large Johannesburg-based business organizations. Respondents were selected in an intentional sample, and were predominantly African men, although men and women of all races were interviewed. Policy documents, records and reports on affirmative action in the four participating organizations, and from further afield, were scrutinized. The research results are reported in the form of biographical profiles of individual participants, as well as case studies of the four corporate programmes. These were preceded by a treatment of theoretical positions in affirmative action, as well as historical and international perspectives.

The research results show that in the short term affirmative action impacts on organizational values, practices and culture in ways which may be read by white managers as threats to customary standards of performance and productivity. In the longer term, however, affirmative action will be sustained by business survival factors and political considerations. The findings suggest that corporate affirmative action programmes generally fail to provide black managers with a sense of purpose or belonging in their organizations. They also fail to address problems of racism and resistance to change in the organization. The aims of affirmative action programmes are rarely made explicit. Planners and recipients hold different views of the benefits to be gained from them. The ideological component of affirmative action is often under-rated in programme design, and measures of accountability are neglected. For these reasons and others, affirmative action programmes may succeed in bringing black managers into business organizations, but fail to retain them, or offer them viable career paths, so that a stable, motivated and experienced black management corps may be built.

So far, corporate affirmative action programmes have contributed to the growth of the black middle class. They do not - and perhaps cannot - address the national need for redistribution, reconstruction and development of opportunities and resources (incl human resources).

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, nor has it been prepared under the aegis or with the assistance of any other body or organization or person outside the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

_____

Penelope Jane Castle

__ day of _____, 1996

PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Penelope Jane Castle

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world is not something hard, real, tangible 'out there', to be identified, manipulated and validated as in a positivist model; it consists of a complex web of meanings constituting everyday experience, which can only be interpreted by reference to people's motives, intentions and purposes. Because knowledge is social, its meaning should be interpreted within specific social settings and traditions. Knowledge changes continually; new constructs permit new perspectives and subsequent claims to knowledge (Deshler and Hagan, 1989).

The purpose of qualitative research is to allow researchers to enter into another person's perspective, or to gain new perspectives on their own experience. The assumption is that such perspectives are meaningful, knowable and communicable (Patton, 1980). In education, a qualitative approach implies a concern with discovering and communicating meanings so as to make them intelligible to others. When a theoretical account (or interpretation) of actions is made available to people, it reveals to them the rules and assumptions upon which they have been acting, and hence 'enlightens' or 'illuminates' the significance of their actions to themselves and others (Brookfield, 1985; Carr and Kemmis, 1986). By offering individuals and groups an opportunity to examine the beliefs and attitudes underlying their actions, they are invited to consider alternative ways of believing and acting. Both processes - the process of becoming more aware of oneself, and the process of becoming more socially conscious - can be considered educational processes, as well as processes of enquiry, as clearly indicated by theorists such as Freire (1984), Habermas (1972) and Rogers (1969). The educational possibilities of qualitative research complement adult education principles of respect for the significance of adults' experience, origins and potential.

To achieve their aims, qualitative researchers document episodes of lived experience representing as closely as possible how people feel, what they know, and what their concerns, beliefs, perceptions and understandings are. The salient features of qualitative research have been noted (Sherman and Webb, 1988; Miles and Huberman, 1984; Patton, 1980) as a concern with context and natural settings; an attempt to grasp experience holistically; a focus on meanings, interpretations and relationships within experience; experience as process; and an appraisal of the significance or value of experience. Favoured methods include interviews, participant observation and unobtrusive measures, usually conducted with small, non-random samples. For the most part, data are analyzed inductively, resulting in explanatory themes,

then conduct pre-planned experiments, under rigorously controlled conditions, ostensibly to verify their theories. The role of the researcher is detached, in order to minimize disturbance of the phenomena under investigation. It is assumed that the researcher has superior knowledge of the phenomena at the outset of the enquiry, and is therefore empowered to make decisions concerning the content, process and setting of the investigation. Subjects' contribution to the research is minimal: they may assent to the conduct of the research; they may agree to apply results; they may comment on the design of the research after it has been put into effect. Such research is based on the exercise of external and unilateral control in gaining information from, and acting upon, others.

The last two decades have seen dramatic shifts in the ways that educational research is understood, valued and used. The trend has been away from empirical research based on positivist paradigms and towards 'post-positivist' or 'new paradigm' research (Chapman, 1994; Reason and Rowan, 1981; Hall, 1975). Arguments have been advanced for viewing positivist research as uneducational, undemocratic and impractical (Torbert, 1981; Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Reason and Rowan (1981) cite eighteen grounds for disapproval of positivist research, including a narrow model of the person, reductionism, reification, a concern with variables rather than wholes, a preoccupation with bigness and a tendency to serve conservative interests. But the main objection to positivism lies in its commitment to the hegemony of the natural sciences and its exercise of tight social control. By rejecting the influence of personal and social values in knowledge creation, and denying dialogical process as a source and means of understanding, positivism exposes an essentially authoritarian and anti-educational nature (Torbert, 1981).

Rooted in these objections to positivism, alternative approaches to educational research, based on the epistemologies of interpretive social science and critical theory, have promoted more informed and human strategies of knowledge creation[2] (Rosenwald and Ochberg, 1992). The underlying proposition of qualitative research is that knowledge is a network of subjective meanings created and sustained by individual members of society. Knowledge of the social

[2] A number of approaches, representing a variety of positions, have emerged in recent years, including 'ethnography' (Fetterman, 1984), 'naturalistic enquiry' (Guba and Lincoln, 1981), 'grounded theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), 'phenomenology' (Stanage, 1987) and 'symbolic interactionism'.

Comstock (1982), Thompson (1983) and Lovett (1980), aim not only to understand, but to change practices by clarifying the values and understandings of those involved in educational processes, and those who benefit from their continuation. They study the nature and consequences of action; the nature of institutions and structures providing the framework for action; and the nature of the educational or enquiry process itself. This 'critical' knowledge is the base for transforming or reconstructing society so that it is "free of alienating and oppressive social institutions and life forms" (Giroux, 1981: 122).

A further philosophical foundation for the researcher's epistemological position is pragmatism, whose basic proposition is that the world is neither dependent nor independent of a person's idea of it (Pope and Keen, 1991). Reality is neither an objective, external entity, nor is it a purely subjective perception, but rather the consequence of an individual's interaction with her environment. The emphasis is on an active, thinking person reaching out to make sense of the universe by engaging in reconstruction and interpretation of her own experience. It follows, then, that the educational methods favoured by the researcher are those which foster learner-learner interaction, learner-teacher interaction, and learner-text interaction. The aim of this pedagogy is not the transmission of knowledge, but the engagement of participants in a critical thinking process - a discovery of and grappling with their own and others' previous ideas and constructions. A research paradigm compatible with critical education theory, pragmatism, and the researcher's ideas about teaching and learning is qualitative research.

The generic term 'qualitative research' is used for multidisciplinary enquiries which value knowledge, and ways of acquiring knowledge, which are different from the objective, neutral, rational methods of the natural sciences. The dominant research paradigm of the last two centuries, positivism, is based on a belief that valid knowledge can be established only on the basis of what is founded in 'reality', as perceived by the senses. Positivists claim that science, and only science, offers an adequate base for research because it employs methods which ensure that knowledge is not contaminated by subjective preference and personal bias (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Scientific research aims to describe, analyze and explain phenomena, and to predict and control events. Scientists, or researchers, develop theories about the external world, in which it is assumed that facts are readily observable (Torbert, 1981). They

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 INTRODUCTION

While the previous chapter introduced the aims and objectives of the research, this chapter sets out the way in which the project was planned and carried out. It begins with a discussion of the research paradigm, then describes the manner in which the sample was selected. Next, an account is given of the methods and techniques used to collect, analyze, interpret and present information. Finally issues of generalizability and validity are considered.

2.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

In the first chapter of this thesis the researcher proposed that critical theory and qualitative research would form the epistemological and methodological frameworks for this study. Critical adult education theory was outlined very briefly in the introduction (Chapter One). There it was shown that critical educators view personal and social values, and the nature of knowledge, to be the products of social processes, and therefore subject to constant change. Critical adult educators believe that the developing and organizing force in human experience is a person's active, critical thinking. Thinking is stimulated by cognitive conflict, usually brought about by experiential problem posing, or problem solving situations. Critical analysis, an important by-product and methodological tool of critical theory, is concerned with deconstructing texts[1] for the political and social values which frame action, philosophy and theory. Applied to the field of adult education, this means that

> ... critical reflection analyses commonly held ideas regarding learning and educational practice for the extent to which they perpetuate economic inequity, deny compassion, foster a culture of silence and prevent adults from realising a sense of common connectedness.
>
> (Brookfield, 1993: 66)

Researchers taking a critical approach to adult education, for example Brookfield (1993),

[1] 'Texts' are understood here to mean pieces of academic writing as well as historical documents, narratives, rhetoric and public statements. As Aronowitz and Giroux (1991: 105) have observed: "texts are sites of pedagogical and political struggle".

ground as well as gaps and contradictions.

Chapter Eleven concludes the thesis with a discussion of the major research findings, focusing first on participants' personal experience of affirmative action programmes, then on corporate policies and strategies, and finally on affirmative action as an agent of social change. Implications of the research for the field of adult education are also addressed.

interpret data.

Chapter Three explores prevailing conceptualizations of affirmative action in South Africa and reviews literature relating to the design and implementation of corporate programmes to address racial imbalances. It also describes the constraints imposed on affirmative action programmes by sociopolitical trends. This chapter provides the theoretical underpinning for each of the chapters which follow, and supports the discussion of the research findings contained in Chapter Eleven.

Chapter Four traces the historical de. pment of South Africa's characteristic social, political and economic imbalances and inequalities from the pre-colonial and colo. ial periods to the present day, taking in the period of Afrikaner nationalism in the middle decades of this century, often regarded as a precedent for present day affirmative action programmes. The chapter also traces black resistance to white domination, and the rise of black political consciousness and power in this century, providing a backdrop to the international models of affirmative action presented in Chapter Five and the personal accounts of black managers' lives found in Chapter Six.

Chapter Five critiques state sponsored affirmative action programmes in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Malaysia, focusing on the intended and unintended results of constitutional and legislative measures. Like the previous chapter, it provides insight into a range of critical issues facing South African policy makers today.

In Chapter Six the personal histories of black managers involved in affirmative action programmes are explored. The chapter provides a sense of who these managers are, and highlights the coherency of their lives, their self concepts and their perspectives on affirmative action.

Chapters Seven to Ten contain case studies of affirmative action programmes in four South African business organizations. Each chapter explains how and why the programmes were conceived, and the factors impinging on their success or failure. The views of those who manage the programmes and those who undergo them are compared, exposing common

cultural bases of affirmative action. It also shows us how educational programmes (and the power bases which support them) are modified and changed.

The researcher used the frameworks of critical adult education theory and qualitative research (discussed at greater length in Chapter Two) to pursue the following objectives:

1. To investigate the theoretical roots of affirmative action and study programmatic assumptions.
2. To place current affirmative action programmes in the context of historical events and processes linking racial preference and education to social change in South Africa.
3. To investigate international models of affirmative action and extract lessons from them for South Africa.
4. To inquire into the social background and educational experience of black managers in affirmative action programmes, and explore the ways in which their histories are reflected in their views of affirmative action.
5. To study conceptualizations and practices of affirmative action programmes in four large business organizations and, through case studies, to illuminate successful and problematic aspects of programme design and implementation.
6. To investigate participants' experience and perceptions concerning affirmative action programmes and to record their creative ideas and suggestions for reshaping programmes.
7. To analyze the impact of affirmative action programmes on individuals, organizations and wider society.

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is divided into eleven chapters which correspond to the steps suggested in the research aims and objectives listed above.

Chapter Two provides an account of the research design including an outline of the researcher's epistemological position and her reasons for selecting a qualitative research paradigm. It describes the manner in which the sample was selected, and the ways in which interviews, biographical accounts, critical incidents and case studies were used to gather and

Reconstruction and Development Programme, which states:

> People are, and must remain, the architects of the RDP as it unfolds in the years to come. The provision of opportunities for people to develop themselves in order to improve the quality of their own lives and the standard of living of their communities is a central objective of the RDP. (RDP, 1994: 59)

Yet, as mentioned above, the planners of affirmative action programmes in South African business organizations appear to have ignored these central tenets of adult education,[18] raising questions about the theoretical base of their programmes.

1.3 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This research set out to reverse this state of affairs by investigating the meaning and impact of affirmative action on those who experience it firsthand - the people who are willing or unwilling participants in affirmative action programmes in large South African business organizations. In addition, the study aimed to provide a more detailed understanding of what Paulston has called the "adult education/social change nexus" (1988: 114). In the sense that affirmative action links education to social goals such as equity and justice, it intersects with the field of adult education, whose aims, as already noted, include personal empowerment, professional development and social change, particularly for disadvantaged and non-participant groups. Yet, as Paulston remarks:

> We have no macro- or even middle range theory explaining how adult education systems evolve, work or interact with other social systems. We have no linked sets of propositions which clarify the pedagogical process of adult learning or how change occurs in the formal and nonformal structures in which adult education takes place. We even lack a well-defined technical language to help us describe and compare adult education programmes and attempts to link them to economic and social development efforts.
>
> (1988: 114)

The researcher believes that the distinctive and critical voice of adult education, with its history of innovation and its empathy with adult learners, provides not only a framework for understanding affirmative action, but also contributes to the development of theories of education and social change. This study increases our understanding of the ideological and

[18] Despite a diversity of paradigmatic orientations, adult education has focused throughout its history on the adult learner as major concern and object of study (Finger, 1995; Merriam and Cunningham, 1989; Jarvis, 1985).

educationists such as Brookfield (1994, 1993, 1985), Mezirow (1991, 1983) and Freire (1985) draw on critical theory to stress the unique task and responsibility of adult educators to help adults free themselves from culturally induced dependency roles and relationships. These theorists suggest that by assessing their experience, becoming aware of cultural contradictions that oppress them, researching their own problems, building confidence, examining alternatives, identifying resources, anticipating consequences and fostering participation and leadership, adults will become more self-directed, empowered and pro-active. These theorists argue that one of the social roles associated with being an adult is a responsibility to contribute to the transformation of society. Thus, for Brookfield, an important part of education is "assisting adults to make sense of and act upon the personal, social, occupational and political environment in which they live" (1991: vii). In a similar vein, Rahnema maintains that adult educators should see education as a crucial part of a much broader attempt to achieve political, social and economic liberation:

> The educator must always act simultaneously as an authentic teacher and as an active agent of social change. His role should be not only technocratic and purely pedagogical or professional in nature but also political, in the widest sense of the word. (1978: 64)

An earlier body of adult education literature (Knowles, 1972; Tough, 1971) builds on ideas about adults such as those held by Rogers (1969) that the healthy, productive personality is self-directed and self-regulated, and on Maslow's (1954) belief that self-actualization is possible only in adulthood. Amongst others, Knowles (1980) developed an understanding of adult learners as mature, experienced and motivated people who are competent to take responsibility for their own learning. Knowles affirms the importance of learner participation in all stages of educational planning and design, including the identification and prioritization of learning needs, setting aims and objectives, and selecting appropriate content, materials, teaching methods and forms of evaluation. This earlier body of work in adult education stresses the significance of the individual's life experience and self-concept as both a resource and a constraint in learning.

An exploration of learners' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities, their view of themselves and their social world, their aspirations and expectations lies at the heart of critical adult education practice. This is a role compatible with the vision of the government's

writers (Bowmaker-Falconer, 1993; Human, 1993; Alperson, 1992) have argued that institutional constraints, including deeply entrenched prejudice, too little investment in education and training,[16] and a tendency to take a short-term, operational approach, have hindered the effectiveness of corporate affirmative action programmes. But most of this research examines the current status of affirmative action, and speaks to and for people engaged in workplace education. It does not allow participants to speak from their own experience.

Affirmative action programmes in most South African organizations are based largely on the perceptions of white, male managers about the need for and direction of education, training and action. The lack of attention paid to participants' perceptions of the process is puzzling. The managers of these programmes are the people who rally and administer organizational efforts to fulfil social and political mandates. Their opinions affect how affirmative action efforts are managed, what programmatic priorities are selected, and how resources are managed. The 'recipients' of affirmative action programmes form both the primary target and the major context of such programmes. Failure to investigate their views can influence how seriously such policies are taken, the personal resources committed to them, and the general climate for success or failure of affirmative action programmes. This startling gap raises questions about the nature and effectiveness of corporate affirmative action programmes - questions which are of particular concern to practitioners and researchers in the field of adult education.

1.2 THE THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Adult education, which is often associated with progressive forces and with social change, contrasts in many respects with the traditional principles of pedagogy.[17] Contemporary adult

[16] Most South African companies spend less than a half percent of their total expenditure on in-service education and training, in contrast to European and North American firms which spend an average of six percent (NEPI, 1992: 14).

[17] In South Africa, particularly, education was used by the apartheid regime as a 'hegemonic weapon', with both the formal and hidden curriculum contributing to the reproduction of inequalities in terms of race, class and gender. Thus teachers in schools were often viewed as transmitters of state ideology and as puppets of the ruling class (Unterhalter et al, 1991). There was little opportunity within formal educational settings for learning to be oriented towards the development of communities and the adult's social roles.

1990s a number of business organizations[13] have introduced affirmative action programmes, often under the rubrics 'equal opportunity', 'black advancement'[14] or 'social responsibility'[15]. These programmes embrace a range of educational aims and functions, including leadership development, workplace education and integration into Western corporate culture.

In contrast to the lively public debate mentioned at the start of this introduction, and despite the educational heart of many affirmative action programmes, affirmative action in the workplace has received little attention from educationists in South Africa. Although the formal education system, and particularly higher education, is viewed by educationists and others as a central institution to redress racial, gender and economic inequalities in society, the potential of education in the workplace to influence social and racial relations, and to provide access to wealth and power, has remained largely unexamined. Yet precisely because so many affirmative action programmes in the workplace have explicit (and implicit) educational aims, they form an ideal setting to study the educational issues raised in a process of ongoing social change.

Previous studies of affirmative action in the workplace have tended to be conducted by writers from the field of organizational development and management development. As we will see in more detail in Chapter Three, these writers have documented the need for affirmative action programmes (Hofmeyr, 1988; Smollan, 1986) and suggested methodological frameworks for corporate interventions (Human, 1992; Hofmeyr, 1992). Recently some

[13] Although a widely circulated study conducted by management consultants FSA-Contact in 1995 reported that a massive 84% of South African organizations in both the private and public sectors had affirmative action policies in place, Innes (1995) points out that FSA-Contact's study was based on a minuscule sample of organizations in the private sector only. In addition, 'formal' and 'informal' policies (described as ones which do not encompass a written policy statement) were conflated in the study, leading many to entertain serious doubts about the survey's claims.

[14] In its broadest sense, 'black advancement' refers to the economic, social and political advancement of black people. In business circles, however, the term has come to refer to the promotion of Africans from the lowest levels of organizational hierarchies into skilled, supervisory and managerial positions in predominantly white organizations (Smollan, 1986). Bennell and Strachan (1992) point out that the term has offensive overtones since it implies prior backwardness on the part of black people before their 'advancement' into white culture and white enterprise. The term 'black occupational advancement' is therefore preferred.

[15] 'Social responsibility' refers to a wide range of corporate programmes for the social welfare of employees, including housing loans, bursaries, and adult basic education courses, as well as community development activities contributing to social upliftment.

challenge[11] is to change the assimilation philosophy associated with affirmative action to a management philosophy which accepts and supports the cultural diversity of employees and client communities. 'Managing diversity' is becoming a major social movement of the 1990s, inspiring the same kind of vision and idealism as environmentalism and feminism, and attracting the sort of attention from researchers and academics that multiculturalism in schools did in the 1980s (Thomas, 1990; Jones, 1991).

In South Africa, instead of declining, the debate on affirmative action is assuming greater prominence and urgency in the context of the new political dispensation. The African National Congress (ANC), the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) have all referred recently to a need for affirmative action. The term is used loosely to cover a wide range of programmes and strategies, including

1. bursaries and academic support programmes for black students at universities and technikons;
2. preferential financial assistance by business to institutions of communities which have been traditionally disadvantaged;
3. corporate social welfare programmes for employees, including housing loans and adult basic education courses; and
4. preferential recruitment, selection and promotion procedures in large companies and academic institutions (Mapai, 1992; Innes, 1992b).

Attempts to delineate the boundaries of affirmative action precisely are sometimes obscured by the use of euphemisms such as 'corrective action' and 'positive action', and by related terms such as 'managing diversity'. In Africa, particularly, affirmative action is often confused with the process of Africanisation[12] following independence from colonial rule. In the 1980s and

[11] In America this challenge is led by a number of social movements, including the women's movement, and black power and gay rights activism. Amongst other activities, these groups challenge the white male attitudes and workstyles which still dominate most US companies.

[12] Rapid Africanisation of the public sector has affected the efficiency of central and local governments and parastatal organizations negatively in a number of countries, and has been criticized widely as a conservative and elitist process. See, for example, Strachan (1993: 141) and the NEPI Human Resources Development Report (1992: 51).

Hollway maintains that part of the interviewing process should be an exploration of the meanings assigned by interviewees themselves to the events and feelings they describe. Aronowitz and Giroux insist on a rigorous examination of experience which explores the boundaries of a particular position, and extends insights beyond the limits of particular experiences. The researcher attempted to extend these principles to all participants in the research process, including herself, by cultivating a climate of trust, depth and reflection.

An important aspect of critical practice, as described by Freire (1985) and Brookfield (1993) is the educator's readiness to place her interpretations and biases before others for scrutiny. To address this need Usher and Bryant (1989) suggest presenting practices for wider examination by colleagues working in similar and allied contexts. They suggest that not only does this process allow interpretations to be scrutinized for their accuracy and validity, but it also facilitates a review through the lens of formal theory. In this study, tentative interpretations and conclusions were not only discussed with participants in the research, individually and in groups, but were also presented to groups of postgraduate students in adult education at the University of the Witwatersrand, in an effort to explore alternative interpretations and conclusions. Connections and discrepancies between participants' experience and theories of education and change were also explored in this process.

2.5 BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNTS AND CRITICAL INCIDENT TECHNIQUE

For many years educators have used biographies, autobiographies and personal accounts as resources for social research and evaluation (Van Manen, 1992; Campbell, 1978; Grumet, 1987). Adult educators always have had a special interest in the lives of individuals (Knowles, 1980, 1975; Brookfield, 1991, 1985; Merriam, 1987) believing that understanding and respect for people are essential in assisting adults to fulfil their multiple roles. Working educationally with people demands more than technical skills and authority. It requires a sensitivity to their fears and hopes, their beliefs, their ways of making sense of their experience, their practical knowledge, and their ways of solving problems. This in turn demands an awareness of the constraints and possibilities of their life histories, including their material circumstances and historical context. For these reasons, the researcher pursued the biography of each manager in this study, focusing, in near chronological order, on respondents' social background,

between them and her through the course of each interview, and from one interview to another. She also tried to adapt to their perspectives during the interview, leading to an exploration of themes which might not have arisen in a rigid adherence to a questionnaire or pre-determined interview schedule.

Whenever possible, interviews were conducted at participants' workplaces. The reasons for this were twofold. First, it was anticipated that respondents would feel more confident and relaxed in surroundings which were familiar to them, and secondly, there was a larger scope for observation.

Almost all interviews were recorded (with the permission of participants) using an unobtrusive micro-cassette recorder. Participants were shown how to operate the recorder, and invited to switch it off if they wanted to say something off the record. The researcher also took longhand notes during the interviews. The tape recordings were transcribed, and copies of the researcher's summary notes of biographical information were returned to participants before the second interview to see if they wanted to retract, amend or improve anything. This gave participants a measure of control over the research, and also contributed to the validity of the interviews, as will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

After transcribing the first set of interviews, the researcher 'fed back' her tentative interpretations and conclusions to research participants individually. This initiated loops of practical theory development, as envisaged by Freire (in Shor and Freire, 1987), while at the same time honouring participants' experience in the tradition of adult education.

Hollway (1989) observes that the researcher's desire to respect personal accounts of their experience should not be confused with a belief in their truth - that is, what people say is valid in itself, but should not be seen as the whole truth, or the only account they could have given. Aronowitz and Giroux also point out the risk of idealizing and romanticizing learners' experiences by taking them at face value, indicating that "...experience becomes an unproblematic vehicle for self-affirmation and self-consciousness" (1991: 130). This seems particularly important when the number of participants in the study is small, and when the researcher's own cultural background is different in many respects from that of participants.

The conversational approach described above was structured around a thematic guide to ensure that interviews covered the intended ground. This thematic guide was used flexibly, however, as one of the features of interviewing in a qualitative research mode is that the researcher learns something from each successive interview which can be verified or expanded in subsequent interviews (Guba and Lincoln, 1981: 61). The thematic guide for the first set of interviews (which were concerned mainly with gathering biographical information) was constructed as a self-administered questionnaire, then evolved into a thematic guide and recording instrument when it was piloted with three members of the research sample (Rayneard, Radebe, Rachidi). The guide is presented in Appendix One.

Bogdan and Knopp Biklen (1982) suggest that an exploratory, free-flowing, unstructured style of interviewing may be helpful at the beginning of a project so as to get a general understanding of a range of perspectives on a topic. Later, a more structured approach may be used to focus on a particular topic, or to get comparable data across the sample. This procedure, which was adopted in this study, permits flexibility and individualization, while minimizing issues of legitimacy and credibility in the analysis of data.

The subject matter of the proposed interviews was sensitive and political, while the research design required that participants display candour and frankness. It was therefore important for the researcher to show sensitivity to the political context of the research and to respect participants' confidentiality. Participants had the option of withdrawing from interviews at any stage of the enquiry. They were informed about the purpose and procedure of the enquiry, so that they did not feel that their personal integrity or status within the organization would be jeopardized by the research. They were invited to propose a pseudonym for use by the researcher in her written reports, if they so desired. (Only two participants chose to do so.)

Cornwell (1984, cited in Potts, 1992: 334) observes that social and professional differences between interviewer and interviewee should not be underestimated and recommends conducting several rounds of interviews to help people to move from polite, safe, 'public' accounts of their views and experiences towards more significant, critical, 'private' accounts. For this reason at least two, and sometimes three interviews were conducted with each participant. The researcher attempted to create rapport with participants, to build trust

time-consuming.[5] Critical incident technique, used to amplify and extend the data gleaned in interviews, will be described in the next section of this chapter, which deals with biography as a resource for qualitative research.

Brookfield (1980: 63-4) reminds us that in ordinary discourse the term 'interview' calls to mind television confrontations in which a detached questioner elicits information in a more or less hostile fashion from a knowledgeable and articulate subject. The term may also suggest 'interrogation', since its other common usage is with the competitive, anxiety-provoking job 'interview'.

The intention in this study was to avoid the negative connotations of the term 'interview' by asking research participants to 'talk' about their experience and views of affirmative action programmes. The informal and non-threatening association with conversation indicated that a reciprocal dialogue was sought, and not a staged 'question and answer session'. This did not mean that the interviews were to be superficial. Taylor and Bogdan's comments are relevant here:

> By in-depth qualitative interviewing we mean repeated face-to-face encounters between researcher and informants directed towards understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words. The in-depth interview is modelled after a conversation between equals, rather than a formal question-and-answer exchange. The interviewer, not an interview schedule or protocol, is the research tool. The role entails not merely obtaining answers, but learning what questions to ask and how to ask them.
>
> (1984: 77)

Various unobtrusive techniques are possible for gathering information in an interview. These are captured in the terms 'clarifying', 'probing' 'contesting', 'problematizing' and 'negotiating meaning' (French, 1987). Efforts were made to use these techniques in a way that facilitated enjoyable, yet meaningful dialogue. Questions were asked in forms which encouraged discursive responses rather than yes/no answers, such as 'Tell me about...' ; 'What do you think of...'; or 'Some people have said...What do you think?'.

[5] For an account of personal constructs and the associated 'repertory grid technique' see Cohen and Manion (1989) and Candy (1982).

The Conglomerate	Geoff Tabbner	25 August in his office in Isando.	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	Harry Thibedi	19 July 1994 in a bay of the reception area, 8 August in his office in Isando.	Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	Seadimo Chaba	10 and 20 March 1995 in a meeting room in Selby.	Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	Letitia Fernandez	3 and 31 March 1995 in a meeting room in Selby.	Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	Tunie Job	22 February and 15 March 1995 in a meeting room in Selby.	(1) Notes only. (2) Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	Shadrack Khumalo	16 March 1995 in his office in Pretoria.	Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	Joe Lukhele	22 February and 3 March 1995 in a meeting room in Selby.	Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	John McCloskey	2 and 10 February 1995 in his office in Selby.	Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	Nandi Mgobozi	14 and 30 March 1995 in a meeting room in Selby.	Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	Elaine Mpulo	7 and 10 February 1995 in a meeting room in Selby.	(1) Notes only. (2) Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	Anne Muir	2 and 20 February 1995 in a meeting room in Selby.	Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	Samantha Petersen	3 and 7 March 1995 in a meeting room in Selby.	Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	Kedi Phasha	1 and 15 March 1995 in a meeting room in Selby.	Tape recording and notes.
The Retailer	Mike Stonier	4 April and 8 May 1995 in his office in Selby.	Tape recording and notes.

2.4 INTERVIEWS

Because of the exploratory nature of the research, and the sensitivity of much of the content, the primary method used for collecting information was in-depth interviews with individuals. A further method of collecting and validating information - personal constructs -was proposed in the early stages of the project, but was discarded when it proved too cumbersome and

The Oil Company	John Mabitsela	18 April 1994 in his office in Wadeville.	Tape recording and notes.
The Oil Company	Ken Mgengebule	1 February and 29 June 1994 in his office in Rosebank.	Tape recording and notes.
The Oil Company	Rafilwe Mohe	1 June 1994 in his office in Cape Town; 11 July 1994 on the telephone.	Tape recording and notes.
The Oil Company	Theo Qabaka	16 and 25 August 1994 in his office at de Beers Technology, Booysens Reserve.	Tape recording and notes.
The Oil Company	Maurice Radebe	14 January and 30 June 1994 in his office in Rosebank.	Tape recording and notes.
The Oil Company	Steve Ramasia	4 February, 9 May and 5 July 1994 in his office in Rosebank.	Tape recording and notes.
The Oil Company	Japhta Sibiya	4 February and 1 July 1994 in a colleague's office in Rosebank.	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	Jane Chen	18 and 22 July 1994 in a bay of the reception area in Isando.	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	Ronnie Chinniah	22 July and 11 August 1994 in a bay of the reception area in Isando.	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	Vee Jithoo	15 July and 11 August 1994 in his office in Isando.	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	Peter LeSueur	26 August and 7 September 1994 in his office in Isando	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	Isaac Makhoti	28 June and 15 July 1994 in his office in Isando.	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	Doctor Makwela	15 and 22 July and 1994 in a bay of the reception area in Isando.	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	Thabiso Mofokeng	22 July and 11 August 1994 in a bay of the reception area in Isando.	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	Paulus Mohokare	28 June and 11 July 1994 in his office in Isando.	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	Linda Ogle	4 and 18 July 1994 in a bay of the reception area in Isando.	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	John Rayneard	21 December 1993; 20 January 1994; and 17 June 1994 in his office in Isando.	Tape recording and notes.
The Conglomerate	Ian Schreiber	26 August and 7 September 1994 in a training room in Isando.	Notes.

TABLE ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

Company	Participant	Date and location of interview	Interview Record
The Bank	Linda Duma	16 and 23 September 1994 in a seminar room in Marshalltown.	Tape recording and notes.
The Bank	Andre du Toit	22 December 1993 and 27 October 1994 in his office in Marshalltown.	Tape recording and notes.
The Bank	Stranger Kgampe	15 September and 6 October 1994 in a seminar room in Marshalltown.	Notes.
The Bank	Andrew Kgantsi	13 and 20 September 1994 in a seminar room in Marshalltown.	Tape recording and notes.
The Bank	Nozitha Daphne Koza	12 September 1994 in the researcher's office, Braamfontein; 22 October 1994 in the researcher's home in Sandton.	Tape recording and notes.
The Bank	Phinda Madi	21 January 1994 in a seminar room in Marshalltown. 16 September 1994 in his office in Melville.	Tape recording and notes.
The Bank	Bruce Montso	23 and 27 September 1994 in a seminar room in Marshalltown.	Tape recording and notes.
The Bank	Siva Naidoo	27 October and 7 November 1994 in a seminar room in Marshalltown.	Tape recording and notes.
The Bank	Kenneth Rachidi	16 July 1993 and 17 September 1993 in a seminar room in Marshalltown.	Tape recording and notes.
The Bank	Dan Simelane	13 and 20 September 1994 in a seminar room in Marshalltown.	Tape recording and notes.
The Oil Company	Adon Dumse	11 May and 30 June 1994 in his office in Rosebank.	Tape recording and notes.
The Oil Company	Johnny Govender	18 March 1994 in his office in Rosebank; 5 July in his office in Boksburg.	Tape recording and notes.
The Oil Company	Joe Khosa	3 May and 24 June 1994 in his office in Rosebank.	Notes.
The Oil Company	Humphrey Khoza	4 and 19 August 1994 in his office in Rosebank.	Notes.

internal evaluation of affirmative action programmes in the four companies. This information was assembled by means of interviews with the managers concerned and an analysis of documents. Next individuals were sought, in each of the four companies, who were either the planners or the 'recipients' of affirmative action programmes.

The study makes no claims to statistical rigour in terms of sample membership. Sample members were selected to reflect possible variations in perceptions developed by individuals in different organizations. The main criterion for selection was thus willingness to participate in the study, as well as communicativeness. A further criterion was diversity: individuals with various portfolios and periods of service were sought; women as well as men, from various racial and ethnic groups and different parts of the country were selected.

The researcher thought that it was unrealistic to expect strangers to discuss sensitive issues frankly when confronted 'cold' by a university-based researcher. For this reason, she organized an intentional sample on the basis of personal contacts and recommendations. Several past students in postgraduate education programmes at the University of the Witwatersrand were known by the researcher to have been appointed to managerial posts in companies which had affirmative action programmes. They indicated their willingness to discuss their own experience, and were able to recommend others who could make a contribution to the study. These recommendations were considered alongside those made by the managers of affirmative action programmes in each of the four organizations. In the end, 46 managers were interviewed, ten to twelve in each organization. Table one (below) provides an overview of the research sample. It lists the participants in the study grouped under the company in which they were employed. The location and date of each interview is given, along with the method of recording the interview (tape recording and/or notation).

since the 1980s to recruit, train and promote black staff. The Conglomerate was recommended by two of the informants as a company steadily, and unobtrusively, increasing the number of black appointments at supervisory and management level in the past five years. The Retailer was recommended by two of the informants because it had a well-defined, vigorous affirmative action policy which had been in place for at least a decade.

Further reasons for selecting these four companies for attention were their size, location and public profile. Each of the companies selected is a major employer, with a large management corps. This enabled the researcher to find a suitable number and variety of participants for the research. The companies are well known in South Africa; their products are increasingly targeted at black communities, and their managements (presently dominated by white males) must be seen to move towards reflecting the racial composition of the population at large. The high public profile of these organizations also meant that spokespersons for and documentation of affirmative action policy were likely to be available. In addition, the companies tended to deal with affirmative action issues inhouse, rather than buying in or contracting out the required education and training. They had substantial staff complements in Johannesburg, rendering frequent site visits by the researcher easy and inexpensive.

An investigation into corporate affirmative action programmes was initiated by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) just as the researcher began her own study in 1993. Although the aims of the two studies were different in several respects, the researcher considered it best to avoid any appearance of duplication. She sought out companies other than those selected by IDASA for study,[4] and was able to increase knowledge in the field by building on IDASA's case studies in her review of related literature (Chapter Three) and the discussion of research results (Chapter Eleven).

After targeting the four companies for study, the researcher approached the managers responsible for affirmative action in each of them for permission to carry out her investigation. She also sought information about the design, development, operation and

[4] IDASA (1995) published case studies on affirmative action in the South African Breweries Beer Division, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, Unilever, The Sowetan, ESKOM, the University of the Western Cape, British Petroleum SA and Pick 'n Pay.

2.3 RESEARCH SAMPLE AND PROCEDURES

A substantial part of this research was conducted in four large South African business organizations, which may not be named for reasons of confidentiality.[3] These organizations are referred to in the study as 'The Bank', 'The Oil Company', 'The Conglomerate' and 'The Retailer'. The companies were selected after telephonic consultations in late 1992 with a number of informed sources, including Dr Linda Human, research professor at the Business School of the University of Stellenbosch; Angus Bowmaker-Falconer, research associate at the Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town; Myra Alperson, research associate with the Innes Labour Brief; Dr Carolyn White of the Centre for Policy Studies; Clive Acton, head of Clive Acton Associates, a Johannesburg-based management education consultancy and agency; Christine Botha, research associate with the Institute for Personnel Management; and Bridget Walker of Quest Personnel Agency. Conversations with these informants in March and April 1993 enabled the researcher to compile an initial list of 35 competitive business organizations running affirmative action programmes which had recognizable educational/developmental aims. Four companies were selected from this list for reasons outlined below.

For a variety of reasons black managers are represented differently across South Africa's economic sectors. Africans are best represented in financial services, coloureds in the oil industry, and Asians in the industrial food sector. Women are best represented in the retail sector (Bowmaker-Falconer and Searll, 1995). The researcher considered it desirable to seek companies operating in different sectors of the economy so that possible variations in affirmative action policies could be assessed.

The Bank, which was recommended by three of the informants listed above, was believed to be rethinking its strategy after making a number of affirmative action appointments at middle management level in the early 1990s. It was suggested that this particular bank would be more accessible and 'upfront' in its relations with researchers than other (financial) institutions. The Oil Company was recommended by three of the informants as representative of highly publicized (though not necessarily statistically impressive) efforts made in the oil industry

[3] This was agreed with company officials at the outset of the investigation.

networks in which there was an exchange of information, services and support which contributed substantially to their participation in educational activities geared towards their own and their children's interests. The study has implications for policy and curriculum development in adult education and early childhood education.

Other qualitative studies which offer insights into adult literacy and basic education in community and work settings have been conducted by Mpoyiya and Prinsloo (1994) and Lurie (1989). The findings of these studies have the potential to make a significant contribution to the field.

It has been argued (Collins and Plumb, 1989; Boshier, 1989, Lovett, 1988) that qualitative researchers run the risk of constituting a new form of positivism which locates 'truth' in subjectivity rather than objectivity, ignoring the ways in which ideology can be embedded in feeling and emotion (as well as in behaviour). Cohen and Manion (1989) warn of the weakness of exclusive reliance on any particular research approach. In order to avoid methodological parochialism and to ensure that data generated in research are not merely the "artifacts of one specific method of collection" they suggest triangular techniques which "attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint" (1989: 270). Triangulation has special relevance where a complex phenomenon, such as affirmative action, requires elucidation.

The methodological framework of this research project is qualitative. The study is intentionally small to allow depth of treatment. It draws on interviews and critical incidents to compile biographical accounts and case studies of participants' personal experience and views. It employs triangulation techniques, allowing the researcher to respond to a multiplicity of perspectives, rather than rely on one viewpoint which might bias or distort the investigation. The researcher believes that this flexible, non-dogmatic approach provides a viable model, not only for this enquiry, but for other adult educational research projects in South Africa.

concepts or working hypotheses. Research results are documented in natural language and often presented in case study format.

South African studies employing qualitative research methods have been carried out by Bozzoli (1991), French (1988) and Smythe (1995), amongst others, and these studies have informed this thesis. Bozzoli studied the lives of a small group of black women in the early decades of this century, starting with their girlhoods in rural Phokeng, and proceeding from an account of their schooling, marriage and motherhood in a peasant society to their migration to the harsh townships of Johannesburg, where they sought work. In the city they established households in which they advanced their own position in a proletarian community. Finally, the women returned to Phokeng where they spent their old age in poverty, dependent on pensions and the goodwill of their children. Bozzoli uncovers their strategies of survival - a mixture of assertiveness and conformism - against the social forces of migrancy, urbanization, racial segregation, proletarianization, poverty, harassment, violence and sexism. The women give their version of "how things look from below, how history is constructed in their eyes" (1991: 242), a version which reveals their tenacity and resilience.

French's (1984) phenomenological study of the reading world of black workers traced the educational and social influences on the reading habits and preferences of a small group of black adults who were employed or lived near a mine hostel on the outskirts of Johannesburg. The study investigated the meaning of literacy, and the significance of reading in these workers' lives, finding a wealth of values attached to reading, which go far beyond the limited and limiting instrumental meaning of literacy. The study also documented a variety of resources for reading, most of which might not be considered 'suitable' for semi-literate adults by educators and librarians. The study has considerable significance for those who wish to design literacy curricula or to publish and disseminate reading materials for newly literate and semi-literate adults in South Africa.

Smythe's (1995) study of intergenerational literacy in two Johannesburg-based educational programmes revealed that domestic and municipal workers who attended night classes had a variety of motives and interests in returning to school, including a desire to attend to their own children's educational progress. Furthermore, these adults were members of social

personnel are experienced, not only at technical/artisanal level, but in terms of managerial, supervisory and human relations skills. Furthermore, much routine assembly work has been automated, leading to large scale redundancies, but requiring a wider range of skills and attitudinal flexibility on the part of the remaining workforce. This creates new demands on the adult labour force, not only to master new skills of manufacturing and maintenance, and to contribute to the development of new products and processes, but also to adapt to new jobs and career paths (Forrester et al, 1995; Marsick, 1987).

Several factors favour a move to post-fordism in South Africa's private sector. The new political dispensation in the country has eliminated some of the external constraints (sanctions, disinvestment) on international trade which existed in the 1980s. Then there are global tariff reforms such as GATT[11] which pave the way for South Africa to re-enter international markets. Finally, there is the influence of many ANC affiliated economists and COSATU labour and education officials who support the rationalist and technicist strategies associated with post-fordism (Kraak, 1995; McGrath, 1995).[12] The trend to post-fordism has been controversial, however, and writers such as Kraak (1995, 1991) and Foley (1994) warn that it is important to guard against generalisation and exaggeration in accounts of the benefits, extent and pervasiveness of post-fordist change. In South Africa, fordist methods coexist alongside other forms of production, such as 'jobbing'[13] and family owned and operated businesses. There has been little innovation in the production methods used in the mining and metallurgical industries - still the mainstays of the South African economy. Mass production methods were introduced in secondary industries in South Africa only in the 1960s and 1970s and are not yet in a state of decline. The introduction of new technologies and management

[11] The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade is a compact which requires signatory countries to dismantle structures of protection.

[12] According to Foley (1994), such strategies include attempts to stimulate export production by reducing government expenditure, reducing real wages, providing incentives for private investment, production and consumption, reducing government regulation of business activity, encouraging foreign investment, and bringing more consensual arrangements to bear on industrial relations. Kraak (1995) claims that the new government's industrial policy of 'growth through redistribution' has been subverted from a unified strategy which required industry to meet basic needs in the local economy while adapting to the demands of the global economy, to one which places greater emphasis on restructuring industry for the export market.

[13] Jobbing is a form of work organization based on one-off contracts with short production runs, sometimes involving complex manufacturing and engineering processes (Kraak, 1995).

exaggerated and misrepresented. So, for example, Meth (1981) questioned the existence of skills shortages, citing the rising level of unemployment amongst qualified workers in the public and private sectors,[9] while Muller (1984), Chisholm (1983), and Chisholm and Christie (1983) argued that the skills referred to were not technical and supervisory, but socially and ideologically defined 'shortages' such as a lack of positive attitude to competitive business and capitalist development. The shortages claim was often seen as a rhetorical device (or an 'ideological smokescreen') used by capital and the state to convince the general public of the necessity of restructuring the workforce for the sake of continued capital stability and prosperity.

In the 1990s, the skills shortage argument has taken a new turn with the growing influence in South Africa of a range of Western writers (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Kanter, 1984; Toffler, 1985; Pascale, 1985) who have noted global economic restructuring and called for new forms of work organization if business is to survive and flourish in the post-industrial, technological era. The goal of such economic restructuring is the creation of technologically advanced, low cost, export oriented, internationally competitive enterprises (Foley, 1994). An important shift in production methods associated with this restructuring has been popularized as a change from 'fordist'[10] techniques of mass production, characterized by semi-skilled work on an assembly line, to 'post-fordist' production, with multi-skilled workers producing a more diversified range of products, with very short lead-in times. The introduction of advanced technologies, such as pneumatics, hydraulics, computerization and electronics, implies a range of new, highly skilled occupations in which shortages of qualified

[9] Archer and Moll (1992) have made three objections to the notion that skills shortages are a major constraint on economic growth, including Meth's point that the South African economy fails to deliver jobs in sufficient volume to match the outflow from schools, not the reverse.

[10] Fordism is named after Henry Ford, the founder of assembly line production. The term refers not just to a method of production, but to a system of social relations, institutional arrangements and work organization which ensures a stable pattern of production and consumption. Under fordism, standardized products are mass produced to reduce unit costs of production, and, through economies of scale, to increase rates of profit. Mass consumption is based on a relatively high standard of living for the working class, as well as on social values which support consumption. There is a tendency towards centralization and concentration of production, leading to the development of monopoly concerns. The state intervenes to provide infrastructure for economic growth on Keynesian lines, to regulate market failure and to deliver a social welfare system. Radical movements of the working class are brought under control through the application of authoritarian or consensual industrial relations systems (Williams, 1992; Kraak, 1991; Foley 1994).

shortage of management skills have been widely publicized in South Africa,[6] and it has been estimated that by the year 2000 there will be a shortage of 212 000 managers and 200 000 skilled technical employees (Hofmeyr and Templer, 1992; Shaw and Human, 1989).[7] This shortage is not only attributable to apartheid policies; demographic trends and social factors also play a part. The white percentage of the population is decreasing, due partly to shrinking birth rates, and partly to the emigration of many professionals, entrepreneurs, artisans and their families. Eighty-six percent of people joining the labour force during the 1990s will be black (Hofmeyr and Templer, 1992).[8]

The partial dismantling of the racist division of labour in the late 1980s (see Chapter Four) has meant that many jobs (including managerial positions) previously reserved for whites are now legally open to blacks. But the vast majority of black people are disadvantaged in taking up such opportunities because of their low levels of education. The system of 'Bantu Education' has contributed greatly to the shortage of black skilled and semi-skilled workers in South Africa, to the high rates of illiteracy and innumeracy inhibiting economic development, and to the small number of black workers and graduates seen to have the ability or potential for promotion to managerial positions. According to World Bank statistics, South Africa has nine university educated people per thousand of the population. When classified by race, there are thirty university educated people per thousand of the white population; for black South Africans the figure is not quite two per thousand (Krige, 1995).
In a debate which spanned the 1980s, a radical critique, concerned with identifying the ideological values, hegemonic processes embedded in capitalist forms of social organization, and the patterns of inequality which they produced, argued that skills shortages had been

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[6] See, for example, popular video and text presentations by Sunter (1987); a supplement to the Financial Mail of 15 February 1991 entitled 'Black Advancement: A Survey'; as well as scholarly works by Hofmeyr and Templer (1992), and Human (1991).

[7] Human and Van Zyl (1982) note the shortage of workers at supervisory and middle management levels in South Africa, citing one manager for every 42 workers. Corresponding figures for the UK and USA are much lower, the nearest comparison being Australia where the ratio is 1:11.

[8] Hofmeyr and Templer (1992) summarize the demographic trends as follows: 3500 children are born every day in South Africa; nine out of ten of these children are black. In 1992 white people comprised 14.4 percent of the population; by 2000 this is expected to be 12.2 percent. Eighty-six percent of people joining the labour force during the 1990s will be African, coloured or Asian.

management to recruit, train or nurture black employees, in preference to white ones, for supervisory and management positions. Affirmative action is seen as a strategic, pragmatic response to three perceived problems: a skills shortage; social instability; and political change. These perceived problems will now be discussed in turn.

The Skills Shortage

From a business perspective, the major problem to be addressed in affirmative action is the 'skills shortage', widely believed to hamper the economic growth and development of South Africa. This shortage has been attributed to many factors. During the years of apartheid and international isolation, South African companies were, to a considerable extent, shielded from international competition in terms of the price and quality of goods produced for local markets (Lloyd, 1994). Apartheid provided an institutional framework and ideological base for an economic system characterized by low cost, standardized production demanding low skill levels, lack of long term human resources planning, lack of cooperation between state, capital and labour, and low education levels for the majority of employees (Kraak, 1991). Apartheid made it unnecessary for companies to invest in human resources, technology or work organization to the same extent as companies in Northern Europe and North Asia. This has had a profound effect on the workforce as a whole. Kraak characterizes the results of employers' neglect of human resources development as follows:

* A poor style of managerial leadership which has failed to understand the rapid pace of socio-economic and technological change.
* A managerial style informed only by the need for short term profits and lacking any long term perspective. Skills development has suffered as a result of this shortsightedness.
* Very little internal training, with employers poaching skilled labour from competing companies.
* No tradition of cooperation between employers and the state (unlike training partnerships in the advanced economies).
* Authoritarian forms of work organization.

(1995: 36)

Human and Human (1989) have indicated that the development of a professional management group is crucial to organizational effectiveness, and that a country which is unable to develop its peoples' skills will be unlikely to develop anything else. Statistics showing a critical

are inclined either to fault schools for not providing pupils with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to participate successfully in the world of work,[4] or to criticize the role of schools in fostering character traits and dispositions that will produce workers who value traditions and respect the virtues of the worksite, such as obedience, punctuality, compliance and deference to authority.[5] Simon et al (1991) note that such positions produce discourses about work education, but they operate at a level of abstraction that fails to produce a pedagogy for work education. So this study, which aims to engage people in an exploration of their own experience, contributes to an area of research which has not been undertaken in South Africa yet, using adult education's ethos and position to strategic advantage.

'Affirmative action' means different things to different people. Nelson Mandela, speaking at an ANC conference on affirmative action in 1991, said

> To millions, affirmative action is a beacon of positive expectation. To others it is an alarming spectre which is viewed as a threat to their personal security and a menace to the integrity of public life.

What exactly are the different meanings of affirmative action to which Mandela refers, and what is their connection to adult education? This chapter attempts to answer these questions by means of a critical review of South African literature on affirmative action in the workplace. The chapter unravels some of the ambiguities of affirmative action; traces the theoretical roots of affirmative action; and relates affirmative action issues to the concerns of adult education in South Africa. It also reviews the sociopolitical trends which impact on affirmative action, and models which have been devised to guide corporate policy and programmes.

3.2 THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

In many of South Africa's large competitive business organizations and government institutions, affirmative action is perceived to be a programme of action instituted by

[4] See, for example, Etheredge (1982) and Sunter (1987).

[5] See, for example, Christie (1991), Unterhalter et al (1991), Nkomo (1990) and Chisholm (1984).

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN SOUTH AFRICA: A REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE[1]

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, the field of adult education has been marginal to the mainstream of education and training and to the preoccupations of the state and other agencies involved in education planning and provision. This has allowed adult educators the space to be critical of existing institutions and structures, but it also means that there is only a small body of work critical of training provision in the workplace written from an adult education perspective.[2] Indeed Schaffer (1984: 189) has observed that the two interest groups curiously absent from training discourse in South Africa are trainers themselves and the education profession.[3]

As mentioned in Chapter One, researchers in the fields of organizational development and management development have been more active than adult educators in writing about affirmative action in South Africa. They have publicized the need for black occupational advancement, identified problems in implementing affirmative action programmes, and posited future trends in the field. Human (1991: 13) has drawn attention to the need to explore the environment in which black managers work, and the ways in which they are developed on the job. Hofmeyr and Templer (1991: 4) observe that there has been little research into the perceptions of progress made in black advancement, and of the commitment on the part of organizations and individuals to equal opportunity.

Literature critical of the formal education system abounds in South Africa. These analyses

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[1] Material from this chapter has been published in 'Competing concepts of affirmative action'. Perspectives in Education, 15 (2) 1994: 265-284.

[2] This literature tends to be concerned with adult literacy and basic education programmes operating in industry. See, for example, Lurie (1992) and French (1988, 1992).

[3] Kraak (1991) observes that the link between education, production and the politics of the workplace were not viewed as important by organizations in the liberation movement, such as the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) and the ANC, with the result that proposals concerning vocational and technical information exhibited very little difference from those emerging from the corporate sector and the Nationalist Party regime.

encourages participants to understand and change their situations. However, the researcher freely acknowledges that the design is not a flawless or unrivalled route to the creation of knowledge. What the qualitative research design has to offer is a framework for challenging (and changing) conventional practices, and for understanding the process of doing this. It is the researcher's contention that such a framework is appropriate and useful in view of the context and aims of this study.

develops during, the study. These go beyond description and interpretation to provide an explanation of the phenomenon under study.

* **Generalizability**, the extent to which an account of a particular setting or population can be systematically extended to other settings, people or times.
* **Evaluative validity**, the evaluative framework that the researcher applies to the study.

Although Maxwell observes that qualitative researchers cannot use his typology to eliminate threats to the validity of their accounts, and suggests that researchers usually deal with such threats by seeking evidence that would allow them to be ruled out, this researcher believes that certain steps may be observed, both prior to and during the research, which enhance validity. First, to strengthen descriptive validity, tape recordings of almost all interviews were made. Verbatim transcripts of interviews provided an accurate descriptive record of participants' statements. Secondly, to support interpretive validity, accounts of participants' views were based as much as possible on their own words and concepts. A process of feeding back tentative interpretations to participants for them to mull over and redefine was implemented successfully. With respect to theoretical validity, alternative interpretations and explanations were sought in an effort to test the researcher's constructions of participants' perceptions. A conscious and ongoing effort was made to promote high quality awareness of these constructions on the part of the researcher and others contributing to the study. No claims to 'external generalizability' (generalizing beyond the groups studied) are made in this research. Any claims to 'internal validity' (generalizing within the group studied to persons who were not interviewed) are backed by a meticulous account of the interviewing process which is sensitive to the politics of the situation and the relationship between researcher and participants. Finally, to enhance evaluative validity, an effort has been made to make the researcher's personal evaluative framework explicit to the reader, rather than leaving it implicit in the accounts.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This study proposes a qualitative research design which is interactive, in the sense that theory and practice interact; contextualized, in the dual worlds of affirmative action and adult education; and compelling, in the sense that it invites engagement in the research process, and

Company and the Retailer, the researcher relied on completed response forms as well as follow-up telephone calls to corroborate her interpretations and conclusions. In rewriting the case studies for this thesis, contextual information has been added, so that the reader can appreciate the unique features of each company and programme, as well as similarities and differences between companies and programmes.

2.7 ISSUES OF VALIDITY AND GENERALIZABILITY

The aim of qualitative research is to gain insights from people which will enrich and illuminate our understanding of actions, concepts, events and practices. The issue of validity arises from a need to persuade researchers and others of the authenticity and trustworthiness of the methods of collecting and presenting information and the interpretations which are derived from it.

Qualitative researchers tend to view positivist procedures for attaining validity as inappropriate, even illegitimate, claiming that qualitative research has a different concept of validity, and has developed its own procedures for ensuring integrity and trustworthiness. Brinberg and McGrath make the point thus: "Validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques...Rather, validity is like integrity, character and quality, to be assessed relative to purpose and circumstances" (in Maxwell, 1992: 280-1).

Maxwell (1992) proposes a typology of validity and understanding based on the way qualitative researchers think about and deal with validity in their practice. He maintains that this 'realist' approach is more consistent and productive than prevailing positivist typologies based on research procedures. The categories of understanding and validity which he proposes are:

* **Descriptive validity**, which is concerned with the accuracy of an account of a specific object, event, act or situation.
* **Interpretive validity**, the researcher's interpretation of what objects, events, and situations mean to the people involved in them. This is a matter of inference from the words and actions of participants in the situations being studied.
* **Theoretical validity**, the theoretical constructions that the researcher brings to, or

Such studies also have a commitment to feed back information quickly to participants, so that they may reflect and act on it, in the tradition of action research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986).

In this study the researcher went repeatedly, over a period of two to three months, to each of the four companies selected for investigation. There she observed and interviewed participants and staff associated with the affirmative action programme, and examined documents and records related to the programme. From these sources she wrote a narrative designed to "take the reader into the case situation" (Patton, 1980: 314). Her efforts to provide readers with a three dimensional picture of the company's affirmative action programme meant exploring the process of developing the programme at least as much as examining its outcomes. The case studies addressed questions such as 'How did those involved in making and implementing affirmative action programmes respond to social and political change? Why? With what consequences? What were the reactions to strategic shifts in affirmative action among the staff of the company? What were the connections (or disjunctures) between responses at personal, company and national levels? The case studies attempted to clarify the concepts and models of affirmative action used within companies and across companies, while also identifying support systems. They traced the historical factors which influenced local policies and strategies, and integrated ideas about affirmative action with national policy developments in the fields of education, development and labour relations. But above all, they sought to present the perspectives of the managers who were involved in affirmative action programmes.

Significantly, given the critical education focus of this study, the case studies provided opportunities for participants to think about their own assumptions and practices, and modify them in the light of reflection and discussion. They also allowed participants to challenge the authenticity of the researcher's mid-range interpretations and conclusions concerning affirmative action in the company. In order to engage participants in such critical reflection, a draft version of the relevant company case study was prepared for each respondent, and their views on it were solicited. (See Appendix Three for an example of the letter and response form which accompanied the draft case studies.) In the case of two of the companies, the Bank and the Conglomerate, the researcher was invited to participate in group discussions focusing on the issues which were raised in the case study. In the case of the Oil

After the first interview with each participant in the study, the researcher drew up a 'biographical profile' which focused on that respondent's personal, educational and employment history. The profile was returned to the respondent within a few days, and he or she was invited to correct, elaborate or delete any part of the text. The profile was then amended by the researcher and returned to the respondent for final editing. When this had been done for all 46 participants in the study, the researcher ordered the profiles alphabetically and arranged them in groups according to employer. (These profiles are presented in Appendix Two of this study.) The profiles were then analyzed and tabulated by the researcher, who looked for similarities and differences in the accounts. Detail from critical incident technique was brought in to illustrate and illuminate material gleaned from interviews. The results of this analysis are to be found in Chapter Six, 'Black Managers in Corporate Affirmative Action Programmes: Social Background, Upbringing and Education'.

2.6 CASE STUDIES

Case study is one of the most familiar methodologies used in qualitative research (Stake, 1988; Walker, 1980) having been used extensively in the fields of medicine, law, business administration, psychology, social work and education (Merriam, 1984). Case studies are essentially an analysis and portrayal of particular instances, events or situations which aim "to illustrate the relationships, micropolitical issues and patterns of influence in a particular context" (Bell, 1987). Case studies permit deeper insights and contextualization of a phenomenon than is possible in a quantitative study of affirmative action, such as that provided by the Breakwater Monitor (Bowmaker-Falconer and Searll, 1995).

In the field of adult education, case studies frequently represent a range of interests and views, rather than one authoritative view, implying that participants' concerns, descriptions and problems are in the foreground of the study. As Walker observes:

> The case study worker constantly attempts to capture and portray the world as it appears to the people in it. In a sense ... what seems true is more important than what is true. For the case study worker ... the internal judgements made by those he studies, or who are close to the situation, are often more significant than the judgements of outsiders.
>
> (1980: 45)

upbringing, experience of education and career.

The personal and unique events described in participants' biographical accounts helped the researcher to interpret the nature of their experience. Knowing something of a manager's background and experience assisted in understanding that person's life decisions and choices. Moreover, the biographies provided details concerning specific places and events in respondents' lives, and these details exposed patterns which were of interest in relating personal histories to more formal accounts of a particular historical period or social event. A vivid example of this is found in Chapter Six, in accounts of the 1976 Soweto Uprising and its aftermath. Not only does the reader acquire a personal perspective on an historical event, but we also learn about how individuals see and wish to portray themselves in relation to such events. As Rosenwald and Ochberg observe:

> ...the stories people tell about themselves are interesting not only for the events and characters they describe but also for something in the construction of the stories themselves. How individuals recount their stories - what they emphasize and omit, their stance as protagonists or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and audience - all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives. Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned.
>
> (1992: 1)

In addition to the information and insights gained from biographical accounts, the researcher employed 'critical incident technique' (Beenhakker, 1986; Corbally, 1969) to identify the significance - particularly the emotional significance - of actions and events (which may be intentional or not) on people as they carry out tasks related to education, training and work. In this study respondents were asked to report positive and negative outcomes of their participation in affirmative action programmes, and to identify those acts and events (the 'critical incidents') which seemed to have led to these outcomes. In this way, conditions were created for respondents to become interpreters of their own experience, and the researcher's interpretations were less likely to be imposed on them. The incidents were recorded and transcribed in the same manner as the interviews described above. The researcher then isolated, categorized and interpreted the incidents, searching for commonalities in individuals' vignettes, and for recognition of problematic incidents in the design of affirmative action programmes. She invited suggestions for alternative ways of dealing with dilemmas, and recorded respondents' remarks.

vocational training and schooling. Lifelong education will be encouraged through the promotion of free and compulsory schooling for all for ten years, including a pre-school year. Integration of education and training would involve all providers (state, private sector and non-governmental organizations), stakeholders (industry-based training boards, professional and vocational training associations) and contexts (schools, commercial colleges, community learning centres) under a National Qualifications Framework charged with regulating standards and managing certification. These broad principles are congruent with the RDP, which advocates the integration of education and training and the recognition of adults' prior learning and experience, but they also raise problems which invite criticism and debate.

Despite their coherence and comprehensiveness, the proposals contained in the White Paper may be criticized on several grounds. A major criticism is that they contribute to only a limited degree to the process of transformation in South Africa, and may serve instead to reproduce powerfully entrenched structures established in the apartheid era (Kraak, 1995; Wolpe, 1991[32]). The notion of occupational mobility, linked to lifelong learning, implies a progression which is challenged by the hierarchical division of labour and by the limitations of the economy to absorb a significant number of skilled black workers (Kraak, 1995). Another criticism is that the move to integrate education and training is driven by the interests of those involved in training at the workplace, particularly COSATU, and does not reflect the interests of students, parents and teachers, who are unlikely to support or implement it (Jansen, 1994). Then again, the modular-based, competency models advocated by ANC and COSATU policymakers may be interpreted by employers and others in a narrow, instrumental way which inhibits rather than promotes learning (Kraak, 1995). A further criticism focuses on the massive resources required to mount a centralized National Qualifications Framework in the face of a wholly inadequate budget allocation for the provision of adult basic education and training. Finally, ABET development and delivery are treated sketchily as 'developmental initiatives' in the White Paper. Given bureaucratic restructuring into provincial departments, the movement towards equity in the provincial context, and the priority of schooling, ABET is unlikely to receive adequate attention from the state (Millar, 1995).

[32] Wolpe's critique anticipated the policy formulation and implementation process.

Education and training are seen to be crucially important for creating economic growth, democracy and equality in South Africa. This is, then, a wider and more powerful vision of the role of education in affirmative action than that in the human resources development paradigm, which tended to see education and training as instruments in developing a black manager class. The RDP's emphasis is on widening access to education and meaningful work, following an approach described by NEPI (1992) as the development of broadly based, "high participation, high skill" human resources. The RDP gives priority to the role of adult education in reconstruction and development, and states an intention to create training and work opportunities for out-of-school youth, the unemployed and retrenched people, particularly through the extension of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET).[30] Sadly, however, these remain little more than statements of intent. There is no indication in the RDP of the structures or strategies to be set in place to fulfil these intentions, and no meaningful commitment of state resources to develop them.[31] Even more worryingly, the RDP makes virtually no reference to tertiary education, where the development of the country's managerial and professional leadership should be taking place.

COSATU (1993), like the ANC, has called for human resources development on a massive scale as a requisite for economic growth and development. COSATU has long championed the right of workers to paid educational and training leave, and promoted links between training, higher wages and job grading. It has insisted that the private sector should provide skills development, rather than narrower forms of training, which would allow skills to be transferred from one job, or work context, to another. COSATU was a strong influence in the National Education and Training Forum, which was mandated to develop proposals for the government's White Paper on Education and Training, released in 1995.

The White Paper on Education and Training (1995) calls for a single, national system of formal and nonformal education from pre-school to tertiary, including ABET. The principle of integration is enshrined in plans to establish the equivalence of adult basic education,

[30] ABET is a uniquely South African acronym which reflects a general (and international) policy move towards the integration of education and training.

[31] RDP planners anticipated that ABET projects would continue to attract funding from the private sector and foreign donors, and hence made no budgetary provision for them.

3.3 THE TRANSFORMATIVE CONCEPT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Another concept of affirmative action (called here the 'transformative' concept to distinguish it from the 'human resources development' concept discussed in the previous section) began to gain currency in the early 1990s, following the unbanning of radical political groups and individuals, and the removal of restrictions on the media and the press. With the transition to a new political dispensation, South Africa's democratic and labour movements introduced a new discourse in public policy, in which redistribution and reconstruction emerged as central themes.

The transformative concept of affirmative action finds its clearest expression in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the principal social policy of the new ANC-led Government of National Unity. The ideological roots of the RDP are manifest in the aims of mobilizing the people and resources of South Africa towards eradicating apartheid, building a democratic future and transforming the country's social institutions. The RDP's popular appeal rests partly on its promises of improved living conditions (including land and economic redistribution) and partly on the critical values of people-centredness, transparency, non-racialism, non-sexism and democracy which were the hallmarks of the anti-apartheid struggle (Innes, 1993). The RDP White Paper (1994) emphasizes the links between growth, reconstruction, redistribution and development. This is in contrast to the capitalist growth school of thought which holds that growth and development, or growth and redistribution, are processes that contradict each other. In practical terms, the RDP is about restructuring government ministries and departments, and redirecting spending away from consumption and towards capital investment. However, budgetary constraints mean that the government must draw on other resources to fund the RDP, hence new partnerships and alignments are to be forged with affected communities, NGOs, the private sector, foreign governments and international donor agencies.

The RDP underlines the government's commitment to affirmative action as a human resources development strategy within a broad framework for social and economic transformation. It emphasizes both education and training as integral components of human resources development. Arguments for high quality general education are linked to demands for redress and equity, and also to demands for greater labour productivity leading to economic growth.

entrenched prejudices, tend to be hidden or ignored, rather than exposed and addressed (Bowmaker-Falconer, 1993).

The human resources development concept of affirmative action can be likened to what Millar has described as the 'technological discourse' of adult education:

> It is education understood in assembly line terms - as the production of human skills and capacities. The specification of educational objectives in performance terms becomes the key task of the educator/manager - and learners are assessed and programmes evaluated in terms of their achievement of these objectives. ... Its great attractions are extreme simplicity, close-fit with productivity ethics, its ability to appear to deliver the goods and its powerful capacity for social control.
>
> (1989: 11)

Both the human resources development concept of affirmative action and Millar's 'technological discourse' are characterized by low social change goals. Control of the change process is located within the system: the introduction and direction of change is a management prerogative, and tends to reflect conservative cultural and social values. Incremental change efforts are directed to protecting socio-economic stability and boosting individual productivity and efficiency. The adult educator functions as a 'manager' of the learning environment and of resources, charged with matching employee development to organizational growth. Behaviourist principles and methodologies underlie much of this form of adult education.[39]

The human resources development concept of affirmative action, and the educational philosophy which frames it, provide a powerful and pervasive account of what matters in affirmative action: integrating black people at higher levels of existing organizations and social structures to ensure their continuity and growth. But it is not the only conceptualization of affirmative action, and it is to an alternative perspective that we will now turn.

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[39] Darkenwald and Merriam (1982: 68-9) cite measures of accountability, behavioural change, behavioural objectives, systems approaches and programmed instruction as some of the manifestations of behaviourism in organization-sponsored education. They also note that techniques and strategies with a more humanistic orientation can be used to foster individual growth and development.

in the face of large scale retrenchments) as well as to the perceived limits of white employees' tolerance of black empowerment (Hofmeyr and Templer, 1991). In the 1990s, Coldwell (1995) suggests that many companies perceive affirmative action programmes to be expensive and risky,[26] and are thus reluctant to invest in them, preferring to 'poach' already qualified candidates from other companies. A different explanation for the lack of progress in affirmative action is suggested by Christie (1992: 10) who points out that the private sector has no enforceable obligations to its clientele with respect to its social responsibility activities, and no accountability to other groups in society. Even in the era of negotiation and cooperation ushered in by rival political groups in the early 1990s, business has remained largely unwilling, or unable, to negotiate and share control of initiatives with community organizations and political groups. The point is captured by an Anglo Alpha executive, interviewed by Alperson, who described his company as an "equal opportunity company" as distinct from an "equalizing company" (1992: 53).

Critique of affirmative action activities from within the human resources development paradigm, led by Human (1993, 1992), Hofmeyr (1991) and Bowmaker-Falconer (1993), centers on the underlying motives for action, which are frequently governed by fear and guilt rather than a desire to succeed in the long term.[27] In such cases, affirmative action is seen as an inconvenience, or necessary evil, rather than a proactive mechanism for development and integration (Bowmaker-Falconer, 1993). Human (1993, 1991) criticizes the tendency to take an operational, rather than strategic approach to black advancement. An operational approach is characterized by internal, technical and short-term aspects of the organization at the expense of longer term strategic planning and development. In addition, South African companies invest too little in training and development at supervisory level, making bottom-up development and promotion problematic.[28] Institutional constraints, including deeply

[26] The risk lies in losing black employees on completion of their training.

[27] Human (1993: 34) observes that in many organizations development has not been well understood or instituted, and that too little pressure is put on managers to coach and develop subordinates or to acquire the skills to do this.

[28] Human (1993: 35) criticizes the tacit acceptance of dual corporate development systems in which the development of lower-level workers tends to stop at supervisory positions, while managers are not generally promoted from the ranks of supervisors.

affirmative action programmes should be made more inclusive and participative. Alperson (1992) and McGregor (1992) suggest means of explaining and publicising affirmative action principles and activities in ways that make them accessible to all employees in an organization. Human (1991) recommends placing recruits in 'hard' positions in line management or profit-making divisions in which they may rise - and be seen by others to rise on the basis of merit - into positions of responsibility and influence.[23]

Human's view is shared by Birkenbach and Hofmeyr (1990) who favour a development philosophy centered on a culture of the 'learning organization',[24] and by Hofmeyr and Templer (1992) who propose a management education curriculum for South African universities which would encourage more flexible, critical thinking.

Although there is considerable agreement amongst human resources development specialists about the need for and direction of organizational change, progress in many organizations has been slow. Bowmaker-Falconer (1993) observes that claims of progress towards employment equity have become public relations exercises, and that the available pool of black managers has remained nearly static.[25] In 1991 Hofmeyr reported that blacks occupied only 2.2% of managerial posts, and less than 1% of executive positions in South African companies. Furthermore, these figures had remained virtually unchanged since 1980, and have increased only slightly in the 1990s (Coldwell, 1995). In the 1980s, slow progress in affirmative action was attributed to the serious economic recession in South Africa (companies had few vacancies; and budgets for affirmative action and training programmes were vulnerable to cuts

[23] Alperson (1992: 62), reporting on Grinaker's affirmative action policy, mentions the practice of 'seeding' in which externally recruited graduates are appointed to 'hard' positions at junior management level and provided with a support system through mentoring and other forms of follow-up. This practice is common in North America.

[24] The main concern of a 'learning organization' is to create an environment in which the learning of all employees is encouraged. Learning is seen to be the responsibility of individuals in the organization, with the company providing resources, stimuli and support. Job rotation, project work, experimentation, action learning and coaching are strategies associated with learning organizations (Birkenbach and Hofmeyr, 1990).

[25] Bowmaker-Falconer (1993: 13) claims that most corporate affirmative action activities center around the circulation of an available pool of black managers, rather than on the task of developing managers in significantly greater numbers. By 1994, the representation of Africans in management had grown to just 3.94% (Bowmaker and Searll, 1995).

strategies include:

* The development of manpower planning models to guide the selection, development and assessment of employees (including detailed job and performance specifications, mechanisms to identify management potential and individual training or developmental needs, and career path planning).
* Leadership and achievement training designed to stimulate participants' individuality, assertiveness and risk-taking propensity.[21]
* Bridging education programmes which prepare individuals or small groups of school leavers for entry into business by focusing on learning, decision making, and problem solving skills, as well as basic business principles.
* Coaching and mentoring programmes to groom high-potential employees for management roles.
* Initial placement of black managers in 'soft' positions in which their perceived cultural conditioning makes them most suitable (for example social responsibility and community relations) and in which they also become transmitters of free enterprise ideology to others.

In a critique of such strategies, Human (1991) argues for a move away from deficit models of black unpreparedness for the white corporate world towards recognition of the role played by organizational culture in general, and white managers in particular, in the development of black managers. Strategies associated with such a move include involving organized labour (as the voice or protector of black employees) in corporate strategies affecting the work and life of employees; and making efforts to open up lines of communication and 'value sharing' between white and black employees, as well as between senior management and black trainees.[22] Hofmeyr (1993a) believes that the process of planning and implementing

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[21] Hofmeyr and Templer (1992) trace such programmes back to McClelland's 1961 model of achievement training which is based on the argument that African employees are 'affiliation oriented' rather than 'achievement oriented'.

[22] See Lurie (1992) for an account of the value sharing workshops conducted at the P.G. Bison company. Both Human (1991) and McGregor (1992) believe that affirmative action programmes should not be the preserve of human resources managers, but should form part of wider corporate objectives, supported vigorously by senior management. Human (1993) points out that successful affirmative action depends on line managers' preparedness to recruit, develop and promote blacks, which a human resources development department cannot do.

Features of Affirmative Action in the Human Resources Development Mould

A key feature of affirmative action in the human resources development mould is the emphasis placed on deficit models of performance. The onus is placed squarely on the individual, or the company, to improve, or at least maintain, existing standards of productivity and efficiency. According to several studies (reported in Human and Human, 1989; Human and Hofmeyr, 1987; Hofmeyr and Templer, 1991), black managers have not met the standards of productivity, effectiveness and efficiency set by white employees. Explanations for this poor performance have focused primarily on the deficits of black managers,[17] and to a lesser extent on the deficits of South African companies. Black managers' underperformance has been attributed to their inferior education and preparation for work; their traditional culture, which is assumed to be incompatible with the free enterprise system[18]; and their marginal position[19] in white-led organizations. Shortcomings attributed to South African companies include racial bias and discrimination against blacks, especially in the ranks of middle management;[20] 'neutrality' and lack of commitment of white colleagues; and the imposition of alien corporate values and cultures (Human, 1991).

Strategies and practices associated with the human resources development concept of affirmative action emphasize planning, induction, socialization and compensatory education and training, as can be discerned from IDASA's (1995) study of eight organizations' affirmative action programmes, and Alperson's (1992) survey of five companies. Such

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[17] See, for example, Charoux (in Smollan, 1986) who complains that "Even at managerial level, blacks begin their careers ... handicapped by a low level of literacy, an underdeveloped ability to apply theory practically, and difficulties in communicating both verbally and in writing".

[18] See Coldwell and Moerdyk (1981), whose influential study postulated dissonant cultural paradigms for traditional (black) people and Western-oriented (white) people, implying that this difference had negative effects on black managerial performance.

[19] This marginality is partly a consequence of black managers' psycho-social isolation in the workplace (there are often not enough people of the same race group to provide a feeling of belonging or support), and partly a consequence of the diverse and conflicting environments in which black people live and work (Human, 1991). Jones (1986) notes that black managers often lack the informal networks and cooperative relationships which white managers rely on at work.

[20] Hofmeyr (1988) reports that most white employees hold negative stereotypes of blacks, believing them to be lazy and dishonest, while Human and Hofmeyr (1987) found that many whites expressed the belief that blacks are inherently inferior to whites. Frank (1987) cites examples of overt discrimination and covert resistance to black advancement, including biased appraisals, subverting grievance procedures and setting people up for failure.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the promises and assumptions of Human Capital Theory were challenged by British educationists such as Dore (1976) and Little (1984). In South Africa, in the heyday of reproduction theory in the sociology of education, the challenge was led by Chisholm (1983) and Nasson and Samuel (1990). The theory was seen to be flawed; it promised too much, too fast. It became apparent that there were no simple relationships between 'inputs' and 'outputs' in education. The causal relationship between schooling and economic return was affected by many influences, such as changes in the demand for skilled labour and the effectiveness of collective bargaining arrangements (Archer and Moll, 1992). More money and time invested in education and training did not automatically produce more productive workers or stronger economies. Family background and social class were discovered to be more potent institutions for the economic success of individuals and groups than the school. Societies which managed to reduce rates of innumeracy and illiteracy did not thereby eliminate poverty, or create equality. One of the most enduring criticisms of Human Capital Theory has been that it deflects attention from structural problems and turns them into individual ones (Nasson and Samuel, 1990).

Despite these criticisms, the promises and assumptions of Human Capital Theory are reflected in the thinking of many educational and manpower planners in South Africa today. Many critics have modified their views.[16] The transition to a new political dispensation has renewed hope that education and training, alongside other interventions, have the power to influence important structural features of economic and social life. Archer and Moll (1992) support a modified version of Human Capital Theory as a basis for educational planning, although they warn that "education is in danger of being oversold by some political reformers as a route out of apartheid's neglect and inequity" (1992: 2). And Foley (1994) observes that advocates of post-fordism have revived Human Capital Theory with a new conception of people's role in a competitive state.

[16] See, for example, Samuel (1992).

government committed to redressing the equalities and injustices of the apartheid era, private sector companies are faced with pressures to provide evidence that they are dealing with the issue of affirmative action in their own workplaces (Coldwell, 1995). White managers are aware increasingly that the appointment of black managers and the provision of affirmative action programmes are likely to serve the company's enlightened self-interest in much the same way as corporate social investment projects do.

Human Capital Theory

A theoretical rationale for the human resources development concept of affirmative action lies in Human Capital Theory (Blaug, 1968) which derives from classical economic theory and the capitalist growth school of thought. Human Capital Theory holds that money and time devoted to education and training should be viewed as an investment in human capital, rather than as a cost to an organization. The argument runs as follows: the variations in pay received by the workforce reflect inequalities in the human capital that employees bring with them to work. Groups which are disadvantaged in the labour market (for example women and black people) owe their inferior rewards to their lower investment in human capital. An investment in the education and training of disadvantaged groups should increase their productivity and efficiency, allowing them to earn the higher pay received by better educated individuals and groups in society.

Human Capital Theory has long been attractive to strategic planners in state and business organizations. It promises perpetual economic growth, an end to poverty and a more equal society.[15] It reinforces the idea that existing standards of performance and efficiency in work organizations are high, and must be upheld. It strengthens the values of individualism and meritocracy with its assumption that employers are rational people who maximize profits by paying only what the productivity of each individual employee justifies. One of its most enduring claims is that labour needs can be anticipated and coordinated through educational planning.

[15] More investment in education, it is claimed, creates higher productivity which in turn creates higher growth; higher growth pays for more investment in education. More and better education gives children of disadvantaged groups the 'capital' to create wealth. Class barriers are broken down as all members of society acquire education.

a whole. Furthermore

> ...the black middle class is likely to be the class that shifts most within South Africa's class structure in the transition from the apartheid to the post-apartheid economy. In other words, it will grow in size, increase its share in distribution and improve its relative economic power significantly more than other classes: it is likely to benefit most from deracialization of South African capitalism, while at the same time being fundamentally re-shaped by the transition. (1992: 3)

Nzimande (1986: 58) once described black managers as "reluctant partners of capitalism". Many members of the black middle class, like the working class, have been victims of influx control, forced removals and autocratic control (see Chapter Six), and for this reason class distinctions between the two groups are often blurred. In the 1980s, the range of allies for the black middle class was large, including big business, organized black labour, the white middle class, the urban poor and foreign capital (Gelb, 1992: 18). Business had little option but to nurture the growth of the black middle class and promote the association of class interests with Western business values and practices. Black occupational advancement programmes were the available means to do this.

A Moral Imperative

Finally, business has been responding, grudgingly, to a moral imperative to integrate black people and advance them within existing organizational structures. This imperative may be internally or externally driven. In the 1980s many South African companies were responding to pressure from their parent organizations,[14] or clients overseas, in acknowledging their contribution to past injustices, and their responsibility to redress them now. In addition, some businessmen came to believe that the apartheid state had abdicated responsibility for racial integration and modernization, and that the private sector was obliged to take a leading role, especially in the financing of educational and welfare programmes (Swainson, 1991; Sunter, 1987). However, Moulder has referred to research indicating that white South African managers entertain pragmatic value orientations (theoretical, economic and political) but are weak on humane and social values. So it is that in the 1990s, with a new black-led

[14] This is often a legacy of the Sullivan Code or the milder European Community Code, both of which set non-discriminatory codes of conduct and black recruitment targets for the South African branches of multinational corporations in the 1980s. For more detail on the Sullivan Code, see the case study of the Conglomerate in Chapter Nine.

approaches has been gradual and uneven, and has not significantly changed the hierarchical and racist forms of work organization (Kraak, 1995).

Whatever position is ' .ken in this debate, it is clear that the skills shortage viewpoint has a plausibility sufficient to satisfy many interest groups and policymakers. We turn now to the second force driving affirmative action in the workplace - the desire to bolster social stability.

Social Stability

The decade leading up to South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 was characterized by economic recession, violence and uncertainty about the future political, economic and social direction of the country. In this period, management was torn between a 'siege mentality' in which the emphasis was on survival and short-term profits, and a realization that the identity and allegiance of the black middle class were still being forged, and might be successfully wooed. As Hofmeyr and Templer (1992) have pointed out, this is not a climate conducive to affirmative action and management development, which require longer range vision and considerable investment.

Neo-Marxist interpretations of South Africa's social relations hold that the black middle class was first fostered as a buffer between the white establishment and militant black workers and students in the 1970s. A "diffuse, yet powerful theme" could be discerned in the capital-state reform discourse of the late 1970s which called for training to nurture positive attitudes amongst black people towards competitive business and the capitalist financial milieu (Schaffer, 1984: 195). The incorporation of the more privileged and better educated strata of the black working class into a middle class with vested inte ests in the free market system was expected to promote social and political stability, while leading to the expansion of lucrative domestic and commercial commodity markets. In addition, the black middle class provided two ideological functions for the ruling class (Nzimande, 1986): it legitimated an ideology of professionalism and careerism, and reinforced the belief that the only way out of poverty and oppression lay in becoming professional.

Gelb (1992) notes that the black middle class trebled in size between 1970 and 1987, and is now equivalent to 19% of the African population, as compared to 37% of the population as

Those arguing for post-fordist systems of work organization (Peters and Waterman, 1985; Morgan and Ramirez, 1983) maintain that organizations must move away from this paradigm towards a more adaptive, innovative paradigm which emphasizes decentralization, entrepreneurship and a culture of empowerment. In practical terms, workers must take a broad level of responsibility for quality assurance, and for the programming, operation and maintenance of equipment - responsibilities for which black workers, particularly, have been poorly prepared in terms of their education and training.

Kerfoot and Knight (1993) argue that the traditional management approach is paternalistic, summarizing the difference between paternalistic and strategic management approaches thus:

> In general, paternalism may be seen as a way of managing that involves the exercise of power by senior staff who 'shield' subordinates from any decision making responsibility. By contrast, once having designed a set of corporate and business plans, strategic management aims to 'cascade' decision-making responsibility down the hierarchy so as to engage staff at various levels in the business. Whereas staff in paternalist companies are simply expected to execute the decisions handed down to them from 'on high', the adoption of strategic management imposes demands upon all members of the organization to be more directly concerned with the immediate success of particular business initiatives, and the longer term survival and strength of the overall enterprise.
>
> (Kerfoot and Knights, 1993: 669)

In a strategic approach to management there is a greater degree of intervention and planning around both 'external' and 'internal' problems of the organization. Efforts are made to transform the corporate culture into one which nurtures collective loyalty and corporate identity. Responsibility and accountability are shifted down to lower ranking employees, emphasizing individual autonomy and control (while also promoting careerism and instrumentalism). Employees are encouraged to learn many aspects of work, participate jointly in decentralized decision making and continually monitor actions and results to keep the organization running efficiently and flexibly. These changes have implications for affirmative action and managing diversity programmes which often are expected to contribute to an integrated, harmonious and productive work environment.[49]

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[49] Fuhr (1993) observes that many South African companies see participative management processes as a way of integrating management, and indeed the entire workforce, across racial and ethnic lines. This may lead some companies to a quest for shared values and norms, a process which is vulnerable to manipulation, in that white managers may simply co-opt black employees into adopting their own values, norms and practices.

A legacy of economic recession and a feature of changes in work organization is 'corporate downsizing', or rationalization, a euphemism for job cutting. Downsizing occurs as businesses discover new efficiencies from computers, telecommunications, robotics and other technologies, and as they attempt to compete in the global market with products made at much lower cost in other countries.[42] In reassessing their efficiency, productivity and profitability, many South African companies are undergoing 're-engineering' processes, which aim to revamp work procedures and products, and also to increase market share, customer responsiveness, flexibility and profitability (Marchand, 1995). Each of the four companies studied in this research had undergone, or was in the process of undergoing rationalization and reengineering processes, which aimed to eliminate redundancies and refine production and service.

In keeping with these shifts in work organization, the traditional style of management still characteristic of many South African business organizations is giving way to more 'strategic' and participative approaches. Traditional management approaches were originally developed from Max Weber's ideals of rationality and bureaucracy, based on the division of labour, formalized hierarchy of authority and separation of personal and work needs (Williams, 1992; Marsick, 1987). These were further distilled in Taylor's principles of 'scientific management', which defined jobs in terms of discrete tasks which were bound by rules and regulations, and cause-effect linkages, obviating the use of creativity or initiative (Peters and Waterman, 1985). This mechanistic, hierarchical worldview has governed the management of business and industry in South Africa for some time: rules and procedures are set by high-ranking officials who control information and monopolize power; innovation, creativity and acknowledgement of values are stifled. Labour is divided, deskilled and strictly supervised by a hierarchy of management.

[42] The reasons for lower costs in other countries are generally cheap labour, and low expenditure on costs related to public order, the environment and safety. Cheap skilled labour is a hallmark of the rapidly growing economies of the 'Asian Tiger' countries, which include Malaysia, Thailand and Korea. Workers are often young women from rural areas, forced by chronic underdevelopment and poverty to leave their home communities to work in poor conditions for long hours and low pay in state-supported manufacturing conglomerations known as Economic Productivity Zones. These workers are not generally unionized, and for a variety of reasons their work conditions are unlikely to change.

strategies which create more jobs and develop South Africa's people. This section of the chapter will now proceed to portray some of the emerging trends affecting affirmative action programmes in the workplace.

While it was noted earlier in this chapter that changes in work organization were not uniformly applied in South Africa, some companies, particularly in the manufacturing, retail and financial services sectors, have begun to plan the process of becoming internationally competitive, or 'world class' (Lloyd, 1994). The fact that South Africa has been placed last out of 14 comparable economies in the development of its human resources (World Competitiveness Report, 1993) is a daunting challenge to the country's potential to compete internationally. It means that service operators will have to orient themselves to new markets and customer interests, while manufacturers must revitalize their training programmes to increase the flexibility and skills of their workforces so that they may achieve the new production methods which contribute to competitiveness in an increasingly globalized economy. Many of these new production methods are borrowed from Japan, and include 'lean production', 'just-in-time' and 'team based organization' processes,[41] whereby workers are supposedly transformed from machine operators into multiskilled 'entrepreneurs' who share responsibility with managers for the planning and success of the business (O'Connor, 1994; Lloyd, 1994). These changes place new emphasis on the need for lifelong learning and for promoting a culture of learning in organizations, concepts which are captured in the term 'learning organizations'. This means that new directions and forms of learning are required of employees than have been delivered traditionally by training departments. It is interesting to note that in two of the companies studied in this research (the Conglomerate and the Retailer), existing training practices were being overhauled so as to facilitate the changes in work organization described above.

[41] According to Lloyd (1994) 'lean production' is also known as 'management by stress'. It signifies continuous rationalization and improvement of production systems by eliminating excesses or waste in the form of surplus workers, inventory stocks, recyclable materials and so on. 'Just-in-time' refers to a system of making available components for assembly at the precise moment and in the exact quantity they are needed rather than producing them in advance and storing them in batches. 'Team based organization' promotes workers' collective responsibility for sections of the production process, including some management functions.

horizontal relationship, the dominant methodologies being experiential and dialogic, emphasizing reflective thought and action.

3.4 EMERGING TRENDS AFFECTING WORKPLACE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMMES

So far, this chapter has analyzed two concepts of affirmative action in South Africa and related them to different orientations in adult education. The concepts reflect different ideological and theoretical roots, different views of the problems to be addressed in affirmative action and the best ways to deal with them. The human resources development concept places value on individual adaptation and individual capacity to bring about change. The discourse centers on providing equal opportunity for promotion on merit, and maintaining high standards of performance at individual and organizational levels. Structural problems of poverty, racism and sexism are not easily acknowledged or addressed in this paradigm. The transformative concept of affirmative action recognizes a range of interdependent institutions and forces - of which the education system is but one - contributing to the transformation (or degradation) of society. Proposed solutions are mainly statutory ones, emphasizing the elimination of institutionalized racial inequalities, and the redistribution of opportunities and resources to the historically disadvantaged.

In the years between 1993 and 1995, when this research was conceived and executed, the centre of gravity in affirmative action shifted sharply towards the human resources development concept, even within the democratic and labour movements. Noting a corresponding shift in the field of education and training, Kraak (1995) observes that the government's capacity to instigate transformative change could be compromised by varying degrees of internal commitment to radical transformation, by employers' readiness to implement the changes agreed to in tripartite forums, and by the capacity of civil society to reshape the face of industry in the years to come. By implication, then, the human resources development concept of affirmative action, which dominates in the business, commercial and service sectors, represents the available way to put more black people into better jobs. The new government, in turn, provides the wider policy framework within which business operates. Increasingly, this framework will require business to evolve and implement

We have already noted the concerns expressed by Kraak (1995), Wolpe (1992) and others about the nature of the transformation to which education and training, and affirmative action, are to contribute. There is a danger that existing power relations will remain unchanged, and the structural position of black workers will stay the same as it was under apartheid (Collins, 1995). Foley (1994) observes that workplace reform and organizational change are often confused. The latter is relatively easy to implement, but real changes in power relations and skills development in workplaces are much more difficult to achieve.

Here it is important to note that affirmative action measures are being created in response to a society in transition. The Government of National Unity has less freedom of political manoeuvre than many supposed prior to the election in 1994. It has to govern by consensus, not only because the interim constitution requires it, but because powerful, competing interest groups, such as business, the trade unions and security forces demand it. This means the emergence of many complex and untidy compromises in the original goal of redirecting resources to disadvantaged sectors in society.

What philosophies of adult education are most closely linked to the transformative concept of affirmative action? Radical adult education, which Millar has described as "...the form of education that takes most seriously problems of organization, of accountability, of historical understanding" (1989: 12), would appear to be a good fit. In essence, radical adult education is a political commitment to the organization and reorganization (or transformation) of society. Groups seeking to change the status quo perceive adult education as 'anti-structure', as an ideological weapon and resource in their struggle for liberation and social justice.[40] Once these groups have gained control, they use state power to transform the social, economic and educational systems. In this form of adult education, social change goals are high, and control rests with participants. The educator has a complex role, combining the functions of critic, learner, intellectual and activist. Teachers and learners are engaged in a

[40] Freire and Brookfield, both associated with radical adult education, believe that the education system, as presently constituted, is inadequate as a tool for social change. Education must itself be transformed from that which perpetuates the social order to that which challenges the social system and thus liberates. Adult education, which stands outside the formal education system, is an appropriate site (and vehicle) for changing people's consciousness and preparing them for more active roles in society.

> Affirmative action is about the economic and social empowerment of Black people. One of the most effective ways to economically empower Africans is of course for them to acquire and create major corporations which are essential for the smooth running of the economy. (1995: 2)

Ramphele (1995c), like Qunta, speaks from personal and professional experience of affirmative action, and points to the importance of encouraging human agency, alongside change in institutional culture, as ways to achieve equity. Writing of her approach to affirmative action at the University of Cape Town, Ramphele says:

> The creation of greater equity in higher education, and indeed in all areas of our inequitable society, has to involve three thrusts: greater access, opportunities for personal development, and a change in institutional culture.
> (1995c: 207)

The positions taken by the BMF, Qunta and Ramphele emphasize that affirmative action is not about white people granting concessions and privileges to blacks, but about black people acquiring the power and experience to play increasingly important roles in the private sector and public life. Qunta and Ramphele, particularly, point to the interplay between individual agency and institutional change in the process of transforming society.

Critique of the transformative concept of affirmative action centers around South Africa's capacity to afford affirmative action, and the extent of the transformation which is to be wrought. Innes, for example, questions whether South Africa has the financial resources to afford such policies:

> ... in putting forward its policy proposals the ANC is not threatening to introduce any revolutionary new strategies, but is rather building on the structures of the past that were created to facilitate white worker advancement and seeking to extend their beliefs to the black workforce.
>
> However, there is an important caveat here. While the relatively small South African economy was just able to support these benefits for white workers (at the cost, one might add, of denying them to their black counterparts), the key question is: can the economy carry the much larger burden of extending these benefits to the much greater number of black workers? The answer is that this will not be possible for a very long time. (1992a: 32)

Critics such as Leon (1992) ask whether costly affirmative action policies will allow South Africa to compete internationally, and whether funds will be diverted to affirmative action rather than to other means of stimulating the economy and increasing productivity.

At this point it is worth looking at the Black Management Forum's (1993) 'blueprint' for affirmative action, since the BMF plays a strong advocacy role in affirmative action.[38] Like NAFCOC's programme, the BMF's guidelines stipulate minimum target percentages at different organizational levels which all companies on the South African Company Register must strive to achieve by the year 2000. While they are more restrained than NAFCOC's demands, the BMF's targets are still very challenging.[39] The emphasis is on reaching a 'critical mass' of appointments in companies through negotiated targets set and monitored over an agreed period of time. If these targets are not met, strict quotas must be put in place. The BMF believes firmly that "unless targets are set, the affirmative action process is doomed to failure" (1993: 24). Although the focus is on 'getting the numbers right', the BMF blueprint also links affirmative action to the transformation of social practices in business:

> Affirmative action must bring about a complete transformation of the racist and sexist attitudes and practices that have been at the core of organisations in the past. It must help to develop a new organisational ethos, and an innovative set of policies and procedures for staff empowerment. Affirmative action is an ongoing process that affects all aspects of an organization's operation; it is not an isolated event or programme. (1993: 4)

A significant contribution to the transformative concept of affirmative action is the BMF's insistence that

> Black people themselves have to be responsible for their own advancement and progress. Blacks have to be in the forefront of removing the barriers to their own upward mobility. They themselves understand the nature and extent of discrimination in White institutions and they must be the champions of affirmative action in their respective organizations. Blacks must not be spectators and must not behave like victims leaving the planning and implementation of affirmative action to the very same White institutions that were responsible for denying them access to opportunities in the past.
>
> (BMF, 1993: 36-6)

The BMF's conviction that black people themselves should play a greater role in affirmative action is echoed by Qunta:

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[38] The BMF operates from the premise that it is "the most legitimate, appropriate and organized voice of Black managers and executives, [and therefore] is best positioned to give expression and leadership on the development and management of talent" (BMF, 1993: 8).

[39] The BMF calls for the following percentages of employees to be black: 80% of all trainees; 70% of all supervisors; 50% of all junior managers, including management trainees; 40% of middle managers; 30% of senior managers; 20% of executive directors; and 30% of non-executive directors.

> context, it is likely that a future government would call for greater disclosure of internal information on what is being done to promote the disadvantaged within organizations. (Innes, 1992a: 28).

COSATU believes that the state should play a part in implementing affirmative action by commissioning goods and services from private sector companies on condition that the supplier show satisfactory progress in implementing affirmative action. The same would apply to state funding and subsidies of private sector enterprises (Collins, 1995). An effective monitoring agency and a statistical base for the country's labour market would be needed to regulate claims.

Another proposal for changing existing patterns of participation in the formal sector of the economy is presented by the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC) in its 1991 '3,4,5,6 programme'. This programme requires leaders in the private sector to meet ambitious racially determined employment targets before the year 2002. NAFCOC calls on all companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange to have at least 30% of their board members drawn from the black community; at least 40% of shareholdings controlled by the black community; at least 50% of the value of their outside purchases to come from black suppliers and contractors; and at least 60% of their top managerial personnel to come from the black community. No South African company comes anywhere near meeting these targets,[37] but NAFCOC's polemic is effective in drawing attention to the need for vastly increased levels of black ownership, management and operation of business in South Africa.

[37] One possible exception is the National Sorghum Breweries, set up in 1990 (when the government privatized its monopoly holding, Sorghum Brewing Company) under black ownership and management. The company is owned by 10 000 black shareholders, none of whom may own more than 10% of the stock. Employees of the company own 30% of the equity. Blackchain, a retail outlet on the Witwatersrand, was started in 1980 and is owned by 1400 members of NAFCOC (Leadership, 1993). The status of two black groups in the financial services sector, New Africa Investment Limited (NAIL) and Thebe Investment Corporation, was uncertain at the time of writing in late 1995. Collins (1995) remarks of the South African economy that a more 2% of private sector assets are owned by black people. It has been estimated that at current rates of accumulation, it will be 100 years before black people own half the shares listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

been established,[36] drawing the state, organized labour and management closer in pursuit of more cooperative relations. Meanwhile, in 1994, the powerful National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) tabled new demands for company sponsored workplace learning during widely publicized negotiations with the management of the Volkswagen company. NUMSA argues that affirmative action policy should be applicable to all members of the workforce, differentiating between those who need literacy and basic education to start off their careers and those who require more advanced forms of training and development. The process should not create an elite through the upward mobility of a few.

While Webster (1995) commends NEDLAC as an instrument of co-determination, praising it for institutionalizing the power of labour in the heart of decision-making, it should be noted that the main thrust of this policy is on strengthening the position of unionized black workers (who are already relatively privileged and powerful). An editorial in the Star newspaper of 21 February 1995 observes that these new developments are "stronger on honeymooning the powerful, including powerful unions, than on encompassing outsiders such as unrepresented workers and small black business". Groups which remain outside the reach of these initiatives include agricultural and domestic workers, those employed in the informal sector, and the unemployed.

At the end of 1995, draft legislation to secure affirmative action goals in the private sector had not yet been published. Innes, (1992a), anticipating such delays, observed that the ANC was concerned about the impact of quotas on business efficiency and on its relationship with the business community, while COSATU feared that quotas would force companies to recruit from outside the organization rather than training and developing its own employees, who are often COSATU members. However, it is a truism that policy hardly ever succeeds unless based on either incentives or pressure. In all likelihood, the ANC will apply both:

> It is very likely that, in future, companies seeking government contracts or support in any form would be expected to have coherent affirmative action strategies in place and working effectively. It is also possible that tax rebates or similar incentives may be provided to companies which show proof of progress in this sphere. In this

[36] NEDLAC is a statutory body set up in February 1995 composed of representatives from government, trade unions, employer groups and other groups in civil society.

rather than equality, becomes enshrined in constitutional principle.[34] Policies promoting racial preference give the appearance of contradicting the ANC's longstanding commitment to the principle of non-racialism.[35] Aside from the problem that affirmative action could blur, and even override other human and civil rights, it requires a high degree of state intervention in people's lives, again perpetuating one of the most obnoxious features of the apartheid era.

As will be evident from the foregoing text, the power of the state is crucial in effecting the structural transformations of political and economic processes which embrace affirmative action in the transformative paradigm. Consistent with this is the intention that state promotion of affirmative action for equity in the public sector should provide an example and framework for the private sector to develop and carry out. In this connection, the ANC has committed itself to pursuing "a vigorous affirmative action and restructuring programme for the public service to reflect the national composition of our population in order to meet the needs of all South Africans" (ANC, 1992: 31). The government's White Paper on the Transformation of the Civil Service (1995) calls for a comprehensive review of the structure and function of all government departments, followed by a concerted, phased programme of affirmative action to employ more qualified black people. Recommendations include revised pay scales to promote professionalism and a work ethic, a code of conduct, improved management information systems and the establishment of an anti-corruption unit.

In the private sector, the draft Labour Relations Bill, published in February 1995, foresees workplace forums and industry-wide statutory councils designed to negotiate labour rights and employment practices, including training policy. Workers' rights to organize on the shop floor, and their access to company information are boosted by the proposed act. Factory-based forums are to be introduced to increase worker participation in decision-making (Webster, 1995). The National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) has

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[34] Mapai (1993: 7) observes that affirmative action entails "dubious criteria of reward - race and gender - one of which has always been regarded as the most obnoxious feature of apartheid".

[35] Sachs (1993: 121) acknowledges this apparent contradiction thus: "the most difficult problem has been to reconcile the principle of non-racism, which seeks to avoid any reference to race, with the principle of repairing the damage done by past racism, which requires paying attention to actual and continuing patterns of racial disadvantage". The ANC's main concern thus seems to be the enactment of racial preference policies without the taint of paternalism or tokenism.

> ...if nothing is done to change social relations and to provide blacks with access to resources and means to overcome the economic marginalization of the past, the patterns of economic control, ownership and management that have been produced by the apartheid system will remain unchanged even in a non-racial, non-sexist democratic South Africa. The call for Affirmative Action is a call to prevent this from happening. (1993:11)

Policy and Strategy in the Transformative Concept of Affirmative Action

Policies associated with this concept of affirmative action are wide-ranging, encompassing not only the RDP and the proposals for educational change outlined in the previous section, but also constitutional and statutory provision. Sachs (1992) originated a proposal that affirmative action be defined and protected in South Africa's new constitution, suggesting a long-term intervention which would also guide 'nation building' activities and development policy. South Africa's interim constitutional guidelines (which were devised in 1993 to guide the Government of National Unity elected in 1994) place a duty on the state to eradicate discrimination in all its forms, and also criminalize the advocacy of racism (Klug, 1995). Although section 8(2) of the constitution outlaws discrimination, provision is made in section 8(3) for measures to achieve the protection and advancement of individuals and groups previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination. Furthermore, the draft Equal Opportunities Bill requires employers in the public and private sectors to provide education and development assistance, and to revise selections and qualifications criteria which discriminate against black people and women. It also mandates the creation of a work environment and culture open to persons of diverse background through the provision of flexitime, daycare and leave of absence. It foresees a statutory agency to monitor the performance of companies employing more than twenty people.

These constitutional proposals have been the subject of both internal and external critique. The South African Law Commission finds the definition of affirmative action unacceptably wide and vague (Leon, 1992). Mapai (1993) observes that the entrenchment of affirmative action in the interim constitution sets up a legal base for discriminatory legislation, thus perpetuating the notion - advanced in the apartheid era - that it is appropriate to use state resources to advance certain cultures or groups over others. In this way racial preference,

The lack of strategic planning of education and training for adults perpetuates the marginalisation of adult education in state provision of education in South Africa, and highlights a gap between rhetoric and delivery which is beginning to haunt the RDP. However, it also points to the many divisions (race and gender, rural and urban, employed and unemployed) amongst the poor (Bird, 1993), as well as the difficulty of making provision for people who fall outside established social structures. Quite aside from this problem, however, the range of interest groups targeted for affirmative action in state policy is so broad that the possibility of meeting their distinct needs is diminished. Women, youth, rural people and the disabled are all included in the category of "historically disadvantaged groups and regions" in the ANC's human resources development strategy (1992: 31).

Forces Driving the Transformative Concept of Affirmative Action

In terms of its redistributive aims, the transformative concept of affirmative action is driven by political and moral imperatives. The **political imperative** for the democratic and labour movements to engage in affirmative action is a need to reward and develop their own constituencies. Thus affirmative action and education policies are located firmly within a political agenda focused on restructuring the economy and democratizing society (ANC, 1992).

Closely linked to the political imperative is what Leon (1992) calls a '**moral symmetry**' principle, which argues that black South Africans have long been powerless, downgraded, patronized, deskilled and diminished. Moral symmetry calls for redress of the historical injustices and imbalances perpetrated against black people. The blame for this situation is placed squarely on apartheid and capitalism, which resulted in an inequitable and differentiated supply of goods, services, opportunities, infrastructure and life experience, justified by ethnic differences.[33] The transition to a new order must be based on the eradication of these injustices and imbalances, and for that more than the abolition of discriminatory practices is required. As Nkhulu (1993) has indicated:

[33] See, for example, Nasson and Samuel (1989), Kallaway (1986) and Samuel (1992) who blame capitalism and apartheid for impoverishing black South Africans and for an ideologically corrupt education system.

Working conditions and opportunities in the towns of the Cape were somewhat better than the rural areas for all race groups, due partly to the existence of alternatives to farming and the development of a small artisan class.

Inequalities were also clearly marked in the white settler population. In the early stages of colonization, the primitive economy and the Dutch East India Company shaped a social hierarchy of only two social classes - "the respectable burghers and the despicable poor" (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 85).[3] But in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries European society in the Western Cape became gradually more stratified, including wealthy plantation owners, gentry, yeoman farmers and labourers (Bundy, 1992).[4] Trekboer society in the eastern districts of the Cape was more homogeneous, but also poorer.[5]

In the context of a weak and corrupt Cape administration, the disintegration of the Dutch East India Company, and ongoing economic depression, schooling in the Cape made slow headway in the 17th and 18th centuries. Education was left largely in the hands of wandering tutors, often former soldiers or priests. Illiteracy was common among whites and the norm among servants and slaves. The first mission schools were established for Khoikhoi children in the 18th century. In them pupils were persuaded to forego their nomadic way of life, and were instructed in the need for discipline and regular habits (Molteno, 1984). In general, however, the standard of teaching was low and only a tiny fraction of the population received any schooling at all.

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[3] The Dutch East India Company itself distinguished four categories: Company servants, freemen (free burghers), slaves and 'aliens' (Khoikhoi and San). The Company recruited only whites as officials and immigrants, according burghers special privileges such as holding office or land (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 86-7).

[4] Bundy notes that by 1731, seven per cent of the colonists owned over half of the landed wealth of the western Cape (1992: 27).

[5] Adam and Giliomee (1979) describe the shifting status of the inhabitants of the frontier zone. Initially, colonists had to attract rather than coerce indigenous labour, and, from time to time, were forced into military or sexual alliances across racial lines. This resulted in a measure of political and social fluidity, as different groups vied for control. Only when the frontier closed, towards the end of the 18th century, did white authority and status prevail, and blacks began to be viewed consistently as inferior.

of dominant leaders and tribes to subject weaker ones to servitude (Iliffe, 1987).

The source of colonial authority over indigenous social systems lay in conquest. Successive Dutch and English colonial powers destroyed or denigrated local institutions and management practices, then asserted and developed their own administrative systems, including slavery. In the Cape Colony, slaves imported from West and East Africa, and from the East Indies, constituted nearly a third of the population[1] and supplied the bulk of the productive labour upon which the colonial economy rested. In social terms, slavery engrained relations of coercion and subordination (Bundy, 1992), but it also sparked resistance. Mason (1991) describes various forms of resistance corresponding to different historical periods. Early generations of slaves assaulted their masters and mistresses, committed arson and suicide, became drunk, malingered, destroyed equipment and ran away. In the eight year period prior to emancipation in 1834, when legislation to reform slavery was introduced, thousands of slaves "kept their families together, won freedom through lawsuits and self-purchase, and attempted, sometimes successfully, to protect themselves from physical abuse" (Mason, 1991: 105). Emancipation did not immediately abolish social distinctions between the indigenous Khoikhoi, slaves and whites. From the point of view of both abolitionists and the British government, abolition assumed continued subordination, in the 'new' form of wage labour, to be undertaken by sober, industrious and Christian labourers. Nevertheless the new legal dispensation galvanized some slaves to reject any form of subjugation, leading to a breakdown in security[2] which partly precipitated the Great Trek from the Cape Colony to the interior in 1836.

Apart from the contributions of colonization and slavery to inequality between individuals, races and classes, the colonial period also shaped another fundamental kind of inequality - that between town and countryside (Bundy, 1992). On the farms, both slaves and Khoi'khoi were subjected to exceedingly harsh labour conditions which persisted long after emancipation.

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[1] At abolition in 1834, slavery at the Cape had lasted 175 years. There were over 36 000 slaves, 59 000 colonists and 42 000 Khoikhoi and 'bastaards' (Bundy, 1992).

[2] The emancipation of slaves created a class of propertyless labourers who wandered in bands in the Eastern districts of the Western Cape, occasionally pilfering cattle (Bundy, 1992; Adam and Giliomee, 1979).

appear again in Chapter Five, in which affirmative action in three developing countries is analyzed, and are a motif of Chapter Six, in which the biographies of men and women engaged in affirmative action are explored.

4.2 PRECOLONIAL AND COLONIAL SOCIETY

Little is known about the organizational forms and management processes of pre-colonial South Africa. This is partly because of lack of documentation and partly because colonialism often involved the violent destruction of indigenous social systems (Davidson, 1974; Mazrui, 1986). Available evidence suggests that administrative systems were relatively small in size, homogeneous in terms of membership, used local technology and indigenous knowledge systems, and co-existed in relative harmony with the environment (Kiggundu, 1991). Leadership was highly personalized and authoritarian. Mechanisms, including violently repressive methods, existed to preserve orderly respect for hierarchical authority. Problems were dealt with by custom and consensus. Group cohesion was strong, and kinship helped cement relationships regionally and across different administrative hierarchies.

Some African authors, writing to counter European myths about the brutality and savagery of African society prior to the colonial era, have cultivated an image of a precolonial period of harmony and abundance, in which poverty and inequality were unknown:

> There were no rich and poor. The 'haves' helped those who were in want. No man starved because he had no food; no child cried for milk because its parents did not have milk cows; no orphan and old person starved because there was nobody to look after them. No, these things were unknown in ancient Bantu society.
>
> (R.V. Selope Thema, in Bantu World, 12 May 1934, quoted in Iliffe, 1987: 3)

But Bundy (1992: 26-7) warns against the seductive vision conferred in the "myth of Merrie Africa". He, and the Africanist Iliffe (1987), argue that poverty and inequality existed in precolonial societies; the 'structural poor' were those members of society who had insufficient labour and family support to exploit the land effectively (including, particularly, women, the elderly and the young). Poverty was both ameliorated and disguised by mechanisms of clientship, kinship and reciprocity. Looking beyond poverty, the sharpest manifestations of inequality were the control exercised over women by older men (Bundy, 1992) and the power

CHAPTER FOUR

PRECEDENTS FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN SOUTH AFRICA: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

For the South African educator working in the area of affirmative action, an historical perspective is important for a number of reasons. First, it draws attention to the rich history of the country, and the fact that present-day South Africa is deeply rooted in historical "myths and misrepresentations, division and conflict" (Hartshorne, 1992: 20-21). Second, an historical perspective suggests reasons for the actions and views of different groups in society, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of them. Third, an historical perspective helps raise a number of questions about the political economy of affirmative action which may be helpful in shaping its future. If South Africa has had experience of affirmative action in the past, what lessons can we learn from it to assist us in the present? How was affirmative action interpreted, implemented and received in the past? Have concepts and practices of affirmative action changed over time?

In order to address these questions thoroughly, the educator needs to go beyond the few books on affirmative action in South Africa, and read widely in history, education, economic systems, culture, politics, management development and employment practices. Such breadth of coverage is not possible for this chapter of the study. Instead the researcher has drawn on literature in the first two categories to provide an historical background to affirmative action.

In present-day South Africa, the term 'affirmative action' is usually understood to refer to the occupational advancement of black South Africans. The term is sometimes applied retrospectively to the advancement of Afrikaners, first in the 1920s with the implementation of 'civilized labour policies', and particularly after 1948, when the Nationalist Party came to power and instituted apartheid legislation. However, the imbalances in South African society which affirmative action seeks to address go back much further. This chapter shows the nature and extent of social inequality in South Africa from precolonial society through the early and late industrial periods to today. Its main themes are class structure and interests; discriminatory social policy, and black political consciousness and mobilization. These themes

contexts of the research to appreciate the treatment of the historical and international accounts of affirmative action which follow in Chapters Four and Five. The review also provides a base from which the reader can appreciate individuals' responses to corporate affirmative action programmes and the arrangements made by four companies to address problems of an unequal, unrepresentative workforce (Chapters Seven to Ten).

The next chapter in this thesis investigates the historical events and processes which led to South Africa's characteristic inequalities. It also recounts a precedent for affirmative action in the earlier decades of this century. Many of the issues raised in the present chapter - particularly those around state policy in education, development and labour affairs - will resonate in the chapter ahead.

affirmative action programmes, and also suggest new elements for inclusion in performance management systems, reward systems, induction, recruitment, placement and career development systems.

All contributors to this field agree that the implementation strategy should ensure that senior management, line managers and supervisors are drawn into the processes of identifying, selecting, training, supporting and advancing black candidates. In most cases such involvement will indicate a considerable departure from the protocols on which companies have relied in the past. Systems to maintain, monitor and evaluate progress in affirmative action, as well as the integrity of the policy and strategy, must be develc nd applied.

This brief review of models for affirmative action programmes shows a high degree of convergence around the principles which should guide policy formulation and strategic planning. The writers emphasize the need for top management support; broad participation in conceptualizing as well as implementing the programme; an audit of company systems which include an analysis of its values, practices and systems, and not just its manpower needs; clear communication of intended directions to all concerned using a variety of media; overhaul of existing systems of recruitment, selection, training, promotion and performance evaluation; and finally development of systems to monitor and support progress in affirmative action. From this it is clear that affirmative action is not a minor intervention in corporate affairs, but potentially a major force for organizational reform. It is also evident from the language used by many writers (with emphasis on 'strategic planning', 'vision and mission statements', 'consultation and participation') that affirmative action is part of the wider discourse of changes in work organization and the management of change which is taking place globally and in South Africa.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed international and South African literature with a view to tracing the ideological and theoretical roots of affirmative action, and to identifying the trends in social policy and work organization which impact on it. The purpose of such a review is to provide the reader with sufficient background about the social, political and theoretical

McGregor (1993) proposes that one of the first stages in the process of designing an affirmative action programme should be an audit of corporate culture, placing emphasis on those elements which determine the company's philosophy with regard to affirmative action. Questions to be asked in such as audit might then include:

> Why did these particular individuals join the organization? What opportunities are available to them in terms of training and development? Do employees receive any feedback on performance, and if so, how is it given and followed up? What is the quality of supervision and management? What opportunities are available for advancement in the organization?
>
> (McGregor, 1993)

IDASA (1995) place even greater emphasis on a thorough audit of human resources practices in the organization. They recommend investigating the following aspects of the company: procedures for recruitment and selection, and for the induction of new recruits; company culture and work environment; training and development programmes; practices which support promotion and recognition; and methods of conflict resolution. The results of the audit should be written in the form of a report from which areas to be addressed in policy can be identified. From this, a comprehensive and coherent implementation strategy can be developed, which takes into account the strengths and weaknesses identified in the audit.

While several writers, including McGregor (1993), glide over the process of policy formulation, others, such as Hofmeyr (1993b) point out that widespread understanding and acceptance of affirmative action will only come about if a clear policy is formulated. Contentious concepts and issues, such as who and what are involved in affirmative action, must be addressed in the policy. A policy statement will communicate a rationale for the proposed programme, state programmatic objectives and indicate the broad strategic approach to be taken. To Hofmeyr's guidelines, IDASA (1995) add that goals and timetables must be clearly stated, and roles and responsibilities of all actors explained.

Rosmarin (1992) introduces a critical note to this discourse by emphasizing the necessity for those involved in planning programmes to adopt a mindset which is receptive to the diversity of the workforce without ignoring issues of racism or sexism. He suggests that managers start by questioning their own paradigms as part of their audit of the organization. From a practical perspective, such a review of individual and organizational values, systems, strategies, policies, practices and structures will assist in identifying areas to be addressed by

and trainers with a responsibility for programme design. It is based on the steps of analysing needs and context from various perspectives, clarifying aims and objectives, devising methods of achieving aims and objectives and methods of assessing performance, implementation of the programme, followed by evaluation and revision. More interesting than the procedure itself is an analysis of those aspects of programme design which are believed to be critical to the success and failure of affirmative action programmes. This is the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

According to McGregor (1993), Jones (1991) and others, a major factor contributing to the success of an incompany affirmative action programme is the support of the chief executive officer and senior management of the company. Madi (1993) and Wingrove (1993) suggest that senior management should become involved in driving and championing the affirmative action process, ensuring that the programme is integrated in the company's business plan, that adequate resources are allocated to it, and that the programme is promoted at every opportunity, for example in the company's annual general report and through various media used for internal and external communications.

Another factor contributing to the success of affirmative action programmes is common 'ownership' of the programme by all stakeholders (Rosmarin, 1992; IDASA, 1995). This includes participative planning, decision-making and monitoring of the programme, especially with representatives of the groups for whom the programme is intended. McGregor (1993) observes that too often affirmative action programmes are driven by the human resources department, instead of being seen as a company project with company-wide responsibility for implementation. Alperson (1993) agrees, pointing out that the involvement of departmental and line managers rather than human resources managers in the administration of affirmative action gives these staff a greater stake in making sure the programme works. Hofmeyr (1993) goes a step further by recommending that companies widen the net of stakeholders to include not only managers, employees and trade unions, but also political and interest groups, such as the BMF, which are vital to the acceptance and success of affirmative action programmes. The point being made here is that wide participation and consultation are necessary so that a variety of interests and perspectives may be brought to bear on the project, rather than relying on the judgement of a few.

Where management and unions tend to disagree is over the groups to be targeted in affirmative action programmes,[46] and the links between education and training for workers and their job grading, mobility and wages. Many unions prefer to negotiate social programmes with employers directly, rather than rely on legislative measures for achieving affirmative action (Collins, 1995).

It is against this background that affirmative action programmes in the private sector need to be understood. The shifts in thinking which have been outlined above have created new opportunities as well as new demands on private sector human resources development programmes. These shifts call for a closer look at the models which have been proposed so far for affirmative action programmes.

3.5 MODELS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMMES

When this research project was started in 1993, there were few, if any, published guides to designing corporate affirmative action programmes. In 1995 IDASA produced an accessible handbook on establishing a company-based affirmative action policy, based on its own research into affirmative action programmes in eight South African organizations. The guidelines are interesting because they do not prescribe a narrow set of steps to be imposed on companies, but instead promote the notion, advanced by Human (1993, 1991) and Hofmeyr (1993b), that affirmative action is a long term, strategic process which intersects human and organizational development. As such, it requires careful consideration of an organization's history, context and resources. The IDASA guidelines foresee a process of internal consultation and debate, culminating in the formulation of a company policy document on affirmative action, which may then be implemented, monitored, reviewed and improved over time.

The procedure for establishing affirmative action programmes advocated by writers in the human resources development field, including IDASA, has long been familiar to educators

[46] Alperson (1993) observes that, unlike most companies, a number of unions target their affirmative action strategies at (almost exclusively black) women, recognizing that they are among the most oppressed and exploited workers in South Africa.

If many South African companies are ambivalent about the benefits of establishing inhouse educatic" and training programmes to back affirmative action, the support of individual trade unions and the workers themselves has also been cautious and qualified. On the one hand, as Bethlehem (1993) points out, unions exist to maxim·e benefits to their members, and education is perceived as a benefit. Education and training are perceived as a means whereby increased wages, job mobility, power and status may be achieved. We have already noted that COSATU played a leading role in raising the profile of ABET in national development planning, particularly through the work of its Participatory Research Project. On the other hand, many individual unions are suspicious of companies' motives for establishing education and training programmes, fearing that managers will use ABET to discriminate against the least educated workers in terms of wage negotiations and job security. Unions and workers suspect that education and training are intended to increase the profitability of the company, rather than benefit workers as individuals, or as a group. As Lloyd (1994) observes, many unions are only now coming to terms with productivity issues, reduction in protectionism, skills development and so on. The problem is exacerbated by South Africa's transition to democracy and by affirmative action policies, in that whole layers of experienced black union leadership have been removed to management and government.

These concerns about leadership and about education and training are worth noting because they highlight the often mistrustful environment within which affirmative action programmes operate. While it is generally true that management and unions agree on the need for affirmative action programmes to develop and empower black members of the workforce, unions and workers sometimes perceive affirmative action as a surreptitious way of winning public relations victories for management while diluting support for union demands. Union leaders generally believe that affirmative action should address wider-ranging issues of workplace equity rather than focus on de"eloping a small number of management trainees (Alperson, 1993; Collins, 1995).

Some trade unions have become increasingly sophisticated in their understanding of macro-economic development issues, and share management's interest in planning for the future success of the company, and the national economy. This has resulted in increasing demands for a say in social policy issues, including affirmative action and education and training.

African companies are planning for the future in the same way, or to the same extent. Historically South African companies have tended to be short-sighted in their human resources planning, as evidenced by the poor rate of investment in the education and training of employees.[44]

Some companies have responded to the problems of a poorly educated workforce by setting up education and training programmes at different levels, and for different work functions in the company.[45] However, others argue that such programmes are unnecessary, too expensive, or outside the company's sphere of work. Such companies may respond to the problem by investing in mechanization, by retrenching poorly qualified workers, or employing new workers with higher education levels. Such activities point to the worldwide trend, noted above, in which the core labour force is narrowing, but requires a wider range of skills. This opens opportunities for core, urbanized workers in some large firms, but does not increase opportunities for workers in the peripheral workforce (temporary and contract workers, part-time workers and those employed in the informal sector) who have little access and no rights to education and training (Forrester et al, 1995; Foley, 1994). Women and black people are over-represented in the peripheral workforce, globally and in South Africa. Thus it appears that increasingly, the workforce will be divided between a minority, skilled labour force, and a majority of low-paid, unskilled peripheral workers who may be intermittently employed in the informal sector. This trend is likely to continue unless the trade unions and the government take a firm stand to oppose retrenchments and encourage the retraining and redeployment of workers and other adults for new roles and capacities. With respect to affirmative action, Coldwell suggests that "a fairly strong-armed interventionist approach is warranted" (1995: 5) to promote investment in training and development.

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[44] Pennington (1994) finds that South African companies invest less than one percent of their wage bill in education and training, compared to an average of four to six percent in Europe and America and up to ten percent in Japan.

[45] The increased willingness of employers to invest in the education and training of low-job-grade employees is shown by the trend towards full and part time ABET programmes in industry, and by the growing number of workplace-based candidates who register for the Independent Examination Board's ABE examinations (Gordon, 1995).

In addition to changes implied by post-fordist work organization and the expansion of capitalism, the early 1990s brought unheralded changes in South Africa's internal structures of power (Saul, 1994). The protracted, but ultimately successful negotiation process which culminated in South Africa's first democratic elections and the Government of National Unity has provided an influential model to business managers and others of cooperative, collaborative and transparent decision-making processes. In addition, as Hofmeyr (1993) notes, a consistent theme in public debates about such issues as the new constitution, capital punishment, the Bill of Rights, VAT, and so on, has been the importance attached to the 'legitimacy' of decisions taken on the basis of informed and active participation of the public. The increasing adoption and advocacy of participatory processes by some top managers implies a shift in the culture of the organization of which they are the dominant group.

In this connection, Schein's definition of organizational culture is useful:

> Organizational culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.
>
> (Schein, 1985)

Organizational culture contains many elements, including language, ritual, symbols, myth and ideology. Ideology is a key component because it links attitude with action. According to Goll and Zeitz, ideology relates to "the public commitments that form the basis for policies dealing with customer services, employee relationships, and community responsibilities" (1991: 191). Ideology resembles and overlaps with both culture and strategic planning because all three contain belief and value assumptions which guide action. Clearly, then, a critical enquiry into a company's policy and strategic action plans for affirmative action will also indicate an enquiry int organizational culture and ideology. If the latter are in a transitional state, or are contested in any way, this will be reflected in the policy itself, in the fervour with which policy is implemented, and the ways in which it is received.

These are some of the contemporary trends which contribute to raising the status of both affirmative action and education and training in South African companies from their place as marginal concerns to a more central part of business planning. Of course, not all South

illegal, often dangerous business of brewing beer.[25] But the informal sector remained small, partly because of laws prohibiting African trading and hawking, and partly because Africans faced severe competition from Chinese and Indian traders, as well as formal competitors.

Since 1860 indentured Asian labourers had been imported to work on the sugar plantations of Natal by the colonial government, and by employers. In the 1870s Indian merchants began to arrive in the country. Faced with white hostility and abuse, these labourer and merchants were drawn together in a fight for political and civil rights and in 1920 formed the South African Indian Congress.

Increasingly, workers who could read, write and work with figures were being sought on the labour market, and schools were seen as the main source of supply of them. In 1904 the Cape Colony and Natal had enacted laws introducing compulsory education for white children between the ages of seven and sixteen. In the Transvaal and the Orange Free State there was still little provision of education, especially at secondary level, and many children from poorer families received no schooling at all. There was opposition to black schooling from white industrialists and farmers, who were afraid that education heightened wage demands and political aspirations of blacks. The white working class opposed black education and training since it threatened their monopoly in certain skills. With no real interest on the part of the state or employers in the education of blacks, very few African children in the Transvaal and Orange Free State received an education in this period.

After the South African War education in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State came under British control, and primary schooling became compulsory, and free, for white children throughout the country. Under the policy of 'anglicization' the Boers' cultural development was suppressed and their children were educated in schools staffed by British teachers, using English as the medium of instruction. The state expanded university, technical and teacher training for whites. It gave limited financial aid to mission schools, which remained the main

[25] Bozzoli (1991) describes liquor brewing among Bafokeng women who had migrated to the Reef as a common income generating activity. Iliffe (1987) cites statistics from the 1930s which indicate that 70% of the women in the Marabastad location of Pretoria derived some income from brewing. All South African towns prohibited Africans from selling beer, and only a few permitted its production for domestic consumption.

In the rural parts of the country poverty took numerous forms, encompassing not only blacks in the reserves, abut also poor white farmers and 'byworners', people who had a relationship of clientage or tenancy with landowners.[21] The growing concentration and commercialization of farming throughout the 19th century[22] affected the lives of these 'poor whites' increasingly. Freund (1992) and Morrell (1922) explain that successful farmers began to confront dependent farmers in a more overt class relationship, while poor farmers were forced to meet cash payments for basic needs, and to relate to creditors, merchants and the state in new ways. After the South African War (1899-1901), significant numbers of 'poor whites' were pushed off the land entirely and sought a new life in the towns, or in the diamond fields of the Western and Eastern Transvaal. In 1908, the Transvaal Indigency Commission reported that these 'poor whites' had become a "separate and inferior class of society" (cited in Morrell, 1992: 6).

For blacks and Afrikaners, urban poverty was different from structural rural poverty. Urban poverty was the poverty of low wages, the poverty of those who were poor even though employed (Iliffe, 1987). For those without employment in the formal sector, the alternative lay in small-scale self-employment. Afrikaners who remained on the land practised a tenuous mixed economy of hunting, transport riding and sharecropping.[23] African men and women who sought work in the cities were increasingly employed in domestic service[24] and the

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[21] Harris (1992) categorizes 'byworners' variously as younger relations, overseers of labour, objects of charity, and victims of exploitation, depending on their resources and relationships.

[22] Large scale sheep and ostrich ranching reduced labour requirements and costs. Landowners no longer needed to rent out land to black or white 'byworners'. The Boers apparently found it difficult to adjust to the new era of surplus production, although Africans in the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal often farmed successfully in this period.

[23] Morrell (1992) argues that poor whites were divided into 'dangerous' and 'labouring' classes - differences which resulted from different relations of production and differing experiences of the onset of capitalist agriculture.

[24] Iliffe (1987) notes that in the 19th century men and women of all races were employed in domestic service, but by the early decades of the 20th century domestic service was so badly paid that it was increasingly confined to African women. Zulu washermen, early entrepreneurs on the Witwatersrand, were driven out of business by changing social patterns (laundry was increasingly done at home as white men established their families in the new suburbs) and competition from Chinese steam laundries (van Onselen, 1982).

reserves' and banned the acquisition of land by Africans outside them.[19] This legislation meant that whites, who constituted less than 20% of the population, controlled more than 80% of the land. Ultimately blacks were deprived of 87% of the territory in the land of their birth (Mandela, 1994) and the system of reserves contributed to "over-peopled, over-stocked, and underdeveloped zones of structural poverty" (Bundy, 1992: 30) forcing more rural Africans into the service of white industry and farming.

According to Iliffe (1987) the widespread African rural poverty which was a consequence of this act was centred on landlessness and the absence of labour. It was self-reinforcing: the poverty of reserves was accentuated by a lack of opportunities to make a living except by peasant farming or labour migration. The reserves were too poor to support local traders or craftsmen, or even to provide a market for local labour. Both black and white people assumed that the African poor could rely upon kin, neighbours and the charity of the independent churches for support. Important institutions of mutual aid in African communities of this period were stockvels (revolving credit clubs), burial societies and welfare institutions inspired by Western missionary societies.[20] But charity and relief work were still poorly organized. Efforts were mainly directed to English migrant miners on the Witwatersrand, and scarcely touched the poverty and hardship which existed among the families of unskilled, unemployed African and Afrikaans workers. So, as Bundy remarks:

> Poverty was visited with particular ferocity on [the rural] sector. By a number of indices, the half-century which followed the 1913 Land Act reduced farm labourers and labour tenants to 'an exceptionally miserable proletariat', forming a sector of the population that today bumps along at the lowest levels of education, resources, income, expectations or power. Their situation exemplifies the dual operation of economic and extra-economic pressures. Stripped of property, dependent on wage-labour, they were also denied mobility, yoked to their employers, exposed to myriad punitive sanctions, and padlocked to poverty.
>
> (1992: 31)

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[19] Although Africans had lost much of their land, some still owned land on a freehold basis outside the reserves, while others held land on a leasehold basis, popularly known as 'farming on the half' because the African farmer handed over half of the harvest to the white landowner (Qunta, 1995).

[20] Iliffe (1987) lists the Bantu Women's Self-Improvement Association (1918), the Purity League (1919), the Manyano prayer unions (1912) and the Bantu Relief Committee (1932) as examples of institutions which attracted mainly middle class Africans in upholding traditional morals and values and providing relief to the urban poor.

peasant characteristics which prevented their forming a cohesive political consciousness and organizing across ethnic lines against injustices and repression in the mines.[18] Nevertheless, in 1918 African railway workers, joined by municipal sanitary workers, and then 15 000 African mine workers, went on strike over low wages. The strike was put down ruthlessly, leading the Transvaal Native Congress, the provincial branch of the South African Native National Congress (forerunner of the African National Congress), to condemn police action and initiate a campaign against poor living conditions and the pass laws. The campaign was brought to a halt when 700 strikers were arrested. In 1920 African miners went on strike again, and the Chamber of Mines responded with customary brutality. Troops and police were brought in, ringleaders were arrested, and miners were forced to return to mineshafts at gun point.

Both white workers and mine management had a vested interest in white social control. Skilled immigrant workers, who came from a tradition of closed craft unions, joined mine managers and unskilled whites in a common front against blacks. The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1925 reinforced the colour bar by establishing a collective bargaining system which excluded blacks (Human and Hofmeyr, 1985). Racial exclusion was further strengthened by the differential provision of general and technical education, which ensured that the acquisition of skills was reserved for whites.

While these events were in progress in urban areas, in rural Natal another war of resistance was being waged by an African chief named Bambatha, who urged his followers to fight against government forces intent on implementing a poll tax and manipulating chiefdoms. In a brutal response to this insurrection, three thousand Africans were killed, huts of suspected rebels were burned, cattle were confiscated, and the Zulu king, Dinuzulu, was imprisoned and fined.

The various forces contributing to racially structured inequality in the early part of the twentieth century were manifest in the Natives' Land Act of 1913, which created 'native

[18] See van Onselen (1982b) for an account of black resistance to miserable wages and endless pass law convictions on the Witwatersrand in the form of 'social banditry' against fellow Africans living in urban locations.

the urban poor and white workers challenged both capitalism and British imperialism. In 1913, 1900 white miners went on a strike which became a violent insurrection in central Johannesburg. More than one hundred strikers and onlookers were killed in fighting between government troops and workers before a negotiated settlement was reached. In the same year, in Natal, Gandhi, with colleagues from the Natal Indian Congress, mobilized merchants, miners and railway workers to strike against pass and tax laws which had recently been extended to all Asians. In 1914 white railwaymen on the Reef went on strike over retrenchments. Union leaders were arrested and deported, while 70 000 troops were put on countrywide alert. Urban Afrikaners were developing an aggressive working-class consciousness which political movements of the time found difficult to win, and the ruling class found difficult to control (van Onselen, 1982b). After the 1914 insurrection, the government passed the Riotous Assemblies Act which gave it the power to ban meetings which threatened public order.

In 1921 the Chamber of Mines announced plans to offset high production costs by retrenching 2000 "overpaid" white workers and employing black labour in semi-skilled positions in their place. In 1922, 22 000 white miners went on strike under the banner of 'Workers of the world unite and fight for a free, white South Africa'. The Witwatersrand came to a virtual standstill. In extended negotiations between the Chamber of Mines, the Smuts administration and the South African Industrial Federation, strike leaders lost control of workers to Afrikaner 'commandoes' who proposed an armed insurrection and the overthrow of the state. More than 20 000 troops were called in to break the strike using tanks and field artillery, and 4700 'ringleaders' were arrested. The Chamber of Mines abandoned its proposed changes and the colour bar was allowed to remain intact. In consequence, a "rigid comprehensive division of labour" was entrenched in the mining industry, in which workers of different racial groups were employed in occupations with different functions, income and status (Cross and Chisholm, 1990: 45). This was of great significance in consolidating patterns for future divisions of labour.

The struggle of African mineworkers in the early part of the century tends to be overshadowed by the fierce battles between white workers and mine owners. Callinicos (1993) and Cross and Chisholm (1990) point out that black workers of this period preserved

of railways and a succession of booms and slumps in the mining industry in the late 1890s, made their position precarious, and led to the first instances of structural unemployment in South Africa.

In the competition for jobs, whites had a major advantage over blacks in that they had political power. Before the South African War, urban Afrikaners were able to lobby for a state public works programme and to secure employment at the lower levels of the civil service under the Kruger government. Wealthy mine owners and militant white workers were able to influence the Kruger government to act on their demands for political and social order.

After the war, the reconstruction administration headed by Milner moved to secure British hegemony and facilitate social control by separating skilled white working class families from the unskilled whites and Africans (the 'dangerous classes') by providing the former with family housing and cheap public transport in newly created suburbs. At the same time greater physical control was exercised over Africans living in the compounds (van Onselen, 1982a).[17] Thus existing race and class distinctions were refined, then buttressed by segregated residential areas. The social distance between white and black workers was later strengthened by legislation such as the 1911 Mines and Works Act, which accelerated the flow of Afrikaners into mining by reserving certain skilled and semi-skilled jobs for whites. By 1920 the gold mines employed 180 000 blacks and over 21 000 whites.

At the turn of the century, membership in the country's trade unions, dominated by British immigrants and hostile to both African and Asian workers, numbered fewer than 10 000 workers, of whom perhaps 1000 were employed on the mines. After the first world war, the unions began to attract mass support, absorbing (for a short period) militant Afrikaner nationalists. In 1900 and 1907 major strikes occurred in Pretoria and Johannesburg, in which

[17] An example of such control can be seen in the way that alcohol was used as a means of procuring a cheap source of labour, particularly among Mozambican immigrants. Later, when drunkenness was found to undermine the productivity of workers, a policy of total prohibition for African workers was advocated and enforced. In the process of dismantling the distilleries and liquor trade, an important source of wealth and power was withdrawn from the rural Afrikaner bourgeoisie of the Transvaal, and the old class alliance between the British and Afrikaner middle classes was disrupted (van Onselen, 1982).

in the preindustrial era: pass and vagrancy laws,[13] the Masters and Servants Ordinance,[14] control of labour in boarding houses, factories and closed compounds[15], and the manipulation of chiefs as agents of the colonial state. Thus, argue Bundy (1992) and Marks and Trapido (1987), the relations of authority and dominance established in the colonial era helped structure the new relations of production in industrializing South Africa.

> ... the gold-mines rapidly established a pattern of labour recruitment, remuneration, and accommodation that stamped itself indelibly upon social and economic relations in twentieth century South Africa. White immigrant miners, because of their skill, scarcity and political power, were able to win relatively high wages. African migrant workers were unskilled and low-paid, earning in 1899 about one-ninth the wage of white miners.
>
> (Bundy, 1992: 30)

Unskilled white South Africans from rural areas, who suffered losses from drought, the rinderpest epidemic of the 1890s[16] and the destruction of farms in the South African War, were compelled to compete with Africans for jobs. Although Afrikaners initially were welcomed on the mines because it was believed that they would be cheaper, less militant and less inclined toward trade unionism than British miners, they lacked the industrial skills to make a success of such positions, and were not a significant presence on the mines prior to the First World War (van Onselen, 1982a). Instead they found employment as transport riders, cab drivers and brickmakers. But competition from immigrant groups, the introduction

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[13] The Vagrancy Act of 1809 declared that all black people who did not have a 'fixed abode' or a 'visible means of support' were vagrants. Vagrants could be arrested, then assigned to work for local farmers as part of their punishment. The 1867 Vagrancy Act sentenced vagrants to prison, or, alternatively, to work for the municipality, public works or divisional council (Qunta, 1995).

[14] This Act defined offenses which servants could commit, including absence from work, negligent or poorly performed work, and refusal to obey instructions. Punishments ranged from prison sentences of up to one month to periods of solitary confinement with a spare diet, and hard labour. The Act was amended repeatedly in the following years, with penalties becoming stiffer (Qunta, 1995).

[15] White workers were accommodated in boarding houses in the working class suburbs of Jeppe and Fordsburg. Closed compounds, or barracks, housed indentured African workers behind walls, ostensibly to restrict the illicit trade in diamonds, but also to prevent an alliance between white and black mine workers, or between skilled and unskilled workers. Van Onselen (1982a: 5) notes that the male culture of drinking, gambling and whoring assumed a central role in the lives of boarding house and hostel dwellers, encouraged by the Kruger government and mine owners.

[16] Iliffe (1987) explains that the cattle plague reached South Africa in 1896 and killed over 2 500 000 cattle, including a disproportionate number owned by Africans. The plague left pastoral peoples close to starvation, children malnourished for lack of milk, farmers bereft of plough-oxen, and everyone bereft of transport to carry food and goods.

settlement and the new requirements of capitalist farming[10] sought work in the cities, either as migrants or as permanently urbanized workers (Bundy, 1992)[11]. The African influx to urban areas coincided with an increased demand for skilled labour on the mines, met largely by immigrants, or 'uitlanders', alongside rural white South Africans in search of wage employment.

The 'uitlanders' included both British and Eastern European immigrants who drew on their experience of the English trade union movement and the Jewish Bund to rally around their lack of franchise, the use of Afrikaans as the only official language of the South African Republic, and exorbitant rates charged by the state railway. They were led by a coterie of maverick capitalists aggrieved by the government's reluctance to exploit the avenues of industrial and imperial expansion which had opened with the discovery of minerals in the Transvaal. These capitalists formed a 'Reform Committee' which, aided by the mineowner Beit, and the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, Rhodes, mounted an unsuccessful attempt (known as the Jameson Raid) to topple Paul Kruger, the President of the South African Republic,[12] in 1885. The raid, intended to induce economic confidence in the mining industry in the face of state obstructionism, plunged the Witwatersrand into a depression which was to last until 1889 (van Onselen, 1982a).

To secure cheap and plentiful labour (to offset the capital expended in mining low grade ore at deep levels) employers and successive governments adapted instruments of control designed

[10] In this period, Africans who lived on white farms (called 'Bywoners' like their white counterparts) gradually turned from sharecropping to cash or labour tenancy, often on very exploitative terms. Under sharecropping Africans gave between a third and a half of their harvest to the landowner. Labour-tenants in the Transvaal and Natal worked six months a year at the farmer's will, were forbidden to leave the farm without written permission, and were obliged to contract their children to the farmer for unpaid labour until they reached the age of 25 (Callinicos, 1993).

[11] Iliffe (1987: 125) observes that migration often meant squalid living conditions, hard work, brutal supervisors and the possibility of incapacitation or death. Between 1902 and 1914, 43 484 men from Mozambique alone died in employment on the Rand. From the migrant's viewpoint, however, the greater danger was that he might not find work.

[12] The SAR was the largest of the 'Boer Republics' created in the wake of the Great Trek from the Cape Colony to the interior. When the republics were incorporated into the new state following the 1910 Act of Union, the former SAR became known as the province 'Transvaal'.

of the state; they were charitable, mission-based, self-help projects, loosely coordinated and not very effective (Iliffe, 1987). Educational and church facilities were limited, and there was little pressure to introduce new ideas or stimulate public debate. With the first large contingent of British settlers in 1820, a new economic system was ushered in which was to have far-reaching political, cultural and social implications. Features of middle class British life, such as newspapers, debating societies and Sunday schools began to exert some influence on the social life of whites in the Cape Colony.

4.3 THE EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1920)

The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley (in 1867) and gold on the Witwatersrand (in 1886) transformed South Africa economically, socially and politically. This is how the historian van Onselen (1982a) describes the changes to the Witwatersrand in the period from the discovery of gold in 1886 to the outbreak of World War One in 1914:

> In a little less than thirty years, a republic founded on a modest agricultural economy was transformed into a colony boasting the world's largest and most technologically sophisticated gold-mining industry - a traumatic transition which was overseen by four different governments, punctuated by an attempted coup, and at one stage, completely halted by a bloody conflict lasting two and a half years. Into this cauldron of capitalist development poured men, women and children drawn from all over the world, giving the Rand a cultural diversity and social texture that bubbled with excitement and vitality.
>
> (1982a: xv)

The development of the mining industry, growing British dominance in the civil service,[8] and British imperial interventions in Africa all linked South Africa to the world economy, and shifted the economic centre of the country from the wool industry of the coastal regions to the highveld.

The rapid growth of mines and cities,[9] along with the infrastructure to support them, brought structural changes in the labour force. Black people who had lost their land to white

[8] In 1912 some 85% of civil servants and teachers were English-speaking (Adam and Giliomee, 1979).

[9] Johannesburg grew from a tented camp of 3000 diggers in 1896 to a town of 100 000 residents at the turn of the century, and a city of 250 000 in 1914 (van Onselen, 1982).

> life is very low; plunder and bloodshed are engagements with which their circumstances have rendered them familiar since their childhood; they are crafty and cunning; at once indolent and excitable; averse to labour; but bloodthirsty and cruel when their passions are inflamed. They pretend to no individual opinion of their own but show the most servile compliance to the rule of a despotic chief, when it is characterized by vigour and efficiency.
>
> (cited in Dube, 1985: 91)

The colonists based their own claim to superiority on the Christian religion and literacy (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 85-89). They saw progress in economic terms, accepting exploitation and inequality as a fact of life in their home countries (Human and Hofmeyr, 1985). Their actions against the tribes in the Eastern Cape brought a period of unrelenting hardship for the Khosas. They were defeated in war, and lost much of their land and cattle to the white settlers; their political structures were fragmented by incorporation into the Crown Colony; and their beliefs were eroded by missionary teachings and European technology.

Towards the end of the 19th century, particularly in the Free State and Transvaal settlements established by the Voortrekkers, Afrikaners began to see themselves as a group separate from and superior to nonwhites, with a distinctive national character and culture, supported by custom and incorporated in legislation. How did this process of differentiation occur? Adam and Giliomee (1979) cite the Boers' isolation and disengagement from Europe, administrative neglect and the introduction of capitalist economic policies designed to foster individualism and a sense of independence. However, Marks and Trapido (1987) argue that 'race patriotism' was characteristic of British settlers as well as Afrikaners at the time, and that new ethnic identities were mainly formed in the period following the South African War (1899-1901), when a unified state was constructed out of the British colonies, the conquered Afrikaner republics and African kingdoms.

In summary, then, the first two centuries of colonialism in South Africa entrenched existing inequalities in African society while introducing new divisions along the lines of race, region and urban/rural location - divisions which still characterize South African society today. The welfare institutions developed in this period were concerned to address the debilitating effects of poverty on individuals, families and small communities. Such initiatives were independent

Classes at these mission schools were not racially segregated, although dormitories were. Some state funds were made available to mission schools after 1841, but Molteno observes that "funds were always very limited. The standard of teaching was low; minimal secondary education was offered and that usually by teacher training institutes" (1984: 49). Such impact as these early schools had was not achieved through contact with the bulk of African children, but through the development of a new 'elite' group which supported ideas and values congruent with the colonists' interests, and (intentionally or not) undermined traditional tribal leadership.

Throughout the 19th century, the frontier wars, the annexations of Khosa lands in the Eastern Cape, the expropriations of the Mfecane, and the changing economic base led to new social inequalities. Not only did many African peasants lose their land, but new relations of production were created with the introduction of capitalism. As De Kiewiet put it, "the land wars were also labour wars" (1964: 180). The colonial economy, administered more efficiently by the British than the Dutch, put pressure on the indigenous population for labour, taxes, rents and other obligations.[7] These pressures created massive structural imbalances, which eclipsed existing inequalities within African society. A process of differentiation within African society began:

> At the upper reaches there emerged a moderately prosperous stratum of modernizing peasant producers and a *mission-educated* elite beginning to move into clerical and teaching jobs. At the other end of the social spectrum, the inexorable process of proletarianization was under way. Individuals and groups, without sufficient land and other resources, were forced into reliance on wage labour for survival.
>
> (Bundy, 1992: 28)

On the whole, the white settlers were cultural chauvinists who looked down on the 'heathen', 'primitive' indigenous people of the colonies in which they settled. An 1892 commission of Afrikaner and British officials reported:

> When not effectively restrained and directed by the strong arm of power, the true and universal character of the Kafirs, as framed by their education, habits and associations, is at once superstitious and warlike. Their estimate of the value of human

[7] According to Iliffe (1987), up to the late 19th century labour migrants sought cash to pay lobola (bride price), expand their homes or relieve famine. However, during the first half of the twentieth century, taxation, land shortage and lower real wages made migration an essential means of family survival.

As the Trekboers, along with their slaves and servants, moved east and north in the 18th century, they met new resistance from the Bantu speaking Xhosa peoples over the eastern boundary of white settlement. Over a period of nearly one hundred years, in which the pressure for land and water mounted as both settler and indigenous populations grew, a series of frontier wars was fought with heavy costs on both sides.

In the wake of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, the Cape had become part of the British empire, and British settlers arrived in the Eastern Cape, putting further pressure on the land and resources already contested by the Boers and the Xhosas. The British injected the capitalist system in South Africa, a system which demanded capital and labour to produce a surplus of goods which could be sold for cash in an ever-growing circle of trade and economic activity. The wool trade became vital to the Cape economy, and some farmers built fortunes on sheep farming. Both slavery and the semi-feudal order of the Boer subsistence farmers had to go. Many of the Boers resisted the new socioeconomic order, retreating to the northern interior in the Great Trek. Some Africans adapted to the new order successfully, growing and selling crops to the new towns springing up in the Eastern Cape. In the main, however, the relationship between the British and the Xhosa was hostile and tempestuous, particularly along the frontier.[6]

Prior to 1820, the London Mission society had established isolated schools for the education of the Khoikhoi and Coloureds in the Cape Colony. These schools provided religious instruction and limited artisan training. Several missionaries had become well known, and highly unpopular in the white settler community, for their battles to uphold the legal rights of the indigenous peoples of the Cape, a battle which culminated in the passing in 1828 of Ordinance 50, which gave equal rights to all British subjects in South Africa, regardless of colour. Now the missionaries took on the task, largely abdicated by the state, of providing education for African children. One of the best known schools was set up by the Glasgow Mission Society in Lovedale, in the Eastern Cape. The success of this school spurred efforts by missionaries of other denominations and countries, mainly in the Eastern Cape and Natal. Early mission schools included Healdtown School, Inanda Seminary and Adams College.

[6] Eight wars of resistance were fought in the Eastern Cape alone. The last major war between the colonists and the indigenous tribes was fought between the British and the Zulus in 1879.

Areas Act (French, 1991).[47]

The principle of Christian National Education, whereby people of different ethnic and cultural groups should have different education systems, was revived by the Nationalists after their 1948 electoral victory. In 1953 they introduced the system of 'Bantu Education' for Africans, which, accompanied by the withdrawal of state funds to mission schools and their subsequent demise,[48] institutionalized unequal and racist education (Dube, 1985). Dr Verwoerd, then the minister of Native Affairs explained to parliament that the previous policy of 'Native Education' had raised false expectations among African children. Education must not show the African "the green pastures of European society in which he is not allowed to graze" (cited in Harrison, 1981: 191). It should teach Africans in accordance with their opportunities, and these opportunities did not rise above certain forms of labour. As Hyslop (1987) and Cross and Chisholm (1990) point out, Bantu Education was intended to produce the stable, semi-skilled urban workforce required by secondary industry, and to prevent juvenile delinquency among urban youth. To these ends, school enrolments were greatly expanded, particularly at junior primary level; state funding for secondary education was deliberately withheld;[49] teaching the Afrikaans language became compulsory; teacher training and university education for Africans were brought under state control;[50] syllabi were revised to stress obedience, piety and identification with rural culture; and resource allocation in education became grotesquely distorted in favour of whites (Molteno, 1984). How successful

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Congress (Cross and Chisholm, 1990).

[47] It has been estimated that the enrolment in night schools was 12 000 in 1953-4 (Christie and Collins, 1984).

[48] Hyslop (1987) points out that the destruction of mission schools was not purely ideologically motivated, but reflected the Nationalist government's grasp of the demographic failure and internal problems of these schools. In 1953 there had been over 5000 state-aided mission schools; by 1965 there were only 509 (Christie and Collins, 1985: 171).

[49] New secondary schools were deliberately placed in the Reserves where tribal and bureaucratic authority would erode emerging black consciousness (Christie and Collins, 1984).

[50] In 1959 the Extension of University Education Act was passed, formalizing the establishment of separate 'ethnic' universities for Indians, Coloureds and Africans. The University of Fort Hare, which had accepted students of all races, was brought under the control of the Minister of Bantu Education, and two tribally based university colleges were started. It became a punishable offence for a black student to register at a 'white' university without the permission of the Minster of Education (Harrison, 1981).

for the unity of all oppressed people (Mandela, 1994).

The Youth League's Programme of Action called for strikes, boycotts and stay-aways in support of demands to repeal six particularly unjust laws. Thus began the Defiance Campaign, a resistance struggle which Sparks (1991) likens to the American civil rights movement. Applying highly visible tactics, 'defiers' used whites-only entrances at railway stations, went into restricted areas without passes and defied curfew laws. More than 8500 people went to jail, and leaders such as Mandela and Sisulu were tried under the Suppression of Communism Act for their leadership of the campaign.

The 1950 Suppression of Communism Act made the Communist Party of South Africa illegal and put an end to the activities of the country's few multi-racial trade unions. A new Public Security Act and Criminal Law Amendment Act made it a serious offence to defy the law. 'Banning' and 'naming' potentially troublesome people and organizations became effective means of silencing opposition to government policy. With many of its leaders in prison or under banning orders, the Defiance Campaign came to a halt, but not without significant consequences. The campaign mobilized huge numbers of blacks in the townships and established a new political culture of resistance. Membership in the ANC soared,[45] and other campaigns followed, notably a march on Pretoria in 1956 to protest the extension of pass laws to women.

Nonformal education organizations were early victims of the Nationalists' attempts to suppress black opposition. Night schools, which had been organized by the Communist Party to provide compensatory education to workers on the Witwatersrand, dissolved under relentless state harassment (Bird, 1984). The Mayibuye schools, 'shanty schools', and classes for adults organized by liberal reformists under the auspices of the South African Institute of Race Relations[46] were all closed by the Nationalist government in 1953, in terms of the Group

[45] When the Communist Party disbanded, many of its members joined the ANC and devoted themselves to its development (Delius, 1993). Then, as in the 1990s, the organizational capacity and experience of Communist Party members made their contribution particularly valuable.

[46] The SAIRR provided literacy and functional skills programmes for adults (French, 1992). Films, libraries and debating societies were formed to moderate African opinion which was thought by liberals to be overcome by the appeal of the radical Industrial and Commercial Union, Communist Party and the African National

Further statutory curbs on the occupational mobility of blacks were placed by the 1941 Mines and Works Act, the 1951 Bantu Building Workers Act and the 1955 Motor Transportation Amendment Act. The Apprenticeship Act of 1944 and the Training of Artisans Act of 1951 did not explicitly exclude the training and recognition of skilled black workers, but asserted such stringent conditions and controls over training that blacks were effectively denied access to the facilities provided in white urban areas.[42] Amendments to the Urban Areas Act restrained black workers by prescribing forbidding terms for residence outside the Reserves.[43] Blacks were further excluded from opportunities for occupational advancement by the Registration for Employment Act of 1945, the Native Amendment Act of 1952 and the In-Service Training Act of 1979 (Human and Hofmeyr, 1985; Qunta, 1995).

Throughout the early part of this period, the ANC, the only organization to represent black opinion nation wide, was remarkably ineffective. Disillusioned with the uninspired and conservative leadership of its parent organization, the ANC Youth League was launched in 1944. It immediately planned a campaign of civil disobedience to win mass support among urban dwellers. Inspired by African nationalist ideals of racial pride and self-reliance, and led by a charismatic intellectual named Anton Lembede, the ANC at first did not work with the Communist Party[44] or with the provincial Indian Congresses. This changed in 1946 when the Asiatic Land Tenure Act was passed, limiting the areas where Indians could reside and trade, and restricting their right to own property. To counter these developments, Indians launched a passive resistance campaign. In 1947 the presidents of the ANC, the Natal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress signed the 'Doctor's Pact' agreeing to join forces and call

[42] The Apprenticeship Act raised the minimum educational requirement to Standard VII, a level which black workers rarely attained due to the inadequacies of their education system. The Training of Artisans Act stipulated that blacks could be trained only in the homeland areas, and not in the 'white' areas where most facilities were available. Human and Hofmeyr (1985) note that the attitudes of white trade union members who served on apprenticeship committees and work reservation policies contributed to the exclusion of blacks from training and promotion opportunities.

[43] Under section 10 (1) of the Urban Areas Act a black person could not remain for more than 72 hours in a 'prescribed' area unless proof could be provided that this person had 'qualified' by residing there continuously since birth, working continuously for one employer for at least ten years, or residing there lawfully for at least 15 years. 'Qualified' persons could, at any time, be deemed 'undesirable' and 'endorsed' out of the area (Human and Hofmeyr, 1985; Qunta, 1995).

[44] Delius (1993) notes that Communist Party members regarded the African National Congress as both conservative and ineffective, a 'petty bourgeois' organization. However, it was Party policy to encourage members to join the ANC.

Afrikaners dominated in these institutions through processes of regulation, control, ownership and management. Adam and Giliomee (1979) point to the important function of Afrikaner dominated public corporations in providing a training school outside the public sector where Afrikaner scientists and business leaders could acquire technical and managerial experience.

State favouritism undoubtedly assisted Afrikaners in their advance in the private sector of the economy, an advance further supported by the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut, or Chamber of Commerce, which mobilized 'patriotic' ethnic support. How was this achieved?

> Afrikaner capital ... benefited occasionally from government favouritism through the allocation of fishing quotas and mineral concessions and the award of government contracts and accounts. In 1977, for instance, 98 percent of the Department of Information publishing budget of 3 million dollars went to the Perskor group, an Afrikaans publishing house that had several cabinet ministers, including the Minister of Information, on its board.
>
> (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 168)

Education facilities for Afrikaners were improved after 1948: primary, secondary and vocational schools were built, while engineering and medical faculties were established at Afrikaans universities. This contributed towards a general improvement in the position of Afrikaners in the occupational sphere.

Under the Nationalist Party the South African state effectively eliminated white poverty, and reduced economic disparities between Afrikaners and English-speaking whites. But the disparities between blacks and whites were increased in the process. While the Nationalists elaborated a prosperous state for whites, they advanced a strictly controlled economy for blacks. Legislation controlling employment was introduced in line with laws specifying racially segregated educational institutions and neighbourhoods. The Bantu Urban Areas Consolidation Act of 1945 and the Physical Planning and Employment of Resources Act of 1967 were introduced to prevent black work seekers from congregating on the fringes of cities. A clause added to the Group Areas Act prohibited the appointment (without official permission) of a member of one racial group as a manager or supervisor in the area reserved for another group.

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managerial positions at ESKOM today (IDASA, 1995).

to a characteristic political act (Christie and Gordon, 1992:404).

The National Party urged Afrikaners to unite as an interest group for their own economic benefit and cultural protection. Economically Afrikaners were urged to close the gap between themselves and the wealthier English speaking population,[40] a goal which demanded that they continue to be protected from competition with blacks. Culturally, the Nationalists promoted mother-tongue education and separate educational, cultural and religious institutions to restore Afrikaners' self confidence and liberate them from a sense of inferiority (Adam and Giliomee, 1979).

Group and racial allegiance were used as the basis for political power formation. The Broederbond ideologized Afrikaner identity and history, and spread the doctrine of Christian Nationalism, which held that nations were products of a Divine Will, with diverse tasks and cultures. From this it followed that certain political, cultural and spiritual values were a prerequisite for membership in the Afrikaner ethnic group. The cause of promoting Afrikaner business interests and Afrikaans culture was linked to demands for national independence and political power, and South Africa became a republic in 1960, then withdrew from the Commonwealth.

The Broederbond became a means of decision making, management and organization development in the public and private sectors. A particularly strong relationship existed between the Broederbond, the National Party and the civil service, compromising the latter's neutrality (Hugo, 1992). By 1980, 90% of 150 key positions in the public sector were held by Afrikaners, and 35% of economically active Afrikaners were employed in the public service (Sonn, 1993). Afrikaners were also over-represented in the mines, parastatal organizations (ESKOM, TELCOM, ARMSCOR),[41] financial institutions and academia.

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[40] In 1948 the annual per capita income of Afrikaners on the Witwatersrand was £162 compared to £349 for English-speaking whites (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 160). In a period in which secondary industry was beginning to rival agriculture and mining in the national economy, Afrikaner businessmen, who lacked the capital resources and connections of English big business, found it difficult to compete.

[41] ESKOM's first experience with affirmative action can be traced back to 1948 when Afrikaans-speaking men were targeted for senior positions, promotion, training and bursaries. It took a generation for Afrikaners to move into previously English dominated technical positions. English speaking managers retain many senior

including improvements in the quality and provision of education, and the development of social infrastructure for poor whites in rural and urban areas.

In the 1930s members of the Afrikaner cultural and business elite mobilized to improve the economic position of poor Afrikaners on ethnic, nationalist lines. Potential class conflict was subjugated to the cause of Afrikaner identity, unity and entitlement by projecting class divisions among Afrikaners as the products of imperialism and exploitation by foreign, particularly English, capitalists (Adams and Giliomee, 1979). The Broederbond began to recruit and insert members into every sphere of public, economic, political and social life, in every corner of the country (Callinicos, 1993). State policy and action extended job protection, introduced subsidized municipal housing for whites and provided agricultural subsidies to white farmers.

In addition to the social and economic strategies suggested by the Carnegie Commission, a range of agencies were developed which mobilized Afrikaners on ethnic lines.[39] These were spearheaded by the Federation of Afrikaner Cultural Associations (FAK) formed by members of the Broederbond in 1929. The 'Blankewerkers Beskermings Bond' or White Workers Protection League, inspired attempts to establish separate Afrikaner trade unions or to take over the leadership of existing ones (Adam and Giliomee, 1979). The 'Ossewa Brandwag', the Ox Wagon Sentinel, rallied Afrikaners in opposition to South Africa's declaration of war against Germany in 1939. An Afrikaner Economic Conference sponsored by the Broederbond launched an 'economic renaissance' directed at promoting Afrikaner business ownership. The 'Reddingsdaadbond', or Rescue Action Fund was formed to finance Afrikaner-owned enterprises, and the Volkskas Bank, a savings bank identified with Afrikaner interests, was established in 1934.

The political mobilization of Afrikaners, the measures devised for their economic and social upliftment, combined with worldwide economic growth led to the decline of poor whitism in the 1940s and 50s. In 1948 the National Party came to power, and its policies of privileging whites while restricting blacks transformed poverty from a structural feature of South Africa

[39] According to Cross and Chisholm (1990) almost 300 cultural, church, youth and student associations, along with scientific and educational bodies, were affiliated to the Broederbond.

and Giliomee, 1979). The 1925 Wage Act, the 1926 Mines and Works Amendment Act and the 1927 Customs Tariff Act all helped entrench white workers in their jobs. Yet the wages paid in these jobs were low, and the success of 'civilized labour' policies in the 1920s and 30s was limited due to the worldwide depression and a severe drought in South Africa.[36] The gap in wealth and status between black and white, and between Afrikaners and the English remained substantial.

The 1932 Report of the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry into Poverty documented the hardship, demoralization and squalid living conditions of 'poor whites' in rural and urban areas while almost totally overlooking black poverty (Christie and Gordon, 1992). Members of the Carnegie Commission traced the causes of white poverty to land shortages[37] and to the economic and social conditions associated with modernization. They explored reasons for this 'blight within Afrikanerdom' including health and nutrition, psychological, social and ethnic traits[38]. A close connection between poverty and education was found by E.G. Malherbe:

> He found poor retention rates, higher failure and more frequent repetition of grades among poor whites than whites in general. Overall, the effects of malnutrition, destitution, ill-health, and physical and mental defects ... manifested in poor school performance, failure and early school leaving. Schools themselves were also inadequate: weaker teachers, poorer library facilities, social isolation and fewer books and newspapers at home contributed to the "listening schools" of the rural poor, at which "passivity is at a premium, initiative and activity at a discount" (Malherbe, 1932, P. 345 original emphasis).... Malherbe concluded that the education which poor whites received was generally too little and of the wrong sort. It did not help poor children control their environment nor did it compensate adequately for poor environments.
>
> (Christie and Gordon, 1992: 402)

The joint reports of the Carnegie Commission concluded with a number of recommendations

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[36] 1932 was regarded as a Black Year in South Africa's economic history. First the Rinderpest, then the Great Drought, then the World Depression. On 27 December 1932 South Africa abandoned the gold standard. Together with the devaluation of the US dollar, this meant the world price of gold rocketed 45% from its previous level. There followed vast inflows of foreign capital inaugurating a decade of industrial growth.

[37] Although Afrikaners owned four-fifths of the farming land at the turn of the century, the closing of the frontier and the Dutch practice of dividing up land amongst sons contributed to a shortage of land (Christie and Gordon, 1992: 400-1).

[38] Afrikaners were found to be indolent and undisciplined, and unwilling to work alongside blacks or as underlings (Parnell, 1992).

1936, the Representation of Natives Act removed Africans from the common voters' role in the Cape (Mandela, 1994).

A systematic study of non-white poverty had been carried out after the first World War and found that in Cape Town 53% of the city's Coloured people and 48% of Africans lived below the poverty datum line, chiefly owing to poor wages. But the political imperative of wooing 'poor whites' turned public attention away from black poverty.

In 1924, replacing the pro-capitalist Union governments of Louis Botha and Jan Smuts,[34] Herzog's Afrikaner Nationalists joined with the Labour Party in a coalition known as the Pact government. This coalition aimed at defending the national economy, promoting the interests of the white working man and farmer, and raising the 'poor white'.[35] In what became known as 'civilized labour' policies, the state created jobs and protected employment for white workers as policemen, soldiers, foresters and post office employees, by pushing blacks out of employment. In the railway sector, particularly, unskilled whites replaced African or Indian workers after 1924, and by 1931 25 000 'poor whites' had been absorbed into state employment (Freund, 1992). Many Afrikaners found employment at ISCOR, the Iron and Steel Corporation founded by the state against the opposition of mining capital in 1928 (Adam and Giliomee, 1979).

Turning to the problem of white poverty in the rural areas, the Pact government provided state aid to moderately productive farmers in the form of land grants, and implemented mild punitive sanctions against unproductive ones (Morrell, 1992). The first agricultural marketing control boards were introduced in 1936, and cooperatives were given favourable loans.

Motivated by both ethnic and class concerns, the Pact government trod a narrow path between promoting white employment and wages while attempting to boost capitalist growth (Adam

[34] Freund (1992) argues that the Union government had a populist side, but is usually associated with overtly pro-capitalist policies. For example, the trend of employing unskilled white workers in the state railway network was checked following the first World War when the Smuts administration worried about their profits and stopped hiring.

[35] The number of people defined by the government as 'poor whites' increased from 106 000 in 1916 to 120 000 in 1921 and 300 000 in 1933 (Parnell, 1992: 120).

sectors did not rise at all,[31] while in the same period the real wages of white miners doubled (Bundy, 1992: 31). The ratio of white to black wages on the mines moved from approximately 11:1 in 1911 to 21:1 in 1971. Earnings in the manufacturing and construction sectors, for both African and white workers, approximately trebled, maintaining a ratio of 5:1 over the same period. As Bundy remarks:

> ...not only was there a sharp discrepancy between white and black workers, but some were more unequal than others. Migrant and contract workers, and women in menial jobs, were at the bottom of the urban pile. (1992: 31)

Economic inequalities were buttressed by social legislation which restricted blacks' access to housing, social services and economic opportunities in the cities. The Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 demarcated and established African 'locations' on the outskirts of white residential and industrial areas, and permitted the forcible removal of Africans to these locations from 'proclaimed' (white) areas.[32] Johannesburg became a proclaimed area and black residents were banished to Eastern Natives Township, a string of hostels across the south of the city, and Western Natives Township, bordering Sophiatown.[33] The law also enabled tighter policing and surveillance of Africans by entrusting the administration of pass laws to local authorities. Africans who were 'surplus' to the labour needs of commerce, industry and white households could be deported to the Reserves.

Further repressive laws were enacted. The Colour Bar Act of 1926 effectively banned Africans from practising skilled trades. The 1927 Native Administration Act made the British Crown, rather than the paramount chiefs, the supreme chief of all African areas. Finally, in

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[31] Between 1910 and 1942 real earnings on the mines actually fell (Bundy, 1992: 31).

[32] Whites had demanded greater segregation and social control in residential areas since the 1880s and 90s. The threat to public health caused by poor sanitation provided an official reason for the removal of black residents in the Cape towards the end of the 19th century. Parnell (1992) explains that in response to an outbreak of plague in 1904 and influenza in 1918 the Johannesburg Council removed 30 000 African slum dwellers from the inner city. White slum dwellers, who represented at least a third of the inner city population, remained where they were, but complained that the council's slum clearance programme meant that "10 000 neat kaffir dwellings have been erected, but for the poor whites nothing is done" (quoted in Parnell, 1992: 127).

[33] Sophiatown was one of the few urban townships in Johannesburg in which land could be owned in freehold by people of any race. Johannesburg taxpayers campaigned for the demolition of Sophiatown and Alexandra in the first five decades of this century, but it was only in the 1950s that the Purified Nationalist Party made complete urban segregation part of its platform. Sophiatown was destroyed in the 1960s to make way for Coloured and white housing. African residents were moved mainly to Soweto (South Western Townships), a township which is the product of slum clearance policies on the part of the municipality.

In summary, then, the early decades of industrialization built on earlier class and race divisions, but introduced new divisions on lines of skill and wages. These divisions were underlined by increasing segregation of residential areas in the cities, and gradual improvement of wages and living conditions of the families of skilled white workers. New sources of wealth, and the emergence of new work opportunities in the cities, exacerbated the existing rural/urban divide, which was cleft even deeper by the 1913 Land Act. The dominant ideology of the period, Social Darwinism, promoted the virtues of free wage labour, secure property rights linked to a free market in land and individual tenure (Marks and Trapido, 1987) shaping many of the institutions of twentieth century South Africa, including the native reserves, migrant labour and segregated urban areas (Bundy 1992). Differentiated education and welfare provision was part of this pattern. But 'Native Education' was a fringe issue, pushed into the background by the struggle between Afrikaners and the English for political and economic power. A cultural revival movement grew amongst Afrikaners, precipitating the development of new political and cultural organizations which sought to protect and support their interests. As white, and particularly Afrikaner, society became increasingly influenced by nationalist ideology, blacks were excluded from civil society by measures such as the pass laws, slum clearances and migrant labour.

4.4 AFRIKANER NATIONALISM, RACIAL CAPITALISM AND EDUCATIONAL EXPANSION (1920-1970)

The state created by the Act of Union in 1910 had an economy almost totally dependent on mining. By 1970 South Africa had become a middle-ranking industrial power with a more flexible and diversified economy, the "economic powerhouse of a continent" (Bundy, 1992: 31).[30] Yet the inequalities forged in the colonial and early industrial periods persisted, indeed were deepened in this period of Afrikaner nationalism and racial capitalism. In the first seven decades of this century, the real wages of African workers in the mining and agricultural

[30] Over time, revenue from gold production was channelled into secondary industry, providing an economic base for manufacturing, which overtook agriculture, then mining, in significance. In the 1950s there was a transition from small scale competitive capitalism to large scale monopoly capitalism which has remained a dominant feature of the South African economy (Cross and Chisholm, 1990).

education and schools. Molteno (1984) notes that most student resistance arose in rural secondary schools and teachers' training colleges, and was occasioned by some immediate grievance or issue. Confrontation with authorities, the withdrawal of labour and collective action in the form of strikes were ways in which students could assert their resistance.

The system of education which had been set up by the British also found no favour with the Afrikaners, who saw it as a way of forcing English language and culture on them while undermining the position of Afrikaner church leaders and school teachers (Christie, 1990). They set up their own schools, called Christian National Education (CNE) schools, which were neither free nor compulsory. In time, the CNE movement waned, as Afrikaner demands for cultural recognition began to be met at local and national level.

Since the turn of the century Afrikaners in the Cape Colony had begun to be mobilized behind a nationalist cause through membership in the 'Afrikaner Bond', or League of Afrikaners. This alliance brought together Afrikaner political, financial and intellectual interests, who pressed for the recognition of Afrikaans as an official language of South Africa. Great efforts were made by teachers, journalists and preachers to foster Afrikaans literacy and culture in the 'Taalbeweging', or Language Movement.[28] In 1918 the 'Broederbond', a secret society of professional men who undertook to promote the Afrikaner cause and work towards an Afrikaner republic, was formed. Welfare institutions such as the 'Helpmekaarfonds',[29] or Mutual Aid Society, were initiated, from which were to grow business concerns like Nasionale Pers (which printed the first nationalist newspaper, Die Burger) and the insurance giants Sanlam and Santam. Cooperatives such as the KWV (Kooperatiewe Wijnbouwers Vereeniging) and funeral undertakers Avbob (Afrikaanse Begrafnis Onderneming) were started (Sonn, 1993). Each of these enterprises was an indicator of the growing political strength of Afrikaners.

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[28] The bible was translated into Afrikaans, and there was widespread, though sectoral, promotion of literacy and the culture of reading (French, 1992).

[29] The Helpmekaar (Mutual Aid) Society was formed after the rebellion of 1914 to pay the fines of the leaders. The society rapidly attracted funds and the idea arose to use them for establishing Afrikaans enterprises which would provide employment and business training.

providers of education to blacks, but did not make education compulsory or free for black children. Following the model of racist legislation introduced on the Reef to regulate labour relations, 'native' schools throughout the country were increasingly segregated, and finally put under the control of the Minister of Native Affairs. Different curricula were drawn up for many of these schools, emphasizing agriculture and manual labour, along with religious and moral instruction. Physical conditions in schools were usually poor and teachers were inadequately trained, reflecting the differential administration, inspection and funding of what were becoming separate schooling systems for whites, Africans, Indians and Coloureds (Cross and Chisholm, 1990).

Black leaders of the period were mostly drawn from a small, mission-educated elite group who embraced Christianity and the colonial lifestyle. They had formed the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) to articulate their opposition to the disenfranchisement of African voters and to the Natives Land Act of 1913.[26] Inspired by Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence and influenced by the conservative black American leader Booker T. Washington, they advocated the advancement of black rights within the framework of segregation, rather than through confrontation with the system (Sparks, 1991). SANNC campaigns were carried out by petitions, newspaper editorials and representations to the British government. The SANNC leadership supported an education policy which accorded with their political vision, and called for universal compulsory education for Africans along European lines (Molteno, 1984). They saw education as a means of acquiring the language, ideas, skills and technologies which would enable them to participate in the structures which had been imposed on them. While these leaders favoured the extension of education to Africans, and supported the establishment of the first university for blacks in Fort Hare,[27] other forms of resistance to schools were being developed which reflected students' and parents' dissatisfaction with educational provision. African students engaged in protests and boycotts of food, and rebelled against oppressive authority, corporal punishment, unsympathetic white staff, forced manual labour and their own lack of control over their

[26] The South Africa Act of 1910 removed the right of Africans to election to parliament, although 'qualified' Africans were entitled to vote.

[27] The South African Native College was established at Fort Hare, in the reserves, in 1916, laying the basis for racial segregation in higher education.

were excluded from full economic and political participation, leading to escalating demands for social change. In the 1990s, however, the fruits of the 'Total Strategy' can be tasted: class is rapidly overtaking ethnicity and race as the primary ordering principle of South African politics and society. Affirmative action as presently practised in South Africa, (favouring the urban, skilled, educated sector of the black community) tends to diminish inter-racial divisions while upholding, indeed widening, class divisions. As Human and Hofmeyr (1985) point out, black advancement has been limited to the chosen, and sponsored, few.

The second conclusion is that state policy has been immensely influential in both entrenching and removing inequalities. The solution to the 'poor white problem' in the first half of this century owed much to far-reaching programmes of affirmative action, job creation and social welfare. Afrikaners were transformed from "incompetent and apathetic indigents", who "can hardly be considered in efficiency the equal of a native"[67] into skilled workers and managers with a major stake in South Africa's mining, financial and industrial enterprises. Between 1950 and 1990 state intervention grew into state hegemony and finally state control over virtually every aspect of the economy and daily life. In the end, the Nationalist government could only deal with an overwhelming political crisis by means of violence and repression. Given the weight of this historical oppression, it seems inevitable that legislation will be needed to counter-balance its effects.

The third conclusion is that the inequitable, inadequate and fragmented provision of general and adult education for black people has contributed in no small measure to the social problems which are now to be addressed in affirmative action. Education cannot be abstracted from economic, political and social forces in society; indeed it often acts in concert with other more immediately interventionist measures. The experience of the last two decades shows particularly well that education is not just a controlled and defined force, but also "an active and changing force, with a welter of unintended and uncertain consequences" (Nasson and Samuel, 1990: 107).

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[67] The quotations are from a 1904 report of the Transvaal Labour Commission and Low Grade Mines Commission, cited by Slovo in Business Day, 4 September 1994.

on the slow pace of the RDP's implementation, and on the government's tendency to monopolize leadership and resources to the detriment of initiatives mounted by non-government organizations.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In history, as in the present day, South Africa is characterized by diversity, contrasts and contradictions. Its social history is crammed with examples of institutional discrimination, which underpin the political system, education, employment practices and the economy. This chapter has attempted to show how South Africa's characteristic imbalances were constructed historically, and how measures to sustain or challenge inequalities have taken different forms in different times. Some of the determinants of inequalities are to be found in class structure, social policy (including state education policy) and black political consciousness and mobilization, so these have been the dominant themes of this chapter.

If affirmative action can be understood to mean efforts to redistribute wealth, power and opportunity among population groups within the country, as the researcher contends in Chapter Three, then it is clear that affirmative action in South Africa has its own history, just as inequality does. The people who benefit from affirmative action, their numbers and locations, the reasons for change and its characteristics, have changed over time. This chapter has shown that policies and strategies associated with affirmative action have changed, just as perceived beneficiaries have. A number of broad conclusions can be drawn from this.

First of all, by a series of political, legal, social and economic measures, the white people of South Africa have consistently and effectively monopolized the economic resources of the country as well as the acquisition of skills. This monopoly has led to the creation of an occupational hierarchy in which whites dominate the professional, managerial and skilled positions, while blacks occupy the unskilled posts. Indians and Coloureds occupy an intermediate position between blacks and whites. We have seen that in the 1980s the Botha government began to encourage the formation of a black, urban, business class, with a view to neutralizing opposition to apartheid. Significant reforms were made in the areas of labour, residential rights and education to achieve this differentiation. The vast majority of blacks

The optimism felt by many South Africans in early 1990, when Mr Mandela and President de Klerk were proclaimed heroes and heralds of a new non-racial South Africa, was severely tried in the months and years which followed. The prolonged and disrupted constitutional negotiations created a mood of heightened, but often frustrated expectation, and of acute uncertainty about the future. As Graaf (1994) has observed, the apartheid system, with its use of violent force and extensive surveillance of African life, hid extensive antagonisms in urban areas between formal townships and other communities, between unionized, employed working classes, expanding middle classes and the growing unemployed.[66] As apartheid started to fragment in the 1980s, and particularly since February 1990, these conflicts have begun to explode. On the Witwatersrand, black township dwellers were affected by a virtual civil war between township residents and hostel residents. Unknown gunmen preyed on commuters and demonstrators. Violence escalated at all levels - on political, criminal and domestic fronts (Rule, 1994). In KwaZulu Natal there was brutal conflict between vigilante groups and residents believed to be affiliated to rival factions of the Inkatha Freedom Party and the ANC. The continued trauma and stress of living in a violent society led many white South Africans to leave the country, and many township dwellers to move to formerly white residential areas. Capital flight and falling investor confidence debilitated the South African economy. As Morris and Hindson comment, "The larger conflict being played out now is essentially about which racial groups, social classes and strata will have their interests best secured in future political and economic dispensations" (1992: 45).

Between 1990 and 1995 a shift began to take place from the politics of confrontation to the politics of negotiation, corresponding with a shift from the goals of a national democratic revolution to the transformation of social institutions. The new regime, with a different base of support from previous ones, has introduced major social policy proposals, (see Chapter Three) including the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), a plan to expand socioeconomic opportunity in South African society by developing housing and basic services such as water and the electricity supply. The policy is advocated by articulate and credible political leaders, who stress the need to promote equality, develop democratic patterns in civil life, and vitalize cross-racial political coalitions. In 1995, however, criticism is converging

[66] Graaf's interest is in the violent conflict taking place in KwaZulu Natal over the distribution of marginal resources for blacks, and the role which education could play in resolving the conflict.

increasingly militant as youths burned property, barricaded streets and waged street battles with the police and army. The establishment of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) in 1986 brought parents, teachers and community leaders into the education struggle, and introduced 'People's Education for People's Power' as an alternative to the hated Bantu Education.[65] The NECC built alliances across civil society for a coordinated national response to the education crisis.

Meanwhile, some black parents, despairing of the breakdown in schooling and the militancy of township youth, sent their children to private schools or to schools in quiet rural areas (see Chapter Six). The army was called in to patrol the townships and to occupy schools. Thousands of activists, some of them in their teens, were detained without trial, beaten and shot:

> State violence against children, while not new, assumed frightening dimensions. Schooling in education ceased, while a new schooling in violence began. Vigilantes, conservative and criminal elements within townships, informers and agents provocateurs, all capitalised on a volatile situation, diverting attention away from the economic and political roots of the revolt and allowing for its representation by the South African media in the ideological terms of "black on black violence" and "student hooliganism".
>
> (Cross and Chisholm, 1990: 65)

Many of the intelligentsia left the country, or were in prison. Despite constant assaults and setbacks, the black resistance movement shifted gradually from reactive strategies which challenged the coercive and reformist actions of the state, to the establishment of mass based democratic and community organizations in communities, schools and workplaces (Swilling, 1988).

The release of senior African National Congress leaders from imprisonment in late 1989, and particularly that of Nelson Mandela in 1990, marked the beginning of a transitional period in South African history. This was to culminate in the country's first democratic election and the inauguration of President Mandela in May 1994.

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[65] The definition of 'People's Education' was always fluid. Hyslop (1988) distinguishes two broad trends: a 'practical perspective' which foresaw the reform of the education system from within DET schools; and an 'ultimatist perspective' which promised new schools and curricula outside the structures of the DET, untainted by 'Bantu Education'.

foresaw a tricameral parliament for whites, Coloureds and Indians.[62]

While the dominant political resistance movement of the 1980s, the UDF, was committed to the total dismantling of apartheid and the creation of a 'nonracial' democracy, labour and student movements which drew on black consciousness ideology were also formed. Organized mass opposition to apartheid, in the form of labour unrest, rent strikes, election and consumer boycotts, stay-aways and guerilla warfare became a common feature of the South African political landscape in the 1980s (Swilling, 1988). Popular pressures emanating from black communities and liberal white sectors resulted in ad hoc responses and policy reversals by the government, such as the abolition of influx control legislation in 1986, the development of black local authorities, and the extension of South African citizenship to Africans not resident in the homelands.[63] The government relied increasingly on the security establishment's repressive power to curb popular protests.[64] Students were often at the fore of resistance to apartheid. As Hyslop puts it:

> Student protest provided the detonator for an explosion of worker and community struggle which confronted the dominant classes with their greatest challenge yet. (1988: 183)

Students' resistance to Bantu Education reached a new pitch of militancy with class boycotts in 1984 and 1985 under the banner of 'Liberation before Education!'. Resolving the problems of the education system came to be seen as a short term demand, while the national struggle for liberation, including links with broader community and political issues, became a feature of the education struggle (Nasson and Samuel, 1990). Between April and September 1984 alone, more than 900 000 students were involved in boycotts over Bantu Education and general political struggle (Dube, 1985). In 1985 the state imposed a State of Emergency during which 300 000 students were expelled from school, and 73 schools in which boycotts had become endemic were closed (Hyslop, 1988). Student protest and resistance became

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[62] Although Africans were excluded from the tricameral parliament, a federal structure was envisaged which was to link the consociational South African state to the 'independent' ethnic states in the homelands.

[63] See Swilling and Phillips (1988) for an account of power struggles within the Nationalist Party which contributed to erratic policy shifts.

[64] Swilling and Phillips (1988) list seven repressive measures pursued by the state in pursuit of its objectives: press restrictions; mass detentions; vigilantes and death squads; forced removals; rent boycott evictions; army occupations; and restricting organizations.

migrants, local employment[58] and pensions.[59] The poorest of the poor were members of households which lacked labour migrants and land. Iliffe comments that in many homeland resettlement areas "People were too poor, too dependent on government and the cash economy, too brutally uprooted from homes and kinsmen to organize themselves" (1987: 275). Crime and violence flourished in such settlements, as did exploitation of newcomers by earlier residents and by homeland bureaucrats. Evidence of gross inefficiency, political favouritism and corruption in homeland bureaucracies has been exposed in enquiries commissioned by the de Klerk government in 1993 (focusing on Ciskei, Kangwane and Gazankulu) and by the Government of National Unity in 1995 (focusing on Bophuthatswana and Transkei). In urban townships, networks of kinship and neighbourhood helped the poor survive. Iliffe (1987) describes a proliferation of 'homeboy networks',[60] revolving credit societies,[61] and small urban self-help groups, often sponsored by the independent African churches, in the 1970s and 80s.

The mid to late 1980s saw the growth of resistance to apartheid on an unparalleled scale and intensity, countered by massive state repression. Resistance spread to all parts of the country, rallied by students' organizations, local civic associations, women's associations, church groupings, trade unions and anti-conscription campaigns, many of which were aligned under the political umbrella established by the United Democratic Front (UDF). The UDF also provided links between anti-apartheid exiles and leadership within the country. It promoted the political alignment of COSATU and the Black Management Forum, and facilitated meetings in Lusaka between white businessmen and representatives of the ANC. National campaigns were organized to oppose the government's constitutional proposals, which

[58] Poorly paid occupations included gathering firewood, basket weaving and beadwork - jobs which were generally filled by women, the very young and the elderly.

[59] The pension system was instituted in 1944 and provided regular but low rates of revenue to men over 65, women and veterans over 60, blind people and other disabled people, subject to a means test. Iliffe (1987), however, avows a massive deprivation of the elderly and handicapped with respect to pensions and health care.

[60] Most immigrants to urban areas stayed with a kinsman and the unemployed relied on family support. By contrast, there were few tribal or ethnically-based welfare organizations, although Iliffe (1987) mentions the Shangaan Welfare Association, which supplied food, clothing and blankets to the aged and incapacitated.

[61] Membership in credit societies was more common among women than men, and was particularly attractive to domestic workers in white residential areas. Burial societies attracted all classes. Burial insurance was one of the chief benefits offered by the trade unions formed after 1979 (Iliffe, 1987).

Another phase of reform involved limited attempts to deracialise social institutions, including the education system. The state commissioned the Human Sciences Research Council to investigate all aspects and levels of education in South Africa. The resulting 'De Lange Report' stressed the need to link education to economic development and proposed a more stratified schooling system, in which the state was to provide free and compulsory education at primary level, while vocational education at secondary level was to be subsidized by industry and commerce. The report also recommended that private schools be encouraged and racial integration in them allowed. Teachers, parents and communities were to become more involved in decision-making. A single education ministry was to replace the ethnically divided ones. Hostility from within the Nationalist Party to De Lange's proposals meant that many of the recommendations were not implemented. While the principle of equal opportunity and standards was acknowledged, this acceptance was subject to the tenet that each population group would retain its own schools and education authorities. State discourse shifted from 'separate and unequal' to 'equal, but not identical and still separate' (Gamble, 1995). Hyslop (1988) considers that the De Lange strategy, which aimed to intensify class differentials while reducing racial ones, was a significant part of P.W. Botha's 'Total Strategy' of co-option and repression.[57]

By 1980 the National Party's attempts to abolish slums and squatter settlements in South Africa's cities had failed in the face of population growth, rural poverty, migrant labour, industrial expansion and the resourcefulness of the poor. The government turned its attention to the homelands, which were to become magnets drawing blacks away from the cities back to the rural areas. Homeland authorities increasingly took control of social services, including education, health and welfare. But the government refused to extend the territories of the Reserves or to invest in their economies, so the homelands never developed as envisaged. By the end of 1980, the State President P.W. Botha admitted that the homeland 'ideal' had failed.

Unemployment and poverty were concentrated in the homelands by the government's massive resettlement programme. For rural dwellers, subsistence depended on remittances from urban

[57] After 1976, moderate elements in the Botha government devised a 'total strategy' of co-option-repression which would modify apartheid structures and state controls. Reformist initiatives involved urban policy, industrial relations, constitutional reform and a reorganization of security apparatuses (Swilling, 1987).

The Soweto uprising led to a mass exodus of African children to the neighbouring states of Tanzania, Zambia and Angola, where some hoped to join 'Umkhonto we Siswe'. For those who remained, but were unable to complete their education in the disrupted schools, the Department of Education and Training opened night schools, which also served the purposes of upgrading teaching staff and providing literacy classes to Standard Four level.[56] As in 1953, the state moved rapidly to take control over nonformal and alternative education for adults. Maintaining that it was acting to prevent the proliferation of 'exploitative' and 'charlatan' private educational services, the government effectively legislated a monopoly over education for blacks by permitting only the Department of Education and Training to issue accredited certificates. Nongovernmental organizations, largely funded by overseas donors and sustaining considerable government harassment, continued to provide alternative forms of education and development, but usually on a small scale.

The Soweto riots of 1976 centred on grievances over the quality and provision of education, but they also highlighted other restrictions on black people, including the freedom to organize and strike. In 1977, under pressure from business and the emerging black trade unions, the government appointed the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions, paving the way for a new labour 'ispensation. The report of the Wiehahn Commission recommended that the Industrial Conciliation Act and the Black Labour Relations Act be consolidated in one statute. The ensuing Labour Relations Act of 1981 granted full trade union rights to most workers, and full autonomy to trade unions over matters of membership. The Commission also recommended that statutory job reservation for whites be abolished, and that the mobility of all classes of labour should be facilitated. In 1981 the Manpower Training Act institutionalized the right to training for all workers and provided for a National Training Board (NTB) to advise on training issues. Meanwhile, the Riekert Commission called for improved residential rights and conditions for urban blacks and greater controls over 'unqualified' workers, contributing to an expanding black middle class and a marginalized class of unemployed and migrant labour on the periphery of the cities.

[56] Such classes were established in Indian and Coloured communities, too.

> and those excluded; and between an emergent petty-bourgeoisie and the working class. ... The weakness of this programme, however, was that it did not address the political grievances of blacks and could not win their acquiescence.
>
> (1988: 189)

An extended system of public and private skills training was encouraged through grants and tax concessions (Swainson, 1991). Corporate investment focused on the development of independent trusts, institutional support for non-governmental projects and joint state-capital ventures, and those forms of education and training which would serve the human resources needs for economic growth.[54] It was assumed that improved skills would lead to increased productivity and career advancement for blacks, satisfying the demands of black labour while creating a more substantial and broadly based black middle class. In this period, the first 'black advancement' programmes were initiated for a small number of carefully selected black people in large local and multinational companies.[55] But in the late 1970s it became clear that longstanding structural inequalities and the marginalization of black people from economic participation and political power were the root causes of social unrest. Skills training and further education on their own would not bring about democracy, equality and development.

In 1976 conservative elements in the Nationalist government introduced a policy whereby half of all subjects in black secondary schools would be taught in Afrikaans. This led to a boycott by a group of children in Isaac Morrison and Orlando West High Schools which swept to all secondary schools in Soweto and to Pretoria within a few days (see Chapter Six). When police shootings resulted in the death of children, there were sympathy strikes throughout South Africa. Students set fire to beer halls, liquor stores, white-owned businesses and Bantu Affairs buildings. The death of Steve Biko in police custody in 1977 caused an outcry locally and internationally, and there were calls for sanctions and boycotts against South Africa.

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[54] Swainson (1991) observes that general funding of tertiary education fell significantly in the 1980s, while that going to teacher development and secondary level education increased. Between 1976 and 1983 Anglo American's investment in education and training was so prominent that the company became known as 'South Africa's other government' (Chisholm, 1983: 158).

[55] Swainson (1991) notes that Afrikaner firms generally have a lower level of commitment to black advancement than other South African companies. Among multinationals, British companies spent less on educational projects than American companies in the 1980s.

In summary, during this period Afrikaners advanced from a mostly poor, underdeveloped population group to a prosperous bourgeoisie (Adam and Giliomee, 1979). This was largely achieved through the National Party's social policies which enshrined white supremacy in the education system and developed social infrastructure for whites in urban and rural areas. A range of agencies was developed to mobilize people in support of group interests, defined on narrow, ethnic lines. Legislation institutionalized a more rigid and thorough system of racial domination than had existed to date. While the education system for whites was expanded, so poor was the financing and provision of education for blacks that there were facilities for less than a quarter of the population (Cross and Chisholm, 1990). With the assistance of massive state grants, manufacturing industry and capitalist agriculture were developed. As the manufacturing industry grew, a stable, permanent workforce became desirable. But government policy rejected the notion of a permanent, urban African workforce. Such a policy would mean improved housing, the provision of education for larger numbers of children in the cities, and the removal of restrictions on the acquisitions of skills by blacks.

4.5 REFORM, RESISTANCE AND TRANSITION ,1970-1995)

In the 1960s and early 1970s South Africa experienced an economic boom which underlined a skills shortage in technical, professional and managerial fields. Private enterprise, prejudiced by this shortage, began to campaign for the review of some apartheid laws, and for improved education and training for blacks. In a significant shift in state policy, secondary schooling for blacks was expanded, although the limited increase in the budget allocation for black education diminished the quality of this expansion. The number of black children in school increased dramatically, as the system of Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education was extended throughout the country. The Black In-Service Training Act of 1976 allowed training of Africans in urban and border areas. Responding at last to a political crisis which threatened economic stability, the government began to encourage the co-option of sectors of black urban society into the middle class, drawing particularly on those employed in the fields of labour, education, health, welfare and housing. As Hyslop describes it,

> ...extensive state encouragement was given to the establishment of a black business class. The political aim was to fragment black opposition through stratification: the state intended that conflicts would develop between urban blacks with residence rights and migrants who lacked such rights; between those included in industrial bargaining

supporters,[52] the PAC under the leadership of Robert Sobukwe, declared an intent to overthrow white supremacy and establish an Africanist, socialist democracy. The Black Consciousness Movement, a philosophy[53] which asserts the solidarity and power of Africans and rejects liberal white tutelage, advanced among black university students, writers and intellectuals in South Africa. The movement, which burgeoned under the leadership of a medical student named Steve Biko, spread from university campuses to high schools and then primary schools throughout the country. Ramphele describes the appeal of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) as follows:

> It is worth recalling that the motivation for the BCM in the late 1960s was to raise the consciousness of black people of the relationship between their physical oppression by a racist system and their internalisation of an inferiority complex, which constituted a psycho-social dimension to their oppression. The focus was thus on freeing the self from psycho-social oppression through solidarity, self-reliance and self-criticism as an important prerequisite to full liberation from all forms of oppression.
>
> (1995a: 25)

In the townships, young people responded to the call to break the "mental chains" imposed by Bantu Education, and formed their own black student organizations called the South African Students' Organization (SASO) and the South African Students' Movement (SASM). SASO and the Black People's Convention organized literacy classes, and were involved in the building of schools, clinics and community centres, health and community projects, and drama and poetry in the townships (Christie, 1991). Set against the compelling, unifying ideology of the Black Consciousness Movement was increasingly harsh police action. Throughout the 1960s members of community organizations and 'progressive' churches were harassed, and two black newspapers were closed. The already substantial power of the police to detain individuals suspected of subversive activities was increased by the Terrorism Act of 1967.

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[52] Mandela (1994: 214) believes that the founders of the PAC thought the ANC was insufficiently militant, out of touch with the masses and dominated by non-Africans.

[53] The Black Consciousness Movement was not based on a single, coherent philosophy, but was inspired by sources as various as the anti-imperialist struggles of the formerly colonized countries of Africa, the civil rights and black power movements in the USA, Kaunda's African humanism, Nyerere's African socialism, and Fanon's account of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed (Sparks, 1991).

was Bantu Education? In terms of labour reproduction theory, Bantu Education succeeded in creating a system of mass schooling geared to capitalist labour requirements for unskilled and semi-skilled labourers (Christie and Collins, 1984). In terms of raising the quality of education for blacks, Bantu Education failed miserably in terms of delivery, access, relevance and quality (Hartshorne, 1992). Until the 1970s the majority of black schoolgoers did not remain in school beyond lower primary level, and only 1% of them matriculated.

Opposition to Bantu Education was immediate and strong, on the part of parents, teachers, the missionaries, and the ANC,[51] who perceived the new policy as "part and parcel of the imposition of passes, Bantustans and the whole repressive apparatus" (Molteno, 1994: 96). While some parents organized alternative education facilities and culture clubs in the African Education Movement, resistance was usually expressed in student boycotts and riots, which increased in number and severity. But Verwoerd and the Nationalist government were intransigent, and in time, protests were diverted to other issues, including the drafting of the Freedom Charter in 1955.

The extension of laws restricting the movement of Africans to women as well as men, led to police killings of demonstrators at Sharpville and Langa in 1960, and the declaration of a State of Emergency. In 1961, the ANC and the Pan African Congress, an offshoot of the ANC, were declared unlawful organizations, and their leaders were banned, imprisoned or driven underground. Deciding it was futile to rely on non-violent methods of resistance, Nelson Mandela and a handful of ANC leaders established an armed wing of the ANC called 'Umkhonto we Sizwe', or Spear of the Nation, which was to sabotage selected economic targets and conduct a guerilla war.

While the police were engaged in suppressing ANC organized black resistance to apartheid, the Pan African Congress (PAC) gained in strength. Formed by a group of Africanists who repudiated the multiracialism of the ANC, the Freedom Charter, and the ANC's communist

[51] In May 1954 the ANC launched a 'Resist Apartheid Campaign' around six issues: Bantu Education the Group Areas Act; the Native Resettlement Act; the Suppression of Communism Act; and anti-trade union measures. Later in the year, the issue of Bantu Education was passed to the Women's League and Congress Youth League, which called for a schools boycott in the Eastern Cape and East Rand in the following year (Christie, 1991).

and local government (Bennell and Strachan, 1992: 37-8), a cause which is greatly complicated in South Africa by the legacy of inflated homeland and provincial administrations alongside a public service which has traditionally offered preferential employment to Afrikaners with allegiance to the Nationalist Party (see Chapter Four).[14] To complicate matters further, an agreement was struck between the ANC and the National Party in 1993 to protect the jobs of all civil servants for a period of ten years.

It is unlikely that Afrikaner incumbents of public service jobs in South Africa will relinquish their positions as readily as white Zimbabweans did. Emigration is not an option for them, and the private sector is not in a position to offer alternative employment. The threat of unemployment remains a powerful force in forging Afrikaner political opposition to the new dispensation in South Africa, and would certainly not foster the kind of supportive relationships which were found helpful in developing black managers in Zimbabwe.

A fifth lesson from the Zimbabwean experience is that training and developing young managers, regardless of their race and socio-economic background, takes time. According to some commentators (Hofmeyr and Whata, 1991; Bennell and Strachan, 1992), a decade is not very long to develop the experience needed to run a firm or a large department of a firm. Yet individual and group expectations defy this. 'Job-hopping' from firm to firm in search of promotion or higher wages is perceived to have negative effects on management development. The Zimbabwean tendency to place recruits in 'soft' positions (personnel, industrial relations, service divisions) rather than 'hard' positions (line management and profit-making divisions) is mirrored in South Africa. If merit, rather than political accommodation, is to guide future appointments and promotions in employment in South Africa, the solution may be to place black managers in positions of responsibility and influence, to give them adequate training and support, so that they may rise, and be seen to rise, on the basis of merit.

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[14] Guidelines to central and provincial administrations for the filling of 11 000 'affirmative action posts' were announced on 28 December 1994. The guidelines encourage applications for early retirement from serving officials aged 50 or over, to make way for candidates who are not well represented in the management echelons of the public service. The guidelines also set out procedures for absorbing the ten former civil services of the 'independent homelands' and self-governing territories (Star, 29 December 1994). South Africa's 19 public sector unions accepted in principle an affirmative action policy designed to make the public service more representative in February 1995.

been estimated that approximately 50% of black school leavers are unemployed.[13] If it is to be more than a corporate public relations exercise, affirmative action in South Africa will have to be linked to broader strategies for economic reconstruction, and take the situation of black youths into account. As in Zimbabwe, a political, as well as an economic cost is implied in neglecting to make provision for this group.

A third lesson from Zimbabwe is that broadly targeted affirmative action policies tend to favour already privileged sections of society. In Zimbabwe affirmative action has favoured black men generally and nurtured a powerful Shona elite. Little progress has been made in advancing the occupational status of black women, despite the optimism expressed by some observers in the years immediately following independence. It would be interesting to know what contribution, if any, affirmative action has made to existing regional and rural-urban imbalances in Zimbabwe. Specific legislation is probably needed to achieve women's occupational advancement, with more attention given to transforming gender relations in society generally. Media campaigns and adult education programmes may facilitate more positive attitudes towards women and their contribution to society in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean situation is likely to prevail in South Africa, where women form the majority of the poor and underprivileged, and where women's and civil rights groups have failed so far to improve women's socio-economic situation substantially.

The Zimbabwean experience shows that job fragmentation and carefully structured career paths have been successful ways of promoting black occupational advancement in the private sector. But in the public sector, job fragmentation and rapid expansion have had a negative effect on efficiency. Real declines in civil servants' incomes are now experienced in Zimbabwe, and this is expected to influence public servants' political loyalty and support. It is clear that affirmative action must be accompanied by structural reform of the civil service

[13] In a recent tracer study, Bennell and Monyokolo (1992) show that of DET matriculants in the PWV region in 1984, 60% of males and 55% of females found wage employment within six years of leaving school. However, they point out that the incidence of wage employment among matriculants is much higher than among youth who drop out of school in lower standards. In 1984, fewer than 10% of African primary school children continued in school to Standard Ten. Thus very few school leavers are in the relatively favourable position of matriculants, only 10 to 15% of whom have found wage employment one year after leaving school. Wage employment prospects for school leavers after 1984 may have deteriorated because of the limited growth in total wage employment in South Africa, and higher enrolments in DET secondary schools.

What can be learned from Zimbabwe's experience of affirmative action? Like Zimbabwe at independence, the new government of South Africa has to develop an indigenous, skilled human resource base, representative of all sections of the population. As in Zimbabwe, both legislation and social practice have to change to ensure equality of access to education, training and employment. These are long term goals, which, in the short to medium term, may be assisted by affirmative action strategies.

First of all, events in Zimbabwe show that legislation outlawing discriminatory recruitment and promotion is helpful, but on its own insufficient. A more effective means of countering racism, sexism, tribalism and nepotism may be the establishment of a credible and vigorous agency, with the power to monitor and adjudicate employment practices at all levels in the public and private sectors. Such an agency has been proposed for Namibia (as we shall see in the next section) and is foreseen in ANC and COSATU policy proposals for South Africa.[11] This agency would include representatives of the government, employers and workers. In South Africa, unlike Zimbabwe, trade unions have large memberships, coherent human resources policies, established procedures for handling grievances, and a strong power base. The active participation of trade unions is of crucial importance in establishing the credibility and accessibility of such a monitoring agency in South Africa.

Perhaps the most important lesson for South Africa from the Zimbabwean experience is that wider issues of economic and political reform need to be addressed alongside affirmative action. The failure of the Zimbabwe economy to expand meant that there were not enough suitable jobs for the vastly increased number of school leavers.[12] This has had a political cost, as well as an economic one, with many Zimbabweans turning away from ZANU(PF). The South African economy was in a serious recession between 1990 and 1994, and it has

[11] South Africa's draft Equal Opportunities Bill requires employers to "employ, develop and promote qualified members of disadvantaged groups into positions previously not open to them". It foresees a statutory agency to monitor the performance of companies employing more than twenty people. Companies which fail to abide by the provisions will be committing a criminal offence and will be liable for a fine of up to R100 000 and/or two years in jail.

[12] According to the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programme for Zimbabwe, sustainable growth of 5% per year is needed to create jobs for up to one million people.

* Preparedness of experienced white managers to provide on-the-job training to junior black colleagues.

Clearly, racism complicates and frustrates recruitment, training and promotion procedures. In a 1990 study of black and white managers in Zimbabwe, Bennell and Strachan found that

> Racism was perceived as persistent and widespread among many of the black managers interviewed as part of this study. Even some white, mainly expatriate, managers felt that their white colleagues were blinkered by racial prejudice. Social and cultural differences (both real and imagined) are clearly key factors fuelling racist attitudes and behaviour. Quite simply, neither whites nor blacks have ever formed close social relationships with [one] another. Their main contact in the past has been as master and servant.
>
> (1992: 32-3)

According to Gatherer and Erickson (1992: 97) black managers at Anglo American Corporation (Zimbabwe) claim that they are excluded from important decisions, that they have to work harder than whites for the same recognition, and that promotion and payment are still biased towards whites. White managers dispute these claims.

While they note such opinions in their own study of Zimbabwean managers, Bennell and Strachan (1992) suggest that culture and race are not the primary cause of slow black occupational advancement at senior levels. They argue that job stability and on-the-job training are crucial for the development of black managers, but that this is undermined by high levels of turnover amongst black graduates, and lack of incentives for top (white) managers to provide on-the job-training. Noting that one-third of industrial companies in Zimbabwe are still owner-managed by white Zimbabweans,[10] and that equity and ownership indigenization policies are unlikely to be introduced, two options remain to the Zimbabwean government. It could either subsidize black capital development (unlikely for a purportedly socialist government), or use its purchasing power to discriminate in favour of companies which show they have progressive affirmative action policies and practices.

[10] The economy is still dominated by white Zimbabweans, who control manufacturing and agriculture, while Asians lead in retailing.

been used to accelerate black advancement (notably in Air Zimbabwe and the National Railways of Zimbabwe) the consequences have been highly negative. They also comment disparagingly on the Manpower Planning and Development Act of 1984, which aimed to centralize the recruitment of artisanal apprentices in the Ministry of Labour so as to redress racial imbalances in the labour force:

> In fact, by 1984 already 82% of apprentices were black compared with only 38% in 1981. Not only, then, was centralised recruitment largely unnecessary but it upset employers who protested that it undermined the proper functioning of what was a well-established and efficient training system for skilled workers. Many companies reacted by refusing altogether to sponsor apprentices. Government eventually responded to these criticisms and effectively abandoned the centralised recruitment of labour in 1988. This is a good example, therefore, of the unintended and highly adverse consequences of poorly conceived and implemented policies that seek to redress racial and other imbalances in labour markets.
>
> (Bennell and Strachan, 1992: 31)

Hofmeyr and Whata (1991) believe that both black and white personnel have been over-promoted since independence. When white incumbents resigned from the civil service, army and police they were offered executive positions in industry. As with black window dressing appointments, white over-promotion has not served the interests of innovation and development in industry. Over-promoted whites do not fill their positions competently, and tend to resist the advancement of educated blacks with potential.

According to Gatherer and Erickson (1992) and Bennell and Strachan (1992) the most significant contribution to black occupational advancement in the private sector is made by sustained commitment, on the part of top managers and their boards, to developing black managerial expertise inhouse. The following factors are seen to contribute to this process:

* Recognition by top management that it is in the organization's own long-term interests to train black managers. Educated young white people no longer stay in Zimbabwe, whereas black youths are more likely to remain.
* Creation of clear career paths with comprehensive and detailed job descriptions.
* Implementation of merit-based promotion criteria, rigorously enforced.
* Development of management training programmes tailored to the needs of black graduates.
* Early identification of individuals with high potential.

Instead of preferential legislation, the Zimbabwean government relied on policies which aimed to eliminate discrimination against blacks and other disadvantaged groups, including, notably, women. The Labour Relations Act of 1985 gave the Ministry of Labour, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare the powers to investigate discriminatory practices in the private sector. However, as Bennell and Strachan (1992) note, the Act focused on individual discrimination, and did not address the effects of past and present practices on the racial and gender imbalances of the labour force as a whole.

In any event, progress in the private sector has been significant. Government statistics indicate that the number of black Zimbabweans in professional, technical, administrative and managerial posts increased eight-fold between 1980 and 1987 (Bennell and Strachan, 1992: 29). This means that over 90% of the professional and technical jobs in the private and parastatal sector now have black incumbents. However, blacks tend to hold junior and middle management posts, and fill few top level positions. Gatherer and Erickson (1992) observe that the majority of black managers remain in public relations, personnel and marketing, with little progress being made on black occupational advancement in production and finance. In 1987 the Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Social Welfare had this to say about persistent racial discrimination:

> ...the most pervasive discrimination today results from employment practices which are neutral on their face but discriminatory in their applications. Such actions include the use of employment agencies and black Industrial Relations Officers to launder discrimination, the old boy network, promotion policies which insist on promoting from within, job requirements which insist on experience and qualifications which do not reflect the actual needs of the job or the current reality of our manpower resources. (Cited in Strachan, 1993: 138-9)

Strachan (1993) notes that black occupational advancement in the private sector was initially accompanied by charges of 'window dressing' and racial prejudice.[9] However inhouse training and development programmes in parastatal and private sector organizations have made a significant contribution to promotion on the basis of merit. Bennell and Strachan (1992) observe that where ministerial and political appointments, rather than skill or potential, have

[9] A 1987 Government Commission of Inquiry into Parastatals revealed that ministerial interference in appointments and operations impeded the successful management of organizations. Technical and professional qualifications and experience had been ignored in the appointment of senior managers, who owed their position to political patronage and nepotism.

> ...very high vacancy rates, especially among technical personnel, little or no systematic on-the-job training for new recruits, and general incompetence and maladministration. Corruption at all levels of government has been widely reported.... Allegations of tribalism and nepotism have also become commonplace although they are harder to substantiate. In particular, many Ndebele believe that they have been discriminated against by the Shona who constitute over 80% of the population. But tribal divisions within the Shona have also strongly influenced recruitment and promotion decisions.
>
> (1992: 28).

While breeding inefficiency and corruption, the expansion of the civil service created a 'petit bourgeois elite' and contributed to a serious budget deficit. Strachan (1993) notes with irony that, in the name of socialism, a bourgeoisie emerged in Zimbabwe which acquired wealth through access to state power and control. This elite group became increasingly undemocratic and repressive as its economic interests were threatened by a poorly performing economy and a growing distance between itself and its electorate. Adam and Moodley describe Zimbabwe as a "pseudodemocratic patronage system...characterized by high levels of corruption and little democratic accountability" (1993: 203). By the early 1990s, however, civil service cutbacks had become the order of the day, mandated by the economic structural adjustment programmes tied to International Monetary Fund/World Bank loans.[8] This has implications for the government's "increasingly fragile grip on power", according to Loxton (1993: 29).

At the time of the presidential decree on the public service in 1980, no affirmative action legislation was issued for the private sector. Instead, it was hoped that the private sector would voluntarily follow the example set by the state. Bennell and Strachan (1992) comment that the government's "hands off" policy was based on a concern that legislation might precipitate a mass exodus of white skill as had occurred in neighbouring Mozambique. Gatherer and Erickson (1992) note the potential threat of such legislation to the fragile economy, already destabilized by the war, sanctions, capital flight and a crippling drought. A further contributing factor may have been the contradiction between promoting managerial advancement in the private sector while furthering the government's stated socialist objectives.

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[8] Adam and Moodley (1993) note until the IMF applied pressure, the Zimbabwean government was unhampered by checks and balances and pursued policies of profligate expansion. Cynics now dub the IMF the second chamber in Zimbabwe, because it effectively adjudicates all legislation.

voluntarily, and either left the country, or sought jobs in the private sector. By 1989, only nine years after independence, 95% of the public service was staffed by black Zimbabweans, with women generally occupying the lower ranks (Strachan, 1993).

Explaining this rapid transition, Bennell and Strachan (1992) and Gatherer and Erickson (1992) observe that significant numbers of black Zimbabweans had been trained and worked overseas during the liberation struggle, and that the quality of education in Zimbabwe, for those who had access to it, was high.[6] This meant that, compared with many other African countries, there was a plentiful supply of well-qualified (though less experienced) black people who could fill the posts vacated by white civil servants. There was, however, a shortage of engineers, administrators, scientists and accountants, as revealed in a study carried out by the Commonwealth Secretariat in 1978 (cited in Hofmeyr and Whata, 1991). This contributed to serious problems in the decade following independence.

The rapid growth in the size of the civil service, from 40 000 established posts in 1980 to 90 000 in 1989 (excluding teachers)[7] facilitated black occupational advancement but adversely affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service. Gatherer and Erickson (1992) express the view that today "the public sector appears to be a haven in which nepotism, tribalism, fraud and corruption exists". Mismanagement, inefficiency, disinterest and poor credibility apparently characterize the public service. Bennell and Strachan cite the following weaknesses:

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was very costly and contributed significantly to Zimbabwe's post-independence budget deficit.

[6] Hofmeyr and Whata (1991) call on 1978 statistics to show the discriminatory features of Zimbabwean education: $44 was spent per black pupil and $500 per white child. But Gatherer and Erickson (1992: 75) observe that although the pre-independence education system for blacks was disadvantaged relative to white education in then-Rhodesia, it was superior to the black education system in South Africa. Some black executives at Anglo American Corporation (Zimbabwe) interviewed by Gatherer and Erickson had acquired technical degrees overseas, mainly from UK universities via British Council Scholarships, during which time they had opportunities of working at overseas plants and industrial concerns. Such candidates returned to Zimbabwe with a good base from which to develop careers in the private sector.

[7] These figures are cited by Bennell and Strachan (1993: 27). Gatherer and Erickson (1992:66) cite an increase in size from approximately 56 000 in 1981 to 165 000 in 1989, presumably including teachers. Despite these figures, the public service maintains that there is a serious shortage of appropriately qualified people in professional and technical categories. According to Hofmeyr and Whata (1991), expatriates are generally recruited to fill such posts.

positions in the public and private sector, and in virtually all skilled occupational categories.[2] Although Hofmeyr and Whata (1991) observe that economic expediency had began to influence employment policy in the late 1970s (when the emigration of white people[3] and commitment to the civil war deprived the private sector of needed skills) black people were absorbed into skilled work only very slowly, mainly through a process of job fragmentation and increased training.

In 1980, after a long and bloody civil war, one of the first priorities of the new ZANU(PF)[4] government in 1980 was to redress decades of overt and covert racial discrimination and to enhance the power and authority of black people. One way to do this, and at the same time reward party supporters, was to replace white civil servants with black Zimbabweans (Strachan, 1993). Soon after independence, therefore, a presidential directive on black advancement was issued which directed the Public Service Commission (the body with responsibility for appointments and promotions in the public sector) to recruit staff to all grades in the public service in a way which brought about a balanced representation of the elements that make up Zimbabwe's population. Rapid advancement was to be given to suitably qualified Africans in appointments and promotions. Furthermore, the Commission was charged with maintaining efficiency and satisfying the career aspirations of existing public servants in carrying out their task.

The directive was legally binding on the civil service and prisons service, and was intended to guide parastatals, state-owned corporations and the private sector, but involved no legal mechanisms for implementation in these sectors. White civil servants were encouraged to retire early with the help of generous retirement packages.[5] Many other whites resigned

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[2] Bennell and Strachan (1992: 26) note that 90% of senior and middle level positions in the public sector were occupied by whites in 1980. A 1975 study, cited in Hofmeyr and Whata (1991), had shown that 85% of professional and managerial posts and 92% of skilled and technical jobs were occupied by whites.

[3] Approximately 50% of the white population emigrated in the period before and soon after independence, contributing to a skills shortage in high-level manpower categories.

[4] Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front).

[5] According to Strachan (1993: 144), the original intention of the Retirement Incentive Scheme was to retain skills in the civil service over a transitional period of five years, but the scheme became an inducement to whites to leave the civil service and find alternative employment. Meeting pension benefits, often in foreign currency,

reasons for these countries' successes and failures, we can draw lessons about desirable policies for South Africa.

This chapter is informed by the literature available to the researcher on affirmative action in the three countries selected for study. This literature is rather sparse, particularly in relation to Namibia, which has only recently become independent. With few exceptions, the literature reflects economic and constitutional concerns rather than the educational and social interests which frame this study. However, most writers consulted acknowledge the part played by education and training in national human resources development policies. Wherever appropriate and possible, then, educational links to affirmative action are given special prominence in this chapter.

5.2 THE ZIMBABWEAN EXPERIENCE

Although job discrimination was never legislated in Zimbabwe, as it was in South Africa (see Chapter Four), racial discrimination was entrenched in a range of statutory provisions for many decades. The Masters and Servants Act (1901), the Land Apportionment Act (1930) and the Industrial Conciliation Act (1934) are examples of such discriminatory legislation, which resulted in huge disparities between black and white Zimbabweans in terms of income, employment and ownership. As in South Africa, black people were largely excluded from secondary and tertiary education, and particularly from vocational education and training, making it difficult for them to advance occupationally at the same rate as their white counterparts, in both the public and private sectors. A high level of unemployment amongst black people was a structural feature of the pre-independence economy, while for white Rhodesians there was almost full employment (Hofmeyr and Whata, 1991: 14).

One of the consequences of racial discrimination in the Zimbabwean economy and education system was that at independence in 1980, with a population of six million people (less than 300,000 of whom were white) white males were heavily over-represented in managerial

CHAPTER FIVE

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN THREE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: LESSONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA FROM ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA AND MALAYSIA[1]

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Like many other countries, South Africa faces the problem of removing deep-seated inequalities in the workplace. Yet few countries face the problem in such stark dimensions as South Africa. Chapter One of this study showed that racial discrimination affects the vast majority of people in South Africa, not a minority, as in the UK or USA. In Chapter Four it became evident that the problem of removing inequalities is made more daunting by government policy (in particular, education policy since 1948) which deliberately nurtured a knowledge and skills gap between the predominantly white manager class and the black workforce.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a picture of affirmative action policies and strategies in the area of employment in three developing countries - Zimbabwe, Namibia and Malaysia. This is done so that emerging South African policies and programmes can be understood against a backdrop of relevant international experience and critique. Such scenarios also have the potential to "challenge frozen mental maps and stimulate alternative, innovative thoughts and policies" for affirmative action (Adam and Moodley, 1993: 202).

Affirmative action policies in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Malaysia have been designed to protect and advance racial or ethnic majorities which were disadvantaged historically. Zimbabwe and Namibia have been selected for review because of their geographical proximity to South Africa, and the many similarities between the three countries' colonial histories and political economies. Malaysia, a culturally diverse, newly industrialized country in the Pacific Rim, has been chosen for contrast with Southern Africa. By exploring the similarities and differences between these countries and South Africa, and by examining the

[1] Material from this chapter has been published under the same title same title in the South African Journal of Labour Relations, 19 (1) 1995 : 265-284.

Finally, given the historical legacy of discrimination against blacks in terms of opportunity, welfare and education, it is clear that merely removing formal restrictions on equality is insufficient. Nor will inequality succumb to economic growth or to human resources management, unless these are targeted very widely. It has been shown that work-based affirmative action measures, such as the civilised labour policies of the 1920s and 30s, have limited success in times of economic depression. It is also evident that job protection and even job creation are insufficient strategies on their own. They need to be bolstered by improvements in the quality and provision of education (both formal and nonformal) and the development of infrastructure in urban and rural areas. A range of agencies in the cultural, educational and political sphere is needed to mobilize and support the interests of those who have been disadvantaged. These premises place a severe challenge at the feet of government and capital, which, at the time of writing, support the notion that 'market forces' and a 'lean state' have the capacity to usher in change.

The role of the state, and its interaction with other players in affirmative action, is the subject of the next chapter, which deals with affirmative action policy in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Malaysia. Many of the issues and debates raised in the present chapter, around the groups targeted for affirmative action, the range of strategies used to advance group interests, and the intended and unintended consequences of national policies gain in interest and significance by being viewed through the lens of international experience.

least expensive way of controlling society. A Malay elite was co-opted as a buffer between the colonial government and the people. Chinese notables, including leaders of secret societies, were used to keep order in the Chinese community (Jesudason, 1990). Hart (1994) explains that the land reservation system, which prevented non-Malays from acquiring land in the reserved areas, was part of a pact in which the British preserved the status and privilege of Malay sultans in exchange for extracting resources with immigrant labour and a guarantee of peasant support. Malaysia's trade unions have never played a role in integrating ethnic groups, apparently because the Indian origins of trade union leaders are not conducive to Chinese membership, and because the Malay working class was not, in any case, engaged in wage labour (Jesudason, 1990: 40). In the colonial period some basic education in the mother tongue of immigrant groups was sponsored in a paternalistic manner by employers. The government provided rudimentary education for those Malays settled in urban areas. The curriculum did not foster national unity or democratic process (Faaland et al, 1990).

Positive discrimination in favour of the Malays had been a major plank of colonial policy. Measures were instituted by the British to protect the Malays from the "more rigorous drive of the other ethnic groups", in particular the Chinese (Klitgaard, 1991).[35] Phillips (1992: 346) cites four areas in which Malays were receiving preferential treatment prior to independence: allocation of land; admission to the public service; permits for the operation of certain businesses; and bursaries and scholarships for higher education. Yet these measures had been ineffective in bringing Malays into the modern sector economy. Instead, their position and culture was being slowly eroded by alien and materialist forces. According to Jesudason (1990) by the 1940s they had effectively lost control of their country, except in ceremonial matters.

During independence negotiations in 1957, a deal was struck[36] between the political parties

[35] The 1948 Federation of Malay Agreement upheld the authority of sultans and entrenched the 'special position' of Malays in the country.

[36] This deal is known as the 'Bargain of 1957'. Non-Malays demanded equal political rights with the Malays, including citizenship, a secular state and continued use of English as an official language alongside Malay. The Malays wanted recognition of their special position as the indigenous people of the country, and measures to promote their socio-economic advancement. The compromise was that Malays would make concessions on

government embarked on successive five-year development plans aimed at achieving national unity and political stability. A solution to economic dualism[32] was sought in efforts to develop a modern thriving economy in as short a time as possible (Morris and Marsh, 1992). Three major obstacles to this existed. First, the colonial government's insistence that market forces guide economic development meant that there was only a rudimentary manufacturing base in the country.[33] Secondly, Malay participation in commerce and industry was negligible,[34] reflecting their lack of institutions to mobilize capital and pool economic resources effectively. Thirdly, developing a modern economy required a literate, flexible and hardworking workforce which shared in national development goals. Such a workforce had not been cultivated in Malaysia in the colonial period.

The uneven participation of the different ethnic groups in the national economy had long been a cause for concern. Before independence, a leader of the Malayan Chinese Association described the historical economic gap between the Chinese and the Malays as follows:

> [It is an] indisputable fact that as a race the Malays are economically backward and well behind the other races in this field...An economically depressed Malay community will never be able to achieve the desired degree of cooperation with the substantially more prosperous non-Malay communities.
>
> (quoted in Klitgaard, 1991: 30)

In the colonial period the British did not establish structures to bring ethnic groups together, preferring to use existing ethnic structures and ties to rule over respective communities. Separate policies for different ethnic groups had long been considered the most expedient and

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[32] The British, Chinese and Indians dominated the modern, commercial sector, while the Malays were locked into the traditional, rural sector of the national economy.

[33] Jesudason (1990) and Faaland et al (1990) link British economic success to participation in extensive international financial networks. The success of the Chinese is attributed to their ability to raise capital and control labour, often in clan-based organizations (kongsi). In the 19th century the Chinese made notable achievements in tin-mining and plantation culture (sugar, tapioca, pepper). The British provided infrastructure in the form of roads and railways, shipping and insurance, financial and marketing expertise. They also established the first rubber plantations. For most of the 20th century the British have dominated banking, mining and agriculture, while the Chinese are active in redistributive and service trades, and in wage-earning occupations. The British encouraged Chinese immigration to Malaysia, finding the indigenous population unwilling or unsuitable for work in the tin mines. Some Malays found an alternative source of income and prestige in the colonial bureaucracy. The British cultivated the Malay aristocracy by forming the Malay Administrative Service in 1910 and establishing an elite college for the children of upper class Malay families.

[34] According to Jesudason (1990), at independence there was no Malay ownership of mines, manufacturing or plantations, and only an insignificant share of the export and import trade.

5.4 THE MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE

In Malaysia affirmative action is defined in ethnic rather than racial or gender terms. Statutory affirmative action policies favour the Malays, who constitute 55% of the population of 17 million, over the Chinese (35% of the population) and Indians (10%). Religious differences coincide with ethnic ones: the Malays are mostly Muslim, while the Chinese are either Buddhist or Pantheists, and the Indians are mostly Tamils (Thompson, 1993; Klitgaard, 1991). An unranked social system exists in which each group has its own class boundaries and power relations.[29] Very little intermarriage occurs across racial and religious lines, and all communities maintain their distinct languages and cultures assiduously.

At independence in 1957, a small aristocratic Malay elite controlled the political sphere and the bureaucracy, but the bulk of the Malay population was settled in the rural parts of the country, engaged in subsistence agriculture and smallholder rubber cultivation. These Malays were subject to many traditional and feudal restraints (Jesudason, 1990). The Chinese, who had migrated from Southern China to Malaysia in the 19th century to participate in the market economy established by the British, made up 40% of the population, were concentrated in the urban areas and West coast ports of Malaysia, and constituted a relatively wealthy merchant and trader class. Like the Chinese, the Indians had contributed to and benefited from the prosperous colonial economy, and enjoyed a measure of control over trade, commerce and finance.[30]

At independence, three of Malaysia's political parties[31] (each representing one of the major ethnic groups) formed an 'Alliance Party', and evolved a working relationship which has formed the pattern for Malaysian politics since then (Faaland et al, 1990). The new

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[29] Thompson (1993) maintains that a ranked social system is assumed in which ethnic and class boundaries coincide. Jesudason (1990) and Faaland et al (1990), however, explain that each ethnic group has distinct classes.

[30] The British encouraged large scale immigration of Indians to work their rubber plantations. Many Indians are still involved in the management and cultivation of rubber estates.

[31] Three major political parties protect and advance vested communal interests in Malaysia, the Malaysian Chinese Association, founded in 1949; the Malaysian Indian Congress, established in 1946; and the United Malays National Organization, also founded in 1946.

public servants on the 'gravy train', reflect growing scepticism about the integrity of many government and civil service officials.

A second area of difficulty shared by the two countries is that white people in Namibia, as in South Africa, see themselves as being as African as the black majority. Such attitudes imply a reluctance to recognize historical discriminatory practices and a need to redress these in favour of disadvantaged groups. White resistance to affirmative action is not overt in Namibia, but in South Africa the potential for white resentment is considerable, especially in the public service and parastatal organizations. As in Zimbabwe, opposition to a new dispensation does not augur well for the kind of supportive race relations helpful in training and developing black managers.

Namibia's Affirmative Action in Employment Bill declares a need to recruit and promote employees on the basis of their qualifications and skills. Presumably employers will devise ways of adjusting their recruitment, selection and promotion procedures. In South Africa, where educational qualifications are unreliable predictors of performance, a more defined and principled strategy which emphasizes competency and experience is needed. Ways of assessing experience and potential effectiveness of service, rather than relying on credentials, are urgently needed. In South Africa the promotion of competency based education and assessment, and recognition of prior learning, led by organizations such as the Independent Examinations Board and COSATU support this trend.

Samoff (1992: 3) has observed that education in Namibia both suffers and benefits from delayed independence. On the one hand, Namibia must build an education system on the slender foundation inherited from South Africa. On the other hand, Namibians, like South Africans, can draw on the experiences of other (African) countries which have achieved independence in the last three decades. Opportunities exist for innovation, especially in adult education, distance and in-service education, curriculum development, and language policy implementation.

We turn now to Malaysia's experience of affirmative action, chosen for contrast with Southern Africa.

is reaching crisis levels: every year 16 000 young people enter a labour market which offers places in the formal sector to only 4000. Swanepoel points out how important it is for Namibian employers not just to design and implement affirmative action programmes, but to formulate "total employment strategies" which will simultaneously create and redistribute wealth (1992: 24). Meanwhile, Namibia's population is set to double by 2014, threatening to overtake economic gains and efforts to improve living standards.[28]

South African is well placed to benefit from Namibia's experience of affirmative action. It is, for example, significant that Namibia's constitution presents a vision of a nation struggling with reconstruction after a long history of exploitation. The same vision guides the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme, and the constitutional framework established for the Government of National Unity in 1993. For reasons embedded in its own political economy, Namibia's present transformation relies strongly on government subsidies, state-assisted job creation programmes and employment quotas. In South Africa, the economic and social burdens of transformation can be spread more widely between government, the private sector and organizations active in civil society as proposed in the RDP, implying that a cooperative rather than coercive arrangement. So what can South Africa learn from Namibia's experience of affirmative action so far?

First of all, in the public sector, an immediate parallel may be drawn between Namibia and South Africa. Historically, both countries denied or neglected to provide openings, education and training to black people (especially in the areas of policy and management) with serious implications for future levels of effectiveness and efficiency. In both countries there is pressure on politicians to view the public service as a means of extending patronage, and also as a substitute for a social security system. In both countries, in the interests of reconciliation, incumbents of public service posts are protected for lengthy periods of time. In South Africa, many government departments effectively employ two sets of civil servants: the holdovers from the old regime, and newcomers who share the new leadership's ideological framework and terms of reference. This dual civil service is inefficient and costly - in political as well as economic terms. Persistent complaints in the South African media about politicians and

[28] See the Weekly Mail and Guardian, 7-13 January 1994.

that employees in designated groups[27] may acquire skills and qualifications for their advancement. The bill mandates preferential recruitment and the promotion of suitably qualified persons in designated groups to ensure their equitable representation in various positions of employment. Finally, employers are required to set numerical goals, timetables and objectives for affirmative action.

An independent Employment Equity Commission has been assigned to investigate complaints of discriminatory practices in employment, to monitor employer compliance with their obligations and to advise employers concerning the development and implementation of affirmative action programmes (Khoza, 1993; Thompson, 1993). The government has indicated its willingness to address the issue of women's rights and advancement by establishing a Department of Women's Affairs in the Office of the President, but specific constitutional provision such as equal pay for equal work, maternity leave and health care are not enforceable. Du Pisani (1993) notes that women's progress since independence has been the result of a small number of activists in the NGO sector rather than state intervention.

At independence in 1990 white civil servants in Namibia were guaranteed security of tenure, the new SWAPO government taking the view that in the interests of peace and reconciliation, a policy of inclusion of blacks, rather than exclusion of whites should guide the development of the civil service (Hugo and Stack, 1992). However openings for blacks were few until the size of the civil service was increased (from 57 000 at independence to 63 000 in 1993) with the establishment of regional and local authorities (du Pisani, 1993). As in Zimbabwe, the state has become the largest employer in Namibia. Unexpectedly, many of the new jobs in the public sector, earmarked for Namibians of African descent, have been occupied by coloured people, privileged by their higher standard of education and language skills.

The private sector has not taken on many of the young black matriculants, graduates and artisans returning from exile. Loxton (1993) believes that this is likely to cause budgetary pressures and growing discontent among black youth and professionals. Youth unemployment

[27] Those designated by the Commission on Affirmative Action in Employment with reference to the race, gender or physical disability of individuals.

notions of equality, anti-discrimination and redress of past imbalances (Thompson, 1993). Strengthening Article 10, Article 23 of the constitution makes the practice and ideology of racial discrimination a criminal offence, and authorizes Parliament to enact affirmative action to advance persons within Namibia who have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discriminatory laws or practices. Parliament is further authorized to implement policies and programmes aimed at redressing social, economic and educational imbalances in Namibian society, including the public service, the police force, the defence force and the prisons service. Paragraph 3 of Article 23 of the new constitution takes special account of women:

> In the enactment of legislation and the application of any policies and practices ...[it]... shall be permissible to have regard to the fact that women in Namibia have traditionally suffered special discrimination and they need to be encouraged and enabled to play a full, equal and effective role in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the nation.
>
> (cited in Thompson, 1993: 41)

One of the interesting things about this legislation is the possibility that it opens up for providing assistance to disadvantaged groups, determined by gender and socio-economic criteria rather than racial or ethnic criteria. An inadequate education, or poor living conditions, are recognized criteria for affirmative action, and it is acknowledged that not all people earn the right to assistance on the basis of their skin colour. Also evident is the interventionist role given to the government to act in the interests of achieving a 'balanced' society. Du Pisani characterizes this constitutional provision as "both a relatively narrow and comprehensive, state-sanctioned, understanding of affirmative action" (1993: 30).

Redefining society is one thing, but eliminating the inequalities at the heart of Namibian race, ethnic and gender dynamics is another. A legislative programme, the Affirmative Action in Employment Bill, drawn up in consultation with the International Labour Organization, was enacted in 1994. This bill governs affirmative action in the public and private sectors of the economy, and requires organizations to take action to eliminate, revise or amend discriminatory employment practices. One way in which this is to be achieved is through the provision of special training programmes in companies employing over 50 persons, to ensure

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hiring or promotion in the workplace specifically to overcome historically imposed disadvantages for certain minorities (Elliot and Fleras, 1992).

companies, members of the administrations of the eleven ethnic bantustans, and teachers, all of whom, it was believed, had an interest in defending their privileged positions.

Despite the existence of this small, educated black middle class, at independence Namibia faced an education crisis of considerable proportions. As was the case with state provision of education, the efforts of political and private sector organizations had met with very limited success. Between 1974 and 1984 SWAPO provided education for several thousand members, and sent some 5000 people abroad to study at various levels (Ellis, 1984). While in exile, SWAPO leaders set up some training programmes in preparation for independence, but could not make up the huge backlog of skills. Namibia's major mining companies, Roessing Uranium, Consolidated Diamond Mines and Tsumeb Corporation, have for some time provided support for black education, especially for higher education (in the form of bursaries for potential managers and skilled personnel), and for adult and community-based education. But according to Ellis (1984) and Pakarae Kandjou (1986) the combined impact of these projects is not large in relation to the size of the population, and tends to be felt more at the semi-skilled level than at skilled and professional levels.

Presently, less than 50% of the labour force is employed in the formal sector, and the prospects for rapid employment generation in this sector are limited by recessionary pressures. The public sector, including parastatals such as TransNamib and the National Broadcasting Commission, account for 40% of wage labour in Namibia, but are in a fiscally precarious position and plagued by competing bureaucratic ideologies and modes of behaviour (du Pisani, 1993).

At independence in 1990 Namibia adopted a new constitution, of which Article 10 guarantees the equality of all persons before the law, and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or socio-economic status. Modelled on the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,[26] the Namibian constitution attempts to weld the

[26] The Canadian charter addresses conflicts of interest and unequal power relations between various regions (the east, west and centre), between French and English, between aboriginal and non-aboriginal, and between racial minorities and white power-brokers. Since the early 1970s, under official policies of multiculturalism and self-determination, ethnic and racial subgroups in Canada have brought about a fundamental shift in collective status and power. The Employment Equity Act of 1986 entitles the government to institute special measures for

government, have been an important source of state-led consciousness moulding, the more so as library services are poor, and widespread illiteracy makes the market for newspapers and journals thin (Ellis, 1984).

The education provided for black Namibians has been so inadequate that in 1994 only 30-40% of over-15s may be considered literate. So poor was black secondary schooling that between 1970 and 1980 fewer than 300 people gained a university entrance qualification. Until independence Namibia had no university of its own,[23] and there has been a general lack of technical, vocational and teacher training.[24] As in South Africa, pupils have rebelled against a curriculum they find offensive, and against the oppressive regime of school and wider society.

The Nationalist government was slightly more generous to coloured education departments than it was to African ones, allowing them some 30% more expenditure per child. Ellis (1984) believes that the intention here was partly to create divisions between different oppressed groups, and partly to produce skilled and semi-skilled artisans for jobs for which insufficient whites were available. Most coloured people have Afrikaans as their home language; coloured artisans have contributed greatly to Namibia's building and fishing industries, and they are thus well positioned to take advantage of new openings in the public service and in commerce.

As an occupying power under mounting internal and external pressure in the 1970s, South Africa began to foster a black Namibian elite. The aim was to forge a political alliance between whites and some black leaders[25] to resist attempts by a future SWAPO government to change existing arrangements and institutions (Ellis, 1984: 29-30). This small, but significant black middle class consisted of prominent black people who had been appointed to the Boards of Directors of local companies, management trainees in international

[23] The University of Namibia, located in the capital of Windhoek, was established soon after independence.

[24] In 1989 only 25% of Namibia's teachers had matriculated and 20% did not have a Standard Eight certificate (Swanepoel, 1992).

[25] Ellis reports that the original intention in setting up this alliance was to ally black leaders with the office of the Administrator General in creating an independence settlement which excluded SWAPO (1984: 29).

black population are a consequence of deliberate neglect and exclusion in the colonial era,[18] including the period after the second world war when the apartheid system became entrenched.[19] Other parallels with the Zimbabwean, and indeed the South African situation, are the relative affluence of the colonisers and poverty of the indigenous population; widespread, structural unemployment;[20] skewed allocation of resources and services favouring the urban elite; and the prospect of white emigration following independence and majority rule, countered by an influx of exiles, including returning soldiers and party supporters, who expected assistance from the new government.

In the colonial period separate education systems were established for the children of white settlers and for people of colour.[21] 'Christian National Education', which reinforces racial segregation and domination by whites, became the official education policy in Namibia after 1948 when the Afrikaner Nationalists were victorious in a white election. 'Bantu Education' was introduced from 1955 following recommendations of the Van Zyl Commission.[22] Radio broadcasting services, and more recently television broadcasts provided by the South African

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[18] Education was first provided by the Rhenish Missionary Society of Germany, starting in 1842. Aside from introducing literacy through bible study, establishing the Christian faith and fostering Christian communities, missionaries aimed to help blacks become employees and artisans able to participate in a capitalist economy led by Europeans. In contrast to the missionaries, most German settlers feared the education of blacks, believing it threatened their interests as farmers, artisans and traders to have literate and numerate workers. The German government voted funds for black education, under pressure from liberals and socialists at the beginning of the century, but little was actually spent (Ellis, 1984: 14-15).

[19] Apartheid was officially abolished in 1977, but practices such as homelands policy, repression (the Terrorism Act, etc), and deliberate regional and sectoral underdevelopment persisted in the 1980s (Pakarae Kandjou, 1986).

[20] Estimates reported in the Weekly Mail and Guardian (7-13 January 1994) suggest that unemployment runs at between 40 and 50% of the 'formal' workforce, which consists of about 150 000 men and women. An 'informal sector', which includes the rural workforce, consists of between 350 000 and 400 000 people.

[21] As in South Africa, schools and students in Namibia were physically divided according to their ethnic and racial groups. Depending on ethnicity, there were varying teacher training standards and salary scales, different teacher-student ratios, different funds spent per student on education, and different administering authorities (Pakarae Kandjou, 1986: 123).

[22] Ellis (1984) points to the striking similarity between the recommendations of South Africa's Eiselen Commission, which resulted in the Bantu Education Act of 1953, and the 1955 Van Zyl Commission in Namibia. The Van Zyl Commission recommended the introduction of South Africa's Bantu Education syllabus; the handing over of church schools to the state; an education levy on Africans; and the setting up of separate education departments for different racial groups.

5.3 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN NAMIBIA

Namibia's experience of colonial occupation and exploitation goes back to 1884 when the territory was known as the German Protectorate of South West Africa. In the post World War One settlement of 1919 Germany renounced its colonial rights and Namibia became a British Mandate under first the League of Nations, then the United Nations. The British government delegated its mandate to the Union of South Africa, and, although the mandate was formally terminated by the United Nations in 1966, South Africa continued to occupy and effectively rule Namibia until 1990.

Namibia's economic structure and social systems are the products of colonialism and apartheid (Asombang, 1989). In 1992 Namibia had a population of 1.6 million people, of whom approximately 80% were black, 15% were people of mixed race (Rehobothers, Coloureds and Namas) and 5% were white (of mainly German and Afrikaans origin). The economy, which is based on minerals and agriculture, is smaller and less diversified than South Africa's. Up to independence, the South African state retained a monopoly of power in a weak civil society. Namibia's monetary, financial and commercial systems are still dominated by South African institutions which are themselves vulnerable to external shocks and crises.[16] Like Zimbabwe following independence, Namibia has become dependent on expatriate 'experts' and organizations to implement improvements to its educational system and economy.[17] Unlike Zimbabwe, however, foreign aid has been made readily available to Namibia, probably because its new leaders quickly renounced the socialist orientation advanced by the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) prior to independence.

As in Zimbabwe, at independence the human resources of Namibia were characterized by the dominance of white males in decision-making and skilled posts in the private and public sectors of the economy. The relative lack of productive and entrepreneurial skills amongst the

[16] As observed in Chapter One, South Africa's mineral-led, export-oriented economy is particularly vulnerable to international political and economic forces.

[17] See Samoff (1992) for an account of international advisers and their advice on education in Namibia.

A sixth lesson from Zimbabwe may be seen in the trend in the private sector towards occupational advancement of blacks in white corporate structures. There was little or no pressure on whites to accommodate racial or cultural diversity, as is increasingly the case in South Africa. Instead, in Zimbabwe, there is mounting pressure from blacks for government policy to facilitate black business ownership and development.[15] Such demands are likely to be made in South Africa, too, especially in view of the persistence and strength of black consciousness ideology. In the 1980s black businessmen established organizations such as the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC) and Black Management Forum (BMF), which advocate black leadership and ownership in a market economy. In the 1990s black-led organizations which mobilize savings and investment, such as New African Investments Limited and African Bank, have attracted a s[illegible] following.

A seventh lesson for South Africa can be found in statements made by successful black executives in Zimbabwe, who point to their educational qualifications, achievements and experience as reasons for their success. Clearly, a sufficiently high standard of general education is needed to provide a base for on-the-job training and the acquisition of valuable experience. The existence of such a standard in South Africa is questionable in view of the longstanding crisis in black education (see Chapter Four). The alternative to providing an acceptable standard of education - reliance on qualified expatriates and South Africans educated abroad - may be regarded as unsatisfactory because it rewards already privileged groups and entrenches dependency relationships. Establishing broad access to a high standard of general education, as recommended in the ANC's 1993 education policy document and the government's 1995 White Paper on Education and Training, is probably the long-term key to successful black occupational advancement in South Africa.

Leaving Zimbabwe, we turn now to Namibia, the country most closely connected to South Africa in terms of past racial policies and social practice.

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[15] It has been found that emerging Zimbabwean businessmen tend to lack financial, management, technical and marketing skills. Agencies and funds are being sought to provide training, research and business extension services (Leadership, 1993: 178).

draws on two sources: the broad account of the historical period provided in Chapter Four, and the biographical profiles of the 46 men and women interviewed in this study. The biographical profiles, contained in Appendix Two, combine factual information about subjects' birthplace, education, work experience and careers with more qualitative information about their views of themselves, their upbringing and education, formative influences and role models. This information is too detailed and lengthy to be included in this chapter, but forms a valuable ethnographic resource for the study as a whole. A brief overview of the race, gender and employer of the managers who were interviewed is provided in the table below.

TABLE TWO

BREAKDOWN OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE IN TERMS OF RACE, GENDER AND EMPLOYER

Employer	Total Managers Interviewed	African Managers		White Managers		Coloured Managers		Asian Managers	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Bank	10	7	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Oil Company	11	10	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Conglomerate	13	5	0	4	0	0	1	2	1
Retailer	12	2	5	2	2	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	46	24	6	7	2	0	2	4	1

The exploration of black managers' background and experience which follows on from this introduction highlights problems in certain macro-level theories which attempt to explain the ways in which social background molds educational performance and the social relations of the workplace. The explanations to be illuminated in this way are the 'social pathology' thesis; Althusser's elaboration of Marxist reproduction theory; and Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital and the school as a conservative force. Reflections on these theories are placed in the conclusion to the chapter, but occasional references to concepts associated with them appear at various points in the text.

CHAPTER SIX

BLACK MANAGERS IN CORPORATE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMMES: SOCIAL BACKGROUND, UPBRINGING, AND EDUCATION[1]

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter One of this thesis presented a rationale for investigating the perceptions of participants in affirmative action programmes, and for attempting to understand the experiences and dilemmas which individuals face. It was noted there that scant attention had been given to the personal experience and perceptions of black managers in South Africa. The focus of most recent work in the field has been on evaluating the scope and impact of affirmative action policies in the public and private sectors, and only rarely on individuals' accounts of their actions, feelings and thoughts.[2]

The present chapter aims to explore the influence of social background, family life and formal education on black managers' self concept and outlook. The motivation for such an exploration derives in large measure from Mills (1978) who urges researchers to exercise 'sociological imagination', a quality which allows us to grasp the relations between history and biography within society. Sociological imagination requires us to ask questions such as:

> What varieties of men and women now prevail in this society and in this period? And what varieties are coming to prevail? In what ways are they selected and formed, liberated and repressed, made sensitive and blunted? What kinds of 'human nature' are revealed in the conduct and character we observe in this society in this period? And what is the meaning for 'human nature' of each and every feature of the society we are examining?
>
> (Mills, 1978: 20)

This chapter aims to exercise sociological imagination in relation to black managers involved in corporate affirmative action programmes in South Africa. To meet this aim the chapter

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[1] Material from this chapter was presented at the International Conference on Adult Education and Training and its Role in Reconstruction and Development, held in Cape Town from 7 to 10 November. The paper 'Black managers in corporate affirmative action programmes: social background, upbringing and education' is contained in the conference proceedings, published by the University of the Western Cape, Centre for Adult and Continuing Education.

[2] The condition of the white male manager class remains a pre-occupation of several publications. See, for example, the Financial Mail of 12 May 1995, whose cover story deals with the "dangerous exclusions" of white managers in the wake of affirmative action programmes in private and para-statal companies in South Africa.

development, which may take place formally, at educational institutions, or informally, on the job. In both Zimbabwe and Namibia at independence, people with recognized educational qualifications were doubly advantaged - in recruitment and promotion to high level positions - in both the public and private sectors. In South Africa the ANC's lifelong education policy promises, in the medium to long term, to address the problem of poor quality general education in South Africa, while making a strong case for national certificates recognizing adults' competencies, as well as their education levels.

Achieving the goal of equality is a much harder task than many people have thought. This enquiry into affirmative action in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Malaysia has shown some of the difficulties of devising and implementing policy at national level. It has also, though to a lesser extent, shown the potential of affirmative action programmes to help South Africans move towards greater equality in the workplace, for all people in society.

The next chapter of this thesis represents a shift from the macro level issues of this chapter and the previous one to a consideration of the ways in which a sample of individuals in four South African business organizations experience and interact with social policies.

The Malaysian and Zimbabwean experiences of affirmative action show that problems of social inequality are not satisfactorily addressed by legislation outlawing discriminatory practices alone. The greater challenge is to give effect to ideals. Namibia's affirmative action in employment legislation provides a potential (but untested) model for South Africa on the establishment of an agency to promote, monitor and regulate affirmative action in the field of employment. Following Namibia's lead, in 1993 the ANC, COSATU and the Black Management Forum proposed the establishment of an agency to regulate affirmative action, which would involve representatives from business, labour and government in setting employment targets and time limits for affirmative action in terms of broad parameters to be determined by the government. Rewards for compliance and penalties for non-compliance were foreseen. Such proposals have the merit of providing a flexible, inclusive and temporary framework for affirmative action programmes. The disadvantages of the proposals are threefold. First, there is the political challenge of mediating new entitlements and vested interests in a unitary state, mentioned above. Secondly, there is the danger of establishing a huge (and therefore expensive and inefficient) public service bureaucracy to oversee the implementation of affirmative action. Thirdly, there is the risk of alienating private sector employers - the state's new partners in reconstruction and development - who are likely to view such legislation as unwarranted interference in a 'free' labour market.

In any case, laws aimed at social change are not self-enforcing, nor are they enforced only by the agencies officially assigned to that task. Political climate, public opinion and organizational culture appear to be equally important in promoting affirmative action. The Zimbabwean experience showed the importance of good race relations in furthering management development within companies, while in Malaysia, there appears to be a need for popular education to address issues of ethnicity and communalism. Alongside sensitive and comprehensive legislation, and effective monitoring agencies, then, education of adults, to assist with human relations, cross-cultural and inter-racial communications, awareness, experiential skills and social infrastructure, has an important role to play in constructing and implementing affirmative action programmes in South Africa.

This chapter has shown that education and training are of critical importance in affirmative action. High quality general education provides a base for further skills training and

geographical location, rather than the broad racial or ethnic criteria favoured in Zimbabwe and Malaysia. With respect to the specific situation in South Africa, Justice Goldstone has the following constructive suggestion to make:

> I believe that one can find objective criteria apart from race both in the education field and in the employment field. One can find criteria such as bad school education. I believe that one such criterion could be the attendance of a Department of Education and Training school. That would qualify someone to benefit from affirmative action. Other criteria could be, for example, living in squa'or or other bad conditions, not having had a proper environment for developing one's school years, and having to live in exile or having been a political detainee. I believe that these are objective criteria and they are important for this reason, mainly because they do not just assume that people deserve the benefit of skin colour simply because of their skin colour.
>
> (Quoted in Thompson, 1993: 41-2)

As the Malaysian experience indicates, such entitlements should be temporary, guiding policy and practice for only so long as targeted groups are underrepresented in the workforce or disadvantaged in terms of access to social services.

With respect to reconstruction, affirmative action strategies appear to function best when they provide many inter-related avenues for advancement. In Malaysia, affirmative action strategies embrace the public service, private employment, education, land ownership, the licensing of businesses and public trusts to buy companies on behalf of individuals. This range of measures offers Malays wider access to the country's economic and social resources than Zimbabwe's policy, which is limited to the public service.

The challenge to the new government of South Africa, then, is to find ways of extending resources, and access to them, to truly disadvantaged South Africans, and to clarify the place of affirmative action in policies framing social reconstruction and economic development. Insofar as affirmative action is tied up with reconstruction and nation building, it is a social policy as well as an economic one, and must be linked to moral renewal and the discipline of an alternative ideology. In the medium to long term, efforts to help black South Africans will reside in wide ranging social and educational programmes which nurture self-reliance, resourcefulness and positive commitment amongst all South Africans towards a more just and equal society.

differences should serve as criteria for the distribution of power and rewards, may find that, as in Canada, competing demands for socio-cultural equality and group entitlements are exceedingly difficult to accommodate (Elliott and Fleras, 1992). Efforts to sustain national unity and state integrity must be balanced with the rights of individuals, interest groups (including women and the disabled) and racial and ethnic minorities. Central governments, having allocated themselves the power and responsibility to manage affirmative action, can find themselves in a political quagmire in coping with the politics of entitlement. Malaysia's violent 1968 riots, in which hundreds were killed, is an example of the extremes to which people may be driven if they perceive that their political interests and economic standing are threatened by measures which favour one ethnic or racial group over another.

It is still too soon to predict whether effective policies and workable programmes will materialize from Namibia's and South Africa's new constitutional arrangements and draft legislation. In both Namibia and South Africa, any transformation will depend on economic growth, imaginative leadership and the political commitment to allocate power and resources at appropriate levels. Nevertheless several criteria for successful affirmative action policy at national level emerge from the study. These criteria are an expression of the two main objectives of affirmative action - redistribution and reconstruction - which are evident in each of the countries studied here.

Affirmative action in Malaysia and Zimbabwe contributed favourably to redistribution of wealth and status between racial or ethnic groups, but failed to address inequalities within groups. In both of these countries, affirmative action policies emphasized procedural fairness over distributive fairness, and resulted in the growth and power of elite groups. In South Africa, inequalities between blacks in and out of employment are widening rapidly, perhaps faster than the inequalities between whites and blacks are closing (Bundy, 1992). Affirmative action legislation based on broad racial preference, insensitive to the nuances of disadvantage, may only strengthen the geographical, generational and class divisions already characteristic of South African society.

An alternative way to promote redistribution may be to define the target group for affirmative action closely, as in Namibia, where disadvantage is determined by gender, class and

interests. The method adopted in Malaysia of labelling any discussion of affirmative action as seditious was familiar to South Africans in the apartheid era, but would seriously damage the new government's claims to nurturing democracy and justice.

Manoevering during the pre-election negotiations in South Africa suggested that accommodations were being made amongst powerful groups which are similar to those made in pre-independence Malaysia. One scenario had it that black South Africans would take control of the administration, police and armed forces, while white capital would continue to control commerce and finance, and to determine economic policy. Afrikaners would be gradually displaced from employment in the civil service, parastatal organizations and agriculture, swelling the ranks of the poor and unemployed, and possibly destabilizing society. Such scenarios imply that affirmative action strategies can indeed forge new understandings, even alliances between groups willing to redistribute power, status and wealth, but at a cost to democratic decision making, and to existing political, class and race relations.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Zimbabwe, Namibia and Malaysia are all multi-ethnic societies in which the majority group wields political power, but is relatively weak economically. Deeply rooted demarcations - in terms of class structures, population location, political organization, economic activities and cultural values - permeate society in all three countries. In Malaysia, despite the world's foremost programme in favour of a majority group with political power, enormous inequalities remain. Political leaders in all three countries are faced with multiple, often contradictory, goals and demands, including assuaging ethnic or class groups' anxieties over questions of power in society. Ultimately, the legitimacy of these leaders depends on how imaginatively and energetically they deal with the challenges presented by social and political forces in their countries.

International models of affirmative action are instructive about the ways in which affirmative action is defined at national policy level, and the possibilities and difficulties of implementing policies in a multiethnic, unitary state. A country like Namibia, with constitutional provision for affirmative action modelled on Canada's assertion that racial, ethnic and gender

It has been argued (Phillips, 1992; Faaland et al, 1990) that the New Economic Policy was designed to strengthen accommodation and cooperation between the elites of the major ethnic groups rather than as a means to solve problems of poverty and inequity in Malaysian society. From this perspective, the prime objective of all Malaysian policies is to intensify cooperation between, rather than integration of ethnic groups. Weiner describes the social contract initiated by the most powerful groups in Malaysia thus:

> ...the Chinese business community successfully argued for an economic development policy which would promote growth by enabling multi-nationals to enter, creat[ing] a tax structure which provided incentives for investment, and... permit[ing] the free market to operate. In return the Chinese would agree that the Malays could control the administrative services, the police and the army. Stated bluntly, the deal was that the Chinese could make money while the Malays could run an administration that pursued pro-growth policies.
>
> (Weiner, 1993: 7)

Could such a deal be struck in South Africa? Plaut (1992) believes not:

> It is hard to believe that the ANC having struggled for decades against racism, would seek to base its policies on a quota system that will only sharpen racial divisions and ethnic tensions within the country. There is no more certain way of engraining prejudice than using a system that allocates job and other benefits on the basis of skin colour.
>
> (Plaut, 1992: 43)

What lessons can South Africans derive from Malaysia's experience of affirmative action? First of all, affirmative action policies based on racial or ethnic identity can result in violent race and class conflict. If people are continually subjected to dominance, and their interests and goals are neglected or dismissed, they may resort to extreme measures to exert some power over the other group. In Malaysia, attempts to create a more equal society economically have resulted in a socially more fragmented and contested one.

Secondly, the Malaysian experience shows clearly that ethnically based targets and quotas do not guarantee redistribution of wealth to all of the community at whom they are aimed. It is extremely difficult to target disadvantaged groups, and easy to benefit those who are already advantaged.

Thirdly, there is the difficulty of eliminating affirmative action practices once they have been legislated. Racial or ethnic privileges become entrenched, and groups rally to protect vested

There is little doubt that these affirmative action measures entrenched the political and social position of middle and upper class Malays, who now dominate an expanded public sector and fill virtually all the highest policy-making posts (Loxton, 1993). One indicator of Malay economic advancement is the ownership of corporate assets. In 1970 the Malay share of these assets was just under 2%, but by 1990 this had grown to 20%, still short of the NEP target of 30% (Hart, 1994).[42] However Plaut observes that:

> Many businesses continue to be controlled by Chinese or Indian owners operating through nominee companies owned by Malay front men. So complex are such arrangements that they are almost impossible to disentangle. More importantly, the quotas have left an indelible anger and bitterness that now divides Malaysian society... ...Even within the Malay community, the policy has helped to limit the wealth that it promised to bring to all of the people. An elite has grown fat on acting for the front men for the Chinese businessmen wishing to win government contracts and the licences necessary to conduct business. Income disparities are now greater within the Malay community than within any other ethnic group. The Malay poor are increasingly turning away from the ruling party, as the October 1990 elections indicated.
>
> (Plaut, 1992: 22)

Puthucheary (1991) concludes that defining affirmative action in ethnic terms has contributed to strengthened ethnic institutions, to the growth of a Malay middle class, and to a position of Malay political hegemony. Even Sachs (1992), who favours the Malaysian model for South Africa, concedes that the price of greater equality between ethnic groups has been the strengthening of communal rather than national identity. Phillips (1992) cautions that:

> ...the Malaysian experience has shown that compensatory discrimination is counter productive in the effect it has upon race relations: it encourages and feeds racial xenophobia. (Phillips, 1992: 354)

Economic inequalities between ethnic groups have been contained, though not reduced,[43] while inequalities within each community have widened. The really poor members of all ethnic communities have been neglected. Income disparities are now greater within the Malay community than within any other ethnic group.

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[42] Weiner (1993: 6-7) quotes 2% of equity capital in Malay hands in 1969. By 1990 Malay equity had reached 22%, much of it in the hands of Malay institutions rather than individuals.

[43] In 1970, an estimate of income inequality of non-Malays to Malays was expressed as a ratio of 7:4. It is still 7:4 today (Faaland et al, 1990).

By restructuring wealth ownership in this way, a Malay bourgeoisie was created. Existing Malayan preferences were extended in the public and private sector and in the education system. Land settlement schemes, agricultural credit and price supports were introduced. A larger proportion of civil service posts, scholarships for university places, business permits and licences were reserved for Malays. Special efforts were made to develop Malay business, with public trusts set up in the fields of insurance, construction, engineering, securities, property and trade, and joint ventures established in mining, hotels and container transport (Klitgaard, 1991). At the same time, the constitution was amended to ban public debate on 'sensitive' issues such as language, citizenship and the special provisions favouring Malays. It is now an offence under the Sedition Act to discuss any form of amendment to the positive discrimination provisions of the constitution (Thompson, 1993: 39). The capacity of the workforce to organize[39] is also tightly circumscribed, in order to sustain high levels of international investment (Hart, 1994).

Education was given a central role in the new development strategy. It was considered a vehicle to modernize society, to equalize opportunities for all and to promote national unity. Specifically, the government embarked on a vigorous educational programme for Malays, especially in management, technical and scientific fields. Technical and scientific colleges were established.[40] More facilities were provided in rural areas, with special attention to pre-schooling. Schools became the "guardians of national character", charged with inculcating the moral and political sentiments which promote national cohesion and consensus (Morris and Marsh, 1992: 253).[41] The government offered partial financing of in-service training schemes in the private sector, to be undertaken individually, jointly, or within a particular industry.

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[39] The workforce in the export-led production of textiles and electronics is largely composed of women.

[40] Today there is a relatively low level of provision of technical and vocational education, reflecting parental and community expectations that an academically oriented curriculum provides access to university and modern sector employment (Morris and Marsh, 1992). Klitgaard (1991) reports an exodus of Chinese and Indian students abroad, where the academic preparation of students is considered superior. In 1987, 60% more students were abroad than in Malaysia, but nine-tenths of Malaysia's 35 000 unemployed graduates were Malays.

[41] According to Morris and Marsh (1992) these values include a work ethic, national unity and moral values such as achievement, diligence, self-reliance and competition.

tin mines from their foreign owners[38] because they needed continued British presence and military protection in a confrontation with Indonesia (Jesudason, 1990: 53).

Economic and political factors played an equal part in the 1969 riots. Manufacturing employment and land development had not kept up with population growth. Unemployment rose in all ethnic groups. There was an 11% decline in the mean household income of the bottom 40% of the population. Chinese access to citizenship meant their increased political strength in elections. The Chinese resisted imposition of Malay as the only official language and resented the special provisions for the Malays entrenched in the constitution. They voted for the opposition in the 1969 elections, threatening Malay political hegemony.

Following the riots, parliament was suspended and the country was ruled until 1971 by the National Operations Council (NOC), the executive of the ruling party.

> The NOC concluded that the major cause of the riots was wide-spread Malay economic discontent. There can be no doubt that this was the case. While a small group of the ruling elite had benefited from the positive discrimination schemes, the overall economic position of the Malays, the majority of whom were concentrated in the rural areas, was adverse. One study shows that 44 percent of rural households in 1957 had a monthly income of below the poverty line. By 1970 after 13 years of continuous and vigorous growth in the economy, 41,7 percent was still in this category. Despite undisputed Malay domination in politics and government decision-making, there was little tangible evidence of the benefits.
>
> (Phillips, 1992: 350-1)

After 1970, the state, led by a younger generation of Malay leaders, took on a highly interventionist role in the economy under the banner of 'New Economic Policy'. This policy was introduced to accelerate the transfer of wealth to Malays, and to prevent the erosion of their already established political position. Targets were set so that by 1990, Malay corporate ownership would be 30%, non-Malay 40% and foreign 30% (in contrast to 2%, 38% and 60% respectively in 1970). Controls over activities in the private sector were introduced, and the state enterprise sector was rapidly expanded (Faaland, 1990).

[38] Such bids would have been useful in mobilizing political support for the new regime. Plantations and mines are not technologically demanding, and are relatively easy for local people to manage.

representing Malaysia's major ethnic groups. In exchange for the relaxation of citizenship requirements and a tacit understanding that Chinese economic interests would be safeguarded, Malays were granted political paramountcy in society. Islam was established as the state religion and Malay as the national language. Malay sultans were preserved within the framework of constitutional democracy (Jesudason, 1990). Quotas for government jobs were extended for Malays, continuing earlier colonial policy. This led to a situation in which the group targeted for affirmative action was also the group with the most political power. Malays were in a position to implement affirmative action according to the law, and also to give the law its widest possible interpretation (Puthucheary, 1991).

The Constitutional Commission which framed Malaysia's new constitution introduced a 'sunset' clause which was to be reviewed 15 years after independence. In the event, the review of legislation scheduled for 1972 was expunged from the constitution following civil upheavals in 1969, in which hundreds were killed. The Malay regiment was accused of shooting civilians, looting Chinese shops and raping Chinese women.[37]

What factors led to the uprising? It seems that deep-seated structural problems - economic dualism and inequality - overwhelmed the delicate balance of the Alliance Party's 'bargain'. Between 1957 and 1969 there had been little state interference in the operations of Chinese and foreign business groups, and the economy grew at the rapid rate of 5.7% per year (Klitgaard, 1991). The laissez-faire framework was successful in generating national income and diversifying the economy, but brought greater benefits to the large foreign sector and domestic Chinese business class than to the Malays, who made little commercial advance. The government made modest attempts to promote Malay economic advancement, but found that Malays were not in a favourable position to take over the ownership of rubber plantations and

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citizenship, while non-Malays would recognize the special position of Malays (Faaland et al, 1990).

[37] Jesudason (1990: 33) believes that the ubiquitous presence of Chinese traders and shopkeepers in nearly every village made the Chinese economic role seem more threatening to the Malays than the Europeans' role, although at the time of the uprising, Europeans were more dominant economically, controlling 60 to 75% of the export trade and 60 to 70% of the import trade.

6.4 EDUCATION

With respect to the quality and personal significance of their education, African managers can be divided into two groups, an 'older' and 'younger' generation of managers. The older generation (Mgengebule, Mohapi, Ramasia, H. Khoza, Koza) were of schoolgoing age in the 1950s, and experienced the transition from missionary to Bantu education (see Chapter Four, and Hyslop, 1987). They reported general satisfaction with the calibre of their schooling prior to the introduction of Bantu Education, reflected in the high pass rates in end-of-year examinations of their schools. These respondents received good instruction in English and mathematics, and were often taught in mission schools by catholic nuns and monks from America or Ireland. Classes were large and discipline was strict, but there was space for a bright youngster to perform well and be acknowledged. In anticipation of lower standards of teaching and support following the introduction of Bantu education in 1960, some of the respondents were pressed to complete their schooling at an accelerated pace, combining two years in one, enabling them to write the externally moderated National Senior Certificate examinations required for study at tertiary level. None of the respondents reported difficulty in rising to this challenge. Their confidence in their ability to perform well academically was well established in youth. Sentiments such as the following were common amongst this group:

> I [heard] people say 'We're being given an inferior education, we're not being taught the right things' ... but I'd always stop and say, 'What about my father and his friends - doctors, pharmacists, teachers - it can't be that bad. And when I went overseas [to study], and I could cope with everything, I would think, 'Well, how inferior can it be?'. (Mgobozi, 14 March 1995)

Younger respondents were more inclined than older ones to point out the shortcomings of their education. As several writers have noted (Christie, 1991; Bundy 1987) an unintended consequence of Bantu education has been the politicization of schools and the creation of critical thinkers rather than the passive recipients of knowledge intended by its architects. These younger respondents mentioned large classes, dilapidated classrooms, few materials, severe corporal punishment, and progressively higher drop out and failure rates in each year of school. Some respondents (Madi, Mofokeng, Radebe, Sibiya) were fortunate to have been taught, and inspired, by teachers who went beyond the prescribed Bantu education syllabus, and who provided individual attention and support. But others complain of dispirited and poorly qualified teachers, or no teachers at all, particularly in English, mathematics and science (Duma, Montso, Makhoti, Phasha). Mohokare sums up his schooling in

been unable to complete their own education for a variety of reasons,[12] and were determined that their children should go to school and escape the drudgery of their own existences. Makhothi's parents believed that education was "the answer to life's problems", and Makwela's family considered education a gateway "beyond [which] you could do anything". Mgobozi's parents linked education to future prosperity and security, saying "We can never give you money, but we can make sure you can make your own money later". Education determined what you were, or could be in life. It was "something no one could take away from you" (Phasha). Parents, grandparents and older siblings often made financial sacrifices in order that youngsters might continue their schooling in hard times (Job, Mohapi, Montso, Phasha and Thibedi).

Heath[13] (1983) claims that parents who are "school or public-institution oriented" (the professional middle classes) initiate their children into ways of knowing, evaluating, performing and communicating which reflect closely the transactional patterns used in schools. So the parents of white and Asian managers, and of female managers, who were generally better educated than the parents of African male managers, were better placed to bring up their children in ways which complement the conventions of schooling, with the effect of making their success at school more likely. A confirmation of this may be found in the accounts of several female managers (Chen, Job, Mpulo, Petersen) who observed that their parents read for information and pleasure and engaged frequently in discussions of current events, while Lukhele, an African man whose parents were unschooled, remarked "You know, my parents never knew whether I'm progressing or not at school. They were just happy I'm going to school". However, there is no indication that the children of middle class parents performed better in school than those of working class parents. And in the eyes of working class parents, going to school was a way of breaking the pattern of poverty and powerlessness, not a way of perpetuating it.

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[12] Reasons for leaving school early were suggested by managers in interviews, confirming the correlation of literacy with poverty and exclusion in South Africa described by Lyster (1992). Reasons include the shortage of secondary schools, the expense of schooling, and demands placed on individuals to contribute to the family's income, to assist with domestic chores and to marry and start their own households.

[13] Heath (1983) conducted a detailed and influential ethnographic study, Ways with Words, which showed compatibilities and incompatibilities between home culture/communication patterns and school culture/communication patterns across different groups in the same locality in the United States.

being granted special privileges and status by their parents and siblings.[11] Certainly parental power and authority seem to have been balanced by their daughters' developing sense of autonomy and self worth, gained in part from their superior education. In these girls' homes, household chores were reportedly shared equally between sisters and brothers, and it was expected that girls, like boys, would finish secondary school and qualify in professional fields.

Once again, a different picture of family life appears in the accounts of white and Asian managers. Materially, their childhood homes were more comfortable and secure than those of African managers. Their fathers and mothers were present; family incomes were stable and sufficient for family members' needs. Children were neither fostered out nor required to contribute to household finances through their labour. Most male children did chores around the house or farm, for which they were not paid, but from which they gained a sense of personal and social responsibility (Du Toit, Tabbner, McCloskey, Schreiber). As might be expected, these children had more free time and a greater range of recreational interests and activities than was common in the childhood homes of African managers. White and Asian female managers often describe their family relationships as "close" and "caring", but most white male managers do not. Two of the managers expressed a degree of alienation from the strict mores of their family homes (Du Toit, Fernandez) while others indicated a strong desire in boyhood to escape paternal authority and the conventions of middle class life (Jithoo, Tabbner).

The self-concept and life opportunities of the black managers interviewed in this study were affected profoundly by family values surrounding formal education, and their own experience of school. Earlier in this chapter, we noted that many of the parents of male African managers had benefited from only a few years of schooling, and were semi-literate. They had

[11] Sacco (1991) reports that the power base of black families in which daughters attended Catholic 'open schools' during the 1980s appeared to shift. Parental authority was subtly taken over by these children who became more elevated than their parents through their superior education. Eventually they became reified members of the family.

and several elders. Other managers gave accounts of rigid discipline in their youth, of corporal punishment and unyielding paternal authority. But many managers see this severity as a source of their personal strength and security. Dumse and Thibedi, for example, claim that their fathers' authority and intervention were instrumental in getting them to complete their secondary schooling at a time when they were diverted by the disruptions in Reef townships in the late 1970s. Parents worked hard to ensure that their children got an education, and their children knew this. As Duma observed,

> Because I had a strong background, it was not easy for me to be drafted into activities other than schooling and getting on in life. (Duma, 16 September 1994)

If fathers exerted a coercive power over their children, moral authority was often vested in mothers. Many managers (Chaba, Jithoo, Job, Kgantsi, H. Khoza, Muir, Ogle, Phasha, Ramasia) speak of their mothers as resilient, resourceful people who inspired or guided, rather than forced, their children to overcome the disadvantages of their situations. Phasha, for example, remembers her mother, a domestic worker, saying:

> I know how difficult it is for one who is not educated. I don't want you to experience what I have experienced. It's not nice to work for somebody, I can tell you. I'm a domestic worker, but I want to see my kids being something in the future. (Phasha, 1 March 1995)

Koza, too, describes her mother, a farm labourer, as a "dignified" and "defiant" woman, "very aware of her oppression". While she despaired of changing her own circumstances, she was determined that her children would not be "duped or diminished by whites", and conscientized them at an early age (Koza, 22 October, 1994). Such parents were highly aware of a need for their children to appropriate the 'cultural capital' which had been denied to them in their youth.

Perhaps surprisingly, given the patriarchal society in which they grew up, most black female managers reported that in their girlhoods they were not burdened with gender-specific roles and assignments (Chaba, Chen, Job, Mgobozi, Mpulo, Petersen). The fact that these girls often attended former mission schools, at considerable expense, may have contributed to their

Amongst African men the phenomenon was so common that it was not even mentioned unless the researcher specifically broached the subject. Several managers had begun to work as boys of eleven or twelve years of age, when the family's income became insufficient to cover basic needs such as food and clothing. Kgantsi, for example, started to work when his parents divorced and his father left home, withdrawing his financial support. Kgantsi's first job was weeding the garden beds at the house of his mother's employer. Later he began mowing the lawns of neighbours in Diepkloof, Soweto, using one of the first petrol driven lawnmowers seen in the townships, owned by his older brother. On Sundays he sold eggs door to door for a township entrepreneur, and earned a good income. He bought clothes, text books for school and food, and remembers that he had enough pocket money to take his girlfriend to the cinema. Another manager, Lukhele, described his initiation into wage labour as follows:

> I was already working at thirteen. I was digging trenches in Lenasia,[10] and would be paid by a plate of curry, or get furious and go home crying if there was no payment. Or I'd go to the golf course over the weekends and try and be a caddy. Eventually I managed to get a weekend job as a gardener where I earned something like R36 a month.... Come school holidays there were part-time jobs. Since that early age I've never really rested ... but those are things which contributed to my steadfastness and patience, my interest in human beings, and of course my religion. (Lukhele, 22 February 1995)

In some cases (Radebe, H. Khoza, Koza, Madi) children assisted their parents in their livelihoods (trading, hawking, cooking, mending) after school and on weekends, until they were old enough to find jobs which generated an independent income. Several managers observed that their early experience of work taught them self-reliance and a sense of personal responsibility; it also honed their entrepreneurial and people management skills, and in some cases developed an interest in marketing and sales, which was pursued later in life (H. Khoza, Lukhele, Sibiya).

Many managers' accounts present a picture of a patriarchal society in which children were both protected and exploited as resources. The balance between protection and nurturing on the one hand, and exploitation and brutality on the other, is uneven. Mohokare, for example, recalls regular beatings for minor misdemeanours, and, in the absence of an older sister, being made to "be a girl", that is, do domestic chores for a family consisting of nine children

[10] Lenasia is an 'Indian suburb' to the south west of Johannesburg, built in the 1960s. Many of its first residents had been evicted from the inner city township of Mayfair, which became a white residential area.

> educated so that we would be able to survive on our own without going to work for a white. (Madi, 16 September 1994)
>
> My parents brought us up in the right way, I think, disciplined and hard working. (Naidoo, 27 October 1994)
>
> My father was uncompromising ... very, very conservative. [For example] traditionally we are respectful and cannot sit and drink with our fathers unless it has been allowed to sit down. You can't smoke in front of your father or any elder. Now, you know, I don't drink. I never started drinking. ... Today [my father's friends] all say, "no, man, you are old enough now - you can actually drink". But [my father] is the first one to say "No, no he doesn't drink." It's nice in a way. (Dumse, 11 May 1994)

More than half of the managers interviewed in this study are the eldest sons (or daughters) in their families, and were accustomed from an early age to special status and responsibility. Hopes for their success in life were high. As is often the case with first-born children, the family's moral and emotional values were taken on at an early age. Many say that they are still guided by their relatives' and neighbours' expectations and aspirations for them (Dumse, Kgantsi, Koza, Mofokeng, Ogle, Thibedi,) particularly with respect to their education and careers. They were expected to be hardworking, disciplined and responsible, and to be respectful and obedient to elders. They were expected to perform well in school and to set an example of diligence and sobriety to younger siblings. As an indicator of their success in meeting these expectations, many black managers overcame hardships to become the first in their families to matriculate or to graduate from university (Duma, H. Khoza, J. Khoza, Khumalo, Lukhele, Mabitsela, Madi, Makwela, Montso, Mohapi, Qabaka, Radebe, Sibiya).

Sometimes boys, and occasionally girls, were fostered out to relatives in times of financial hardship (Kgampe, Khumalo, Mabitsela, Makwela, Thasha, Qabaka, Rachidi), an event which may have disrupted their sense of security, but which also forced children to be flexible in adapting to new surroundings and people. Many managers describe their family connections today as "close knit" and say that their families are the most important things in their lives (Duma, J. Khoza, Mofokeng, Ogle, Petersen, Radebe, Ramasia). They feel a responsibility to help others, especially younger siblings, to "get on in life".

Unlike most of the white managers interviewed in this study (and the female managers of all races) many black male managers worked in part-time wage employment as children.

middle classes,[9] in which the cultural and social organization of traditional society was considered "backward" (Chaba, Job). These families were several generations removed from rural life and poverty, unlike the families of many male managers, who were more recent arrivals in the city. Generally the parents of female managers had been educated to secondary school level and were employed in skilled occupations. So, for example, Mpulo's father was a journalist, Mgobozi's father was a health educator, Chaba's was a businessman and Job's a government official. In contrast to the situation of many of the male managers, the mothers of female managers were usually educated. They had been trained (and frequently still practised) as nurses (Chaba, Job, Mpulo, Petersen) or social workers (Mgobozi). In these middle class homes, female managers remember that their parents engaged in reading and discussion of current events, and played socio-culturally significant roles in their communities.

The picture of occupational status is different for Asian and white respondents in the study. Among the Asians interviewed, Jithoo's father owned a printing business, Chinniah's father was an accountant, Govender's father was a farmer, and Chen's father owned a garage. These parental occupations place Asian managers firmly in the petit bourgeoisie, on a plane with, or slightly superior to, the parents of female African managers. Paternal occupations amongst white respondents are generally of still higher status: Rayneard's father was a naval officer and engineer; Du Toit's, Tabbner's and LeSueur's fathers were managers in large organizations; and Muir's father was an entrepreneur. Only McCloskey, whose father was a small farmer in Ireland, falls outside this pattern of white advantage.

6.3 FAMILY LIFE

Most African and Asian managers consider themselves fortunate to have grown up in an extended family, and they attribute many of their values (their work ethic, the significance attached to education, the importance of living in harmony with others) to upbringings which they describe as "conservative", "protected" or "strict".

> Values were very clear in our home. The values were that you must be educated. My parents were independent, disciplined, with strong ethics. We [children] were being

[9] See In Hausse (1993) and Marks (1986) for an account of the small and fractured grouping of the African middle classes in the pre-Apartheid period.

infirm elders. Invariably they had a gamut of jobs after school and on weekends to supplement the family income.

In households in which the father was present, and in regular employment, mothers might remain housewives or work outside the home, occasionally as hawkers and factory workers, but most frequently in domestic service, the largest source of employment for black women in South Africa. Cock (1984) and Bozzoli (1991) have described the long hours, poor pay and lack of holidays accorded South African domestic workers, resulting in their separation from their own families and communities. Indeed domestic workers have been seen as amongst the most exploited and oppressed groups in South African society, not only in terms of their wages and isolation, but in terms of the lack of respect and dignity paid to them. Lack of education and employment alternatives, coupled with influx control legislation restricting the movement of black workers combined to 'trap' black women in domestic service. Several managers interviewed in this study described their own and their mothers' resentment of this entrapment, focusing on the lack of time available to nurture and guide their own children (Kgampe, Kgantsi, Koza, Lukhele).

The fathers of male African managers were generally employed as semi-skilled or unskilled labourers on the mines, in construction work, in factories, or, less frequently, in commerce. The highest paternal occupational ranks are represented by Mgengebule (court interpreter), Makhothi (policeman), Radebe (shopkeeper), and Mofokeng and Rachidi (teachers). Occupations, and therefore class positions, could not easily be improved in the repressive 1950s and 1960s. Parents were clustered in occupations with low wages, little security and few chances of career advancement. Poor employment conditions and segregation in urban locations were dominant features of their lives.

It is interesting to note that female managers who grew up in black townships in the 1960s and 1970s, unlike their male counterparts, do not refer to themselves as "township kids", nor do they identify with the image of streetwise hustling which the term denotes. These women were generally brought up in the more "progressive" and "respectable" homes of the African

But, while this passage insinuates a deficit in parental influence consistent with the concept of cultural deprivation, we shall see in the following section that parental authority was a powerful influence in the lives of these managers, helping them to withstand pressure to drop school and join the underclass.

With respect to the comfort and security of their family homes, the experience of African respondents in this study is utterly different from that of their Asian and white counterparts. Chen, Chinniah and Govender, who are Asian, spent the early years of their lives on farms or plots which were owned by their parents, and, while these households were not wealthy by any means, they provided an adequate income and secure tenure for the family as long as the head of the household was alive. Muir, Schreiber, Le Sueur, Tabbner and Rayneard, who are white, all spent some portion of their childhoods on family-owned smallholdings or farms, or in the suburbs of large towns. These families were relatively well off, and enjoyed the freedom of movement denied to black South Africans. Schreiber and Le Sueur each remark that their love of nature stems from experiences of "good, healthy outdoor living" in youth.

Most black managers' socio-economic backgrounds were humble; some families were very poor, though not absolutely destitute (J. Khoza, Khumalo, Mabitsela, Mohokare, Rachidi). The position of families in which the father, invariably the chief breadwinner, had fallen ill, had died, or was absent, was precarious indeed:

> From being born fairly privileged, where I didn't have to suffer for anything, our lives changed, and my mother had to fend for us. (Chaba, 10 March 1995)

The absence of a father raised the spectre of the family's permanent removal from town,[8] and the negation of any opportunity to acquire assets. The number of cases reported in this study in which the father was absent (through death or desertion), or incapacitated (through accident or illness), is striking. Nearly one third of black managers in this study grew up in homes headed by a single parent or guardian (Chaba, Chinniah, Govender, Kgansti, J. Khoza, H. Khoza, Khumalo, Lukhele, Simelane). In these families children were forced to grow up early, and to assume responsibility for household chores, younger siblings or disabled or

[8] After 1952, when the Natives (Urban Areas) Act was amended with the notorious 'Section 10' qualification, the right of black people to remain in urban areas for over 72 hours was restricted to men who could prove that they had been in continuous employment and residence for a period of ten years.

struggles with the police and state officials. One of Mohokare's earliest childhood memories is of the day on which residents of Mooiplaats, a persistent 'black spot' outside Pretoria, were dispersed. Some moved to Atteridgeville, an African township twenty kilometres from town. Mohokare and his brother were left behind when their parents and their household goods were loaded on the removal trucks, and were only reunited with their families months later through the intervention of neighbours and relatives. Such early experiences speak of the devastation and resentment felt by many black managers about the break up of families and communities under apartheid.

During these managers' childhoods, life in African townships was strictly controlled by the (white) municipal authorities and the police, and this was impressed upon children at an early age. Madi, for example, comments that his parents, small traders in Soweto, held an abiding suspicion and fear of the police, who harassed them constantly, demanding passes and permits which it was impossible for his parents to acquire. H. Khoza remembers his mother's sudden and frequent absences when she had been arrested or imprisoned for hawking food in the townships, an activity which was then illegal. Thibedi remembers his terror following the Sharpville Massacre in 1960, when residents of Tembisa, only an hour's drive from Sharpville, expected a police attack:

> There was just chaos, everybody rushing around, and ... [I was] being pushed in the house, because ... the police were coming ... and there was fear ... pandemonium. (Thibedi, 19 July 1994)

Chipkin (1993: 214-218) has described the archetype township, Soweto, as a vast, noisy, sterile, anti-social, polluted environment devoid of privacy, infrastructure and facilities. The world inhabited by these "township kids" was treacherous and violent indeed. Parents and older siblings were often not at home. They might be held up by pass raids, gangs of tsotsis, long queues, crowded trains, roadblocks or any of the dozens of obstructions that pervade black life in the townships. As Sparks (1991) remarks, a consequence of this insecurity is that

> At an early age the black child will find himself on his own, without the security of adult presence and adult supervision, more and more in the company of others his own age, moulded more by peer pressure and survival instincts than by parental influence. (Sparks, 1991: 224)

townships. I lived and worked in that place, so I know it. I know the vibes".

Of the 30 African managers interviewed in the study only Mabitsela, Sibiya and Simelane remember childhoods spent in rural parts of the country, and they comment on the difficulty of adjusting from country to city life and vice versa. "City boys" were tough and streetwise hustlers, who had to look out for themselves. Boys in the rural areas were organized in cohorts, or 'age regiments' in which they carried out prescribed duties, such as herding cattle and goats, and underwent ritual initiation into manhood and membership of the tribe.

Many of the managers interviewed in this study come from families which had remained in the cities for some time, despite government programmes of mass removals and population control. Some of these families were established in the freehold areas of Marabastad in Pretoria, or Alexandra, Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare in Johannesburg, where there was a rich and varied socio-cultural life as well as vast overcrowding. These families were displaced by slum clearance schemes of the Johannesburg and Pretoria town councils in the 1950s[5] (Kgantsi, Lukhele, Ramasia, Mohokare), and the stricter implementation of apartheid laws in the 1960s[6] (Tuma, Dumse, J.Khoza, Makwela, Mpulo, Ogle, Thibedi). Kgansti and Ramasia, whose families lived in exceedingly poor conditions in Alexandra and Western Natives Townships in the 1950s, remember that their parents were keen to move to the new townships of Meadowlands and Diepkloof in Soweto, where they were offered space and privacy in three or four-roomed houses. At last their families could escape the unscrupulous landlords, violent crime and gang warfare of the "old locations".[7] However other removals had a different complexion, as families were forcibly evicted from their homes in bitter

[5] The first of many slum clearance programmes in Johannesburg took place in 1904 when Bubonic Plague broke out in a mine compound and spread rapidly to the Indian and African locations in Brickfields (present day Newtown). The municipality destroyed both locations, removing residents by train to Klipspruit Farm, 13 miles south west of Johannesburg. The 'temporary segregation camp' at Klipspruit was later to become the dormitory city of Soweto (Chipkin, 1993: 198).

[6] In Johannesburg's 'urban renewal' of the 1960s, black residents were pushed progressively further west, south and east onto sites beyond the city usually adjacent to municipal sewage and waste sites (Chipkin, 1993).

[7] Families were promised more space and privacy in Soweto (a three or four-roomed house for each family, instead of six or seven families sharing one partitioned house in the 'old location'. Tenants paid stable rents to the government, rather than to landlords, who could raise them at any time. Crime was rife, and residents lived in fear of the 'Spoiler' and 'Msomi' gangs.

6.2 'TOWNSHIP KIDS'

Most of the 46 managers interviewed in this study were born between 1945 and 1965 in urban areas of South Africa. Those of African descent were born and brought up in townships on the Reef, or in other cities and major towns of South Africa. Unlike the black workers studied by Bozzoli (1991), French (1988) and Mpoyiya and Prinsloo (1994), whose backgrounds traverse town and country, the experience of the managers in this study is almost exclusively urban. The parents, or guardians, of these managers had migrated to the cities in earlier decades,[3] and had become standholders or tenants in the 'locations', compounds and slumyards of the city. They had sentimental bonds rather than strong social or economic ties to rural life.

Many of the African men who were interviewed (but none of the women, to whom we shall turn later) described themselves in youth as "township kids" or "city boys", meaning that they grew up in extended families, occupying small, crowded homes in ethnically ordered townships some distance from the 'white' commercial, industrial and residential districts in which their parents were employed. As children they were often left alone or in the care of relatives while their parents worked in town. They went to poorly equipped and staffed primary schools in their neighbourhoods, and, if they were boys, played soccer on the streets, gambled or did odd jobs ("piecework") after school. There was no provision for them by way of organized church, cultural or youth groups. Sporting and recreational facilities were, and are today, extremely scarce in the townships. Some of the respondents (Kgantsi, Lukhele, Qabaka, Sibiya) played on the fringes of neighbourhood gangs which engaged in territorial battles, inspired by adult gangsters who were both feared and admired in the townships.[4] A mixture of pride, confidence and canniness is evident in Lukhele's description of himself as "a city boy who grew up in Sophiatown and Soweto. So I know the ins and outs of the

[3] We saw in Chapter Four that the Natives Land Act of 1913 (and its subsequent amendments) led by degrees to widespread rural impoverishment. From 1932, the Rinderpest, Great Drought and world economic depression led armies of the landless and unemployed to flood into towns looking for jobs in the mines, in the expanding manufacturing industries, or in domestic work.

[4] Cross (1991: 41) explains that street gangs in South African townships derive to an extent from parent cultures which value physical strength and tolerate aggression, offering boys an opportunity to sublimate feelings of hunger, failure and insignificance, and to assert a proud and rebellious identity through which members can feel *masters of their own identity*.

which had been denied to them. In this way the managers and their parents learned to use existing structures - even the notoriously discriminatory and oppressive education system - to their own advantage. The managers became agents of their own fates, and later in life were well prepared to find (or fight) their way in corporate structures.

Another French theorist, Bourdieu (1976), argues that the culture of the school system is that of the dominant group in society - those who control the political, economic and social resources. Schools are conservative forces which perpetuate existing social structures by progressively eliminating lower class children from higher levels of education and privileged schools. They do this by ignoring or denigrating the cultural heritage of working class children, while translating the cultural capital and ethos of privileged classes[22] into apparently universal standards of educational performance and ability. The ethos of working class families usually militates against scholastic achievement.[23] Thus only a small number individuals - such as the black managers interviewed in this study whose parents encouraged their schooling - escape the fate of their class and succeed in acquiring cultural capital through formal education. This possibility gives credence to the myth that education is a liberating force in society, rather than the conservative one Bourdieu believes it to be.

While the concept of cultural capital is useful in understanding how some managers succeed in the business world, Bourdieu's preoccupation with class domination in the education system leads to an unduly deterministic and mechanistic view of education. Bourdieu underestimates both the capacity of individuals to act as agents of change in their own affairs, and the capacity of education to liberate and empower individuals and groups. In this study, we have noted that black managers' ability to stay in the education system, and to appropriate cultural capital at school and beyond it, implies a high degree of social, intellectual and linguistic competence. This competence was recognized and nurtured in youth by parents and neighbours, priests, teachers and school administrators, not least of all by the managers

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[22] Cultural capital is a heritage which includes cultural artifacts, knowledge, skills and values. It is divided unequally among members of society, as is material wealth (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). The ethos of the privileged classes is described as "a system of implicit and deeply interiorized values which, among other things, helps to define attitudes towards the cultural capital and educational institutions" (1976: 110).

[23] Bourdieu (1976), using French society as a reference point, declares that parental support for schooling is a feature of lower middle class ethos rather than working class ethos.

Perhaps the most serious flaw in this theory is the way it blurs the connection between the political nature of social problems, the historical development of inequalities, and the individuals or groups who experience problems. It merges personal inadequacies with the structural causes of social conditions faced by diverse groups, often with racist and sexist overtones.

A different set of assumptions and explanations about social conditions and the interests of the disadvantaged is offered by the French Marxist Althusser (1971) who observes that in order to survive and flourish, capitalist societies require a specific ideological climate, which is located in education, the media, trade unions and institutions of the democratic process itself. All of these components of civil society, which Althusser terms 'Ideological State Apparatuses',[3] (owing to the impact of the state on their formation) reproduce existing social relations of production, including the class system and class conflict.

Althusser maintained that diverse Ideological State Apparatuses were unified under the ideology of the ruling class, which, with state power and resources at its disposal, remained fairly resistant to change. In South Africa, civil society has been described as weak and fragmented (Stadler, 1994; Gerhart, 1995), alternately submerged and threatened by the power of successive governments. Yet the managers interviewed in this research point to a range of ideological influences and institutions, including their families, the black consciousness movement, the trade unions and the church, who opposed the ideology of the ruling class and presented alternative visions of society. In general Althusser's theory fails to take adequate account of the capacity of individuals and groups in civil society to resist or change situations. Both the managers themselves, and their parents exhibited an intuitive understanding of the role of schools in reproducing the inequalities of the class system and the hierarchy of labour. But the parents resisted the simple replication of their own class position by insisting that their children remain in school to matric. When possible, they sent their children to schools of superior quality, where they could acquire the cultural capital

[3] Althusser distinguished between the 'repressive state apparatus', the government, army, police, courts, prisons, etc, which function ultimately through violence (or the threat of violence), and 'ideological state apparatuses' which function predominantly by ideology, through the values they propound (Althusser, 1971: 253).

of success of working class children, among which are their limited range of social experience, cognitive and linguistic inadequacies, and the inappropriate value orientations received in their homes (Henry et al, 1968).

A major problem with this theory lies in its deterministic nature. According to the theory, the poverty and deprivation of many African homes should mean that African children do not succeed in education and therefore do not acquire the jobs which would enable them to break the culture of poverty passed on to them from their parents. Indeed, we saw above that many African managers grew up in homes displaced by forced removals; most underwent the dubious 'Bantu education' system and struggled to complete their schooling in the upheavals of the 1970s and 1980s. And yet, despite the obstacles placed in their way, these managers have succeeded in education as in life. The value orientations of their childhood homes, the strict behavioural codes of their parents, and the manner in which the managers made use of the limited range of social experience available to them in youth point away from an endemic cycle of deprivation. As youngsters the managers grew up fast, impelled by the practical need to supplement the family income through their own labour, as well as the moral requisite to help younger siblings "get on in life". So, contrary to the predictions of social pathology theory, some individuals and groups are able to secure and mobilize the resources needed to rise from poverty, even in the face of government policies designed to oppress them.

A second problem with social pathology theory is the implication that the poor are deprived of culture, rather than engaged in a culture which is different from, or outside, the mainstream of white middle class culture. The 'culture of poverty' is supposed to be characterized by deficit, inadequacy and uniformity. By way of contrast, the managers' biographies showed considerable variation in the socio-economic position, education levels and resources available to the parents of male and female managers in the study, and to older and younger generations of managers. There was no uniform response to shared historical events such as forced removals and the collapse of the black education system in the 1980s. Families held different views on gender roles and the labour of children. So even the limited picture of urban black working class culture presented in this study shows a greater cultural diversity and richness than a social pathology perspective allows.

their personal position in the socio-political environment of the workplace.

So far, we have seen that for managers who grew up in South Africa's black townships, completing secondary school and proceeding to tertiary level education in the repressive 1970s and the turbulent 1980s was exceedingly difficult. The process involved parental and personal ambition, as well as a strong drive for upward mobility, self preservation and self improvement. By way of contrast, most white managers in this study went to secondary schools as a matter of course. There was nothing remarkable about finishing high school and studying at tertiary level, even for "average scholars", as several described their performance at school (Fernandez, Muir, Tabbner). White and Asian managers enjoyed a superior education to that available to African managers. They had smaller classes, better qualified teachers, better physical resources and facilities, and a fuller curriculum. In most respects their experience of education, and consequently its significance to them, is different from that of black managers. There are only a few areas of overlap: white managers seem to have had equally poor career and study path guidance at school; and several of them struggled to find the money to finance studies at tertiary level (Du Toit, McCloskey, Stonier).

6.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided insights into black managers' social environment, family life, and educational experience, with a view to getting a better understanding of their self-concept and life choices. The insights and understandings developed here will gain greater resonance in the following chapters, which examine four corporate affirmative action programmes and managers' experience and perceptions of them.

The managers whose biographies form the basis of this enquiry are not the passive victims of a malfunctioning society proposed by those who subscribe to a 'social pathology' thesis (Thompson, 1982 and 1980; Henry et al, 1988). This thesis posits a 'cycle of deprivation' manifest in individuals and groups in terms of income, employment, housing, education and so on. An endemic 'culture of poverty' is passed on from one generation to the next, aggravated by the apparently "feckless, apathetic and disorganized behaviour of those involved" (Thompson, 1980: 84). A range of deficits are held responsible for the relative lack

management, these men were also subject to suspicion and hostility from the shopfloor and from other members of the democratic movement, who believed them to be "aspirant capitalists, individualists, yuppies, 'fat cats', and collaborators" (Khoza, 1993: 70). For many years these managers occupied an isolated and tenuous position between predominantly white management and the black trade unions.

In the face of discriminatory policies and practices at all levels, the key to employment, job advancement and professional status in the world of business was perceived by many black managers to be a university education. The historically white universities, in particular, were seen as the gatekeepers of the dominant culture and economy, and so places in these institutions were specially prized by the managers interviewed in this study (Kgantsi, Mgengebule, Mohapi, Qabaka, Radebe). Many managers pursued tertiary education opportunities while working, either through distance education institutions[19] or through part-time study in graduate and postgraduate degree and diploma programmes.[20] Their studies are significant to the managers only partly for the knowledge and skills acquired. Postgraduate studies, particularly, were praised for providing exposure to ideas and contacts beyond township life and the world of work:

> Studying at university opened my eyes as to how the world works. ... Having been exposed to tertiary education you tend to understand things better. Your thought processes are quite different from [those of] a matriculant. You see things in a broader context. (Montso, 23 September 1994)

But academic qualifications also lend status and confidence. They represent rungs on a career ladder, and they are symbols of both legitimacy and "achievement" in the world of work. They are sources of cultural capital which allow the managers to make sense of, and advance,

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[19] A handful of managers had completed courses at UNISA, South Africa's largest distance education institution (J. Khoza, Khumalo, Ramasia), while others studied by correspondence through the RSA Technikon (Jithoo) and professional institutions such as the Institute of Bankers and the Institute of Personnel Management (Chen, Kgantsi, Makhoti, Mohokare).

[20] In the late 1980s several managers (Chinniah, J.Khoza, Madi, Qabaka, Thibedi) participated in the Joint Management Development Programme, an innovative nonformal education programme run by Clive Acton Associates in Johannesburg. The programme was supported by the French Chamber of Commerce, the Black Management Forum and a number of multinational companies, such as the oil company Total, which had remained in South Africa despite sanctions and disinvestment campaigns in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the University of the Witwatersrand's Management Advancement Programme and Postgraduate Diploma in Management have attracted the interest of several managers (Kgantsi, J. Khoza, Mofokeng, Radebe).

For those who could not immediately afford to study beyond secondary school level, the alternative was to seek out nonformal education possibilities while working. The prospects of this were bleak in the 1960s and 1970s. Most industrial and commercial training of Africans focused on lower-level clerical and administrative functions such as filing, translation, book-keeping and record keeping. Management development was deliberately neglected because Africans were not expected to assume managerial responsibilities. It was widely believed that Africans had no capacity to manage modern organizations and institutions on a sustainable basis.

The growing power of the trade union movement in the 1980s offered several managers their first concrete opportunities for personal development and recognition after their school years. Mabitsela regards his post-Matric involvement in the trade union movement as his "real break in life". As Deputy Secretary of the CUSA-aligned[18] Steel, Engineering and Allied Union of South Africa he was responsible for setting up new branches and raising funds. He represented his union on the Industrial Council, and travelled extensively in South Africa and overseas. He gained experience and confidence in himself as he was exposed increasingly to different people and cultures as well as to union operations and management systems. He was awarded a grant to study industrial relations in Britain, and on his return to South Africa, was soon offered a position as industrial relations officer with a petroleum company. For Thibedi, employed in another multinational conglomerate, the process of establishing the trade union in his company,

> ... triggered a lot of confidence in me which I never had before... I felt excited that we had achieved something, but it wasn't that we now had power. It was more the issue of now we are going to be recognized. At last we will have a voice. (Thibedi, 19 July 1994)

Yet former trade unionists Mabitsela, Mohapi, Mohokare, Ramasia and Thibedi all say that their subsequent career progress was hampered by perceptions held by white managers that

> [Trade unionists] are all communists or socialists. They have no work ethic ... they cannot run a business ... they are untrustworthy ... they could give away sensitive, confidential information to their comrades. (Mabitsela, 18 April, 1994)

Whatever the truth of these allegations, as former unionists who had crossed the floor to

[18] CUSA (Council of Unions of South Africa), founded in 1980, was the moderate forerunner of NACTU (National Council of Trade Unions), a federation of trade unions guided by black consciousness ideology.

time of great need, only one manager (Mohokare) completed his secondary education at night school, and one engaged in distance education classes at secondary level (J.Khoza).

Girls were more likely than boys to attend boarding schools (often prestigious former mission schools), reflecting their parents' higher socio-economic position (Chaba, Chen, Job, Mpulo, Ogle, Petersen). At these schools girls could escape the political conflict altogether, while being initiated into a wide range of activities (sporting, cultural) which opened the path to leadership roles. For Mpulo, the physical resources and culture of hard work and achievement at Inanda Seminary allowed her to "come into her own", and she became a prefect and chairman of the debating society (Mpulo, 7 February 1995). For Petersen, the emphasis placed on an active, independent role for women in society was the source of her confidence "which has stood me in good stead to face the world" (Petersen, 3 March 1995). Spiritual and academic development seem to have been equally important; girls formed close attachments to their schoolmates, which have extended beyond their school days (Petersen, Mpulo). However, these female managers are quick to say that they were "shielded" from the harsh realities of the outside world, in which they would have to compete with others for places at tertiary institutions, for bursaries and later for jobs. In common with their male counterparts they experienced a lack of guidance about career choices and study paths, and were confronted with problems of accessing 'white' tertiary education institutions.

We have noted that many managers, especially African men, had a poor material background in youth, and that younger managers had spent their school careers in conditions of recurring disruption, with negative experience of relationships with teachers and township authority figures. For those managers who were able to pursue tertiary studies immediately after matriculating - generally the younger generation of managers (Mofokeng, Montso, Mpulo, Qabaka, Radebe) - going to university was an emotionally intense, disturbing and often lonely experience:

> It was the very first time I was away from home and meeting strange people. ... It was threatening ... you are called to make decisions about your life and you are not sure if the decision you have made is correct. Whereas when you were at home it was easy: you just bounced it off your parents, you know, you had a sort of sounding board. (Mohapi, 1 June 1994)

> things like that. In '85 we did write exams, even though there were still uprisings ... schools were burned down, that kind of situation. And '86 was a bit more normal ... better than '84-85. But still, you know, there were ongoing strikes and boycotts, stuff of that time. But we did write exams at the end of '86 and that's when I completed my matric. (Makwela, 15 July 1994)

Some managers were the targets of police surveillance and harassment while at school or university (Duma, Koza, Mofokeng, Phasha). In Standard Eight Phasha was taken away from school for questioning by the police. With other students she was required to report in the mornings and evenings to the local police station in Soweto. She recalls that she often said to her mother "I can't take it. I want to leave". Almost all students in township schools were subject to peer pressure to conform to the anti-school culture of the 1980s, but most were able to maintain some control over their work by studying at home. They accommodated rather than endorsed or resisted peer pressure, and returned to school when they could (Duma, Dumse, J.Khoza). The fate of schoolmates who "went under", that is, became submerged in political activity, went into exile or simply dropped out of school was instructive to these managers (Duma, Dumse, Kgantsi, Lukhele, Makwela):

> Some of the guys who left school with me [after the Soweto riots of 1976] were in the thick of things. They just faded and dropped school, dropped everything. ... For some life started very early. They started getting married, and they were too young to handle marriages. Things were just too fast, too fast. One guy - a good friend of mine - became a hobo. He was staying in the [drain] pipes out at Doornfontein. (Dumse, 30 June 1994)

Financial and family pressures, and an instinct for self-preservation, made the managers in this study take a pragmatic approach to their schooling. As Chinniah says,

> [School demonstrations and boycotts] were exciting, but again you had to draw a line whether to continue your life boycotting or not. I knew I could not afford to lose one year of my time. (Chinniah, 22 July 1994)

Those who remained in school, or returned to it after an absence of months or years did not find it easy:

> From a group of friends ... we were about 12 or 14 of us, just two of us went back to school. We were the joke of the whole group: "Gee, you guys are crazy. What are you doing?" Myself and this friend of mine, we had a very slow life. Dull and very slow, [laughs] but it paid off ultimately. (Dumse, 30 June 1994)

As testimony to the paucity of nonformal education for young adults in South Africa in this

black universities, extended some academic 'years' by weeks and months, forcing students to seek part time employment and additional bursaries to tide them over financially (Madi, Montso, Phasha, Simelane). Most managers who were students in secondary schools on the Reef after 1976 forfeited at least a year of their studies to ongoing demonstrations and school closures (Dumse, Job, J. Khoza, Khumalo, Montso, Phasha).

Despite the expansion of the education system for Africans, finishing secondary school in the 1970s and 1980s remained a major achievement in itself. A recent survey found that only 8% of African adults in South Africa have passed matric,[15] compared to 10% of coloureds, 27% of Indians and 61% of whites. Five times more whites have degrees than all other race groups combined[16].

As matriculation pass rates, particularly in Soweto, plummeted post-1976, parents concerned about the interruptions in schooling, and worried that their children would be swept up in the violence of the political struggle, sent their children to schools in the rural parts of the country if they could afford it (Duma, Kgampe, Madi). This often meant a move to poorly resourced institutions in the 'homelands',[17] where schools still functioned, even if there were no teachers qualified to teach English or mathematics in the higher grades. Those who remained in Soweto attempted to study at home, forming study groups with others, and attending school when possible.

Makwela, one of the youngest interviewees, remembers his secondary schooling in Tembisa, a Reef township, in the politically charged era of the 1980s:

> At first, I was young, and well, I didn't know what was going on. I just went to school. In '84 we didn't write exams because it was very dangerous ... uprisings and

[15] The percentage of matriculated Africans is higher in the metropolitan and former homeland areas than it is in the former 'white' South Africa (Krige, 1995: 80).

[16] There are 345 249 white people with degrees, 31 238 Africans with degrees, 13 825 degreed coloureds and 20 677 degreed Indians (Krige, 1995: 80).

[17] The former homelands and states have the greatest population numbers and highest percentage of young people. They also have the lowest percentages of economically active people and greatest levels of poverty - more than 73% of people. The African education system is highly disadvantaged. Many districts have a pupil/teacher ratio of over 40:1. In the Eastern Cape this ratio reaches 67:1 in the Bizana region (Krige, 1995: 78).

> You had to make a pretty clear decision between school and political involvement. It was sort of one or the other, because you could get swept up in politics, and that [meant] you would have to leave the country.... There was no question that you could argue your case in a fair trial. The chances of you coming back alive after detention were almost nothing. (Mofokeng, 21 July 1991)

> We were all caught up in this thing [black consciousness], and through my friends I got myself involved in politics. Some of my friends ended up in jail... I sat down and discussed this issue with my wife and she said, 'You have got to choose [between] your family or politics'. And confronted like that, I had to make a choice one way or the other and I chose my family. (Mohokare, 11 July 1994)

For these managers, the choice was clear: joining the political struggle meant abandoning their families, their education, and their prospects of advancement at work. They were likely to incur detention, exile, injury and possibly death. These managers decided against political involvement, but remained sympathetic to the aims of the liberation movement. They made their own adjustments to the struggle:

> I would not toyitoyi down the street and throw stones. If I heard someone was injured, or there was blood, I would walk another way. (J. Khoza, 3 June 1994)

> I would write features for an underground publication, but I would not pick up a gun. (Madi, 16 September 1994)

The black consciousness movement, and the subsequent efforts of the liberation movements to wage a national struggle, inspired those in school with a vision of black power, integrity and unity. In the 1970s and 1980s, however, most respondents who were still in school experienced problems related to the breakdown of the black education system following the Soweto uprising of 1976. For those aspiring to tertiary education, the most common problems related to apartheid legislation which limited access, accommodation and transport to historically white universities (Kgampe, Mgengebule, Qabaka). Black students at these universities were often compelled by their socially isolated circumstances to engage in political activity on campus:

> You didn't have a choice ... there was a small number of black students ... everybody knew who was who ... if you weren't towing the line, you might get ostracized. But then you could say, 'Who cares?' because the whites were not going to like you either. You didn't want to lose on both sides. (Qabaka, 16 August 1994)

Institutional closures, and disrupted or delayed examinations, particularly at the historically

> a single demonstration. We would wake up at 4h00 AM and sit at stations ensuring that nobody boarded the train to work. The stations would be blockaded. By 5 o'clock the police were shooting and the students were running all over, but that was the name of the game. And there was the issue of identity. We were no longer combing our hair. We were growing beards as a sign of black consciousness. (Dumse, 30 June 1994)

Bundy (1987) describes these township youths as South Africa's first sociological generation, a group with its own generational consciousness - relatively educated, totally urbanised and sympathetic to statements of black political identity.

Several black managers in this study (Duma, Koza, Mofokeng, Naidoo, Simelane) had links to student and youth organizations in the townships or on university campuses, such as NUSAS (National Union of South African Students), and its offshoots SASO (South African Students Organization) and UCM (University Christian Movement), but only one of them, Rachidi, played a leadership role in the black consciousness movement.[14] Two women, Koza and Mpulo, inspired by the ideals of community service promoted by Steve Biko and Mamphela Ramphele, practised for a while as teachers and community workers in remote, impoverished communities in the 1970s. Those who openly identified with and participated in political action were detained and harassed by the police in the 1970s and 1980s (Duma, Koza, Mofokeng, Phasha, Rachidi). But more often than not, the managers in this study attempted to avoid confrontation with the security forces and authorities and carry on with their studies:

> I was not an activist ... but as a thinking person, as a person of colour subjected to an unfair system, I could not be non-politicized. (Jithoo, 15 July 1994)

> There were stayaways, there were boycotts at school and we all just had to flow with the crowd. Once you were with the crowd, nobody seemed to notice you, they [the authorities] cannot single you out there. (Chinniah, 22 July 1994)

For many managers the activism sponsored by the liberation movements clashed head on with family loyalties, and the time-honoured values of obedience and cooperation, upheld by their elders as the keys to survival and economic security:

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[14] Rachidi was Vice Chairman of the Witwatersrand branch of the Black Peoples' Convention, and after the arrest of other prominent leaders in the organization in 1975, became National President until the BPC was banned in 1977.

Atteridgeville, near Pretoria, thus: "We were the real products of Bantu Education ... we were not taught to fend for ourselves. We were not taught to think but to obey".

Alongside this picture of deteriorating quality and standards in schools in the 1960s and 1970s are reports of high performance on the part of individuals, and recognition of achievement and potential from teachers, parents and neighbours. Many managers (Chaba, Job, Kgampe, Koza, Mohapi, Mpulo, Phasha, Radebe, Simelane, Thibedi) were identified as promising or "brilliant" scholars, and were assisted (financially, or through recommendations) to attend reputable mission or boarding schools, often some distance from home.

Far surpassing the influence of teachers and school administrators on students at secondary or tertiary education institutions in the 1970s was the sway of the black consciousness movement. The ideological content of black consciousness stressed black independence and self-empowerment, stimulating a new political awareness among students. Mpulo describes how she and her classmates were inspired by the theatrical productions and pamphlets disseminated by members of the black consciousness movement. Charismatic leaders such as Steve Biko and Saths Cooper came to visit Inanda Seminary, and encouraged students to form a junior league of SASO, the radical South African Students Organization, which operated in tertiary level institutions. Other students, living and studying in more disadvantaged urban settings, were mobilized to political action in 1976-7, action which effectively challenged state control over Soweto for a time. Dumse describes vividly the events of 16 June 1976 when he was a student in Orlando West High School in Soweto, leading to his subsequent identification with black consciousness:

> At the time I was doing Standard Nine. On the 16th of June I remember we were starting our exams. That morning we had one of our mid year exams. At that stage there were two very strong soccer teams in Soweto, and one was in Orlando West ... so you can just imagine - that morning we were all looking forward to the match in the afternoon of that day. ... Then the rumour went around that all high schools are coming our way. ... The majority of us, you know, just heard the noise growing closer and closer, and the sound of people singing coming closer and closer to Orlando West. To the point, where, you know, it was difficult to sit in a classroom and concentrate on the exam paper. We all dropped our pens and walked outside. We didn't want to be caught inside the classroom. We didn't know what was going to happen.
>
> The shooting started that very day. It was 10 or 11 when they started shooting. Hector Petersen was killed. And from there on everybody became conscious. We missed not

introduced or monitored in the systematic way that major organizational development programmes in the Bank normally would be.

In keeping with moves towards a more strategic management approach, and prompted by the negative views held by black staff on the subject of employee diversity, as revealed in the 1992 'Interact' surveys of management and general staff, the Bank turned its attention to the procedures used to assess, train and develop its existing staff. Efforts were made to identify potential in supervisors, so that they might be developed and promoted. The performance appraisal system, known as IPMS,[14] was refined, and cross-functional Career Management Committees were instituted within the system to identify potential, assess 'personal resolve', review performance and suggest career development paths for individuals within the Bank's branch, regional and divisional networks. Thus career path planning joined testing, education and training as cues for development and promotion.

7.5 CURRENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STRATEGY

In June 1993 a 'Strategic Issue Conference' on affirmative action was held for senior and general managers of the Bank to initiate serious debate about affirmative action and rally support for it. Prominent black leaders, including Mamphela Ramphele and Nthato Motlana were invited to address delegates. They invoked 'demographics' and 'market forces' alongside the familiar moral and political arguments in favour of affirmative action, conflating business strategy and social responsibility. So successful was this approach that the conference ended with a resolution that 'equity' should be a key value and business goal for the Bank to the end of the century. The dual strategies of affirmative action and 'managing employee diversity' were to be deployed to achieve equity. Affirmative action is understood to be a relatively short term intervention designed to bring more black people into the organization. Managing employee diversity is concerned with getting value from a multicultural workforce. The nature and value to the organization of 'equity', however, is illusive and remains unexamined.

[14] Integrated Performance Management System.

contemporary manpower planning models. By 1990, however, it was felt that these targets were too challenging in an era of slow business growth caused by the economic recession. White managers believed that their own jobs were threatened by affirmative action, and resented the advancement of black staff. Furthermore, the compulsory targets did not accommodate the diversity of the Bank's regions and divisions, and the varying levels of commitment felt by regional managers. For example, the merchant banking division was relatively responsive to pressure for change while managers of the branch networks tended to be more conservative, reasoning that white customers would feel uncomfortable handing their money over to blacks.[13] According to several respondents in this study, certain departments in the Bank became identified as "no go" areas for blacks when senior managers declared that they did not want blacks working there "because they are not work oriented". One black manager described in poignant terms a common experience of inter-personal relations at the Bank:

> *There was a time when people did not want to work with me or speak with me because I was black. Some people do not speak to you because you are [their] junior [in age or rank]. But I came to understand the protocols and codes. (4)*

Discrimination and evasion on the part of some highly placed white managers apparently went unchallenged and unchecked. Integration proceeded at a slow pace. Voluntary targets, set by division al and regional managers in consultation with their general managers, replaced compulsory ones in 1993, following a Strategic Issue Conference on affirmative action, but were still often unmet. As one respondent put it:

> *There are a lot of black employees around, but when you look at the type of jobs they are doing then you see they are still down there in the lower ranks, and further up you see their numbers dwindling. (20)*

Those black appointments which were made tended to be of recruits from outside the Bank rather than promotions from within. Furthermore, new recruits were more likely to be employed in the 'soft' field of human resources (in public relations, education and training, personnel) rather than spread across occupational fields. Affirmative action was not being

[13] The Bank did not even hire blacks as security guards, since black men carrying guns made whites nervous.

them an opportunity to discover where their aptitudes and interests lay. Supervisors were assigned to oversee participants' work and to provide mentoring functions.

Problems with the Accelerated Training Programme arose almost from the outset. Learners in the programme resented being shuffled from one department to another, and were uncomfortable with their unstructured career paths. Trainees found it difficult to get appropriate training from conservative staff members of the branches to which they were assigned, and experienced unaccountable delays and obstructions in their postings. They felt no sense of belonging or commitment to the organization, and lacked confidence in their contribution to the work of the departments to which they were seconded. The permanent staff of these departments expressed antagonism towards the 'prima donnas' of the Accelerated Training Programme whom they suspected would be promoted over their heads.

By this time the Bank had already conducted a number of studies which indicated that "the changing demographics of the marketplace"[12] would increasingly influence its strategic development. It was also politically desirable to recruit and develop black staff, as this would be a point in the Bank's favour in the competition to attract accounts from the new, black-dominated provincial and local governments created in the wake of the 1994 elections. Thus there were good grounds to believe that black advancement was essential to the future growth and prosperity of the Bank.

The Bank tends to conceive of its black staff as a commodity: it must have a sufficient supply of them, and it is prepared to pay a premium to get them. As the black managers interviewed in this study put it:

> *The Bank is a numbers driven organization, not a people oriented organization. (20)*
>
> *If it's not in numbers, the Bank doesn't understand it. (4)*

So it is not surprising that the Bank turned to devising numerical targets for affirmative action rather than studying the reasons for the lack of success of previous initiatives. Targets for the recruitment and promotion of black staff had first been set in the 1980s, based on

[12] The Bank came to realize that 80% of its potential customers were black.

introduced in 1986, and was applied for the appointment of clerical staff, junior supervisors and junior managers. However management has remained an overwhelmingly white, male preserve. In June 1994 a survey of all the Bank's regions and divisions confirmed that senior management was 100% white, while middle management was 98% white. Junior management was 92% white, with Asians and Coloureds making up 5% of staff at this level, and Africans 3%. Senior supervisors and junior supervisors were 88% and 73% white respectively, with Africans represented at 2% and 6%.

The main vehicle for black occupational advancement at the Bank in the 1980s was a 'Career School', introduced to provide bridging education to promising matriculants and graduates who were to be employed in the Bank's branch network. The Career School grew out of the unfortunately named "Blackenization" project, a 1979 initiative to recruit black candidates for inservice training in branches of the Bank situated in the former homelands. The Career School focused mainly on improving the reading skills of learners, but also introduced them to basic economics and remedial mathematics. The six-week programme aimed to increase learners' reading speeds and comprehension, thereby rendering them more efficient in their work, while also preparing them to undertake studies for their banking exams.[10] In 1988 the National Institute for Personnel Research was commissioned to evaluate the Career School, and, following its report, the school was suspended.[11]

In the mid 1980s a management development programme, which had previously accommodated white employees only, became available to blacks and was rechristened the 'Accelerated Training Programme'. The programme foresaw a five-year training period, during which participants were involved in formal training for one year at the Bank's colleges, and were seconded for short periods of time to various departments within a particular geographic region of the Bank's branch network. This was done to familiarize recruits with the wide range of work activities carried out in the organization, and to offer

[10] The traditional route to a career in banking is by passing the examinations of the notoriously rigid Institute of Banking.

[11] The Career School concept has been resurrected in the 1990s in the form of a more focused 'Banking College'. The Banking College aims to recruit and train entry level staff for frontline positions (counter staff, tellers, receptionists) in the branch network. Training is provided in pre-service and in-service modes, from one to three months' duration.

The managers at the meeting confirmed the broad argument of the case study, and expressed a desire for concerted action on the part of the Bank to address issues which greatly affect them, and which also contribute to the Bank's public image. When it was announced that the Bank had been successful in its bid for the provincial government account, some managers expressed fears that the Bank might become increasingly complacent, rather than more proactive, in the matter of affirmative action in the future: "Now that the Bank has won the Gauteng account, affirmative action and managing employee diversity will be right at the bottom. These matters will not get priority "

In the text which follows, significant statements made by respondents are used to illustrate certain themes and to testify to the authenticity of the research. These statements appear in the text in *italic* script, followed by a number in brackets, eg (4), which has been assigned to the respondent to protect confidentiality.

7.4 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AT THE BANK

In the past decade the Bank has been enterprising in developing technology and services for its clientele, but has not committed itself equally to human resources development. Changes in staff policy arise mainly in reaction to external political pressures, rather than in response to internally felt needs.

Forty percent of the Bank's staff is black[9] but very few of this number are employed in management positions. The Bank's board of directors, an all-white preserve until 1992, now has seven black directors on two of its boards. In the 1980s the Bank subscribed to popular notions of equal opportunity and black advancement, but failed to sustain measures which would alter the racial profile of its workforce substantially. A policy proposing the preferential recruitment, selection and development of African, Asian and coloured staff was

[9] Like most employers, the Bank refers to black South Africans as "ABCs", using the old Apartheid categories of Asians, Blacks and Coloureds. However, in this study, the term 'black' is used to refer to African, Asian and coloured people generally. The researcher acknowledges that both terms of reference are problematic, for reasons which are not entered into here.

Bank's operations and to provide an historical perspective. The manager in charge of affirmative action selected five colleagues, with varying portfolios and periods of service at the Bank, who were available and willing to be interviewed by the researcher in the second week of September 1994. The names of a further three managers were put forward during interviews with the first seven respondents. Thus an intentional sample of ten managers was built. The researcher was able to interview all the respondents at least twice. Interviewees were asked to provide biographical information, and to correct summary notes made by the researcher drawing on her notes and interview transcripts, as described in Chapter Two.

Tentative research results were reported back to participants in mid January 1995 in the form of a draft case study. Participants were asked to read the case study and complete a response form, which was to be returned to the researcher (see Appendix Three). Concurrently, the Bank was engaged in a bid for a R10-billion contract to administer the Gauteng province's financial affairs. In the open tender process, proposals were judged not only against pricing structure and capacity to handle the account, but also against attitudes towards community involvement and the Reconstruction and Development Programme.[8] Concerns among senior management that the researcher's draft case study was being widely circulated in the Bank, and could possibly injure the Bank's bid for provincial government accounts, led to a request for a meeting to be held at the Bank on 7 February 1995. An endeavour to suppress the report and hinder its circulation was quickly squelched, to the credit of officials in the Human Resources department, who perceived an opportunity to learn from the report. Seven of the managers who had contributed to the study met with the researcher to correct errors in the case study and check her interpretations. Submissions from several other staff members were also received at the meeting. The case study was revised in the light of the meeting, and presented to the Bank as a base for focus group discussions scheduled for the week of 13 February 1995.

[8] See the Mail and Guardian, 27 January 1995, for an account of the tender process entitled 'Council has banks grovelling'.

It seems certain that measures will be introduced to combat discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, location, and other non-economic factors. According to the RDP's section on reform in the banking sector:

> Banks should be required by law to disclose their loans by race and gender, their assets and liabilities by sub-region and sector, their staff by race and gender, the location of their branches and their defaults by neighbourhood. Blanket bans on mortgage bonds to specific communities - "redlining" - should be forbidden.
>
> ('Banking Survey', Supplement to Business Day, 30 June 1994 : 3)

In response to changes in its external environment arising from the deregulation of financial services, the imminent end of cartel-like conditions, and the expansion of consumer markets, the 'paternalistic' style of management characteristic of banks generally is gradually giving way to a 'strategic' management style (see Chapter Three). The transition is not yet complete in the Bank. The two overlap and co-exist, and together create tensions which affect affirmative action, as will be shown later in this chapter.

7.3 NOTES ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The researcher first approached the managers responsible for affirmative action at the Bank in December 1993 and arranged to carry out her investigation in the latter half of 1994, when the Bank's new strategic action plan for affirmative action was to have been in place for six months. In the end, some interviews were conducted in January and February of 1994, and more in September and October of the same year.

The Bank is a very large organization whose business affairs are grouped in six geographic regions and seven divisions, each containing business units with varying ethos and degrees of autonomy. For logistical reasons, the researcher focused on the staff of the Human Resources department and of two other divisions, all located in Johannesburg.

The manager in charge of affirmative action, and his supervisor, the Manager of Strategic Resourcing, set aside time to be interviewed themselves, and provided the researcher with general information about the Bank. They also suggested further contacts in the Human Resources department who could be consulted for information on specific aspects of the

accounting, engineering and architectural professions". Investment services include schemes aimed not only at professional groups, but also at the youth market, stokvels[5] and burial societies. The Bank's Small Business Unit targets black entrepreneurs; its Community Banking Services Division was started to support micro-enterprises (for example, hawking) and to provide loans to small borrowers. A pension scheme for domestic workers and loans to students selected to train at Vaal and East Rand colleges were instituted to help the Bank grow in the black market.

The Bank is well known for its generous support of the fine arts and the performing arts in South Africa. The Bank's Foundation, with a 1995 budget of R8 million,[6] disburses funds to cultural, welfare and educational institutions, including all of South Africa's universities and technikons, the Joint Education Trust, the Valley Trust, Junior Achievement Schools and Star Schools. There is black representation on the main board and on regional advisory boards, and a new black advisory committee which has been set up to counsel management on strategies to improve its programmes in the black market. Notwithstanding these efforts, the Bank shares with other major South African banks a poor record of supporting black individuals and enterprises. In 1994 less than 2% of all bank credit went to individual black South Africans.[7]

In 1994 the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) took South African banks to task for the lack of finance made available to disadvantaged communities, saying:

> A handful of large financial institutions, all linked closely to the dominant conglomerates, centralise most of the country's financial assets. But they prove unable to serve most of the black community, especially women.
>
> (RDP, 1994: 110)

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[5] Stokvels are informal savings clubs or syndicates. According to the Portfolio of Black Business in South Africa (1994) there are 800 000 stokvels in South Africa, with a cash flow of R50 million a month.

[6] The 1993 Foundation budget was reportedly R41 million.

[7] See the 'Banking Survey', a supplement to Business Day, 30 June 1994.

In the 1890s the Bank adopted a policy of corporate growth through amalgamation and consolidation, increasing the number of its branch offices by absorbing or pushing out smaller, independent banks and community based building societies. In this century, the Bank has survived many financial and currency crises which have put lesser institutions out of business. Financial deregulation of the banking industry in the 1980s resulted in cut-throat competition between large and small banks searching for a profitable share in an 'overbanked' market. Between 1990 and 1993, in a major rationalization of the industry, South Africa's top seven financial institutions were replaced by four large banks, with smaller players relegated to niche markets. The banks which survived the turmoil of the past 15 years now face a changed political environment, with new challenges and crises.[3] Three of these challenges are the expansion of consumer markets, increased competition from overseas banks,[4] and anticipated legislation to outlaw discrimination in lending practices, of which more is said below.

The Bank offers a wide spectrum of domestic and international financial services including credit cards, hire purchase, mortgage loans, estate planning, insurance broking and unit trust investments. In the past decade, the focus has been on developing sophisticated, technology-based products and services to facilitate local and international transactions. While South Africa remains the Bank's primary market, neighbouring countries are areas of increasing activity, while operations are also expanding in Europe and North America. The Bank employs over 30 000 people, and is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

Historically the Bank served mainly the white community, with its strongest support coming from wealthier English speaking people and organizations. Like other financial institutions in the new South Africa, it has developed special packages to meet the needs of more varied customer groups, defined - in the Bank's literature - by occupation and social aspiration. These include packages tailored for "students striving for the top... innovative and dynamic achievers...those who have reached the top...the medical profession and...the legal,

[3] See Business Day, 25 June 1993: 8.

[4] International companies are expected to compete strongly in money and capital markets, and in project and trade finance, but not in the retail market.

desire for confidentiality, the names of individual managers have been replaced by numbers, so that neither they, nor their employers, may be identified.

The case studies are presented in a specific order, starting with the Bank (in this chapter) and proceeding to the Oil Company (Chapter Eight), the Conglomerate (Chapter Nine), and the Retailer (Chapter Ten), reflecting a continuum from least to most successful in affirmative action. The reasons for this success and failure are discussed in Chapter Eleven, the final chapter of this thesis.

7.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE BANK

The Bank has been operating in South Africa for more than 130 years and is one of the oldest, and most successful, commercial banks in the country. Originally a British bank, the first colonial head office was established in 1860 in what was then the prosperous centre of the wool export business, Port Elizabeth. In the vanguard of aggressive imperial expansion in Africa in the latter half of the 19th century (see Chapter Four), the Bank was the first to open a branch on the diamond fields of Klipdrift, the first to establish representation on the Witwatersrand gold fields[1] and the first bank to open in what was then Rhodesia. The Bank played an important role in the diamond and gold industries, which supplanted wool as South Africa's main export product in the 1880s. The word 'British' was dropped from the Bank's title in 1883, enabling the Bank to operate in areas outside British jurisdiction.[2] However, ties to the British parent institution were retained until the local operation became wholly South African owned in 1987.

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[1] Johannesburg's first bank was a tent which opened for business in 1886 (Business Day, 25 June 1993: 25).

[2] At the time there was strong opposition to 'foreign' banks in the Free State and the Transvaal republics. Indeed the imperial banks were expropriated from the Free State by a special decree of the Volksraad in 1865. The gold fields of the Eastern Transvaal were outside British jurisdiction, and, although the situation changed temporarily when the British annexed the Transvaal in 1877, the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek regained independence in 1881, temporarily constraining the Bank's expansion.

CHAPTER SEVEN
INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDIES AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AT THE BANK

7.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPANY CASE STUDIES

In constructing the four case studies which follow, the researcher asked questions regarding each company's current affirmative action profile, the scope of its policy and programmes, and the history of affirmative action at the company She also sought a picture of the structures which support affirmative action in the organization, such as staff selection, assessment, training and development. She enquired about the racial and gender composition of management and the corporate board, and about mechanisms for empowering black and female employees within existing frameworks, such as bursaries, mentorships, job fragmentation, strategic placement and caucus/support groups. She also asked about the impact of the economic recession and the transition to a democratic government on affirmative action policy and implementation.

Each case study contains an account of the successes and problems encountered by the company in implementing its former and current affirmative action policies. Incongruities between policy and practice are explored in an attempt to distinguish significant changes in corporate values and structures from expedient and public positions.

As discussed in detail in Chapter Two, background information for the case studies came mainly from focus interviews conducted with staff members of the human resources department of each company. This information was augmented by written materials provided by respondents, including corporate policy statements, strategic action plans, notes on internal programme evaluations, and records of staff discussions.

The names of the organizations in which the case studies were conducted are not supplied in the text, as requested by company officials when the researcher negotiated access to interviewees in 1994. This request reflects sensitivity to public opinion about each organization's affirmative action status, as well as concern about the delicate state of communications, both inhouse and externally, at the time of writing. In keeping with this

themselves, who describe themselves as "fighters" and "achievers", "focused, "goal-directed" and "ambitious". They feel that it was their own hard work, persistence, and eye for the main chance that got them their present station in life, although they also rate highly the educative influence of their parents, the black consciousness movement and the trade unions.

So how can we reconcile the social problems raised in a study of personal biographies with the rigours of broad social analysis? Mills (1978) believes that this is the challenge which exercises the sociological imagination:

> The first fruit of this imagination - and the first lesson of the social science that embodies it - is the idea that the individual can understand his own experience and gauge his own fate only by locating himself within his period, that he can know his own chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances. ... We have come to know that every individual lives, from one generation to the next, in some society; that he lives out a biography, and that he lives it out within some historical sequence. By the fact of his living he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove.
>
> (Mills, 1978: 19)

In this chapter, we have seen that black managers demonstrate a high level of awareness of their location in an historical period, and in South Africa's particular social structures. They are conscious of the people and events which have shaped their chances in life. But what of their awareness of affirmative action? How are they affected by the "push and shove" of corporate interventions? Of public opinion? How do their personal biographies contribute to the evolution of affirmative action? The insights developed in this chapter help us see black managers in a more pro-active, forceful role than has usually been ascribed to them - a perspective which is carried forward in the four corporate case studies which now follow.

understanding by underplaying the tensions and conflicts which characterize multiracial society.

In line with its strategic management approach, 'equity' has been cast as one of the Bank's business goals. This makes racial preferences in hiring and promotions (a consequence of impending legislation) more acceptable in the organization, and bolsters the notion that affirmative action is instrumental in expanding consumer markets in black communities. By emphasizing the supposed business benefits to accrue from affirmative action, the potential social and cultural impact of affirmative action on the organization is suppressed. Indeed it sometimes appears that affirmative action and managing employee diversity initiatives are not supposed to have any effect on the Bank's operations or culture - or at least no one is permitted to suggest that they should have. A good deal of emotional underbrush might be cleared away if it was conceded at the outset that affirmative action means far-reaching changes. It brings with it problems which are difficult to deal with, but these are only increased when people in the organization barely admit to themselves that this is what may happen.

The persistence of segregation and conflict in the Bank yields little hope of imminent racial accommodation and coexistence. It is possible that substantial progress will be made only if the Bank is faced with a crisis arising from external political pressures. As issues of development and reconstruction become increasingly prominent on the political agenda, and development agencies come under close scrutiny, sources of finance are also drawn into the spotlight. Pressured by political change and new economic realities, the Bank may yet undergo a process of transformation, not only in terms of its financial services, but also with respect to employment policies and management practices.

Unequivocal leadership from the chief executive officer in setting the vision ... basically to shout it from the rooftops and to carry the flags. (20)

Only once we have reached a critical mass will we see change. (4)

These responses are interesting. The first respondent sees the impetus for change arising from the top of the organizational hierarchy. The problem is seen as one of communicating, with clarity and conviction, a 'vision' of the way forward for the Bank. It suggests that successful change strategies must have an ideological dimension as well as a practical one, and that in the Bank more attention needs to be given to the former. The second response sees change in terms of power relations at the Bank. Only when black managers are employed in significant numbers will it be possible to transform the organization from within.

7.8 CONCLUSION

The failure of senior management to provide consistent leadership and support for affirmative action suggests a tenacious resistance to any reduction of racial hierarchy at the Bank. Senior managers may wish to give an appearance of change, and may wish to be seen to take action, but ultimately they condone a process whereby efforts made by members of the Human Resources department to promote equality in the organization are undermined and sabotaged. First, regulatory mechanisms, such as hiring and promotion targets are set up. A procedural and numerical edifice is created which ensures that the issue of hiring a certain number of blacks is given prominence over other issues, such as discriminatory practices in the organization. Then there are repeated instances of interposition and nullification of the strategy ("We can't find enough suitably qualified blacks"; "Blacks don't fit in"; "Blacks don't perform well") until concessions are made: voluntary targets replace mandatory ones. Because no sanctions or rewards are instituted for action, little progress is made. Only small numbers of black managers are incorporated in the organization, and they are spread thinly in line positions, ensuring that there is no effective challenge to traditional agents and patterns of control. The skills of white managers are assumed to be adequate for dealing with new employees and changing situations, while black managers are tied up in training programmes and otherwise diverted and prevented from doing jobs with real responsibilities. When blatantly inappropriate attitudes or deficient skills are exposed, employees are sent to 'managing employee diversity' workshops, which are intended to facilitate inter-racial

Why does the Bank pay me at a senior grade to do a junior grade job? I am not being used the way I should be. I feel abused. (43)

I want to be seen to be performing, to be able to deliver. I hate being a puppet and I hate being kept in a situation where my regular answer to questions is "I don't know". (13)

Lack of an integrated strategy

Recruitment and education and training functions are separate sections of the Human Resources division, while the responsibility for strategic planning and monitoring of affirmative action lies in a third department. Sharing information and acting in a concerted and coordinated manner on affirmative action is constrained by such arrangements. The root of the problem, however, lies in the perception that affirmative action occupies the uneven ground between strategic business planning and human resources strategies. The absence of a holistic and integrated vision of affirmative action has been referred to above. 'Equity' may be included in the Bank's strategic business goals, but it is not linked to other strategic imperatives, nor is it implemented or evaluated in the same way.

Low priority

There is a suggestion that white managers have become both complacent and cynical about black occupational advancement, and that affirmative action has effectively been sidelined in the organization:

Shortly after the Strategic Action Plan was drawn up, affirmative action was the flavour of the month, but now the focus has shifted ... to quality service. It [affirmative action] was crucial last year, but not this year. (29)

7.7 STEPS TOWARDS A MORE EFFECTIVE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STRATEGY

What do black managers at the Bank propose as ways of improving the Bank's performance in affirmative action? Respondents in this study made relatively few recommendations, suggesting that they experience high levels of demoralization and resignation. Two of their suggestions are given here:

Black people want to believe they are making a contribution to the bottom line; that they are a profit component of the business rather than a cost component. (12)

Most of [the first wave of] black managers were shakers and movers, people of talent. They have all left the organization. They felt stifled, hopeless. (20)

I wanted real results, particularly in affirmative action, which was my area of responsibility, and it just became clear that I was not going to see any. (29)

There is too much concern for white fears, but very little concern for black fears. ... The assumption was that they [black managers] had [high] expectations, while they actually had fears. Nobody bothered about their fears. (20)

The power of black managers to withhold their labour, or to transfer it to another company, is substantial and reliable:

Blacks hold certain levers of power ... because without them affirmative action cannot happen. (20)

The practice of 'jobhopping' from one organization to another to gain higher salary and position is both economically rewarding and a means of exercising power. Black managers do not share their white counterparts' concern that this practice has become an endemic and destructive feature of affirmative action. While white managers point out that it diminishes opportunities for advancement from the ranks of junior management to middle management, black managers see it as a reinstatement of their own sense of agency in the face of efforts to marginalize and diminish them in the organization.

Black managers point out that the Bank, along with other large companies in South Africa, encourages job hopping by engaging in 'poaching' expeditions from other organizations, and paying premiums for those black managers recruited to the organization. Yet once hired, black managers are not welcomed or inducted into the company. Their responsibilities and duties are frequently not explained to them:

They bring black people in and then they dump them. After six or seven months they [black managers] say: "There is nothing for me here", so they leave. (43)

Meaningful assignments are withheld from them, undermining their sense of worth and achievement:

I have difficulty [finding] reasons why I should wake up in the mornings and come here. I spend hours and hours bored. Not bored because there is nothing to do, but bored because I'm doing things which are not developing me in any way. (12)

Poor managerial skills

Managerial skills, on the part of many white managers, appear to be deficient, especially in the areas of assisting subordinates' career planning and development. Black managers repeatedly expressed concerns regarding their marginalization, and the lack of support and feedback they experienced:

> *There is resistance to the contribution I can make. It's a bit of a love-hate relationship. They don't really want me to go, but they are very uncomfortable with me being around. (20)*

Black managers commented specifically on the lack of intercultural consultation and communication among employees, persistently biased perceptions of their ability, and lack of real discussion and exchange of views in performance appraisals.

An alternative explanation of the unsupportive, insensitive behaviour of many white managers at the Bank is offered by Kerfoot and Knights (1993: 671) in a study of gender discrimination in UK financial institutions. They identify the strategic management approach adopted by financial organizations with a form of 'competitive masculinity' which ranks individuals in terms of their capacity to exercise control over events and to secure the compliance of others. According to them competitive masculinity is precarious and insecure, caught in a "ceaseless striving for material and symbolic success, where conquest and domination become exalted as ways of relating to the world". In an endless search for validation of their own competency, men attempt to subjugate women and 'lesser men' who represent a threat to them. The good fit of this interpretation to conditions at the Bank is born out in the words of one black manager:

> *When you see how [aggressively] white people behave [among themselves] it's not surprising that affirmative action falls. I would call it a struggle for acceptance, power and position in the organization. (4)*

The high rate of attrition of black managers

A great cause for concern at the Bank is the high rate of attrition amongst black staff, particularly at management level. In 1993 55% of the black managers who had been employed within the past two years had left the company. Asked why black managers leave the Bank, respondents claimed:

Generally the feeling is that there is something wrong with black managers, not that there is something wrong with the Bank. (4)

A great deal has been written (Human, 1993; Human and Horwitz, 1992; Hofmeyr, 1993) about the negative impact of racist and sexist environments on the performance of under-represented groups in work settings. It would appear that there has been no improvement in conditions at the Bank over a number of years, and the environment remains one in which black managers struggle to develop themselves and advance in the organization.

Responsibility and accountability.

It is a truism in the management of affirmative action that the human resources function should provide a support role, while the project needs commitment from senior management as well as line accountability. We have seen above that top management has failed to provide a longer-term vision to guide principled action, thus undermining initiative and averting the flow of the 'cascading' communications strategy. But line management has also largely abdicated its responsibility to customize the strategic action plan or to initiate alternative arrangements. When black managers are selected or promoted, the action is largely the result of an individual manager's initiative. Managers are not held accountable for meeting affirmative action targets, and the appointment and development of black managers is not an enforceable component of their performance appraisal.[16]

Limited ownership and commitment to the process

The strategic action plan was mainly a product of the Strategic Issues Conference in June 1993, and is thus a senior management project. Because a wider spread of individuals and groups within the Bank was not involved in the design, and because the attendant communications strategy is top down and prescriptive, levels of commitment and sense of ownership at other levels of the organisation are weak.

[16] An action group on 'managing employee diversity' was convened in the central services unit of the Human Resources department in 1992 to coordinate corporate affirmative action projects. The group had no real power or support within the organization and became inactive in 1994.

standards of personal conduct. A consequence of this "ethic of guardianship" is the highly specific and narrowly defined duties placed upon employees, on the grounds that staff of a lower status and 'respectability' could not be trusted with the levels of social responsibility presumed to reside in high office.

A pervasive fear seems to exist that the Bank's social conventions and traditions (in interpersonal relations as well as in business matters) could be contaminated or defiled if alternative practices were introduced. As black managers point out:

> *There is a [X] Bank way of doing things ... a typical [X] Bank manager or executive. The Bank takes people and it clones them ... develops them into a certain image that is accepted at the Bank. There is a strong concern that the infusion of black people into the organization is going to tamper with the organization's conception of what an [X] Bank manager is like. ...The Bank fears that the norm which made it so profitable in the past is going to change. (20)*

A feature of this norm is racism, deeply entrenched, but seldom overtly expressed:

> *Polite racism is tolerated in the Bank ... they turn a blind eye. (32)*
>
> *Racism in the Bank is condoned as long as you don't call someone a Kaffir or become really rude. Racist jokes and sexist jokes are condoned. The Bank is a very chauvinistic organization. (20)*
>
> *[White] people use euphemisms ... they don't really tell you what they feel. (32)*
>
> *It is very quiet, underground, that kind of style. (43)*

And yet,

> *As late as 1993 there were white managers who would not even get into the same lift with black people. (4)*

A range of tactics is in place to deny the existence of racism at the Bank :

> *You are given a sense ... that an [X] Bank manager does not concern himself with 'black issues'. (20)*
>
> *When I insisted that we hold workshops and discussions ... [on affirmative action] there was tremendous resistance ... I expected the Bank to call [racist] individuals to order, or at least nudge them to correct behaviour and all that. But usually it works the other way ... you're accused of being oversensitive. (20)*

between the Bank's social roles and goals, including affirmative action, and employees' understandings of their responsibilities and actions in advancing them.

Weak leadership

Associated with the problem of a poorly understood and communicated ideological base for affirmative action at macro level is weak sponsorship from top management. As the black respondents in this study put it:

> *The silence from the top is deafening. (20)*

> *For affirmative action [to succeed] you need people who will take a stand, who will run up the flags, and say "This is how we will do things here". But nobody knows the Bank's position with regard to affirmative action. We have a strategy, but we do not have a position, or a statement. (20)*

> *The Bank has good management, but it does not encourage charismatic leadership, creativity, lateral thinking, etc. (4)*

> *There is indifference and veiled resistance to change. (43)*

Top management's lack of commitment to and support for affirmative action undermines the best efforts of human resources practitioners to carry forward a programme of action. It also tacitly approves many white managers' resistance to altering the values and attitudes which shape discriminatory practices in the organization.

A corporate culture which does not welcome black managers

An important way in which the Bank's social goals and strategies are expressed is in its corporate culture, which demonstrates features of both paternalistic and strategic management styles. Black managers describe this culture as cold and unyielding:

> *The level of tolerance of diversity is very low ... if you remonstrate with management you will really get your knuckles rapped. Mine are only bones! (20)*

> *The organization prefers to manage change in such a way that it impacts quite minimally on its normal operations. The pace of change at the Bank is painfully slow. (4)*

A rigid and paternalistic ideology upholds the values and practices derived from the English parent company. As Kerfoot and Knights (1993: 666) observe, a paternalistic management approach is derived from notions of social-class acceptability which supposedly indicate high

managers interviewed in this study. These problematic aspects are discussed below, in a sequence which reflects the strength of respondents' convictions, starting with the most passionately and frequently held views. Many of the issues raised here resonate with the obstacles to designing and implementing effective affirmative action programmes reviewed in Chapter Three.

Lack of conviction and direction surrounding the strategic action plan for equity.

The strategic action plan frames 'equity' as a strategic business issue, in part because the Interact surveys conducted in 1992 revealed that white managers were uncomfortable with the political overtones of 'affirmative action'. These white managers tended to see affirmative action as detracting from their ability to get on with the 'real' jobs they are paid to do. Bowing to these perceptions, the complex and interrelated social, moral, political and economic reasons for engaging in affirmative action were downplayed, and a new discourse was introduced which justified affirmative action as a business strategy. But even in this new guise, white managers were sceptical about the return to the Bank (and the benefit to their own careers) on investment in affirmative action, and tended to dissociate themselves from it. Black managers pick up on their white colleagues' lack of conviction and partial understandings about affirmative action, saying:

> *These [affirmative action] initiatives ... are seen as peripheral to the operations of the organization. (4)*
>
> *There is indifference and veiled resistance. (20)*
>
> *There is no momentum behind it. (12)*
>
> *You can't drive a car forward if you're in reverse gear. (29)*

The choice of one affirmative action strategy over another is determined in part by pragmatic considerations, such as the number of black and white managers at different levels in the organization, the resources to be allocated, and standards of efficiency and productivity to be upheld. But at another level, the choice of strategy is ideological, and has to do with how the Bank, and groups within the Bank, conceive of their role in society, and the function of affirmative action within that role. At the Bank, pragmatic values and ethos are in the foreground, while ideological premises tend to be deeply buried. The Bank's attempt to 'sell' affirmative action to its employees as a business strategy has exposed gaps and incongruities

VALUING AND MANAGING EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY WORKSHOPS

The central aim of the workshops, according to the programme managers, is to "sensitize and conscientize" employees concerning their changing environment, particularly with respect to the increasing diversity of the Bank's workforce. Diversity is broadly understood to include differences in employees' culture, race, age, gender, educational background and rank within the organization. However, the main thrust of the programme is "the need to break down [negative] racial stereotypes and assumptions held by whites" and to "break down their inhibitions about social contact with [members of other race groups]".

The workshop is run over two days, in office hours, but held at a hotel or residential conference centre rather than in participants' workplaces. Participants may volunteer for the programme, but are more commonly nominated by regional or divisional personnel managers.[15] Participants are screened and grouped by facilitators before and during the workshop. Criteria of particular importance are participants' rank within the organization, racial group and gender. The purpose of such arrangements is to "get participants out of their comfort zones", to force them to communicate with coworkers, and to challenge their conventional patterns of social intercourse.

The workshops are intended to facilitate interaction and sharing of ideas between participants, resulting in greater insight into each others' cultural backgrounds, everyday decisions, demeanour and behaviour. An example of such an insight might be understanding why many (though not all) black employees observe stayaways. Participants' engagement with one another is stimulated by games, videos ('A Class Divided' and 'Diversity at Work') and frequent group discussions. A board game is the centrepiece of the workshops, exposing individuals' "political views, prejudices, convictions and blind spots". According to the managers, the game allows employees the "unusual" chance to talk across class and racial lines.

Experiential methods are crucial to the success of the workshops, freeing participants to express views which they might otherwise hesitate to expose (perhaps because they are offensive or threatening). The managers acknowledge that some of the outcomes of experiential learning - exposure and confrontation - may be painful and upsetting for participants. Facilitators are encouraged to avoid "courtroom situations" in which individuals and groups are blamed for past iniquities. One way of doing this is to ask participants to focus on a vision of South Africa in the future, rather than to reflect on the past. According to the managers, participants of all race groups and levels in the organization express a desire for peace, harmony and economic betterment. Facilitators are encouraged to emphasize the commonality of such desires. They also promote the idea that vengeful reverse discrimination is unprofitable.

7.6 AN ANALYSIS OF THE BANK'S APPROACH TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Human resources practitioners at the Bank are well versed in current thinking around affirmative action, and are conscious of the Bank's uneven progress towards its goal of equity. While the researcher was assured that general managers in some areas of the Bank's operations were making good strides in affirmative action and managing employee diversity, several aspects of the Bank's approach were perceived to be probematic by the black

[15] Regional and divisional personnel managers may observe (or receive reports) that certain staff members reveal 'problems' in relating to members of other race groups or to the opposite sex, or they may recommend the workshops to anyone with an interest in cross-cultural, inter-personal relations.

Point three of the plan restates the decentralized approach to managing affirmative action which allows regional and divisional managers to set and amend targets for recruitment, development and promotion of blacks ("females and disabled staff to be included"), based on local conditions and business strategies. The responsibility for implementation was thus returned to line management, despite its proven disinclination to engage in affirmative action.

Point four underlines the faith placed by the Bank in quantitative methods and technology to initiate and sustain change in the organization. It calls for an appraisal of systems and practices which hinder successful affirmative action and diversity management. The mechanisms in place for such an appraisal are 'Interact' surveys, run at four to five year intervals in collaboration with the International Survey Research organization in Chicago. Thirty thousand copies of a detailed questionnaire are distributed to the Bank's general staff, while 3000 copies of a special 56-question poll are sent to the Bank's managers. Results are analyzed, and published in an accessible manner in the inhouse newspaper. Focus groups, which bring together twenty or so staff members selected through intentional and random samples of questionnaire responses, meet to discuss controversial findings and to suggest solutions.

Point five of the plan calls for senior managers, then other groups of managers to attend a two-day workshop entitled 'Valuing and Managing Employee Diversity'. Because this workshop is the most overtly educational item on the eight point plan, it is described in some detail below. Points six and seven of the strategic action plan refer to arrangements which would give affirmative action and managing diversity regular attention in staff performance appraisals and management meetings, while point eight relates to reporting arrangements. An analysis of this strategic action plan, interwoven with black managers' comments on affirmative action at the bank, is presented after the following account of 'Valuing Employee Diversity Workshops'.

Satisfied that the conference had resulted in a clearer statement of objectives and actions than was previously the case, and believing that senior management commitment to affirmative action had been secured, human resources practitioners turned from establishing equity as an organizational goal to developing the means to achieve the goal. This rapid shift in direction seems to have resulted in a gloss over several critical questions: Is 'equity' congruent with other corporate goals and practices? What outcomes, other than increased 'representativeness' of the workforce, could be expected to arise from equity? Who would be affected by these outcomes? Who is to benefit from equity, in what ways, and in what timeframe? What are appropriate measures or milestones in achieving equity? What were the reasons for the Bank's lacklustre performance in affirmative action thus far? What changes needed to be made in the company culture and structures to support the new policy?

The Head of Employee Relations convened an action group, consisting of managers who had attended the conference and staff engaged in strategic development. They drafted an eight-point 'strategic action plan' (reproduced in Appendix Four) for implementation in 1994. The plan sets out steps in the process of defining, implementing and monitoring affirmative action measures. It also indicates the sequence and method of action, and allocates responsibilities to senior managers to initiate a 'cascading' communications strategy.

Crucial issues in achieving equity were believed by human resources practitioners to lie first in securing executive and senior line management support for the project, and secondly in coupling the Bank's business strategy with its employee diversity strategy, the first two items on the eight point plan. It was feared that if these issues were not addressed successfully then the human resources function would remain the custodians of affirmative action policy, and there would be no 'buy in' from other sectors. The plan calls for the publicly awarded approval of a high ranking sponsor, the Chief Executive Officer or Managing Director, followed by senior management, to lend legitimacy and credibility to the initiative. Thereafter, the concept 'cascades' through the executive ranks required to implement the change. Support is provided by the human resources function, in the form of information systems, career and performance management systems and a recruitment network.

pointed out the reason to his colleague, and to their boss. When neither of them responded, Peter decided to bide his time and let events take their course, so that all involved would see the consequences. Peter's project was seriously delayed and he was called to account for it. In the discussions which followed, Peter explained what had happened and was eventually given approval to hire another consultant for his project.

Asked whether Peter's colleague's actions were racially motivated, or just 'normal' male aggression in a competitive work situation, Peter agreed it could be both, but that it was natural for a black manager to assume racial prejudice considering the history of black oppression in the country.

A more subtle way in which white managers' resistance to affirmative action is expressed is in the 'glass ceiling' which respondents encountered. Black executives are simply not promoted as quickly and as frequently as their white colleagues, a phenomenon observed in the Bank, and reported in other contexts (IDASA, 1995; Qunta, 1995). When black managers are not promoted within a reasonable period of time, they leave the company, setting in motion a 'revolving door' syndrome, in which large numbers enter the firm but leave soon afterwards. This can have negative consequences for all concerned. First, it perpetuates the clustering of black managers in the junior managerial ranks of the company, entrenching racist notions that black managers cannot be promoted because they are not as intelligent or capable or steadfast as white managers. Second, its prevents the training and development of a cadre of experienced senior and middle managers, as lamented by one of the managers at the Oil Company:

> *[The Oil Company] is succeeding with its recruitment policies at junior management level, but failing at senior management level. In middle management there is just a vacuum ... and it's middle managers who actually run the business. (36)*

Finally, the rapid movement of managers out of the company means that black executives do not develop their own social networks and pressure groups to address change from within the organization.

notion that affirmative action will have a negative impact on costs and productivity. 'Bottom line' arguments are perceived to be more powerful than the moral and social ones traditionally advanced for affirmative action in the company. For this reason, white middle managers can safely ignore the affirmative action targets announced by divisional managers. As one manager captured it, "Line is might, line is right" (8). When asked about persistent racial imbalances in the management of the company, respondents generally rated the Oil Company's performance as at best weak, and at worst biased towards whites:

> *[The Oil Company] is very cautious..it takes [too much] care for the sensitivities of whites, the possible threats and resistance [posed by] whites. (19)*
>
> *[The Oil Company] doesn't want to upset the status quo. (14)*
>
> *When you [as a black person] come into a management environment you are the only one, or one of very few. I don't see that as a threat [to white managers]. It may be something that they [whites] dislike. Because they dislike you, they will deny you the kind of support that a new entrant to this club or league would need in order to get established. (24)*

Several explanations were offered for the resistance shown by white managers:

> *White managers have benefitted from apartheid all along. Now they don't want that to be inflicted on them. (13)*
>
> *White managers are inclined to train black managers to a level just below that needed for competency in the job. This pattern guarantees the security of their own jobs and entrenches perceptions that blacks are not up to the job. (13)*
>
> *White people get overprotective of the system. Black people get opportunistic. The environment becomes hostile. (5)*

Several managers reported that their autonomy and authority had been challenged by their white colleagues and supervisors quite openly, early in their careers. One such challenge, and the resolution of it, is summarized in the incident below.

Peter and a white colleague share similar rank, responsibilities and resources in the Oil Company. When a consultant who was contracted to work for Peter left the firm, Peter and his colleague were obliged to share another (white) consultant. Peter assumed he and his colleague would have equal claims on this consultant's time, but this was not to be the case. Peter's colleague instructed the consultant to complete work on his own projects and to drop the work assigned to him by Peter. When Peter's project started to fall behind schedule, Peter

While they do not promote clientism specifically,[14] many of the black managers in the Oil Company expressed a desire for community in response to the individualism and exclusiveness of the white business culture in the organization. Some of these managers looked for mutual identification and affirmation by establishing a caucus within the company, or by supporting black professional associations such as the Black Management Forum. In such settings they can seek one another out, share experience, release emotional tension and explore solutions to common problems. The desire for mutual identification and affirmation is merged with a desire for greater personal and group effectiveness. Association with others lends legitimacy and power to individuals who might otherwise be isolated or exposed because of supposed cultural differences.

Related to this desire for community is the development of personal networks as a strategy to maintain personal contact in an alienating corporate world. Black managers at the Oil Company developed and maintained relationships with former schoolmates, teachers, colleagues and with family members and friends, all of which serve a range of needs linked to work. These vary from consultative, organizational and educational needs to the need for emotional support and a desire to form useful social contacts.[15] The problem is that these managers' personal networks do not lead to greater social integration in the Oil Company, nor to greater empathy with the organization, a pattern also observed among black managers at the Bank.

Resistance to affirmative action on the part of white managers

Some black managers believe that there is a band of conservative white middle managers who frustrate progress in affirmative action. These white managers ignore or isolate black managers, sidelining their contributions and diminishing their decisions by promoting the

[14] Several managers commented on the need for 'sponsorship' from powerful individuals higher in the hierarchy in order to achieve occupational advancement. This is noted again in a later section of this chapter.

[15] During the interviews respondents frequently enquired of the researcher about educational opportunities for themselves and others, about trends in student politics and the transformation of the university, the nature of teaching and learning in various faculties, and the way in which black students are accommodated and supported in university residences and in academic support programmes. They also notified the researcher about their own experiences of lecturers and academic programmes.

rather than outright prejudice against blacks.

> *The generally positive organization culture at times appears to be a facade. (36)*

> *You can sense racist - not people - but policies and practices. (28)*

> *[The Oil Company] is just another plantation. (19)*

A well oiled, racially exclusive old-boy network is believed to influence policy and appointments. The hierarchical structure is tight, defined in 14 levels according to the Hay-Ansyl system. Lines of power and authority are perceived to be "rigid" and "stifling". Out-of-office social events center on dinner parties, cricket and golf, all of which are associated with the dominant white male culture of the company and do not encourage interracial participation.

> *The social environment tends to be poor... The only time you talk to your [white] colleagues is when they want to know what you think of Mandela or the ANC. (38)*

> *Because few [black managers] play golf and tennis they are often forced to be spectators rather than participants. (13)*

The picture is one of black managers being relegated to the sidelines rather than deliberately excluded from mainstream corporate culture. But black managers are acutely aware that their marginal status affects their ability, as individuals or as a group, to influence affairs in the company:

> *We [blacks] don't have an 'old boys club' or network, and so we don't catch things on the grapevine. You don't pick up on the subtleties ... within the departments and you end up stepping on the wrong toes, or maybe forming the wrong alliances in power struggles. (38)*

> *We don't have a credible number of black guys to be able to create our own culture in the company. (36)*

Graaf (1994: 8-9) has noted that the need for clientism - a system of administration and legitimacy based on bonds of extended family, friendship, clan or other personal ties - is particularly strong in situations of economic deprivation and political powerlessness. In Chapter Four we saw that the apartheid system explicitly promoted clientism through the homeland system and the extension of tribalism in the in the urban areas and labour compounds. Several township institutions, such as compound and hostel cultures, homeboy groups and township 'big men', are manifestations of clientism.

There is no specific policy, just lots of talk. (24)

It [affirmative action] may exist in principle, but not in practice. (5)

[It was] a noble intention ... but ultimately an unsuccessful public relations exercise. (19)

Respondents were united in their disapproval of the way in which affirmative action has been handled in the company, particularly since 1992, as shown in the following remarks:

There have been peaks and troughs in affirmative action. Up to the mid-1980s black people aspired to work at [the Oil Company]. Then the company probably became complacent, and by the 1990s, [we] ... began to lose black managers. (13)

Since 1991 or 92 ... there has been a terrible slide. (5)

Our record is not one that could be displayed with pride by the company. (24)

Participants believe that affirmative action is now little more than an exercise in "window dressing" or "image boosting" so that the company may present itself advantageously in the public eye. The driving force behind the social and moral crusades of the 1980s is lost. However, the power of the new government to demand, even legislate, affirmative action, as well as changing business patterns favouring black consumers are perceived by most managers to have the potential to reactivate affirmative action both within the company and in wider society. It is interesting to contrast this perspective with that of managers at the Bank, who were confounded by the Bank's dislocation from national socio-political trends.

8.5 AN ANALYSIS OF THE OIL COMPANY'S APPROACH TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

What are the factors which contribute to the high levels of dissatisfaction expressed by black managers at the Oil Company? Several trends can be discerned, some of which are similar to the problems revealed in the case study of the Bank (see Chapter Seven).

An unfavourable internal environment for black managers

Black managers believe the company's culture is determined by its senior management, which they describe as "white", "English" and "middle class", exhibiting "patronizing attitudes"

to recruit black graduates, and a database of qualified black professionals in the country was set up. Promising black staff within the organization were provided with training to assist them to move into 'hard' areas, or were shifted laterally to widen their experience. Certain senior positions were earmarked for black appointments, while efforts were also made to appoint more whites in the lower ranks of the organization, which had been occupied exclusively by blacks. The 20% target was nearly met, as the percentage of black people in management positions rose to 17%. Progress in all these areas was somewhat undermined by the terms of the affirmative action officer's appointment: his position was an advisory one, with no power or authority over enforcement.

8.4 CURRENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STRATEGY

In spite of the Oil Company's public commitment to and investment in affirmative action, its vigorous recruitment of black people with suitable background, talent or potential, and its development of colour blind internal policies and procedures, by the end of the 1980s it was losing its black managers at an alarming rate. The drift of managers trained and promoted by the Oil Company to companies such as Transnet and ESKOM[13] (themselves undergoing vigorous transformation processes) became a near exodus in the early 1990s, when headhunting and poaching became common practice among South African companies eager to improve their public image and evade impending affirmative action legislation.

In the recessionary climate of the early 1990s, profits in the oil industry plunged. In 1992 the Oil Company introduced a Business Process Reengineering (BPR) programme, intended to rationalize productive and administrative processes, flatten the organizational hierarchy and decentralize decision-making. In the fallout of this policy, many staff were retrenched, the recruitment of black managers was suspended, the affirmative action officer was shifted to other duties, and the implementation of affirmative action was delegated to divisional managers. Attention was focused firmly on the restructuring programme and affirmative action was sidelined. Now, say respondents, there is neither a policy nor action:

[13] ESKOM is the Electricity Supply Commission, another giant parastatal organization.

NEED, COUNT) were funded, while progressive, community-based adult education initiatives[10] were also given support. An enthusiastically supported music talent competition, 'Road to Fame', was launched in the mid-1980s, winning the company wide media exposure as a 'hands-on' concern, focused on the transformation of South African society as a whole.

Towards the end of the 1980s affirmative action began to take on a new hue as it became clear that consumer markets were shifting to black South Africans. Always sensitive to the currents of national socio-political change, and to economic trends, the company began to support initiatives geared towards black economic empowerment. The Oil Company was the first organization to sponsor the FABCOS-affiliated South African Black Taxi Association, paving the way for other companies to express interest in joint ventures with FABCOS.[11] Other initiatives in this vein include the 'Livewire' television programme, which encourages young people to generate entrepreneurial ideas, and the Technical Business Development Trust, a collective initiative to render training and other services to black entrepreneurs engaged in, or wishing to enter technical business fields.[12]

By the late 1980s, despite considerable strides in affirmative action, it was apparent that the new wave of black managers in the Oil Company was not employed across disciplines (sales, finance, engineering and general management), but was concentrated in the 'soft' areas of industrial relations and human resources - a pattern shared with the Bank (see Chapter Seven). For the first time, affirmative action targets were set across the board: by 1992, 20% of junior and middle management positions were to be held by blacks, with at least half of the incumbents to be Africans. An Affirmative Action Officer was appointed to the Human Resources department to support the affirmative action process and to advise the board about the company's direction and progress. At first all went well. Eligible black candidates from outside the company were targeted for recruitment, visits were made to university campuses

[10] Human Awareness Programme (HAP) and Use, Speak Write English (USWE) are two examples of adult education NGOs supported by the Oil Company.

[11] FABCOS aims to build capacity among informal black business operators, and to this end has developed a partnership programme in which white-run corporations commit themselves to help fledgling black industries.

[12] An innovative feature of this scheme is the creation of opportunities for black graduates with technical qualifications by employing them as technical advisors to newly established enterprises in technical fields such as chemical manufacturing.

to compete with their historically advantaged white counterparts. These 'high fliers' were mostly recruited into the organization from their final year of undergraduate study, or from other companies. They were sent to London to complete higher degrees in business management, and were assigned to work in various capacities at the company's offices overseas. On their return to South Africa, they were placed in high level, high visibility positions, but were not given commensurate authority and responsibility. They were not properly deployed, and they could not be promoted, because it was felt that the predominantly white staff and clientele of the Oil Company were 'not ready' for black managers. After a few years many of these employees left the Oil Company to start their own businesses, and some moved to other firms where they perceived better opportunities for advancement. Some went on to found the first black-owned consultancies in the fields of marketing and advertising in South Africa. They contributed to the development of influential institutions such as the Black Management Forum (BMF), the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC) and the Foundation for African Business and Consumer Services (FABCOS). So, as one respondent put it,

[The Oil Company] lost, but South Africa gained. (13)

In the 1980s the board of directors of the Oil Company took what was then a bold step by committing itself publicly to affirmative action. It also linked affirmative action to a social investment programme focused primarily on education, community development and human rights. Funds for the company's scholarship and bursary awards (which do not oblige students to work for the Oil Company when they graduate) were boosted. Some staff members were sponsored on the prestigious Joint Management Development Programme; others were encouraged to further their education and training at university. The company engaged in an aggressive recruitment drive, and became known as a leading 'equal opportunity employer'.

The organization cultivated a progressive and committed corporate image by supporting human rights institutions such as IDASA[8] and the Black Sash Advice Office Trust. Education projects for the development of black teachers,[9] schoolchildren and illiterate adults (READ,

[8] The Institute for Democracy in South Africa.

[9] A centre to advance mathematics and science teachers in the school system was set up at the University of Natal. The Oil Company also supports the University of the Western Cape's Development Education Programme.

Interviews were conducted between January and August 1994, both before and after South Africa's first democratic elections and the inauguration of the government of national unity. Eleven managers were interviewed, in their own offices in Rosebank, Wadeville and Boksburg (on the Witwatersrand) and in Cape Town. As was the procedure in the Bank, interviewees were asked to provide biographical information and to correct summary notes made by the researcher, who drew on her interview transcripts and longhand notes.

When a draft version of this case study was distributed to the managers in September 1994, they expressed the view that the study reflected a fair and accurate interpretation of the situation at the Oil Company at the time. Several managers recommended that the report be brought to the attention of the chairman of the company, and this was taken up subsequently by the most senior manager interviewed in the study. On the whole, managers expressed dismay and regret about the company's poor progress in affirmative action, and about their social isolation in the organization, as revealed in the case study. The comments of one manager, who has left the firm subsequently, are relevant in this connection:

> *[Before reading the case study] I always thought [the Oil Company's] black employees were generally happy. I supposed they left the company because they were offered better money somewhere else. It's a pity I only became aware of the general unhappiness after I left. (36)*

A fortnight after the case study was first circulated, the company proposed to set up an internal 'task force' on affirmative action to audit the company's performance throughout South Africa and make recommendations to the board of directors concerning future policy.

8.3 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN THE COMPANY

Affirmative action was first implemented at the Oil Company in the 1970s under pressure from a number of groups, including the parent company:

> *Pressure arose from sanctions against the oil industry in the 1970s and 80s. There were demonstrations in front of [our] offices in London. (38)*

'Black advancement' was couched in terms of moral and social responsibility, supported by the European Community Code of Conduct and by head office. Emphasis was placed on the selection, training and development of a small number of talented black men to enable them

have been expensive and damaging to the company's image. At the time of this investigation, in mid-1994, staff morale was low, and people were edgy, uncertain of their future with the company. Jobs were moving to Cape Town, a city perceived to be inhospitable to Africans for a variety of reasons.[6]

Over a period of more than twenty years, the racial profile of the Oil Company's 2000 strong workforce has changed considerably. In 1994 blacks occupied 34% of supervisory and management positions, up from 7% in 1972. However, it should be noted that the company was not prepared to issue the researcher with a separate account of management and supervisory positions by race and gender, but instead provided figures for supervisory and management posts as one category. Of all employees holding supervisory or management positions, approximately 10% are Asians, 10% are Africans, 14% are coloured and 66% are white. So management is dominated by white people. Black men are clustered in supervisory and junior management ranks, with some representation in middle management, few senior managers and one black member of the executive committee.[7] Women comprise less than 10% of the total workforce, and probably an even smaller percentage of management posts.

8.2 NOTES ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The Public Affairs Manager of the Oil Company had been known to the researcher professionally for a number of years. When approached in January 1994 concerning the feasibility of the study, he sought permission for the researcher to interview managers in the Oil Company, and encouraged ten colleagues to participate in the research in a voluntary capacity. He set aside time to be interviewed himself, and provided the researcher with general information and published reports on the company.

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[6] The population of the Western Cape is predominantly white and coloured. Historically the Western Cape was a coloured labour preference area, and under apartheid it was difficult to recruit and house African employees in Cape Town. Many South African whites and coloureds share Afrikaans as a language, and have other cultural affinities. In the 1994 elections, coloured and white voters in the Western Cape province returned the Nationalist Party to power, bucking the national trend towards the ANC.

[7] The company's board of directors has two black non-executive directors.

compelled to buy a certain quantity of synthetic fuel from Sasol, and to use the pipeline and wharfage services provided by Petronet and Transnet,[3] other uneconomic state-owned enterprises. Although they are prohibited from forming a formal cartel by the Competition Act, the oil companies have benefitted from the inflated pricing mechanisms enshrined in the 'Rationalization Plan' (Ratplan), an agreement between the government, the major oil companies and the Motor Industries Federation (representing garage owners). The Ratplan effectively protects the profitability of the oil industry and rules out new competition. In the 1990s a free market lobby (and initial support from the ANC)[4] has brought pressure to deregulate the oil industry and allow other groups to enter the retail market. This would encourage price competition, discounting and retail marketing as large chain stores enter the market and self service pumps appear. Uneconomic rural petrol stations would probably disappear, along with many forecourt jobs.[5]

Throughout the 1980s the five major oil companies in South Africa competed over their share of the automotive fuel market, leading to a greater emphasis on service and marketing. This in turn led to staff increases, and opened the door to affirmative action. However, in the 1990s most oil companies have been down-sizing and restructuring, anticipating the deregulation of the petroleum industry. In the oil company which is the focus of this study, a restructuring programme was introduced in 1992, ushering in a more strategic management approach, characterized by a flatter organizational structure and decentralized decision making. The company sold its unprofitable interests in chemicals, and reaffirmed its commitment to improving customer service and its interface with clients in the automotive fuel sector. According to several people interviewed in this study, a "leaner and meaner" company is resulting from the restructuring process. Duplication of effort has been reduced and productivity has risen. But the cost has been high. Retrenchments and early retirements

[3] Transnet is a monolithic parastatal holding company for Spoornet, Portnet, South African Airways, Autonet, Petronet and PX Transnet, which control South Africa's rail, road, air and sea transport, as well as its docking, signalling and switching systems.

[4] The ANC has backed away from its initial anti-regulatory stance, under pressure from the labour movement to retain jobs.

[5] Following deregulation of the oil industry in the UK, 40% of service station sites disappeared over a period of ten years. In South Africa it is estimated that 30 000 to 50 000 workers could become redundant ('Top Companies', Supplement to the Financial Mail, 24 June 1994).

CHAPTER EIGHT
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AT THE OIL COMPANY

8.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE OIL COMPANY

The R30 billion-a-year South African oil and synfuel industry is dominated by two enormous, unprofitable, state-owned operations, Sasol and Mossgas,[1] which manufacture and retail synthetic fuels. A handful of smaller oil companies, local subsidiaries of major multinational oil companies, import petroleum as crude oil, refine it locally, then distribute and retail it in the form of fuel and oil-derived products. The company which is the focus of this study is the South African branch of a well-known multinational oil company which is wholly European owned. The South African company operates with a high degree of autonomy, but reports to head office in London. The parent company provides a coordinating function for its world-wide interests, and extends technological, financial and managerial expertise to its local companies.

The 1980s and early 1990s saw a dramatic shakeup in the oil industry internationally as oil prices tumbled, then stabilized at relatively low levels, following the release of Lybia's oil reserves, the end of the war in Iraq, and the discovery of rich new oil fields in Asia, America and Africa. There has been fierce competition among the multinational oil companies for capital to fund 'megaprojects' in the former USSR, Canada and Nigeria. As a consequence of generally low retail prices and the rising cost of exploration and production (not to mention the cost of cleaning up environmental damage caused while refining and transporting fuel) oil companies operate internationally with relatively small profit margins, and are fiercely competitive.[2]

The South African context is somewhat different from the international one. Here fuel is expensive, due in part to internationally set crude oil prices and the poor dollar-rand exchange rate. The industry is also heavily regulated. Oil companies operating in South Africa are

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[1] The South African Coal Oil and Gas Corporation (SASOL) was established through the Industrial Development Corporation in 1951 to give the government control over a strategic commodity, oil.

[2] See the Financial Mail, 27 May 1994.

East Rand factories was closed, and nearly a third of all employees were retrenched. In 1994, following a period of consolidation and slow growth in profits, the South African company was poised to expand its sales locally and to other countries in Africa.

The company is known internationally for the high quality (and cost) of its products, the professionalism of its staff and the superiority of its customer service. However, the South African firm remains essentially a high cost, low productivity operation, despite the restructuring process it has undergone. In the 1990s it faces a challenge from local and international manufacturers who are quick to bring to market somewhat lower quality products at better prices. Market research and strategic development have been identified as areas of relative weakness in the past,[2] and are being addressed in the 1990s.

At the beginning of 1994, the company had 800 employees, of whom approximately half were white and half were black. Women, who represent perhaps 15% of the workforce, are mostly employed in sales, marketing and administrative positions. Asians (5% of the workforce) tend to be deployed in the firm's financial and commercial departments. Africans occupy 53% of lower management posts (as defined on the Peromnes Job Grading Scale) and 18% of middle management posts. Significantly fewer black managers are employed in technical capacities than in administrative, human resources or marketing related sectors of the company. Human resources managers in the company acknowledge that senior posts in technical and production areas are dominated by white men. As one of the black managers interviewed in this study put it:

> *You walk into any office and all you see is white faces. You go on to the plant and all you see is black faces. (22)*

A consideration here is that the factory is reportedly[3] an Afrikaans-speaking, right wing stronghold, and there is reluctance on the part of many of these employees to provide on-the-job training or other opportunities to black colleagues whom they see as directly threatening their livelihoods. At the time of conducting the research, towards the end of 1994, there were

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[2] The Manager of Corporate affairs speculates that this may be the case because the company's original customer base was located in the mining and heavy industrial sectors, in which marketing played a minor role, while sales was important.

[3] Six of the thirteen people interviewed in the study commented on this phenomenon.

(Pascale, 1990). It also employs 'softer' forms of control, such as an emphasis on corporate values, which prevent its strong, bottom-line orientation from overwhelming its commitment to employees.

The Conglomerate's socialization process is tuned to replicate its culture across international borders and generations. The company has a distinctive style of management, viewed by its employees as a common grammar, or "the way things are done here". The emphasis is on uniform values, and coherence in terms of structures and systems throughout the global enterprise. These are not rigid doctrines that prevent initiative or action, but are more in the nature of frameworks. The company blends control and uniformity with a climate that encourages creativity and tolerates contention. Again and again the researcher was told that new and divergent views were welcomed:

> *There are no set rules. You use your own initiative to solve a problem. As long as it achieves the desired outcome, they [management] don't mind. (21)*

People who are comfortable with, or adapt to, the dynamic, participative, profit-oriented culture of the Conglomerate become "stayers" who remain with the company for years. Those who do not "fit in" usually leave within two years of joining the company. As a result of this tendency the company has an unusually loyal, stable and committed workforce.

This balance between business fundamentals and human resources development is also evident in the Conglomerate's social investments. These are often motivated and managed by employees who live in beneficiary communities, and include the building and subsidization of local schools and creches, community halls and recreation facilities. Financial and technical support is provided to the East Rand Black Industrial and Traders Association, which was set up to showcase black achievement in industrial and commercial enterprise.[1]

The late 1980s saw the Conglomerate in the grip of a severe economic recession in South Africa, aggravated by sanctions and restrictions on international trade. The company went through an exacting rationalization and business re-engineering process in which one of its

[1] This show is increasingly perceived as an alternative to the 'white' Rand Show, South Africa's largest industrial, commercial and agricultural trade fair.

CHAPTER NINE
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AT THE CONGLOMERATE

9.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CONGLOMERATE

The company is the South African subsidiary of an American-owned multinational conglomerate which manufactures and exports an extensive range of adhesives, abrasives, tapes, films and other products whose proprietary names are well known throughout the world. The South African operation imports and manufactures products at its plant on the outskirts of Johannesburg, and has branch offices in the major cities of Southern Africa. Markets for the company's products are extremely diverse, located in the health, traffic, telecommunications, mining, food, automotive and furniture industries.

The global structure of the parent company is decentralized, allowing for local, independent decision making. Subsidiary companies benefit from research and development, as well as from support services provided by the parent firm. The relatively flat organizational structure and international reach of the American company create opportunities for lateral moves in local companies as well as in overseas branches. A matrix system governs organization structure in the parent company and the subsidiaries, facilitating communication and consultation between managers employed at different levels and in different settings in the international network.

While a global corporation is bound to be bureaucratic in some respects, the Conglomerate strives to maintain a creative tension between its rules and routines on the one hand, and a model of management that generates employee initiative and achievement on the other. The company prides itself on the innovation and creativity of its members, and on their commitment to change and progress. The impression created on the researcher by almost all the salaried staff interviewed, black and white, men and women, is one of confidence and optimism. How is this frame of mind possible given the challenging conditions facing business in South Africa in the 1990s (IDASA, 1995)? Respondents observed that the company's huge product range and diverse markets demand creativity and flexibility on the part of individuals and groups in the company. In addition to this, the Conglomerate does not rely entirely on the 'hard' tools of management, such as strategy, organizational structure and systems

the Oil Company could grasp the opportunity presented by the recession and the restructuring process to overhaul those human resources development practices which do not serve the company well. The freeze on recruitment might then force the company to look inwards - towards the potential of its own staff, and the processes needed to secure their development and performance.

In an empowering situation, people perceive progress towards goals such as self-reliance, human dignity and self-sufficiency. This is not being achieved at the Oil Company. The racial inequalities in the company's workforce do not reflect unequal talents and interests among employees, but expose an ideological framework which condones discrimination and makes it seem natural and reasonable. In this respect, the Oil Company and the Bank have much in common.

A considerable investment has been made in individuals and programmes over a period of twenty years. Yet the company abandoned its vigorous recruitment and train , programme for economic reasons, just when the number of black managers employed, their placement and authority in the organization, were beginning to threaten white hegemony. So at a psychological level, numbers are important to both white and black managers. White managers' sense of control was apparently threatened when the proportion of black managers rose to a level nearing 20%. But even at this level, Africans experienced feelings of alienation and frustration because they were still a minority in management, unable to make their voices heard. Now that their numbers have been further reduced, it is even more difficult for them to insist on recognition where it is due, and to appropriate further rights and powers in the company. Achieving 'critical mass' appears to be a remote goal. So, as at the Bank, some managers will continue to use their personal resources to improve their own positions rather than the organization's. The 'revolving door' syndrome will prevail.

We noted in the case study of the Bank that affirmative action is a process whose success is closely liked to a supportive work environment. A thorough integration of affirmative action aims with other corporate goals, and with improved human resources principles and practices (staff development, career path planning), would help to shape a more appropriate environment in the Oil Company. But can such an environment can be developed given the rigors of the restructuring process in which the company is engaged?

Investigations of several organizations carried out by IDASA (1995) suggest that while it may not be possible to implement affirmative action on the desired scale in a recessionary climate, companies are not prevented from identifying existing staff with potential, determining their needs and providing them with the necessary skills training. Following this line of argument,

Affirmative action is part political necessity and part business necessity... We cannot continue with a situation where [most] members of management are drawn from the white sector. (13)

Affirmative action is an issue like safety; how the company manages it affects productivity and morale. (28)

Affirmative action means blacks becoming part of management, having a say in the decisions that industry takes ... decisions which will shape the economy of the country. (24)

The managers are aware that success in addressing these issues will depend partly on management's will to restructure affirmative action policy, partly on the resources (human and material) allocated to them, and partly on pressures for change from within and the company and outside it.

8.7 CONCLUSION

The managers interviewed in this study disclosed negative views about the pace and direction of affirmative action in the company since 1992. They perceive waning support from top management, and resistance on the part of middle management, to the creation and management of opportunities for black employees. Black managers comment on their isolation from informal social networks within the company, and criticize weaknesses and inconsistencies in succession and progression planning in the company. A variety of corrective actions was suggested, the most important of which is to redefine affirmative action in terms of the company's business and social goals in the 1990s, and to revitalize procedures to attract, develop and retain black managers.

Affirmative action has developed in an ad hoc manner in the company, both anticipating and reacting to socio-economic trends in the country and internationally. The ad hoc nature of this development means that there is no written policy, no communications strategy, no implementation plan, and no basis for systematically monitoring and evaluating progress in affirmative action. Given this lack of internal coherency and a poor record of achievement it is not surprising that affirmative action has lost credibility in the eyes of many.

If [we] are seriously looking for solutions ... we have to discuss our objectives, not just talk ... about affirmative action. (8)

The most frequently made recommendations concerned recognition of individuals, and the provision of real opportunities for growth:

We must recognize individuals; show appreciation of their worth to the organization. (13)

[There must be] opportunities for individuals to make a mark. (14)

We don't need career paths ... which are too explicit or rigid ... but there must be some recognition of your potential ... and your growth. Someone must endorse your goals and tell you [that] in order for you to reach them, [you must take] these steps, you must address these issues. That's the sort of thing we need to embark on. (5)

Participants favour a broader conceptualization of affirmative action with shared responsibility for moving the process forward. They recommend greater accountability for progress in meeting affirmative action goals:

Individuals and the organization can take responsibility for ... job creation and skills development in black business. In this way you address the issues of economic empowerment and affirmative action. (5)

We must develop ownership of the process ... it should be a joint development, so that everybody [in the company] ... has a role to play in it. (38)

It must not be just human resources, just strategic planning; it must be something everyone is involved in. (36)

Affirmative action can be the responsibility of divisional heads, but there must be pressure on them to produce results. Progress in affirmative action must be evaluated like any organizational goal. (28)

Management has to take a longer-term view of the resources needed for affirmative action. (13)

The comments above indicate a sophisticated understanding of the interplay between organizational goals and broader sociopolitical objectives. These black managers know that affirmative action impacts not only on how work is done, but is crucial to the future success of the company. It may also have significant impact on national development goals, as the following remarks show:

Problems of retaining black managers

As at the Bank, one of the most disturbing trends in affirmative action in the company is the number of black managers who have left the firm:

> *The legitimacy of affirmative action is threatened by the fact that there are not enough black managers. (19)*

> *The rate at which we are losing black graduates ... is alarming. Something has got to be done. (39)*

> *It is depressing that black people who were actively recruited and appointed to management positions a few years ago have left the company. (38)*

Why do black managers leave the organization? Two different explanations were offered. One reason is that black managers are held back from developing and advancing in the organization:

> *Black people were given jobs which were not challenging; they were not given authority or responsibility. (38)*

> *People outgrow the organization. [The Oil Company] offers good training and development, but doesn't offer responsible, challenging positions. (14)*

> *Their whole potential was not realized. (36)*

The alternative explanation is that black managers' aspirations and expectations are high, and can be more easily met at other organizations:

> *Affirmative action, and especially headhunting for young professionals, promises rapid promotion. Black managers' expectations are in some cases unrealistic. (24)*

> *New [black] recruits say "What's in it for me?" and "How long will it be good?". (42)*

8.6 STEPS TOWARDS A MORE EFFECTIVE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STRATEGY

Participants were generally doubtful about the company's will to move from affirmative talk to affirmative action:

> *There are meetings every year on affirmative action. The organization asks 'What are we not doing right?' They ask the same questions every year ... but what have they done with the answers they received the previous year? We fall short in addressing concerns [already] raised. (5)*

Only two managers believed that career advancement was based on merit and personal application:

> *[Career advancement] is up to you, self-knowledge is needed. (8)*

> *[I believe] my qualifications and skills are appreciated irrespective of the colour of my skin. Promotion will be based on merit. (42)*

Most black managers said that race influenced promotions:

> *Promotions are biased in favour of whites. (19)*

> *Because there is no social network [which includes blacks] and because we don't play golf [with whites], you miss out on opportunities. You can't get promoted the way white guys do. (38)*

Some see having a mentor or sponsor as the only route to promotion:

> *Unless you have a sponsor who is powerful, you don't go anywhere. (24)*

> *There are people who have good mentors. I mean, you must see some of these young guys move. They do all the right things, they know the right way to go ... you just know he is being guided up the ladder. (38)*

> *There are influential people in the organization, and if they say 'Well I want [so-and-so] there' and that's it. They don't operate in line with ... human resources directives. (36)*

All the managers criticized the company for inconsistencies and weaknesses in policy:

> *The company is afraid to fire unsatisfactory [black] employees after probation. (8)*

> *White managers are not held accountable for supporting blacks and improving race relations. (13)*

> *[Even] amongst black people at [the Oil Company], including high achievers, there are those who ... do not see themselves having a responsibility for upgrading and developing others behind them. (39)*

Many of the respondents felt that they had not enjoyed significant development and growth in their jobs. They observed that several black managers who had left the company had advanced substantially in other organizations, a phenomenon which reinforced the view that there were internal organizational barriers to black advancement in the Oil Company.

Affirmative action has always been a senior management prerogative. There has been little or no consultation with other stakeholders about the direction and progress of action:

> *Affirmative action ... has been handled behind closed doors and kept to senior management. [Their attitude is] 'Don't pass it down the line ... there is going to be confusion as well as immediate reaction, so we will introduce it quietly' ... This tends to create more problems than it solves. (24)*

> *The board of directors decided they're going to have an affirmative action programme in the company and then delegated implementation to different divisions and just said "do your own thing and keep us posted". And then, you know, it just depends on the steam of the man .. to push it or not. Some divisions are not doing it. (38)*

A consequence of senior management's indifference, or neglect, is that there is no continuity or co-ordination of affirmative action efforts, and no mechanisms in place for monitoring or evaluation:

> *There has been little practical development of people, little mentoring and support. (24)*

> *There is no process that everybody in the company has bought into, or has contributed to positively. (8)*

Lack of consistency and transparency in career path planning

Black managers are particularly critical of career path and progression planning in the organization, and the lack of transparency surrounding the criteria for promotions:

> *Career paths are supposed to be there ... but in practice, I don't think they are. (38)*

> *There is a lack of succession and progression planning ... None of us knows how it works. You just feel you've hit a jackpot when you're promoted. (5)*

> *I see people who put in similar, even more, effort [into their jobs] than me, but they are unsuccessful. It's all very subjective. (36).*

> *[The Oil Company] is quite like some of the government departments ... unless you do very badly, you just sit there. (24)*

> *The promotion system at [the Oil Company] is fairly rigid. You have to serve four or five years in a post [before promotion]. Generally, merit doesn't have much to do with it. This doesn't lend itself to affirmative action. (5)*

Another time I was going to buy farm land - you know when we develop these filling stations next to the highways they're all on farm land. This old lady, she didn't even want to talk to me on the phone. She just didn't want me to come, because she didn't trust that, I mean, how can a black person come and make an offer to her on her farm? He must be a con man or something [laughs]. I had to get a white lawyer who worked for me to do all the negotiations on my behalf. So, it was only when the lawyer cleared me that she was prepared to accept me and say "pop in". (38)

When black managers fail or make mistakes, they say that they are not judged on an individual basis, as white managers would be, but as a representative of their race. This leads to feelings of frustration and disillusionment on the part of black managers, expressed as follows:

They [whites] look on you like 'Once you fail they're all like that'. When you succeed then you're the exception. (14)

The problem for black managers is that you not only have to perform well in your work, you become .. a sort of custodian of black aspirations. There is a tremendous psychological burden that if you fail, it isn't just a mistake you made ... you are diminishing all black managers. (38)

There is this feeling that you can't do anything wrong ... or they [white colleagues and supervisors] will be angry. It stifles your risk-taking ability, your creativity and innovation. (19)

However, it should be noted that several participants in the study found support from senior [white] managers when their authority or dignity was threatened in a work situation:

My appointment...was resisted by my white subordinates [who] tried to sabotage me by their lack of cooperation. They did not succeed because senior management empowered [stood by] me. (38)

Weakness or indecision on the part of senior managers in dealing with subordinates' racist behaviour was perceived by black managers as a willingness to support the status quo.

Waning interest and support on the part of senior management

The respondents believed that top management was sincere about affirmative action, and did not deliberately block black managers in the way that middle managers did. But while senior management may have its heart in the right place, its energies are focused elsewhere:

Affirmative action is not treated seriously by senior management. If there was commitment, it would be demonstrated in employee profiles. (13)

Patronizing attitudes towards black managers

In addition to experiencing active resistance on the part of their white colleagues and subordinates, black managers reported that they often felt patronized and stereotyped:

> *The attitude [of white managers] has been 'You blacks have not been in management, you don't know and understand the culture of business, and it will take time to learn the ropes. But take it easy, it comes slowly ...' It is irritating because some [whites] become patronising ... like [they are] sitting high up on a pedestal, and patting [blacks] on the head, saying 'you are not doing badly'. (24)*

> *White managers have habitually considered themselves management material, and blacks not. You will have to break a psychological barrier for [black managers] to be accepted. (13)*

All respondents rejected the notion that they were affirmative action appointees. Some expressed their resentment vehemently. They felt the phrase denigrated their hard work and achievements, as expressed below:

> *There is a stigma attached to affirmative action appointees. They are labelled 'protected person'. They are 'disabled'' and need special provision. I don't need it. I resent it. (19)*

Negative attitudes to affirmative action may be linked to insidious stereotypes about black people, including the assumption that Africans are unable to manage themselves and others. This is the reason advanced for the phenomenon that black managers' performance is often supervised more closely than white managers' would be, and for questioning their credentials repeatedly. Two incidents which illustrate the latter are described graphically below:

> *I had problems when I started .... The customers used to have problems with me. I used to deal with property developers [when] a filling station was to be built next to a shopping centre. When it was still on the drawing board I would get involved in the planning and so forth. The property developers are used to dealing with whites ... they're talking big bucks, nothing less than a million and a half Rands. Now people don't expect that you as a black could be sitting there deciding those things. Every time I was in a meeting, the first five minutes of the meeting was basically a discussion of my credentials. You know, initially my business card never had my qualifications after my name. But I realized that when we start the meeting, I have to explain my academic qualifications, my background, my history. And I finally decided not to waste the first ten minutes of every meeting, I had better just put all my qualifications on my business card straightaway. So it says '[name and surname], Bsc, ACD Maths, HDE, MAP (Wits Business School)'. And when the guy takes my business card, he looks at it, and those questions are answered. And thereafter we can have a decent meeting.*

In future, it is planned to publicize ADP beneficiaries through the inclusion of profiles of them in the popular inhouse journal. But the problem of communicating programme objectives and activities in a meaningful way to all members of staff remains.

Consultation with all constituencies

The experience of the initial planning group and the cross-functional management team emphasizes the importance of consulting with a wide range of individuals and constituencies on policy formulation and implementation. Yet despite efforts to consult individuals from a range of occupational and racial groups, few employees outside the ADP team thought that the process had been sufficiently participatory or consultative. The most obvious omission in this respect is the trade union, SACCAWU.

Initially the ADP team focused on the development of salaried staff, since these were the people who responded to the notice advertising the programme. The extension of affirmative action to the shop floor (in the sense of providing access to higher level training and development, and promotion beyond supervisory positions) was not promoted vigorously. A significant change in this position took place in 1994, due to several interrelated events. The initial failure to attract candidates to the ADP from all levels of the organization resulted in the unintended exclusion of members of the shop floor. At the same time, workers' rights to lifelong learning opportunities, and particularly to adult basic education, were becoming more prominent issues in labour affairs at national level. Shop stewards at the Conglomerate began to ask why they had not been consulted about the ADP, and requested a hearing. Meanwhile, an experienced person receptive to trade union concerns had been appointed through the ADP to a managerial post in the human resources department. In a series of meetings held with shop stewards, the ADP was recognized as the company's major vehicle of occupational advancement, and it was agreed that access to the ADP was to be extended to workers through the provision of compensatory education at Standards Eight and Ten levels.

Of course, if shop floor staff are to be recruited for salaried posts and targeted for management development, further steps will be required, as indicated in Chapter Three of this study. Existing staff will have to be assessed for potential and given appropriate training; new recruits to shop floor jobs will have to reach higher educational requirements than in the past;

helping them develop technical skills needed in their career, but point out that most valuable learning opportunities are informal, arising from the demands of the work situation. Observing others, particularly during negotiations with suppliers and customers, was a frequently employed strategy.

In this connection, the informal, voluntary mentoring relationships cultivated at the Conglomerate were perceived as valuable. Mentors reportedly provided role models to more junior staff, and performed a number of other functions, such as advising protegees about job openings, explaining company protocols, providing feedback on performance and acting as sounding boards for problems.

In contrast with the experience of black managers at the Bank, black managers at the Conglomerate are appointed to 'real' jobs with real responsibilities. They are not shielded from decision-making by white managers who believe they do not have the capacity for it. Graduated decision-making, with responsibility for the consequences of decisions, is a management development strategy favoured at the Conglomerate. In addition (and in contrast to the experience of black managers in the Oil Company) the Conglomerate's black managers are well briefed on their duties and career paths:

> *During the interview [for a new position] we spoke a lot and I asked a lot of questions. What would be expected of me? What are my new responsibilities? What authority goes with the position? How far can I go? [My future boss] spelt it out quite clearly to me and said: "It's yours. You've got full responsibility. (21)*

Timely and clear communications

The launch of the ADP within the company led the managers concerned to believe that timely and clear communications with all employees on issues related to affirmative action were vital. Lack of communication, or failed communications, threaten the credibility of the programme by giving the appearance that little or nothing is happening:

> *We registered our names [for the ADP] last year [1993]. Six months later there was a meeting and we were briefed on what the ADP was all about. And three months later I got a communication saying, 'We apologize for being a bit late'. But we can't keep on being late. We can't afford to be late, or to apologize for being late. (22)*

A favourable environment for affirmative action

The ADP is set in an organizational environment which is favourable for affirmative action. In sharp contrast with the Bank and the Oil Company, supportive features of the environment include senior management commitment to the process of black leadership development and empowerment within the organization and in the broader community; support systems, such as cross functional management teams and mentors to facilitate social interaction and the exchange of views; and enthusiastic and committed people to manage the programme.

Significantly, the organizational culture is one which affirms the dignity, confidence and competence of employees. When asked about race relations, white and Asian respondents in the study described the company as 'liberal', due mainly to the influence of the parent company which promotes equal opportunity ideology and practices in its American factories and monitors those of the South African operation. Most of the black managers interviewed in this study agreed with an Asian manager who said that

> *I have never felt 'different' in our organization. I was never made to feel aware of my background or culture or anything like that .... We just never think about that. (9)*

But of course, not everyone in the organization shares the same positive view. One African manager observed that

> *There is still that feeling from the white guys that black people can only perform up to a certain level, they can't go beyond it. (26)*

In contrast with the rather formal and exclusive sporting and social activities sponsored by many other companies for their salaried employees (membership in golf clubs; dinner dances at hotels), the emphasis at the Conglomerate is on inclusive, popular and competitive activities such as road running, soccer and volleyball. This makes it easier for employees to interact across barriers of race, class, gender and rank in the organization, and facilitates the development of social networks.

In Chapter Six of this study we saw that black managers rely strongly on academic qualifications for placement and advancement. At the Conglomerate, an additional strategy to promote career development was observed. A number of managers described themselves as "lifelong learners", as people committed to acquiring the skills - and power - to shape their own positions, and those of others. These managers credit inhouse education and training for

aspirations (leaping from the shop floor to the managing director's office, or wanting to train in a field completely unrelated to the current career path) provided grounds for career counselling for a small number of applicants.

For those who passed through the screening process successfully, a personal study programme was developed. The company pays registration and tuition fees as well as other expenses, such as travel, accommodation and books.

In addition to the ADP, an informal policy exists of allocating 50% of openings and promotions to black staff members. Efforts are being made to identify black employees with potential by using standardized tests of literacy and numeracy, appraisals by an industrial psychologist, and discussions with the staff of the human resources department about the prospects and avenues for advancement in the company. In future all new recruits to the company will be required to have at least a matric, as such employees are believed to be more productive, to have better relationships with colleagues and management, and to have the potential to be trained for management positions.

The ADP has been given a period of five to seven years to prove its worth to the company. At the end of this period it is anticipated that there will be no further need for affirmative action measures.

9.5 AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONGLOMERATE'S APPROACH TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

A study of employees' perceptions of the ADP, its progress and outcomes to the end of 1994, reveals several factors which may have a bearing on the programme's longer term success in the organization, as well as its capacity to serve as an example to other organizations engaged in affirmative action. Once again, these factors are presented in a sequence which indicates the convictions of participants in the study, starting with the most strongly and widely held views.

trying to co-opt them; thus potential candidates might not come forward in the numbers anticipated. A third explanation was suggested by the 'greying' of the workforce. The average age of the company's blue collar workers is 47,2. Many of these employees have benefited from the custom of personal referrals in the hiring process and the relatively high wages paid by the company in terms of equal opportunity measures instituted in the Sullivan Code. The rate of attrition is low and the company is not growing, therefore there are unlikely to be many openings in management in the short term. Management's perception, then, was that the company's long-term, blue-collar workers did not have the educational background, nor the youthful vigour and motivation, to engage in further study for the purposes of career advancement.

Recognizing that the programme had not been widely communicated to employees, and had not succeeded in engaging their enthusiastic support, the new cross-functional management team decided to run question and answer sessions for a wider cross section of staff members. Again due mainly to the interest shown by white-collar workers, the programme attracted 64 persons in 1994, of whom 50 were black, and 10 were women.

Members of the ADP team then set about structuring and implementing the programme. Working in pairs or triads with practitioners in the firm's human resources department, ADP team members began to counsel applicants concerning their occupational aspirations, and appraise their aptitudes, attitudes, and achievements. Personnel records were scrutinized for candidates' educational background and indicators of good performance.[12] An assessment was then made of each candidate's suitability for the programme. Candidates were rated in three ways: automatically accepted; temporarily declined (may reapply in six months); or needing further assessment from human resources professionals. One of the interesting byproducts of this assessment process was that it alerted members of the ADP team to the weak communications skills of several potential candidates. The human resources department was notified in turn about a widespread need for remedial education.[13] "Unreasonable" career

[12] Performance appraisals, rates of absenteeism and records of debt are reviewed.

[13] In 1994 the Conglomerate registered as an adult education centre, and employed nine teachers to run a pilot programme for 25 learners in Standard Eight and 23 learners in Standard Ten. Classes are held after hours, on company premises, at no financial cost to learners.

the existing workforce. Calculations were made of the number of managers needed each year, and the number of black appointments which should be made to meet hiring and promotion targets, ranging from 40% to 60%. In line with the company's tradition of inhouse recruitment and development, it was decided to draw up a list of potential candidates for supervisory and management positions, based on team members' perceptions of individuals' aptitudes, experience and educational or trade qualifications. The number of candidates listed in this way was sufficient to meet the targets which had been set, but it was decided to open the search more widely so as to recruit a larger pool of potential managers from within the firm. A discreet announcement was made outlining the company's equal opportunity aims, and a notice was posted inviting applicants to join the 'Accelerated Development Programme' (ADP) - billed as a company-sponsored education and training initiative.

The specific aim of the programme is to develop a pool of qualified people who may be advanced into management positions as these become available in the process of attrition. To this end, the support offered is not limited to job specific training, but is oriented to various management functions (for example administration, sales, accounting) represented in the firm. Requirements for short-term, job-specific training (for example in sales and marketing) will be met inhouse, whil quirements for longer-term professional education will be met by registering staff mem rs as students with accredited educational institutions and organizations.

Initially, the response from blue-collar workers to the announcement of the ADP was disappointing, although the response from white-collar workers was enthusiastic. Several explanations were offered for this by human resources managers. First, it was believed that many blue-collar workers who had read the notice would not see themselves as the potential managers invited to apply for a place in the programme. Secondly, leaders of the trade union (SACCAWU),[11] locked into oppositional relations with management and preoccupied with wage disputes, had in the past discouraged potential candidates (particularly shop stewards) from applying for management development programmes by insinuating that management was

[11] The South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union. SACCAWU was not consulted about the ADP prior to the announcement.

to manage the company's large vehicle fleet. The appointee was soon revealed to be unsuitable for the job; he was unable to control the fleet financially and made questionable deals for the purchase and service of vehicles. A committee had to be appointed to oversee his decisions and effectively do his work, making his position a mere 'window dressing' appointment. His appointment was terminated when his mentor, the managing director, left the firm a few years later. The incident contributed to a conviction widely held by the firm's present management that tokenism is to be avoided at all costs. The company has now reverted to its earlier policy of internal recruitment, training and development, and intentionally dispels links between its human resources policies and affirmative action. The use of blander American terminology and euphemisms ('equal opportunity', 'managing diversity') is preferred. Putting the case bluntly, one senior manager declared:

> *We don't have an affirmative action campaign, we have an objective to give our stockholders the best return on their investment in the short, medium and long term. We could achieve the short and medium term objectives with no affirmative action, but we would fail in the long term. (45)*

9.4 CURRENT STRATEGY: THE ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

In 1992 a series of meetings was held by senior staff of the human resources department in which an 'accelerated programme' was conceived for the dual purposes of spurring management development and black occupational advancement in the firm. The concept was not communicated successfully to others in the company, so the original design was set aside in favour of a more participative, consultative management process. A thirteen-member, cross-functional team[10] was drawn from different levels and areas of the organization, across racial and gender lines, to investigate the development of staff and the management of equal opportunity in the company. The team first set targets for the racial composition of management up to the year 2003 (based on projections of the company's growth and sales, and taking into account recommendations made by NAFCOC and the BMF) then surveyed

[10] Cross-functional teams consist of people from different functions in the organization, for example, sales, human resources, finance and manufacturing, who meet regularly to set targets and develop strategies for change in the organization. Cross functional teams are not unique to the Accelerated Development Programme. They have been used successfully to address problems of customer service, and for other tasks in the organization.

(a black woman) a failure because of her "unrealistic expectations" of the company.[8] This employee left the company at the end of 1993. Of the three bursars who completed their studies in 1993, one has been employed.

In 1992, following an audit of the workforce and a projection of human resources requirements to the end of the century, management concluded that further action was needed to develop a management force (particularly at middle and upper management levels) which reflected the diversity of South Africa's population. 'Diversity' was understood to refer to race. Gender, ethnicity and disability were not considered to be significant issues in the company at the time.

A backdrop to the company's current affirmative action aims is a certain wariness of using the term 'affirmative action' at all. The term is perceived by many to have connotations of conflict and failure. Here it is important to note that the Conglomerate has always steered clear of public pronouncements and high profile actions on issues of social responsibility.[9] With respect to affirmative action, one senior manager reflected the views of many others when he said:

> *Affirmative action has failed, or has been seen to fail, everywhere, including the USA. It's just not a good term, not a successful word. The term is not used much in the corporation globally. (45)*

An examination of the American and Zimbabwean experience of affirmative action in the 1980s created misgivings amongst human resources managers in the South African company about the effects of vigorous affirmative action on productivity and organizational effectiveness. In addition, some managers at the Conglomerate had acquired jaundiced views of affirmative action resulting from an incident in the company's recent history. Traditionally the company's management corps had always been drawn from its own staff, but in the early 1980s the managing director at the time appointed his black chauffeur, a former golf caddy,

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[8] This bursar requested financial support for an additional year of fulltime study to complete a Masters degree.

[9] In the late 1980s, in the period of economic sanctions and disinvestment in South Africa, the benefits of such a position were clear: the company could continue to operate, albeit discreetly. The relative merits and demerits of persisting with such a position will need to be carefully weighed up in the 1990s.

> *The Sullivan Code was used by most American companies as a point scoring mechanism. [The Conglomerate] is no exception in that ... We have seen genuine attempts at social responsibility, but not within the organization. Outside the organization, yes. The company did a lot for communities out there. A lot. They set up schools, they built old age homes, they have given thousands of rands away in projects ... but not enough was done inside. (27)*

Swainson (1991) remarks that it is difficult to assess the overall impact of private sector investment in education and training. But it is worth noting that in 1987 Rev Sullivan withdrew from the Sullivan Code Signatory Association, observing that it had failed to introduce 'real' change. Another critic of the signatories, Mafuna, commented that

> They [American multinationals] have failed to measure up to the expectations of the black community because they have been too engrossed in perfecting the ratings system. Their motive was to score points.
>
> (Business Day, 28 October 1988)

Generally, social programmes motivated by the Sullivan Code seem to have improved working conditions, but to have done little to increase the supply of skilled black workers and professionals in the economy. At the Conglomerate, education and training expenditure was designated for developing potential managers from the ranks of salaried black employees. In the 1980s the company sponsored the further education of several employees on the Joint Management Development Programme, a demanding and innovative three year programme for the development of young managers of all races.[6] In 1992 a bursary scheme was introduced to fund graduate studies in business administration at the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town.[7] Under this scheme individuals are supported financially for one year of full time study. They sign a two-year indemnity to the company, and on graduation are deliberately placed at the lower end of the management scale for which they qualify, so that they may rise, and be seen to rise, on the basis of merit. Mentors, chosen for their expertise and communicativeness, are assigned to bursars, and monitor their progress. In 1992 there were three participants in the scheme, one of whom was considered by senior human resources managers to be "successful", one "average", and one

[6] The programme was supported by the French Chamber of Commerce, the Black Management Forum, and a number of multinational companies, such as the French oil company Total, which had remained in South Africa despite sanctions and disinvestment campaigns in the 1980s. The programme was run by Clive Acton Associates, and enjoyed high prestige in business and education circles.

[7] The Postgraduate Diploma in Management is currently favoured.

9.3 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN THE COMPANY

In 1977, at the insistence of its parent organization, the company became a signatory of the Sullivan Code,[4] and began to implement 'equal opportunity' measures modelled on those in place in its American parent organization. The Sullivan Code stipulated hiring practices, rates of pay, and the provision of equal facilities and services for all race groups. Signatories of the code were obliged to budget a certain percentage of the payroll for social responsibility, and of this sum, a certain percentage was to be spent on education and training.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the Conglomerate routinely exceeded the targets for hiring and promotion of black people prescribed by the code, and received top ranking on the Sullivan Principles. The company first concentrated on desegregating and upgrading facilities at the plant, then on improving living conditions for employees and their families outside the work environment. Education grants, housing subsidies and medical care for black staff were introduced.[5] Over time, greater weight was given to involving black employees in the identification, development, implementation and evaluation of social programmes. Towards the end of the 1980s, in a gesture of solidarity with the efforts of black South Africans to overturn apartheid, the company pledged to pay full wages to workers who had been detained without trial by the authorities for demonstrating against apartheid, or for breaking apartheid laws.

While these activities may give a glowing picture of the Conglomerate's social conscience and action, a different light is cast on the Sullivan Code and the company by one of the black managers interviewed in this study:

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[4] The Sullivan Code is named for Rev Leon Sullivan, a prominent African American congressman who devised a code of conduct for American-owned businesses operating in South Africa under the apartheid regime. In 1987 Sullivan stated in a press conference that adherence to his code in 127 of some 200 American companies in South Africa had "failed to undermine apartheid". He called for both disinvestment and a trade embargo (cited in Beaty and Harari, 1987).

[5] In 1994 the company spent 12% of its payroll on social programmes, and one million Rands was budgeted for inhouse education and training. This sum includes the salaries of three full-time staff members, overheads such as training rooms and equipment, and training materials.

who were present, and fielded questions and comments from them. She checked her interpretations, and was assured that they were generally accurate.

At the meeting, team members complained that affirmative action was moving "at a snail's pace", and that the project was in danger of losing credibility in the company. While considerable strides had been made in communicating policy, and in opening access to education and training programmes, lack of commitment to the project was evident on the part of some managers. Reluctance to appoint black people to senior positions in the company was evident. Furthermore, vacancies were being filled by recruits drawn from outside the company, rather than from the pool of people whose skills and potential had been identified by the team in 1993. The commitment of senior managers to black occupational advancement in the organization was beginning to be questioned, apparently for the first time.

In the meeting it was proposed that clear targets be set to guide line managers as well as the management team itself about progress in affirmative action. Mechanisms for evaluating individual progress (for example the insertion of items on affirmative action into managers' performance appraisal forms) were mooted. It was also suggested that the company's informal mentoring system be extended to others in the company and that both mentors and protegees should receive an orientation to their roles from staff of the human resources department.

The researcher was left with the impression that some managers' high hopes of rapid progress in affirmative action had been trimmed to more modest levels, but that team members were prepared to press for changes to strengthen and support the process which they had initiated. As was the case in the Bank and the Oil Company, the draft case study acted as a catalyst for reflection and action, and assisted those responsible for affirmative action to address the problems identified by participants in the research.

no blacks in senior management or on the company's board of directors, making the company's public profile as an 'equal opportunity organization' somewhat low key. The American parent company has indicated that it wishes to see at least one black person and a woman on the board within two years.

9.2 NOTES ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The procedure followed in the Conglomerate was nearly identical to that observed in the Oil Company and the Bank. In the case of the Conglomerate, the General Manager of Human Resources and Branch Operations had been an acquaintance of the researcher for many years. She contacted him, and the Manager of Corporate Affairs (whose portfolio included affirmative action) in December 1993 concerning the feasibility of conducting research at the Conglomerate. These two managers approved the project and agreed to be interviewed themselves. They also provided the researcher with documentation and general information about the company. The Manager of Corporate Affairs put the researcher in contact with five colleagues who met the selection criteria for interviews (see Chapter Two). This first set of respondents suggested further contacts within the company, leading to an intentional sample of thirteen managers.

Interviews were conducted between January and September 1994, both before and after South Africa's first democratic elections. Interviews were conducted on the company's East Rand premises, either in respondents' offices, or in breakaway rooms adjoining the reception area. As was the case in the Bank and the Oil Company, respondents were asked to provide biographical information, and to correct summary notes made by the researcher, drawing on her notes and interview transcripts.

On 26 January 1995 members of the Conglomerate's management team for affirmative action met at Idlewilds, a resort on the outskirts of Johannesburg, to discuss, among other things, a draft version of this case study which had been circulated to participants in the study in the last quarter of 1994. In February 1995 the researcher was invited to make minor corrections to her report, and to join the management team for its second meeting of the year. At that meeting the researcher presented a summary of her report to the nine members of the team

senior management and on the company board of directors; white men and women dominated middle management.

Targets set for the retail group by the year 2001 were that blacks should comprise 80% of the total workforce, and hold 20% of senior management posts. By March 1996 each chain in the retail group should have a black non-executive director.

10.2 NOTES ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process followed the pattern already established in the Bank, the Oil Company and the Conglomerate. This time the researcher was referred by a personal friend and former employee of the Retailer to senior staff in the company's personnel division. The Personnel Manager and Personnel Director were approached in February 1995 concerning the feasibility of the project. They welcomed the researcher and put forward the names of several colleagues within the retail chain and the wider retail group who met the criteria for selection. They also set aside time to be interviewed themselves, and provided the researcher with general information about the company. The first set of people interviewed suggested further contacts within the company, and so an intentional sample of thirteen respondents was built. The researcher acknowledges that the sample is heavily skewed towards employees at the company's head office in Johannesburg. Although potential respondents from the company's many stores and geographical regions were suggested by employees at head office, it proved extremely difficult to establish contact with these people on the telephone so as to set appointments for interviews. Interviews were conducted in the first quarter of 1995, in private offices or breakaway rooms at the Retailer's premises in Johannesburg.

A draft version of this case study was given to respondents in June 1995. Three respondents completed the response form attached to the case study and returned it to the researcher. In August, the researcher telephoned a further four respondents and asked them for their comments on the report. All seven respondents agreed that the draft case study gave a detailed and accurate picture of the Retailer and its affirmative action policy. Asked how the research results might best be used by the company, one manager suggested that participants' perceptions and views of affirmative action should be aired more widely in a company-wide

justified in the company (and the industry) as a need for 'fresh blood' to stimulate creativity and productivity.

The corporate culture, strongly influenced by the American model of customer-driven policy, was described by respondents as "entrepreneurial, profit-driven, professional and competitive" (31); and "cosmopolitan, competitive, fast-paced and demanding" (34). It emphasizes "empowerment, participative management, open communication and effectiveness" (07). Or as one respondent described it: "You have to swim; we don't hand out life jackets" (34).

The Retailer has a wide range of training programmes aimed at developing managerial, technical and professional skills. The 'Merchant Development Programme', a flagship programme, is a one-year course which aims to instil in newcomers to the Retailer a sound base in retailing as well as a 'merchant mentality' (Supplement to the Annual Report, 1994: 4). Thirty candidates are selected twice yearly from 500 to 600 applicants. On completion, trainees may enter the Merchandise Division as assistant planners or buyers, jobs which identify them as 'fast trackers' for middle and senior management positions.

Other programmes have been designed to address the developmental needs of middle to senior management. In these programmes, participants from across the retail group are engaged in both theoretical and experiential learning exercises, syndicate work and workshops. Participants are put under pressure of time, and are expected to deliver public presentations on individual and group activities. Such programmes go beyond technical skills training to expose participants to other people and functions in the organisation.

In 1994, in the retail group as a whole, 67% of the workforce was black (ie African, Asian and Coloured) and 70% of employees were female. Management, from supervisory to senior levels (graded on the Hay Ansyl system) was 34% black, with Africans holding slightly fewer than 10% of senior management posts. There was one black non-executive director on the company's Board of Directors. In the first quarter of 1995, in the retail chain which is the focus of this study, the workforce was 42% white, 31% African, 21% Coloured and 6% Asian. Women made up 75% of the workforce. White men were heavily over-represented in

The reasons for moving from a centralized and hierarchical style of management to a more participative approach were described by one respondent as follows:

> *There is a changing reality in the world ... being driven on various fronts. It is resulting in a greater democratization of almost everything, so, if you want to do something it is no longer possible and meaningful to do it in an autocratic way. So, in fact, if you don't give [people] a say and allow them to participate, you probably are not going to achieve the results that you want. So ... we have re.ognized the need for a high level of participation at all levels in order to get the best out of the people who work in the business. (23)*

Interactive management, the third management approach to which the company subscribes, means seeing the organization as a series of cells, or functions, interacting with one another at various stages. Productive work should no longer be seen as a linear process, in which individuals and groups perform a discrete function and then pass the activity on to the next individual. Instead they interact with one another simultaneously, and in so doing, they create interdependence and synergy. Disagreements are supposed to be eliminated, and a uniform focus or direction achieved. The business itself functions as a system, which is constantly refined and streamlined through re-engineering and the application of information technology. The business, as a system, interacts with its immediate external environment (another system) which, in turn, is part of a greater global system.

But corporate philosophy and corporate style are not necessarily the same thing. The premise of cooperation and mutual trust implicit in participative management is undermined by the aggressive individualism and competition fostered in the internal and external environment. The external environment is characterized by intense rivalry with other retailers over markets and profits. Internally, the flat organisational structure means that there are few job openings on a vertical axis, particularly at head office. The increasing use of information technology means that the number of people needed to run the business is shrinking. Long-serving staff members are locked into positions at the top (directors and divisional managers) or the bottom (service staff) of the organisation. Between these levels there is intense competition for advancement among staff selected for their youth, ambition and determination. While some new jobs are created through the opening of new stores, the expansion of existing ones, and the strategic thrust into new markets, staff often seek advancement in rival retail chains, often returning to the Retailer some years later at a higher level. This high turnover of staff is often

drawn from Million-Rand-A-Month competition entries was spent over three years on 250 schools (Annual Report, 1994: 20). A Saturday school, named after a chain in the same stable which targets black consumers, provides classes in English and mathematics to the children of staff members. However, pressure to increase social investment is growing:

> *The expectation of the man in the street is that the legacy of apartheid is going to be sorted out quite quickly ... if the government can't provide, then business must provide. We have had a major increase in applications for educational assistance quite recently. (44)*

Although this report emphasizes human resources functions and issues, the company is led by its buying and marketing functions.[5] According to the Retailer's 1994 Annual Report, decision making is relegated to operating levels of the business whenever possible. Strategic, participative and interactive management philosophies lie at the heart of this approach, which "relies on the building of employee partnerships at every level to foster mutual trust and to encourage people to think always about how they can do things better" (Annual Report, 1994: 2).

In the 1980s, following a period in which authority, responsibility and strategic thinking were vested in a few individuals employed in leadership capacities (notably a series of charismatic and visionary CEOs) a process of devolution began, aided by advances in information technology and business process re-engineering (noted in Chapter Three). One consequence of this has been that strategic thinking and planning have been decentralized and shifted to lower levels of management. A related process has been a flattening of the organizational structure. At head office, a handful of top executives exercise group responsibility for finance, personnel, marketing and so on, and liaise with divisional managers to control policy directives. Each store, or 'operation', functions as an independent cost centre and carries out its own accounting and warehousing. Most stores employ their own personnel manager and carry out their own personnel selection. The stores function in a network rather than a hierarchy. The network consists of divisional operations managers, store managers or area managers, together with the infrastructure of each store.

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[5] Five of the fourteen directors in the Retailer's Central Management Committee represent merchandise functions and two of them are responsible for marketing.

subscribe to the Retailer's 'Club'[1]. Subscribers receive a glossy monthly magazine which advertises fashion and beauty products and promotes consumer lifestyles. They are encouraged to take part in demonstrations and promotions. They receive special offers, prizes, vouchers and discounts on certain goods. The main incentive to join the Club is the chance to win cash prizes in the 'Million-Rand-A-Month Challenge'.[2] To ameliorate the gross commercialism of the competition somewhat, R250 000 is donated every month to schools selected by the top five prize-winners. On the face of it, schools are co-beneficiaries of the competition.[3] However, the Retailer profits enormously from Club subscriptions, taking in five or six times the prize money disbursed in monthly competitions and grants.

Aside from its public association with cash donations to schools, the chain, and indeed the retail group as a whole, has a low profile in social investment, in striking contrast to its parent company, SAB. According to a senior manager interviewed in this study,

We believe our responsibilities centre around our employees and their families. (44)

The 1994 Annual Report explains that the group's major contribution to society is the creation of job opportunities and training people for those jobs.[4] A significant financial contribution to the education of individuals, billed as "a serious commitment to education" in the Annual Report (1994: 20), may be seen in a R5 million bursary scheme associated with another chain in the retail group. But support for institutions and communities is much weaker: R4 million

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[1] There were 1 500 000 members of the Club in 1994, most of whom held active accounts with the Retailer. About 500 members were not account holders.

[2] The first prize is R250 000, the second is R50 000, the third is R25 000, the fourth is R15 000 and the fifth is R10 000. There are 550 cash prizes of R1000 each. Fifty Club members have their account balance paid in full every month.

[3] A recent television advertisement by the Retailer suggests that donations are made to needy schools in black communities, but in fact prize-winners may select any school at all as a beneficiary, and donations have been made to well-heeled private schools which serve privileged sectors of the population, as well as to schools in poorer communities.

[4] An additional contribution may be seen in the retail group's participation in the Textile and Clothing Industry Task Group, set up by the new government to formulate strategies to improve the industry's international competitiveness as well as its effectiveness in supplying the domestic market with textiles and clothing at affordable prices. The task group is composed of representatives from business, organised labour and government. It has held discussions on the GATT requirements and productivity issues such as skills development and technology. A Textile and Clothing Authority has been established to enhance the international competitiveness of the industry.

10% (Annual Report, 1994: 25). These rates are considered to be low in relation to the profits recorded by rival chains in 1994, but satisfactory in view of the chain's expansion (three new stores were opened in 1994), its extensive refurbishment programme, and its investment in electronic systems (automatic merchandise replenishment systems and electronic points of sale equipment were installed in many stores).

Trading conditions in South Africa in the early 1990s have not been favourable to retailers. Disposable incomes and employment levels in the general population have been depressed. Consumer and investor confidence were affected negatively by violence and political uncertainty, constraining retail growth. However, there were indications in late 1994 that the country was emerging from its longest recesssion since World War II. Lower rates of corporate taxation boosted post-tax income, offsetting the price increases incurred through the introduction of VAT and the poor international exchange rate of the Rand.

The chain faces stiff competition from other retailers, threatening its historically dominant position in women's fashion. Its top priorities are to retain market leadership and build profits. It planned, therefore, not to open new stores in 1995, but to focus instead on the revitalization of trading areas through relocations and refurbishments.

In keeping with South Africa's historical segregation along lines of race and class, each of the chains in the retail group has had its own distinct target market. The traditional market of the Retailer has been middle income whites, but the growth of the black middle class and the expansion of the lower income market in the 1980s has meant that black consumers have overtaken whites in terms of market share and buying power. This has important implications for the future prosperity of the chain, and indeed the entire retail group. It is a fundamental principle of marketing that the people who can best interpret consumer needs and interests are those who share the same population group and class position. This means learning about black consumer demands and lifestyles so that merchandise, marketing and service can be appropriately pitched. As one respondent interviewed in the course of this study put it:

> *If we don't find out lots more about black consumers fast, we are going to lose our competitive advantage. (31)*

Aside from the retail trade, a substantial source of income derives from customers who

CHAPTER TEN

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AT THE RETAILER

10.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RETAILER

The retail chain which is the focus of this study began as a single basement shop in Joubert Street, downtown Johannesburg, in 1929. The shop sold women's fashions, and a system of allowing customers to pay for their purchases over a period of six months became the hallmark of its success. During the 1930s, further stores were opened on the Reef, then in Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth, until in 1946 there were ten stores in the chain, and a public company was floated on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. The company prospered and a period of growth and diversification followed. Stores were opened in the major cities and towns of South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The growing prosperity of the white population of South Africa in the 1960s led to a market of increasing size and sophistication, but also brought increased competition from rival chains. In the 1970s, the principle of 'customer sovereignty' became enshrined in the company's philosophy. The advent of store credit cards and the use of information technology to manage stocks and credit contributed significantly to the company's financial growth in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The Retailer is today a leading fashion chain in southern Africa, providing middle to upper income customers with clothing, footwear, household textiles and accessories. In 1994 the chain had 166 stores in South Africa and Namibia, and employed over 8300 employees. The chain is the largest of three chains in a retail group which operates 541 stores in Southern Africa. In 1994 the Retailer contributed 66% of the retail group's sales and 79% of its attributable earnings (Annual Report, 1994: 15). The retail group as a whole employs over 15 000 people and administers more than three million active charge accounts, of which 1 800 000 are held by the Retailer. Group manufacturing, distribution and printing operations support the retail trade carried out by the three chains.

The retail group was described by several of the managers interviewed in this study (23, 31, 44) as a 'blue chip' company, meaning that it is well established and profitable. The group became a subsidiary of South African Breweries (SAB) in 1982. The chain which is the focus of this study achieved a 13% sales growth in 1994, which translated into a trading profit of

promotion in the organization do not validate this proposition, then the credibility of the ADP, the human resources department and ultimately the management of the company will be at risk.

The purpose of the ADP is, as its name suggests, the accelerated participation of previously disadvantaged groups within existing structures and cultures in the organization. The ADP promotes education and training as the main route to occupational advancement in the organization. Other avenues to advancement, such as job creation, job fragmentation, and job sharing, which imply changes to the way work is structured in an organization, are unacceptable to those in positions of power in the company.

So far, the Conglomerate's approach to affirmative action has not been seriously challenged, either from within or outside the organization. For example, the company has not been much affected by the 'entitlement' and 'job-hopping' syndromes, precipitated by corporate head-hunting and poaching, which have been reported by many larger companies (noted in the case studies of the Bank and the Oil Company). There are several possible explanations for this. First, the company kept a low profile as an equal opportunity organization when it remained in South Africa during the period of sanctions and disinvestment in the 1980s. At a time when other multinational companies were publicly proclaiming their affirmative action programmes and appointing black staff to highly visible positions, the Conglomerate went through a process of downsizing, which meant that it did not recruit or hire many new people at all. The company's culture nurtures loyalty and teamwork; it rewards individual performance; and it favours innovation and change. The traditional pattern of advancement in the company has been one of starting low on the organizational hierarchy, proving oneself and working one's way up. So the company's recent history, existing structures and culture all support the implementation of affirmative action as a consensus-based, participative, medium-to-long term process of strategic change and development.

The company's culture is one which is open to change. The Accelerated Development Programme, initially aimed at reforming employment and promotion patterns in the company, will inevitably influence wider human resources policies and practices, and thus contribute to an ongoing process of change and development in the company.

management team have contributed to the skills development and commitment of team members, and also enhanced the political climate surrounding affirmative action in the company. The team offers a broad base of opinion and experience, reducing the tendency for affirmative action to be seen as an exclusively pro-black (or anti-white) issue, and enhancing the perception that it is a holistic, as well as strategic, approach to development. The initial exclusion of the trade union from consultations has been rectified, encouraging company-wide participation in the programme.

The company acknowledges an ethical and moral responsibility to develop its black employees, and believes that it has a good record as a socially responsible, equal opportunity employer. This sense of responsibility was inculcated during the period in which the Conglomerate was a signatory of the Sullivan Code, which obliged the company to provide equitable structures for its workforce and to contribute to the development of disadvantaged communities. But how enduring is this sense of moral rectitude, now that the strictures of the Sullivan Code have fallen away? In mid 1994 there was a sense among senior managers that the rising tide of public interest in affirmative action would again recede, particularly if the expense of implementing affirmative action measures negatively affected profitability, levels of foreign investment in local companies, or the entry of 'new' foreign companies to South Africa. But two other forces militate against any waning commitment to affirmative action. First of all, the government's draft Equal Opportunities Bill, if legislated, will provide a legal imperative to implement affirmative action, effectively replacing the coercive function of the Sullivan Code. Perhaps more significantly, the company's past and current initiatives in affirmative action have already taken a grip on individuals and groups in the organization. Employees' values, expectations and demands have all increased with the social changes introduced to the company through the Sullivan Code and the ADP. Not only this, but employees' senses of solidarity and power have been subtly increased by the insertion into negotiations between management and the union of the issue of blue collar access to the ADP. Thus a significant outcome of affirmative action at the Conglomerate, even in the early stages of implementation, is heightened awareness and aspirations among employees with regard to social change in the organization. It can be expected that there will be a sustained demand for education and training opportunities at all levels, as these are being proposed as the vehicles for economic and social mobility in the organization. If future patterns of employment and

It's not something self-perpetuating, it's got to be driven all the time. (45)

The difficulty is not deciding on the targets, but actually doing the recruiting, identifying, training and developing [to meet] the targets. One of the biggest obstacles is time. It takes two to three years for someone from the shop floor to get matric. (17)

But what outcomes do employees who are not members of the ADP management team report? Feelings of pride and ownership jostle with doubts about the task ahead:

It's not Utopia, but it's a start. (41)

[The ADP] should have come about a long time ago. Had it come about five, six years ago it could have been a much more influential programme. Changes would have been quite significant. Now it seems we are pressed for time, we are trying for so much in so little time. (21)

We expect so much of them [the ADP team] because in a way they represent the whole black population. If they fail it could be said "Look at black people, they are failing again". (22)

I am not looking at the ADP programme to give me the go ahead to be what I want to become. I have got my own goals to achieve. (3)

These respondents also warned about the dangers of complacency. They noted that many members of the ADP management team are themselves beneficiaries of the programme, and they may be inclined to assess the programme favourably because they are personally invested in it. It was pointed out that for the ADP to sustain credibility and support as a company-wide initiative, it must benefit - and be seen to benefit - others in the company within a reasonable period of time.

9.6 CONCLUSION

The experience of the Conglomerate shows that affirmative action is a process which demands significant time, attention, participation and communication throughout an organization. In launching the Accelerated Development Programme the Conglomerate is devoting more energy and resources to affirmative action now than previously, and it is beginning to pay off. The programme has been generally well received in the company, and promises to deliver on its objectives.

The processes of consultation and participation encapsulated in the ADP's cross-functional

previously the case. Will this move pave the way for Africans to advance in greater numbers to middle and senior management positions, or is it simply a slight reordering of the traditional racial hierarchy which reserves positions of power and authority for white men? Only time will tell.

Women managers expressed a degree of vulnerability in the face of black managers' advance:

> *Guys who are coming in [to the company] from the bottom - affirmative action guys - are very highly qualified. I mean, they've got degrees and everything else. I need to make myself more marketable, that's how they put it ... I can't leave myself open to an attack that 'She's got nothing, why must I report to her?'. (33)*

In this connection, the training department foresees a strengthened role in providing informal education to support the process of change:

> *The biggest barriers to affirmative action are FUD - fear, uncertainty and doubt - on the part of everyone in the organization. One has to recognize these in oneself and in others. Talking about them helps, and in this respect, the counselling aspects of training and development are useful. (41)*

Several members of the ADP team expressed the view that a positive spinoff of the programme was that it

> *... will bring management and the union together on issues that union people have been raising for some time ... not necessarily race issues. (27)*

ADP team members are themselves visible beneficiaries of the programme, not only in terms of opportunities for promotion and access to education and training. As one team member summed it up:

> *There's an opportunity to develop a higher profile for individuals in the company, to gain more understanding of other people, to increase one's own career opportunities, to increase involvement in the company and to gain a voice through which they may be heard. (45)*

Sustainability of the project

Although there may be rewards for their work, it seems that everyone on the ADP team wrestles with the complexity of their tasks:

> *It's not easy, not obvious. It's taken time for people to realize that we are serious about it. (40)*

greater attention will have to be paid to training supervisors to recognize potential and talent amongst their staff; the trade union, and shop floor workers generally, will have to be consulted in a more comprehensive way. Human Resources managers at the Conglomerate foresaw no problems with this.

Assessing the impact of the ADP

At the time of conducting this research, the ADP lacked mechanisms to review and evaluate progress in affirmative action at all levels of the company on a regular basis. Line managers were not held accountable for affirmative action in performance appraisals, nor were benefits to be won in the company's bonus incentive scheme for mentoring and training black managers. Although realistic targets for affirmative action had been set within manpower and succession plans, there was no means to ensure line managers' compliance with them. Because of the loose, organic, planning process, the ADP team had no benchmarks from which to measure its own effectiveness. These are serious shortcomings of the programme which could affect its longer term viability in the company. Lack of detailed planning often reflects an incoherent vision of where a programme is going and how it will benefit participants. Without a focused orientation, the programme may be seen as a peripheral activity which is expensive and difficult to justify.

Nevertheless, respondents commented favourably on a range of outcomes of the programme, some of which were unanticipated. For instance, members of the training department observed that during the process of interviewing ADP candidates they had learned a great deal about the variety of study programmes on which candidates had embarked prior to the announcement of the ADP, even without financial assistance from the firm. This helped both candidates and members of the ADP team to identify personal interests and goals, and informed the training department about particular training and developmental needs which were not catered for in the current palette of inhouse training programmes.

An interesting outcome of affirmative action in the Conglomerate, which may be underlined by the ADP in the future, is the promotion of Asians and women into the middle ranks of management, particularly in financial and service sectors of the organization. This means that the 'glass ceiling' on minority appointments has been raised to a higher level than was

Several different explanations for this were offered. The first explanation was a pragmatic one, suggesting that head office lacked measures of accountability in affirmative action, unlike the stores, whose staff are increasingly required to service the needs of black customers. Another explanation refers to the reluctance of the predominantly white male management corps at head office to hire and develop people of different race groups:

> *We have to wrestle with the legacy of Apartheid where people have been educated to believe certain things about people of colour ... White men have been used to getting the jobs, getting the promotions, as a matter of course. A reasonable education was enough. They are struggling to come to terms with the fact that there are a lot more people competing in the race. (44)*

A third explanation was that white managers cooperated with affirmative action to the extent that black people were brought into the organisation, but then they sabotaged the process:

> *They often don't manage people well, they play 'divide and rule' (18)*

Respondents suggested a range of methods which were used by white managers, consciously or unconsciously, to undermine affirmative action. Some of these are described in the following sections, which deal with problems of implementation, race relations in the company and the nature of work and decision-making.

Problems with Implementation

Many of the managers interviewed in this study, both black and white, indicated that the company had experienced ongoing problems with recruiting experienced black candidates for more senior posts, and qualified black people for creative posts. The latter difficulty was attributed mainly to the poor quality of general education for blacks in South Africa, and to lack of career guidance in black secondary schools. At first, the company relied too heavily on academic qualifications in selection procedures:

> *We burned our fingers with graduates ... very often these people would come in with a certificate to hang on the wall and really they thought that all they had to do was sit behind a desk and receive a salary ... It was hard to get people to recognise that academic qualification is not necessarily a passport to anything, that you have to work and produce results. (23)*

Candidates appointed in this way often had expectations of rapid advancement in the company - expectations which did not relate to historical patterns of promotion:

> *A fast track in retail is 14 years, and that's for whites. (30)*

It is apparent that participants perceive company policy on affirmative action as tightly focused, even uncompromising. People in the organization understand the policy and the reasons for its existence.

Commitment to Affirmative Action

One of the benefits of having a written policy document on affirmative action is that it is seen as publicly committing the Retailer to a set of principles and actions. As one of the senior managers interviewed in this study explained:

> *It ties us down to a certain extent and confirms our values and beliefs in respect of affirmative action ... We can say 'That's what we stand for, those are the principles and values to which we subscribe and [towards which] we are striving'. It formalises the argument, makes it a little bit more tangible ... gives it more substance. In a more informal environment we [might] be inclined to duck and dive and say 'Well, no, we did that last year, and this year it's not applicable'. (44)*

Most staff members interviewed in this study believed that the company was sincere in its commitment to affirmative action, and cited the Retailer's past record in affirmative action, its policy document and the production of the affirmative action video as evidence of intent to act vigorously on affirmative action. Only one interviewee, a young woman with managerial experience of affirmative action and organizational development outside the Retailer, expressed reservations on this score:

> *[Affirmative action] gets mentioned by senior managers at conferences ... in a room full of 3000 people ... so we know they are talking about it. But we don't know if they are talking about it in the boardroom when they are by themselves. (25)*

Most people agreed that,

> *Affirmative action has unqualified support and commitment from senior management ...(30)*

It was pointed out to the researcher repeatedly that success in affirmative action depended on the cooperation and commitment of line managers, and that levels of commitment (or 'buy-in') were variable within the Retailer. So, for example, the operations (stores) side of the business was making rapid and visible progress, both in terms of the number of black people employed, and the training and development of black staff for higher level jobs. The situation at head office, however, was more ambiguous. In the eyes of one respondent,

> *[At head office] affirmative action is felt at junior management levels, but middle and senior management are still 90% white. (18)*

The changing political situation, pressure from its more progressive parent organization, and anticipation of legislation which could introduce penalties for non-compliance were further grounds for pursuing affirmative action:

> *As a leading retailer, the company must not be seen to lag behind others in matters of social policy. (07)*

> *There has been a sharper focus on affirmative action since the elections. (25)*

> *There is more pressure from SAB than from [the Retailer's] management itself to actually do something about affirmative action. (01)*

The notion that affirmative action initiatives were driven by a sense of moral or social responsibility to disadvantaged groups was proposed by only a few interviewees. The general consensus, as expressed by a senior manager, was as follows:

> *The company will gain in moral and social stature, but first and foremost we are doing it for business reasons. (44)*

Beneficiaries of affirmative action were understood by all participants to be "African blacks", as defined in the group policy document. There is scant support for the view that regional variations in the country's demography should determine constituencies, or that women have been disadvantaged by past national or organizational policies and practices. The following remarks indicate an awareness of the broader dimensions of affirmative action and its impact on groups in the company other than Africans:

> *... at the moment we are wrestling with Asian and so-called coloured people [who] feel that they didn't qualify under apartheid and they don't qualify now under affirmative action ... They are feeling left out again. (44)*

> *The questions asked at affirmative action presentations show that whites, followed by Asians and coloureds fear their marginalization in the company. They worry about their children's prospects here, too. (30)*

> *I work with quite a few white females who believe ... that they are not part of the affirmative action policy ... in the company. (25)*

> *[White] people ... feel their jobs are on the line. If you've hit fifty, that's it - you're gone. They are replacing you with a black male. (31)*

they have not been helpful in identifying substantial numbers of people with potential for development, although they have highlighted unsatisfactory levels of literacy, numeracy and language development, even among graduates from tertiary education institutions. The company is experimenting with new ways of screening candidates for training and development, including experiential models of assessment.[12]

Staff of the personnel department also hold discussions with functional directors to identify appropriate positions at middle and senior management levels to which black people may be appointed. Positions may be existing posts or newly created ones, with the proviso that the posts are meaningful, with real responsibility and accountability. The company has had some success with job splitting.

10.5 AN ANALYSIS OF THE RETAILER'S APPROACH TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

How do staff members perceive the Retailer's affirmative action policy and implementation strategy? An analysis of their views in presented under headings below, as in the previous case studies.

The driving force behind policy development

As was pointed out in the previous section, the decision to embark on affirmative action was a strategic one, prompted by changing patterns in the Retailer's customer base. These changes called for greater congruence between the company's staff and its customer base in terms of race, language and lifestyle. This driving force behind affirmative action was understood by all participants in this study, and was particularly well expressed by two of them:

> *[Affirmative action] is a matter of enlightened self-interest. (30)*

> *It's a question of business survival. (31)*

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[12] For example, one intake of marketing trainees was shown a number of retail advertisements and videos and asked to identify the one they considered most effective, then to write a rationale for their choice. Candidates were also asked to speak and write about themselves and their career ambitions. The test thus assessed candidates' capacity for self-reflection, as well as their ability to critically evaluate texts and write in English.

skills oriented. This rather technicist approach to education is now giving way to a more developmental approach. A 'needs-based' strategy to education and training - a stalwart principle of adult education (Knowles, 1980) - has long been in practice at more senior levels of the organisation and is now being extended to the junior ranks. Instead of routinely sending management candidates on a host of inhouse training programmes, the intention is to assess an individual's present capacities and background and interpret them in relation to a 'functional screen' of the qualities and skills which are known to contribute to success in a certain job or field of work. An individual's dominant and secondary traits are picked out and a profile is drawn up indicating possible career directions and areas in which education and training would be beneficial. The profile is drawn up by the relevant personnel officer and discussed with the candidate's line manager, then the candidate, who may agree, modify or dispute the interpretation. The approach has at least two advantages: it increases transparency in the career path process, ensuring that all parties share judgements, aims and expectations; and it increases the chances that the candidate will be an active stakeholder in the assessment and planning processes, rather than a passive victim. This boosts motivation. An additional benefit of the process is that a pool of candidates with potential for supervisory and management development is identified, informing senior management about where to expend its resources.

As a more person-centred, needs-based approach is implemented, curricular adjustments are being made. Training and development programmes were previously focused on improving learners' technical knowledge and skills. But recent experience with black graduates of inhouse management development programmes has pointed out weaknesses in candidates' 'soft skills', the qualities of assertiveness, decisiveness, vision, initiative and creativity. So the emphasis in management training is about to shift from management to leadership development. Incorporated in this is the concept of working in teams and managing change.

The intention to provide opportunities for development and advancement to existing staff requires the identification of candidates with high potential. At present all staff at supervisory level undergo psychometric tests designed by the Human Sciences Research Council to identify their potential for further training and development. However, concerns were expressed by members of the personnel department about the reliability and validity of these tests. They were developed twenty to thirty years ago, and are very culture bound. So far

will be appointed to a post, while a white applicant with more experience or a better academic record may be turned down. Notwithstanding this position, there have been difficulties finding qualified black people for more creative and senior posts in the company. This is attributed by members of the Personnel department to the poor quality of education generally available to black people in South Africa, the limitations placed on black people's career aspirations under the job reservation system, lack of career guidance in black schools, and the difficulty of accessing places at historically white educational institutions.

The Retailer has long made use of agencies which specialize in placing black people, but it is now turning to other recruitment sources. The unbanning of the ANC and the return of exiles to South Africa has meant an influx of talented people who have received a better education overseas than was generally available to black people in South Africa. Such people may have received education in creative or technical fields (such as graphic arts or fabric design) which was not available to black South Africans educated under Bantu Education. In addition, the company has employed a number of black people who were educated at private schools in the wake of the 1976 Soweto uprising. Such candidates are perceived to be more confident than graduates of DET schools, and they have superior English language skills, enabling them to "fit in" well. A matriculation certificate has become a basic requirement for employment in the firm:

> *We don't employ an unpacker to be an unpacker, we employ an unpacker and make sure [he has] at least a matric of some kind. We see if [he has] potential to go to something more senior in the business. That's beginning to pay off nicely ... We don't say what kind of matric it has to be, but we do look for matric, because there are enough people out there with it. So we don't spend a lot of time on literacy classes, we don't do any of that kind of work. The people we have are sufficiently literate to be able to cope [with their jobs and with further education and training]. (23)*

Training and development are regarded as essential conditions for the company to meet its affirmative action targets while retaining its competitive edge. Training programmes are increasingly used as affirmative action tools. Half of the 30 places on the 1995 Merchant Development Programme were reserved for black candidates, and ten out of twelve trainees on the 1994 programme were black. A similar pattern may be found in other training and development courses. In the past, inhouse training programmes tended to be job specific and

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION VIDEO

A 15-minute video, created by a local, black-managed production company,[10] is the centrepiece of a two-hour training session[11] on affirmative action. The aims of the programme are to access staff interpretations of affirmative action, provide an explanation of the Retailer's affirmative action policy, and raise awareness of the implications of the policy for staff members. The video is screened twice during the training session. Brainstorming, small group discussion, and an explanation of key policy principles support the teaching of the video.

The video uses the metaphor of the Comrades Marathon race to put across a message about affirmative action in the Retailer. The central figure is a young African man who is in training for the marathon. We see him starting his run in "the new dawn in our country" - a dawn which is concerned with "rectifying previous imbalances rather than reverse discrimination". The runner speaks of "the challenges in the road ahead" and his hopes of winning the race. We see him drawing on his training to "overcome obstacles" and "compete on an equal level" with other runners. He speaks about the need for commitment and discipline. He praises "people who are more hungry to prove themselves ... people who fight to achieve their goals and to get something".

The first person narration provides the audience with a sense of intimacy and authenticity. The runner's perspective is endorsed, amplified and legitimated by observations about affirmative action made by various members of the Retailer's staff. A white woman speaks about the impact of affirmative action on motivation and performance: "You cannot be average any more. You have to try harder. You cannot coast any longer. There are too many aspiring black people out there". An interview with the Chief Executive Officer is interwoven with scenes of the runner and the race, and with staff observations. He addresses some of the issues and concerns raised by staff members. He acknowledges the sensitivity of affirmative action for white males in the company, but is unequivocal about the policy: "There will be equal opportunities for Asians and Coloureds, and there will continue to be opportunities for white people. But we will focus our attention on the black, underprivileged sector of our population". The way for white people to resolve the dilemma is to be "better than [black] competitors". The CEO places affirmative action in the context of wider social change in South Africa: "Management has changed so much that we all have to keep reinventing ourselves. No one will ever be comfortable again in business". And, "We will all be insecure if we do not adapt and change".

Finally, there is an appeal to white employees to support blacks to develop the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the business. Staff, and the trade union, are exhorted by the CEO to "pull in the same direction", to demonstrate their commitment and cooperation to the company. The video ends with a flow of praise for the Retailer's "fabulous reputation ... harmony ... belonging ... togetherness".

Recruiting black staff has become an important objective to the retailer. In the light of organizational needs, being black secures a place in the hierarchy of qualifications, while being white is increasingly a disqualification (Jordaan, 1995). So it may occur that a black applicant with less experience, but meeting a pre-determined minimum level of qualification

[10] The Retailer understands its responsibility to the RDP as contracting work to small scale black business when possible.

[11] Alternatively, three 45-minute sessions may be offered to cover the same ground. Training sessions are often held in employees' lunch breaks.

Responsibility for the programme is spread over three levels. At the most senior level, the Central Executive Forum, which consists of the managing directors of each of the chains and business units in the retail group, is responsible for measuring the success of the programme on a quarterly basis. Managing directors may devise affirmative action targets and strategies to reflect their particular business needs and circumstances[9] within the framework of group policy. They report quarterly on progress achieved in their area of accountability. At the operational level, staff of the human resources division advise line managers on the targets to set as part of their business goals. Staff members play a supportive role in communicating and monitoring the affirmative action programme, and in ensuring that adequate recruitment and development procedures are in place to support affirmative action. Finally, the onus is placed on the individual to "take responsibility for your career, and make full use of the opportunities available".

The company's affirmative action aims are to be achieved by several methods, including recruitment and selection, career path planning, training, mentoring and assessment of potential. Funds have been allocated from the group and individual chains for these purposes. A Group Affirmative Action Manager was employed in 1994 to communicate the policy to all stakeholders and to monitor the implementation of affirmative action. As part of the Retailer's business strategy, affirmative action has become a 'key performance area' and all managers are assessed on their progress during annual performance appraisals. The criteria used to assess managers' performance are presently under review. A revised performance appraisal system will place greater emphasis on a manager's preparedness to change, and ability to implement change. Managers will increasingly be measured on their performance in teams, rather than their individual performance. Their ability to support and develop junior staff members, particularly black staff, will be increasingly important (31).

[9] There is some flexibility around setting targets which reflect demographic variations in South Africa's geographic regions. The customer base of a particular company and the present racial complement of a company's management are also be taken into account.

> To achieve this vision, we need to take deliberate action to ensure that everyone is equipped to compete on an equal basis and ensure that our "employee mix" is representative of the community it serves. This is what we call Affirmative Action (1993: 2).

The document outlines four guiding principles for affirmative action:

> T .e Affirmative Action programme will form part of the company's strategic business p'an.
>
> The programme will avoid the lowering of standards or activities that will render the business less competitive, however, new and more appropriate ways of operating may well result in changing standards. There should be no tokenism, paternalism or window dressing.
>
> Implementation of the programme should not lead to unfair discrimination within the company, although Blacks will be pro-actively appointed to positions on an accelerated basis.
>
> The programme will be implemented on two levels:
> - Internal development of employees identified as high potential candidates
> - External recruitment of suitable employees (1993: 1).

The policy document addresses several controversial aspects of affirmative action head on. For example, on the issue of tokenism, the document states:

> Tokenism implies advancing people because of their race rather than their abilities. Obviously, the placement of people into unsuitable positions is unacceptable. The main criterion for appointing anyone into a job is the ability to perform the tasks that the position requires. There may be mistakes made, as there have been in the past, but we must make every effort to train and develop our people so that, when they are appointed, they will succeed (1993: 2).

Concerning the impact of affirmative action on white employees' career progress, the document takes a tough line:

> There is no doubt that Black people have not had the same opportunities as White people have had in the past. Our Affirmative Action strategy means that there will be many more people competing for the same jobs. However, the criteria for promotion are willingness, ability and potential. This means that there are opportunities for everyone who performs (1993: 3).

10.4 CURRENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STRATEGY

In 1993, in response to a directive from the parent company, SAB, affirmative action policy was formalized and made uniform throughout the retail group. The group training and development manager investigated previous practices in the organisation, and reviewed contemporary policy, procedures and practices nationally and internationally. He analyzed future group requirements, drafted a policy document, discussed it with various stakeholders, and presented it to the managing directors of each of the group's companies in August 1993 for their approval. Soon thereafter the policy was published in the form of a pamphlet, and a video was created as the centrepiece of a training programme on affirmative action (see box later in this section).

The policy document defines affirmative action as

> ... the active appointment of Black people, with the relevant skills, qualifications, knowledge, experience and potential into management and specialist positions up to Board level, in order to reflect the demographic realities of South Africa (1993:3).

Later in the document, black people are defined as "Black, Asian and Coloured people", and "people who have been historically discriminated against and denied opportunities because of apartheid legislation" (1993: 2). The document acknowledges that "women and disabled people have traditionally been discriminated against, [but] priority is given to people who have been disadvantaged by law". More specifically, "priority will be given to African Blacks, then Coloureds and Asians" (1993: 2). Seriousness of intent is indicated by the following statement:

> [The Retailer] is an equal opportunity employer and will not tolerate activities or practices that undermine this principle. We will make and sustain specific additional efforts including the required resource investment to assist disadvantaged groups (1993: 1).

The meaning of 'equal opportunity' is elaborated thus:

> Equal opportunity means that every employee has the opportunity to grow and develop within the organisation, for example, equal access to training, development and promotion. This is our vision.

African men[6] were placed in existing training programmes to prepare them for positions as supervisors, floor managers, and ultimately store managers. Despite resistance from some white staff, particularly in the Cape and the Natal Midlands, the company increasingly appointed and trained black staff, and the ratio of black to white employees in the lower managerial ranks changed significantly. By the mid 1980s, pressure from the trade unions[7] and from the personnel department[8] saw increasing numbers of women, Coloured and Asian candidates join African and white men on training and development programmes. By the late 1980s, the Retailer saw many of its middle ranking black managers being 'poached' by competitors, who had delayed their own affirmative action programmes:

> *Prior to Nelson Mandela's release [from prison] the ANC had been unbanned and there were a lot of things starting to happen that made people realise that South Africa wasn't always going to remain the way it had been ... Companies were beginning to panic and realise there is the potential for a black government to impose quotas. In fact everybody anticipated the worst, and in order to make themselves look good ... they wanted to get blacks, and if they could find some that had some training in retailing, so much the better, because the pool is very small. (23)*

Success in black advancement was uneven in the 1980s. Stores tended to perform well, but the head office division was less successful. One reason offered for this was that posts are generally more specialised at head office, and it was difficult to recruit black staff for such posts. At head office, black staff tended to be relegated to clerical positions, and generally failed to rise through the ranks. Although a few black individuals were successful in higher level managerial posts in the company, on the whole little thought was given to identifying and developing the potential of black employees in the company in this peri-

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[6] As in other industries, trade union officials (whose work demonstrated their leadership abilities and potential for further learning) were often co-opted into junior management positions. Indians and Coloured people were not specifically targeted under black advancement.

[7] Three unions are represented in the company: the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU); the Federal Council of Retail and Allied Workers (FEDCAW); and the National Union of Distribution and Allied Workers (NUDAW). All three unions apply pressure on the company to develop staff internally rather than recruit externally.

[8] Ironically, the personnel department has been traditionally a white female stronghold, and although the company's black advancement programme was administered by personnel officers, there were few appointments of people of colour, or of men, to the department until the 1990s.

campaign. Others expressed interest in a comparative study of progress in affirmative action among South African retailers, using both quantitative and qualitative measures.

10.3 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN THE COMPANY

The Retailer's first formal affirmative action policy was published in 1993. Prior to that, the retail group had made inroads into black advancement, particularly in the store networks which service black consumers. The difficulty of navigating apartheid legislation in the 1970s is recounted in the following incident:

> *It was in 1976, when I was with [another retail chain in the same group]. The Department of Manpower was quite keen that we conduct management training programmes and they were giving us concessions for training ... At that stage we embarked quite actively on affirmative action, and we had a lot of black trainee managers ... I was an area manager in Pretoria, and I was actually training those guys ... One I recall specifically [was] appointed as a manager of a small store in Bosman Street in Pretoria, which is up near the station. We had a large [chain store] there and next to it a store called Fair Deal. And I took this guy in as a manager. And the cops came and charged me for having a black manage a store in a white area, for which I was duly taken to court and given a two year suspended sentence ... So the company was in a dilemma because the one government department was giving tax concessions for developing these people, and the other one was taking us to court for appointing them. It was a contravention of the Group Areas Act.*
>
> *JC: What happened to the manager?*
>
> *We had to take him out. We made him a supervisor in another store reporting to a white manager... There was a spate of this at that time round Johannesburg. They went round from store to store seeing where there were blacks managing stores, and I think they used our case as a test case to see if they could win the day. And we took it to the Appeals Court in Bloemfontein, but we still lost. Then the whole thing fizzled out ... it was shortly after the Soweto riots. In the early Eighties it wasn't a problem putting blacks in management positions. We got away with it, nobody did anything about it. But I think it did set back the affirmative action programme that we were embarking on already then. If we had been able to pursue it as aggressively then as we wanted to, it would have made a hell of a difference today. (23)*

In the early 1980s, targets were set to promote the movement of black workers into supervisory positions in the operating divisions (the stores). Increasing numbers of mainly

The black managers interviewed in this study viewed affirmative action as modest compensation for the long period of racial oppression which they and their parents had suffered. They understood affirmative action as a form of broad social justice, akin to the 'transformative' concept of affirmative action analyzed in Chapter Three. This concept emphasizes the need to redress the historical injustices and imbalances perpetrated against black people, and to develop measures to bring about the redistribution of wealth and power needed for the reconstruction and development of society. It calls for the mobilization and participation of black people in the process of their own development, as highlighted by the BMF (1993), Qunta (1995) and Ramphele (1995).

This research showed that black managers viewed corporate standards of productivity and efficiency, and claims of meritocracy, with some scepticism, recognizing the greater resonance of personal associations and networks in job advancement. These managers appreciated the political, contestable nature of 'standards' and 'merit'. In contrast to the planners of affirmative action programmes, they saw these as malleable concepts, determined not by pre-existing criteria but rather by the perceived needs of dominant groups in the organization and in society.

Black managers do not see their attainments as tainted or undeserved, but they know that many of their white colleagues associate affirmative action with black inferiority. The effect of this on black managers is that they invariably reject any personal identification with affirmative action, while at the same time they uphold it as a strategy for black empowerment. Black managers in all four companies studied here believed that they had been appointed because of their superior qualities and skills. They resisted the notion that they had been appointed in terms of affirmative action 'just to get the demographics right'. They remarked that affirmative action labelled them 'disabled', 'stigmatized', 'inferior' or 'token', qualities inimicable to their self-concept as capable and successful achievers.

The disjuncture between their own self concept and the way they may be perceived by others often gave rise to emotions of anger, frustration and resentment. Many managers expressed feelings of displacement and disillusionment, a sense of being on their own, of being under observation, of being perceived as a representative of their race, rather than as individuals.

These men have devised affirmative action programmes which suit their purposes and reflect their values. The knowledge which informs their programme designs is born out of their particular social circumstances and historical conditions. In practice, most white male managers work and confer only with one another, which means that they miss out on alternative perspectives, and tend to pass off their own world view as one which encapsulates all human experience. Meanwhile, the 'recipients' of affirmative action programmes - the black managers who form both the target and the context of white managers' plans - are people whose social circumstance and historical condition are quite different from those of the planners.

There is much that is sociologically interesting in the life stories of these black managers, aspects of which are discussed in Chapter Six and portrayed in Appendix Two of this study. In many respects their social background and experience of education represent a narrow profile of the broader injustices of South Africa's apartheid past, itself the subject of review in Chapter Four. Historical inequalities and injustices have had a major impact on their education, training, freedom of movement, choice of occupation, and place in occupational hierarchies (Mkwanazi and Rall, 1994). While their biographies showed variations in socio-economic background, and in the resources available to male and female managers (and to older and younger generations of managers), many African male managers shared certain similarities. They had been brought up in South Africa's urban townships, and often came from homes displaced by forced removals, in which the father, the chief breadwinner, was absent or incapacitated. As children, these managers were forced to grow up early, and to assume responsibility for themselves and others. Most passed through the inferior 'Bantu education' system and struggled to complete their schooling and tertiary education in the turbulent 1970s and 1980s. The value orientations of their homes and the strict behavioural codes of their parents contributed to their developing the persistence and resourcefulness needed to stay in school and to seek professional careers. A range of ideological influences, including the black consciousness movement and the trade union movement, helped them rise through the oppressive structures of the apartheid state. They learned to manipulate hegemonic structures, such as the education system, and to become agents of their own destinies. It therefore comes as no surprise that they consider themselves to be striving, hard-working, active and effective 'achievers'.

That was the reason for investigating the perceptions of both the 'planners' and 'recipients' of such programmes. Jordaan (1995) has noted that the positioning of some employees as planners or givers, and others as receivers or beneficiaries, may be perceived as affirmation of the superiority of some and the inferiority of others. Preferential treatment, according to Jordaan, implies inferiority, which in turn has an undermining effect on black managers' development. But as Jordaan also notes, society needs to invest in the black sector of the population; institutions need blacks on their staff to survive and prosper in South Africa's new multicultural democracy. Thus the appointer and appointee become both benefactor and beneficiary.

The 'planners' of affirmative action programmes are the managers who rally and administer organizational efforts to fulfil a particular mandate - in this case, a mandate to hire and advance increasing numbers of black people in their organizations. In this study, the planners were all white, middle class men,[1] human resources managers who viewed their task as one of finding strategic, pragmatic solutions to persistent problems of 'skills shortages'. While occupying senior positions in their companies, these managers operated in varying degrees of professional and political isolation from the mainstream of their companies' business interests. They support the 'human resources development' concept of affirmative action elaborated in Chapter Three of this study, a concept which places emphasis on providing equal opportunity for promotion on merit; upholding existing standards of performance and efficiency; anticipating and coordinating organizational needs through manpower planning; and investing in the 'human capital' of the organization. In most cases these planners believed that affirmative action, like education and training and business, was separate from political considerations. They tended to deny (the Bank) or suppress (the Oil Company, the Conglomerate) the ideological aspects of affirmative action, assuming that the frameworks of competitive individualism and equal opportunity were neither political nor ideological. Their focus was firmly on population ratios and targets (for hiring, promotion and training), a focus which reduces the complexities of affirmative action to a 'manageable' problem which can be solved in statistical form.

[1] Black men and women were employed as affirmative action managers at the Bank, the Oil Company and the Retailer, but their duties were to implement and monitor the programmes, rather than conceive and design them.

Corporate affirmative action programmes have been put forward as an important vehicle for advancing black people into leadership positions in South African society, especially in the business sector, where fewer than five percent of all managers are black. Such programmes aim to recruit, train and advance black employees, in preference to white ones, into skilled technical, professional and managerial positions. Clearly, these programmes have educational aims, such as the development of black managers' leadership and technical skills and their assimilation into western business culture. However, they have not received the same attention from educationists as they have from writers in the fields of organizational development and management development. This study attempts to reverse this state of affairs by bringing the concerns of adult education to bear on affirmative action programmes in the workplace. These concerns include the importance of assessing and building on adults' personal experience, self-concept, aspirations and expectations as a resource and constraint in learning.

In keeping with the critical education paradigm and her own pragmatic philosophy, the researcher developed a qualitative research design for this study. A series of interviews was conducted with 46 managers employed in four South African business organizations. First individuals' personal histories were investigated as a background to their perceptions of affirmative action, then the experience and attitudes of managers in each of the four companies were examined.

This final chapter of the thesis discusses the major findings of the research, focusing first on participants' personal experience of affirmative action, then on corporate policies and strategies. Ways of developing a more informed approach to affirmative action in corporate settings are proposed. Then the focus shifts to a consideration of affirmative action as an agent of social change. Finally, the implications of the research for the changing field of adult education and training in South Africa are explored.

11.2 MANAGERS' PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMMES

This study started with the premise that affirmative action programmes are shaped not only by interventions from above, but simultaneously by efforts to grapple with them from below.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMMES: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'affirmative action' appeals to many because it suggests that someone or something is going to act, in a positive, approving manner, on someone, or something, else. But a closer look at the term shows that both the agent and the object of action are unnamed. The construction implies that the action carried out by the agent is positive and explicit ('affirmative'), while the objects of action are cast in a passive role. In this way, the object's own social agency and points of reference go unnoticed; they are obscured, even overwhelmed, by the positive force attributed to the actor.

This study does not accept the tacit understanding of affirmative action presented in the paragraph above. Instead it opens up an enquiry into the meaning and impact of corporate affirmative action programmes from the point of view of people who are both the subject and object of them: those who develop and administer policies and those who undergo them. Among other things, this study asks whether affirmative action programmes are as positive and approving as the term implies, and whether beneficiaries are locked into a role of passive acceptance. It asks whether affirmative action programmes may be considered meaningful and effective, and if so, by whom, and for what purposes. It enquires into the consequences of affirmative action programmes for individuals, for business organizations, for the field of adult education and for broader society in South Africa.

Such an enquiry is consistent with a critical theoretical approach to adult education, such as that embraced by Brookfield (1991; 1985), Mezirow (1991; 1983) and Freire (1985). The emphasis in a critical approach is on questioning familiar relationships and practices (including reified power relationships and ideologies), considering alternative ways of thinking and living, and proposing new ones. It is the task of critical adult educators to help adults free themselves from dependency roles and relationships, so that they may become more self-directed, empowered and pro-active individuals, able to contribute effectively to the transformation of society.

concerns about their jobs and prospects in the company. A clearly articulated policy has been translated into procedures which are tightly focused as to aims, but are open to adaptation.

At the Retailer, affirmative action is being integrated into the ongoing life and human resources practices of the company. Attention is being given to transforming organizational practices in response to needs which apply not only to black people entering or advancing in the company, but to other groups as well. An obvious example of this are efforts to change the recruitment, selection and performance appraisal systems. Training and development programmes, as well as mentoring arrangements, are also being altered to provide the job enrichment opportunities which will allow some candidates to gain the skills, experience and contacts to make them eligible for further advancement.

A weakness in current activities is that targets are not always differentiated by occupation or job grade, making it possible for the company's divisions and business units to achieve general percentage increases without having to analyze them in relation to over- and under-represented groups at different levels in the organization. In addition, human resources procedures tend to favour young black people who are well qualified academically, often educated in private or overseas schools. Affirmative action is not opening many doors for black people who have been with the company for some time, and who are employed at lower levels of the organization. A major challenge to the company, then, is to develop human resources internally rather than recruit externally:

> *I believe the great challenge is not to find the black director of the future ... [but] to ... address the desires of junior people [in the company]., the ones who will say 'What about me? Why do you bring in aliens from overseas schools with an MBA degree? They are privileged - those guys have never been disadvantaged through the apartheid system. I have been loyal for twenty years, but I am still an unpacker. What are you going to do about me?' (25)*

An associated challenge at management level is to find ways to regenerate creativity and productivity of staff in the company, rather than endure the high turnover of employees in whom the company has made a considerable investment in terms of training and development.

Interim goals, but not too prescriptive, would be a good idea. Okay, by the year 2000 we know this is the way we would like to be, but what should it be like in the year 1998? (07)

10.6 CONCLUSION

In the words of one senior manager interviewed in the course of this study:

The single most important benefit of affirmative action is that we will stay in business. (44)

The Retailer has embarked on affirmative action as a strategic business imperative: the company needs capable black people on its staff to prepare for growing black consumer markets. Not only are consumer markets changing, but labour markets are also undergoing change. One feature of this change is the recognition that the 'skills shortage' in South Africa will have to be addressed through the development of black people and women for management responsibilities:

We can't compete globally, or even nationally, with a very restricted number of people from whom to choose. At the end of the day there aren't enough white males to go around. (44)

Affirmative action is being refined and implemented in the company at a time when the nature of work is changing, due to advances in information technology and changes in socio-economic patterns nationally and globally. Success in the retail business is measured by the ability to respond flexibly and rapidly to changing markets and opportunities. In this context, affirmative action is a factor which highlights and contributes to the company's capacity to change.

A consistent finding of this research was that employees understood the company's affirmative action policy and accepted the strategic business reasons which drive it. The company has communicated the policy effectively by distributing its policy document, creating an inhouse video on affirmative action, and holding workshops and briefing sessions for employees at all levels and locations in the organization. Senior executives have debated the issues at length, are committed to the policy and are seen to be so. Consultations have been held with the unions. Channels of communication have been opened which allow staff to air their

consumer patterns generally, as well as deploying staff of a particular ethnic group in stores situated where that group is strongly represented in the local population.

> *My being sent to Mmabatho, for instance. [They thought] I understand the Tswanas better than anybody, forgetting that I grew up in Johannesburg, and don't understand a thing about country life. (25)*

Stereotypes surrounding black people and generalizations about 'the black market' are still common. The respondent cited above, a single woman who lived and was educated overseas for several years, describes her experience at the Retailer in the early 1990s:

> *It has been expected of me to know more about what babies would be wearing, about what the mothers and [nannies] are doing. But now they've known me for two years ... and nobody expects me to know what [black] people wear to church. I mean I don't go to church with those people, how would I know? ... I spent four years in Britain. How would I know what teenagers do in Soweto? ... It's becoming more normal now, but I still find that when we get new people - new black people - they expect them to know more. You feel as if this is what is expected of me, this is why they employed me ... But I think the country will wake up to this slowly and start to think of [us] as individuals. They won't say you should know something about blacks because you are black. (25)*

Suggestions for Changes to Policy and its Implementation in the Company

Interviewees generally agreed that the group's affirmative action policy was necessary and important, and that it had been stated clearly and communicated effectively throughout the organization. Suggestions for improvements centred around implementation. The following points propose refinements to procedures for recruitment and selection:

> *The company needs a system for identifying potential rather than achievement. This would be useful for existing staff, particularly, but would also accompany standard entry interviews and tests. (31)*

> *The company should forge stronger links to the schools it supports through the Club. It should recruit people from these high schools, give them bursaries through high school, and actually train them [for positions in the company]. (01)*

Some interviewees felt that affirmative action required stricter monitoring and wider communication than is presently the case.

> *The company needs to give the person [who runs affirmative action] a stick. (18)*

> *People on the shop floor need to get involved. Nothing will happen without their involvement and commitment. (16)*

He said, 'Oh shit, what am I going to do now? I don't have another coloured personnel manager to put in there'.
I thought, 'Gee, is it that they only appoint me purely because I'm coloured?'... It offended me terribly. (34)

I would like to be promoted and appointed to a position of strength if they believe in my ability, irrespective of colour. I wish people would see past colour. Colour isn't the issue. (35)

However, not everyone experiences the uncertainties described above. A different view was represented equally strongly:

I was put in a management position, and I'm expected to deliver on my job. If I don't, it's got nothing to do with my colour. (01)

The Nature of Work and Decision Making

All the managers interviewed in the study were conscious that heavy demands were made on them in terms of the volume and pace of work. As one manager put it,

I work almost non-stop here. It's one man's job, but it should be three. (18)

The fact that everyone in the company is under pressure to work and deliver implies a kind of non-racialism:

I haven't felt like I'm under pressure to perform because I'm black.... There is so much pressure on people that they have no time to spend worrying about what this black girl has done. (01)

But black managers are not uncritical of the assumptions which underlie work, or the manner in which decisions are taken:

In black culture decisions take longer, but they are collective, and when we've finished with it, no one will stop it. But unfortunately, in a Western way of thinking, I've got to lobby this and lobby that. People go into corners and mutter. (18)

Everybody is an operational manager, even directors do training and things like that. Divisional managers do operational work, which is a problem to a certain extent. Strategic thinking does not happen at the level it should happen. There is not enough ...looking outward, looking forward. (01)

The practice of 'Bantustan trading' was criticized by several black respondents in the study (01, 25, 35). Bantustan trading means expecting black employees to be informed about black

Some individuals are confident of their ability to deal with racism:

> *I expect to encounter subtle racism from time to time. I know how to deal with it. (30)*

Others feel that

> *We are [not] adequately prepared to overcome those social, cultural barriers [between the races]. (34)*

It is particularly difficult for new recruits to the company to adjust to the 'white' corporate culture:

> *White people, especially youngsters, are dynamic, even aggressive. Black youngsters are easily overwhelmed when they enter [the company]. They are made to feel that they don't belong. (10)*

All participants in the study agreed that overt racism was unacceptable in the company, and that racial incidents would be dealt with fairly by senior managers:

> *[If someone made an offensive racist or sexist remark] I don't think it would be just left ... something would be done ... the issue would be addressed. (01)*

Yet some black managers speak of an implicit resistance on the part of whites to their assuming greater status and power in the company:

> *Black people are willing to come and learn ... you've sort of been a back room boy, now your're coming out of that cocoon, you want to be seen and to act. You're on the stage. And [white] people say 'Don't give him that much stage [sweeping gesture]. Give him just that much' [forefinger and thumb an inch apart]. (18)*

Subtle resistance may also be expressed by whites in the form of cynical remarks about affirmative action appointments, such as those described by two black managers:

> *When you come into a position it's being seen as 'they had to get their affirmative action figures right'. I must say I've had endless concerns because ... my [boss] is an Indian and I am coloured, and everybody was ... making jokes to the manager: 'You are going to get a good appraisal, hey, you've got AAs' (34).*

> *It makes you feel very uncomfortable when people start speaking about affirmative action. You start feeling like you are a fraud, you know? (35).*

Affirmative action tends to unjustly polarize race and ability. Race becomes the overriding criterion for placement and advancement, suggesting that ability and performance are lacking. This perception works to the detriment of managers' self confidence:

> *I was a coloured person in a coloured store in a coloured area, and what was alarming, when I broke the news to my boss that I'm leaving because I got a promotion up here. was his first words. (I'm still so annoyed with this man!).*

mentors and protegees about the purpose and process of mentoring. Suitable mentors are suggested to protegees, but there remains an element of choice.

Race relations in the company

As several interviewees observed,

> *Having an affirmative action policy is one thing, but it takes a long time to change social relations. (16)*

> *Well, you don't make years of wrongs right overnight. (34)*

The company has considerable experience in affirmative action, and staff members are confident that management will "get it right" (35). The emphasis placed on individual performance and work in small teams reduces the tendency to generalize about race:

> *[The Retailer] ... has been into affirmative action longer than any other retailer ... There is room for improvement, but it's not bad. As long as we don't fall into the trap of generalising and saying, you know, each black person must love Mandela or Winnie, then we'll be fine. We must look at everybody as an individual and we'll be fine. (25)*

> *The people in the building, irrespective of race, get on very well. I wouldn't say that [the company is doing anything] to encourage mixing, I think it is something that just happens. When you go to the canteen you will find a white sitting with a coloured or a white sitting with a black. I think it's going on very well. (10)*

According to members of the personnel department, white resistance to black occupational advancement is dying fast, for a number of reasons:

> *On a national level ... we have a black government and we have people with charisma and leadership qualities who are giving reason for confidence, especially Mandela himself. That's one level where I think happening. The other reason is I think there are now successful role models [in the company] that have credibility. They are there because they deserve to be there and they have earned their stripes. They are not there as tokens. The third reason is that we have done a lot of work to sensitise [staff members] and to air concerns. We have had endless meetings in the divisions, we have allowed people from the stores to come together, to say what their concerns are. Whites get up and talk about the loss of jobs and positions for their kids and their potentially being disadvantaged ... I think a lot of the heat has been taken out of the system. (23)*

While white people in the company may feel less heated about affirmative action today, blacks still feel the chill of racial barriers:

> *It's like cutting through thick cold butter. (18)*

White managers believed that some of their prejudices towards black people were confirmed:

> *...like blacks don't have good negotiating skills and therefore will never make good buyers, or their creativity is very limited and therefore they will never be able to put merchandise assortments together. They are not very confident and conversant with information technology so we can't really use them in the systems area. ... Those were the typical prejudices ... of the early 1990s. (23)*

While the company's selection and performance appraisal procedures have undergone substantial change (see previous section), prejudices have not disappeared completely. Instead, they have been channelled into a more constructive, but still discriminatory, way of thinking. It is widely believed that blacks in the company need substantial education and training to compete with whites on an equal footing. It is assumed that all black people need training before they can assume responsibility, or exercise power and control, in their particular fields. Several black respondents (16, 18, 30) disputed the need for lengthy training, particularly in fields such as marketing, where experience and contacts play an important role, observing that

> *Black people can remain trainees forever. (30)*

These respondents claim that while black recruits are required to do a full year's training before they become an assistant buyer or planner, their white counterparts are placed and promoted much more rapidly by mainly white line managers.

An attempt to start a black managers' forum within the retail group, inspired by the success of ESKOM's black managers' caucus, received stronger support from other chains in the retail group than from the Retailer itself. Two factors seem to have contributed to its poor reception. First, the fact that the forum was preoccupied initially with internal shopfloor grievances did not appeal to the Retailer's managers:

> *They [black managers in the retail group] were becoming a union. They were now going to become spokespeople for black supervisors and managers and sales assistants, black anything. They were going to go to management and argue on grievances. ... Our feeling was ... if you just want to tell us about how your boss treats you, quite frankly we are not interested (25).*

Secondly, staff of the personnel department, concerned that black managers were rallying around racial identity rather than their professional roles and duties, moved quickly to develop a mentoring programme to encourage supportive professional relationships between managers, thus pre-empting possible demands by black managers. The mentoring programme trains both

policy's becoming increasingly defensive and reactive.

Of the four companies studied in this research, only one, the Retailer, conducted any sort of audit of corporate values and practices, despite the fact (noted in Chapter Three) that writers in the field consider this an essential part of affirmative action planning (Human, 1992, 1993; Rosmarin, 1992; McGregor, 1993; Fuhr, 1992). The emphasis in the other three companies was on numerical targets and operational aspects of the programme, often at the expense of socio-cultural aspects. It is clear that to serve the needs of black managers in South Africa's business community, affirmative action requires an expanded vision which surpasses most present conceptualizations and resource allocations.

Ramphele (1995b), writing about the difficulties of implementing an affirmative action programme in an academic context, observes that the problem is not the existence of an organizational culture which is dominated by the customs, rituals and preferences of white men, but rather the need to acknowledge it, examine it, and change those aspects of it that are harmful or obstructive to others:

> A lot of what constitutes institutional culture is often not articulated and acknowledged. It could be argued that the power and mystique of institutional cultures lie in the fact of their being interred in habit and beyond normal discourse. Discourse may, and does, strip it of the veil of mysticism which makes it intangible and beyond reach of any potential pollutants or detractors.
>
> (Ramphele, 1995b: 15)

A reluctance or inability to address this problem lies at the heart of many unsuccessful affirmative action programmes. It is assumed that in order to gain their participation, 'outsiders' have to be inducted into the mainstream culture without questioning whether that mainstream is a desirable social framework, or whether adaptations and alternatives exist. Such is the problematic principle behind black advancement, recognized with particular poignancy in this study by black managers at the Bank.

Ramphele (1995b) goes on to say that the people who are 'outsiders' in broader society are not well placed to negotiate the mystique of institutions in which they find themselves. In this study, however, black managers were certainly aware of the subtle barriers imposed by this

Ownership and Status

Related to the previous point about identifying the aims of affirmative action programmes is the necessity to integrate the programme into strategic planning. Unless the affirmative action programme clearly fits into the company's plans and priorities, it is condemned to marginalization. For example, the Oil Company dealt a near-fatal blow to its affirmative action programme by retrenching many of the black people who had been hired or trained in the years prior to its Business Process Restructuring programme. Black staff became demoralized and looked for work elsewhere, perceiving the programme to have low priority in the company.

Affirmative action programmes which are incorporated in a holistic human resources strategy, which is in turn part of a company's business development plan, are more likely to succeed. In the absence of this integration, and lacking a focused, future orientation, affirmative action programmes are likely to become a peripheral activity which is expensive and difficult to justify.

Because affirmative action programmes have tended to exist outside the company's main business, hovering somewhere between social responsibility and human resources development, they have not been subject to the same planning, monitoring and evaluation processes which govern other functions in a company. When insufficient recognition and resources are given to the management and administration of a programme, these functions may be overlooked (as was the case in the Conglomerate) or performed poorly (as in the Bank and the Oil Company).

Cultural and Ideological Bases of Affirmative Action Programmes

As observed at the Bank, and to a lesser extent at the Oil Company and the Conglomerate, purely technological, operational solutions, lacking social perspective, may simply erode the socio-cultural resources which might have transformed plans into meaningful social action. At the Bank, in particular, the cultural and ideological bases for action was incongruent with the transformative mission behind the 'Strategic Plan for Equity'. This, combined with weak leadership on the part of senior executives, a poor communication strategy, and a lack of mechanisms to build responsibility and accountability for affirmative action, led to the

the eyes of its employees and the public, improve employees' sense of commitment and loyalty to the company and enhance their motivation to work. They may also expect the programme to contribute to improved communication in the company, especially between managers and workers.

This agenda is often quite different to that of black managers themselves. As noted above and in Chapter Six, black managers may have expectations of job mobility and advancement, of increased salaries and benefits, and of enhanced power, status and visibility within the organization. They may see their contribution to the company in terms of developing new markets, or moving towards alternative management styles. Obviously this can lead to misunderstandings about the programme, and to a credibility gap on both sides. It is clear from this that programme aims need to be discussed and communicated both more widely and more explicitly, otherwise they are doomed to fail. White managers often accuse black managers of having 'unrealistic expectations' of affirmative action, expectations which cannot be met. Yet they, too, have unrealistic expectations.

The challenge is not to reduce expectations to the point where the programme offers little significant benefit to any of the stakeholders. It is rather to describe aims in a way that is explicit and meaningful to all stakeholders (including managers, supervisors, the trade union and other interest groups). In other words, the affirmative action programme needs to be situated within the broader framework of the company's plans, but it must reflect the values and interests of all stakeholders. This type of detailed and specific planning will assist greatly in clarifying the role and objectives of the affirmative action programme, which in turn will inform an appropriate implementation and evaluation strategy. An adult education approach (Knowles, 1975; Brookfield, 1986) could assist in clarifying taken-for-granted hopes, expectations and assumptions held by individuals and groups involved in the programme, and point a way forwards which is acceptable to all parties. Adult education has experience in linking individual learning with collaborative, collective efforts. It can help to bring divided or polarized groups closer together in joint tasks (Finger, 1995).

The company case studies show an emphasis on the first of these forces, with a trend (especially strong in the Retailer)[5] towards viewing affirmative action as part of a human resources strategy aimed at improving the competitiveness of the company and its products locally and internationally. This shift in emphasis has important implications for company-based affirmative action programmes. As long as affirmative action is seen as tangential to the business, functioning outside its core concerns, it has the lowly status of a social responsibility endeavour, as seen in the Bank. Perceived in this way, affirmative action programmes are vulnerable to failure, first because they fall low on the company's scale of priorities and are at risk of being adversely affected by fluctuations in the market performance of the company (as in the Oil Company). Secondly, they fail to attract the interest and commitment of top management, which, as we have seen above, is needed to drive the programme in the company. Thirdly, such programmes tend not to be planned and managed as systematically as other projects of the company, which leads to problems of defining, achieving and demonstrating desirable outcomes. The latter problem was evident historically at the Bank, and is evident currently at the Oil Company and the Conglomerate.

This does not mean that companies have totally abandoned their social responsibility agendas. In each of the companies studied, affirmative action still contributes to social commitments. Rather, affirmative action is undergoing more intense scrutiny in South African companies owing to contemporary trends towards reducing the size of the labour force while raising the calibre of human resources through education and training, as described in Chapter Three.

Unexamined Aims and Expectations

Companies tend to embark on affirmative action programmes with ambitious and multifarious aims. Their explicit aims are to correct the racial (and to a lesser extent the gender) imbalances in the workforce. Their hopes, sometimes concealed under buzzwords such as 'value added programmes', are to eliminate racism, prepare recruits to take on management positions, eliminate the skills deficit of the workforce, enhance the image of the company in

[5] The Bank's equity programme paid lip service to this trend, but the programme was handled discreetly and not as part of a holistic human resources strategy. Many white managers were reportedly dubious about the need for any reorientation arising from trends indicating a shift towards black account holders.

The principles outlined above are logical and straightforward - perhaps deceptively so. By way of contrast, this research showed that in three of the four organizations studied, affirmative action programmes were being implemented without a clear policy framework to guide them, or a coherent vision of where they were going and how they would ultimately benefit participants. Not surprisingly, the success rate of these programmes was uneven. The following section discusses factors which contributed to success or failure in affirmative action in the four companies studied.

Leadership and Commitment

Strong and public commitment from the top levels of management is one of the most commonly cited prerequisites for affirmative action programmes (IDASA, 1995; McGregor, 1993; Wingrove 1993). Firm leadership not only affects the allocation of resources, but also influences organizational norms which subtly guide interpersonal behaviour. It may reduce the incidence of discriminatory behaviour by people whose prejudice is embedded in a set of beliefs and values which includes deference to authority. Senior managers in both the Conglomerate and the Retailer were aware of, and exercised, this power. Furthermore, the managing director of the Retailer publicly committed himself to treating violation of affirmative action policy as seriously as he would any other company policy. By way of contrast, top managers in the Bank and the Oil Company were perceived to support principles of equal opportunity and equal treatment, but not to exercise the vigorous leadership needed to translate principles into action.

Policy Frameworks

In Chapter Three, it was proposed that companies in South Africa's private sector generally supported practices associated with a 'human resources development' concept of affirmative action because they perceived this to be the most effective way of addressing the 'skills shortage' of managers and skilled technical employees, and of developing a black middle class to bolster social stability and strengthen black people's allegiance to a capitalist economy. They could also express a sense of moral and social responsibility to redress past inequalities, particularly with regard to black people's access to work and education.

of inhouse training, or by tertiary education institutions, would do well to build managers' experiential skills and capacity to develop social infrastructure within organizations (Finger, 1995), a challenge which is clearly not limited to black managers. As Dovey (1995: 43) points out, "one's survival, sense of community, identity, and sense of purpose can never be guaranteed but must be constantly negotiated and renegotiated within a changing social context". Experience in South Africa and elsewhere suggests that adult education programmes are often successful in helping individuals face up to challenges that threaten their confidence and ability (Deshler and Hagan, 1989; Brookfield, 1986).

These issues will be taken up again in a later section of this chapter. We turn our attention now from the impact of affirmative action at the micro level to the way it impacts at organizational level.

11.3 CORPORATE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMMES

In Chapter Three, models of affirmative action programmes were reviewed which recommended that employers discover the barriers to the employment and advancement of those underrepresented in the workforce. This was seen by various writers (Human, 1993, 1992; McGregor, 1993; Rosmarin, 1992) as the first and most crucial step in developing effective action plans. The next step is to remove those barriers, and to communicate to all parties concerned the intention of constructing and implementing policies and programmes for the benefit of targeted groups (IDASA, 1995). Strong and public commitment to affirmative action from top levels of management is required. The participation of various stakeholder groups, both inside and outside the organization, is also needed (Hofmeyr, 1993). Equally important is an orientation towards creating the conditions under which targeted groups can thrive at all levels of the organization (Thomas, 1990). Finally, it is necessary to implement, monitor and evaluate these programmes.

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situations (Dovey, 1995; Brookfield, 1985). For this reason, much adult education practice is aimed at facilitating this shift by promoting shared responsibility for teaching/learning, and relationships which are characterized by mutual respect and shared commitment - a relationship described by Freire (1976) as dialogue.

They complain that black managers exhibit an 'entitlement syndrome', that they lack commitment to their employers, and do not exhibit the initiative or perseverance needed to climb up corporate hierarchies. Such white managers seem to be trapped in a paradigm which accepts the existence of only one social reality and which upholds a rigid set of values and principles as universal truths. In this respect many black and white managers diverge. But if it is accepted that the conditions of a modern, urban, democratic society will prevail in the South African political economy, and that paternalistic, authoritarian and bureaucratic traditions of management are increasingly inappropriate, the position adopted by black managers offers better chances of developing appropriate models and working relationships for the future.

While several black writers (Madi, 1993; Khosa, 1993) have been critical of the arrangements made in corporate affirmative action programmes, Qunta (1995) speaks directly to black managers, offering them practical advice based on her own and others' experience of affirmative action in corporate settings. She stresses the need to build self-esteem, confidence and assertiveness "to fend off the various overt and covert acts and attitudes by which being Black is demeaned and being White elevated" (1995: 97). One way to do this is to increase understanding of African history and the psychological effects of discrimination. Another is to cultivate allies in "games of corporate politics" and to relieve social isolation by joining forces with others in pressure groups and forums which negotiate change with management. Finally, she suggests that managers find ways to deal with the inevitable stress of their situation.

With respect to promoting cultural and racial awareness at individual level, developing confidence and assertiveness in social situations and building good human relations at organizational level, the field of adult education has much to offer. These are traditional areas of concern in adult education, stemming from the humanist vision of fully functioning, self-actualizing individuals (Rogers, 1969; Knowles, 1972; Tough, 1971) with an internal 'locus of control'.[4] In addition, management development programmes offered by companies as part

[4] This concept refers to the individual's perception that responsibility for life success rests with herself, rather than with others (parents, teachers, the government, etc). There is research to support the notion that a shift towards an internal locus of control is accompanied by greater success in educational and vocational

career paths to open up as new patterns of selection, promotion and performance appraisal were developed.

The Conundrum of Expectations

Feelings of empowerment, whether they arise from personal endeavours, such as learning and decision-making, or from wider social events, such as South Africa's first democratic elections, bring with them enthusiasm and high expectations. Black managers have serious expectations, not only of government, but of their organizations and of themselves. Their accounts of their experience suggest that they wish to contribute to the success of their companies through their work, that they wish to be given real responsibilities:

> *[About an employer who gave this manager a fancy desk and job title, but no real responsibility] I said to him 'This is insulting me. I know I've got to deliver. I'm a worker, a runner. That's how I trained myself'. When I came to [the Retailer] I said to my new boss, 'Never bring me here because of affirmative action. Please don't do that to me, don't frustrate me with it. It's going to demoralize me'. (18)*

> *A lot of black people want to work for [the Bank] because they know there is a lot to learn, and they want to be associated with this organization which is doing so well ... (20)*

They are keen to take part in group problem-solving and decision-making processes - a desire compatible with the strategic and interactive management approaches gaining currency in South Africa. Black managers are just beginning to demand from employers the opportunities, resources and support they need to play more active, responsible and legitimate roles in their organizations. They want a real say over such areas as investment, technology, research and development, training, job creation, levels of pay and profits:

> *If you join a bank you have to be assertive from the outset. You have to hit really hard. I used to think [white] people would be charitable, that we would work together harmoniously, that we would not make assumptions about each other. I was wrong. (43)*

> *I need to earn a position by performing a duty rather than being appointed on the basis of race. The appointment should have a dual purpose: it should be a learning process for the appointee and value adding for the employer. (32)*

Unfortunately, many white managers see this as a problem rather than as an opportunity.

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returning to the Retailer after a number of years to positions of higher rank.

It should be easy to interpret 'empowerment' through affirmative action in terms of individual success and mobility. But the case studies of the Bank and the Oil Company suggest that some corporate efforts are unproductive even at the individual level. As testimony to this, we saw that black managers employed in these companies perceived themselves to be excluded from social networks in their companies and denied opportunities for informal learning from more senior white colleagues. They had little access to knowledge about strategic planning in the organization and played no part in decision-making; their accomplishments and skills were either unrecognized or denigrated. Demanding assignments and real responsibilities were withheld from them; their performance was sabotaged by colleagues and subordinates. Black managers in these companies were expected to take responsibility for their own work and to make the right decisions to further their careers, while at the same time they were dependent on conditions which they did not determine. Finally, they were forced to defend their appointments in the context of opposition from their white colleagues and subordinates, ambiguous standards of performance and obscure career paths.

It should not be surprising that some of the managers at the Bank and the Oil Company turned to the one of the few levers of power available to them - the power of the cynic. These managers consciously manipulated the growing demand for black managers by using their mobility to extract high salaries and premiums, prestigious jobs and perks - the 'revolving door syndrome'. More than half of all black managers employed by the Bank had left the company within two years of their appointment. In the Oil Company, the drift of black managers to other companies was only slightly less dramatic. Black managers employed by the Conglomerate and the Retailer had a much stronger sense than managers at the Bank and the Oil Company that they contributed through their work to the business success of their companies. They were given real and challenging tasks to undertake - tasks for which they were specially selected, trained and supported. These managers had a clear understanding of the career opportunities in their organization or industry, a sense of their eligibility for promotion, and a grasp of the performance outcomes required for advancement. This contributed to their staying with the same employer for lengthier periods of time,[3] allowing

[3] At the Conglomerate, black managers had become 'stayers' in keeping with the company's traditional patterns of employment. Their career paths entailed both lateral and vertical moves within the company. At the Retailer, black and white managers frequently left the company to seek advancement in other retail companies,

Another way in which the majority of black managers in this study attempted to dispel their sense of displacement and disillusionment was by advocating a general mixing of races and cultures, emphasizing the common experience of humanity and the need for integration. This appeal for 'non-racialism' and multi-culturalism appeared frequently in African managers' comments, and is not surprising when we consider the oppression and institutionalized segregation which has been an ongoing part of their experience. One manifestation of this lay in calls for their white colleagues to be rendered more tolerant and aware of discriminatory values and practices, perhaps through exposure to 'diversity' programmes.

Participants in early black advancement programmes described a daily experience of insecurity, isolation, hostility and depersonalization which were symptomatic of the much wider social failures of the apartheid era. In the later 1980s and early 1990s, despite recessionary pressures, there has been more extensive hiring of black managers in business than was the case in previous years, owing to a demand for specialists in the fields of industrial relations and human resources development, and to the availability of black managers well versed in these areas through their work in the trade union movement and in non-governmental organizations. This, taken with the new visibility of black leaders in government and civil society in the 1990s, may begin to dissolve and reshape monolithic group identities and the practices identified with them. The younger generation of black managers in this study were concerned to improve and consolidate their personal positions in the corporate world, and were less concerned than their older counterparts with reversing the stereotypical and negative images of black managers held by many whites. These younger managers were prepared to adapt to and accommodate the dominant mode, but not to compromise themselves or to assimilate:

> *The way that I've been treated has made me strong. Now I take nothing for granted. (39)*

The strategies which managers devised to deal with everyday problems at work often reflect their personal and social values. In this connection, several themes emerged from the company case studies: the value of collective and cooperative approaches to problem solving; the value of social networks; the importance of lifelong learning; and an increasing sense of empowerment.

township life, their early identification with black consciousness goals, even the portfolios to which they were first assigned (industrial relations, social investment, training and development, public relations) heightened rather than reduced their political awareness.

Although black managers are able to root their identity in family, and derive a sense of community from their early years in the township, their intellectual, economic and social ambitions, as well as their educational achievements, set them apart from fellow South Africans living in the townships. In a sense they are 'double aliens', being outside the white society which dominated their education and life chances, as well as outside the residually traditional societies in which they grew up.

Generally, affirmative action programmes have failed to provide these managers with a voice or sense of community within the organization. Instead, they have had to rely on their own belief in and definitions of themselves. Many managers described multiple states of alienation arising from an uncongenial or hostile work environment. Their responses to this alienation were varied. While some took refuge in pessimism and despair, the majority sought to overcome alienation by establishing new forms of connectedness to the people around them. So, for example, some managers in each of the four companies studied attempted to start forums for black managers within their organizations, with a view to identifying common interests and grievances, and strategies for dealing with them.[2] Others expressed interest in issues of transformation and indigenization of business culture in South Africa, embracing the concept of 'Ubuntu-Botho', which stresses interpersonal and intergroup relationships, respect and interdependency (Christie, 1993). Still others channelled their anxiety into a search for alternative employment, or for further education. In this way they sought to turn an experience of closure and exclusion into one of connection and renewal, and to reinstate a sense of personal agency.

[2] The fate of these forums was different in each of the companies. Generally speaking, they met with a degree of resistance and suspicion on the part of white managers, who discouraged their formation by denying the resources needed for their establishment. White managers, and some black managers, distrusted the overtones of trade unionism in such forums.

Such feelings were particularly strong among managers at the Bank and the Oil Company, and were recounted in critical incidents described in Chapters Seven and Eight. The following comments illustrate the point:

> *I am a statistic, you know, and it puts a hell of a lot more pressure on you ... I have to work twice as hard to prove to you I got my job on merit and not on the fact that I'm black. (34)*

> *My boss actually said to me that I don't deserve the position I have, that I've only been appointed because of affirmative action. And I thought, 'I've been here for five years, how can this lady come around and tell me that this is affirmative action?' I mean, she doesn't even know me! (19)*

These experiences confirm the results of other studies (Shaw and Human, 1989; Hofmeyr, 1988) which show that black managers frequently encounter resistance, paternalistic attitudes and lack of support from their white subordinates, colleagues and supervisors.

All of these factors influence black managers' attitudes towards and decisions about themselves and their role in the organization. Their attitudes also affect how seriously company policies are taken and the personal resources committed to them. In this way the managers wield some influence over the success or failure of corporate affirmative action programmes, as we shall see.

Responses to Feelings of Alienation

Black managers hired by white companies in the 1960s and 1970s were few in number. Their promotion and success depended on their ability to assimilate into white corporate culture and hierarchy. The demands placed on them in this process were significant and unilateral, as expressed in the following account of one black manager's first appointment in a mining company in the mid-1970s:

> *You are going to a certain group of people and you're trying to break in ... and there's a certain way they do things which nobody prepared you for. Not your father, or even the university ... If you can drink hard, play hard and work hard, it helps. If you're a more academic type of person, you won't suit very well. You have to help yourself over the barriers [of language, authoritarian management styles and structures] which exist ... or you leave. (38)*

Whatever adaptations these managers made, or were forced to make, they did not accept the dominant ethos in the corporate world that business was apolitical. Their daily experience of

11.7 CONCLUSION

As South Africa moves deeper into political, social and economic reconstruction, affirmative action and adult education will become increasingly important as initiatives to address legacies of exclusion and repression. Institutionalized affirmative action is becoming necessary if society is to function. This need derives in large part from demands leading from the political empowerment of black people. These demands encompass the right to full participation in the privileges, opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship, including the right to play leading roles in business organizations. The overarching goal of affirmative action is thus to ensure that black people participate fully, and at all levels, of organizations from which they once were barred.

At the same time, South African companies face varying degrees of pressure as their internal and external environments undergo change in response to global shifts in markets, technology, resources and work organization. In the short term, affirmative action brings additional pressures to bear on companies because it impacts on organizational values, practices and culture in ways which may be read as threats to customary standards of performance and productivity. In the medium to long term, however, affirmative action will be sustained by political considerations as well as business survival factors. Work organization and workplace culture in South African companies will change as a practical necessity.

This research has shown that affirmative action programmes, in the organizations studied, have failed to provide black managers with a voice or sense of community in their organizations. They do not 'empower' black managers, either as individuals or as a group within the organization. Nor do they address the paternalistic attitudes, opposition and lack of support exhibited by white colleagues and supervisors to black managers. In response to the exclusion and alienation they often experience in white-run companies, black managers take refuge in their own strong sense of identity and control. They may attempt to re-establish a sense of connection and community in their organization, for example, by joining other black managers in interest or pressure groups for change; or they may opt instead to seek further education or alternative employment. In the latter case they consciously manipulate the growing demand for black managers in business by extracting high salaries and prestigious titles.

contribution to social reform. The RDP commits the government to consult significant stakeholders in adult basic education and training and to address the problem of illiteracy. Yet there is no clear strategy for such large-scale provision in South Africa, either in the domain of public education or in workplace learning. New national policy in adult education is dominated by concerns surrounding the establishment and regulation of standards and equivalencies between education and training, not with the expansion of provision in the workplace and in schools. Instead the rhetoric of 'voluntarism' and 'market forces' is invoked as a spur to generating educational activity outside the school system. In the absence of a budget allocation and of clear plans to promote adult education, it appears that practical developments will continue to depend primarily on the attitudes and perspectives of individual stakeholders. For adult educators, this means working with specific individuals, groups or organizations, including employers, officials, community agencies, advocacy groups and deprived groups, in fact, wherever education can contribute to a solution. As this research has shown, the pursuit of purely technological, political, economic, or even educational solutions will not be sufficient to deal with the challenges ahead. Collective work will be needed to develop new approaches and practices.

This research has helped to clear familiar paths and identify some new directions for adult education to pursue in partnership with others. Some of these paths have their roots in the 'grand tradition' of adult education described in Chapter One, but they are not just a continuation of the old forms; they reflect a new orientation to addressing both equality and efficiency in the social context of work. Given the consequences of past social policies in South Africa, it is not appropriate for adult educators and business organizations to wait for the new government to bring about a better society. Individuals and organizations must make a concerted effort to assure that their practices lead to a more equitable and efficient society. A policy of affirmative action, supported by vigorous adult education, can potentially contribute a great deal to developing such a society.

11.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR ADULT EDUCATION

Up to this point in the thesis, adult education has been treated as a set of ideas and practices which could inform the processes of designing and implementing corporate affirmative action programmes. In this penultimate section of the study, this perspective is reversed, and the implications of affirmative action programmes for the field of adult education are considered.

In a period of transition in South Africa, it is important to reflect on the critical and creative functions of adult education for individuals and for society. In the 1990s, sharp divisions in the orientation of adult educators[9] - a legacy of the 1970s and 1980s - are beginning to fade, facilitating a period of reorientation and regeneration. A re-orientation is needed to adapt the theory and practice of the field to address the issues of **equality and justice**, which stand in the foreground of South Africa's moves to reconstruction and development, as well as the issues of **efficiency and productivity**, which relate to the crucial task of expanding the national economy to provide the resources and context for reconstruction and development.

The research findings, along with interrelated developments traced in Chapters Three and Four of this study, indicate that a consensus paradigm is becoming more influential in South African adult education. There is the increased importance of human capital theory in the planning of education, training and development generally; the growing demand for adult education and training as a vehicle for economic and social mobility; the increased enrolment of adults in education opportunities provided by employers and educational institutions; and the endorsement by trade unions of training programmes to increase worker productivity and efficiency. The already weak counterhegemonic adult education structures, represented by progressive NGOs of the 1980s, are barely visible in the mid-1990s.

The ideological constructs of the new government emphasize reconstruction and redistribution. These are to be achieved through the Reconstruction and Development Programme, which calls on the general education system and affirmative action to make a

[9] On the one hand there are those who fulfilled functions, such as training in industry and compensatory education in state night schools, which were (and are still) instrumental to the dominant institutions of modern, industrial society. On the other hand, there are those who took sides with disadvantaged groups and worked in the directions of social awareness and political advocacy.

strengthened by the publicity and controversy which continue to surround affirmative action and the demand that greater numbers of black people be appointed to positions of responsibility and power in the private and public sectors.

The research results pointed to several trends which enable us to describe affirmative action as an agent of 'reform within the system'. In general, affirmative action programmes increase the number of black employees within existing organization structures and cultures; they tend to push Asians and women into the middle ranks of financial and service sector management, creating spaces for appointments above and below them. In addition, they seem to heighten the awareness and aspirations of participants with regard to social and cultural change within companies. They do this by focusing attention to problematic systems and practices in existing arrangements which demand adjustment. For example, problems of recruiting, developing and retaining black staff call attention to the poor quality of general education at all levels for all races, requiring companies to act increasingly as designers and providers of educational programmes. Finally, lack of success in affirmative action may force companies to re-examine standards (and measures) of efficiency and service, often falsely assumed to be high.

Sociologically speaking, these trends may have several effects. First, the increasing number of black managers in business organizations challenges the dualism of the oppressed and the oppressor, and the enduring stereotype of the powerful, omniscient white capitalists who conspire to keep the mass of black people in a culture of silence. As the black middle class grows, so will its influence over social values and practices, and its capacity, and responsibility, to introduce change. Secondly, it is widely accepted, at least at senior management levels, that the upward mobility of blacks is important to the future development of South Africa. This makes it necessary to understand and address the forces which oppose black occupational advancement, leading to a process of examining the assumptions underlying workplace organization and workplace culture. This in turn paves the way for the development of alternative practices which are less culture and gender bound; which are more transparent than was previously the case; which are based on wider consultation and consensus than previously; and which have the potential to create and improve standards rather than simply sustain existing ones.

previously denied. Affirmative action attracts a degree of respect by recruiting academically qualified employees and providing opportunities for their personal development. However, maintaining participation in affirmative action is problematic because there is ambivalence about the desirability of the reforms on the part of planners, and doubts about their effectiveness on the part of recipients. Many companies institute affirmative action programmes just as they introduce new technologies and management techniques - all the while striving to preserve the structures and cultures traditionally associated with Western business. As Kraak (1995) and Foley (1994) point out, capital is often trapped in a mindset which seeks to maintain control over labour, and over the pace and direction of change. This research has shown that many black people will leave such companies because they sense that there is no real commitment to equity or to change.[8]

White managers' control over structure and culture is challenged when a substantial number of black employees is employed and when a sense of solidarity and power is achieved by them, as individuals or as a group within the company. Whether they acknowledge it or not, companies have resisted or undermined such pressures, using a wide range of strategies. They may retrench black staff, place limits on new appointments, select and support only those applicants who conform to prevailing images of good managers, impose a ceiling on advancement up the ranks, withhold significant responsibilities and powers, deny recognition for achievements, turn a 'blind eye' to blatant and more subtle racist attitudes and behaviours, refuse to cooperate in training and developing black colleagues, neglect to develop and enforce measures of accountability in affirmative action, and so on. What is so remarkable about affirmative action is that so modest a reform elicits such powerful resistance.

So what are the changes associated with affirmative action which would allow it to be considered a reform initiative? Notwithstanding the resistance described above, affirmative action has demonstrated a capacity to modify organizational structures and culture, and has the potential to bring more substantial changes in the future. This potential is considerably

[8] An exception to this may be seen in the mobility of black managers employed by the Retailer. In this case, employees were not dissatisfied with the company's orientation to change, but sought job advancement opportunities in rival companies, often with the intention of returning to the Retailer at a later stage. This appeared to be a general pattern in the retail sector and not a consequence of affirmative action.

The experience of these countries raises difficult issues for South Africa. How can society undo the legacy of racial discrimination in its institutions without engaging in reverse discrimination? How, in a country with limited resources, can some be compensated without incurring unacceptable costs to others? One of the hazards of affirmative action in the countries studied is the perpetuation of group classifications, ironically in the name of ending them. Inequalities between racial or ethnic groups were more easily addressed than those within the same group. The study showed that laws aimed at social change are not self-enforcing. Their success or failure depends on political climate, public opinion and adequate enforcement. Basic requirements for effective affirmative action at national level are threefold: linking affirmative action to an ideological base of moral renewal and discipline in a unitary, non-racial state; finding ways to mediate new entitlements and vested interests which avoid the establishment of a large and unwieldy bureaucracy to regulate them; and promoting interrelated avenues for development which nurture self-reliance and resourcefulness rather than dependence on state subsidies.

How can the contribution made by corporate affirmative action programmes to social change in South Africa be assessed in the light of this broad international and historical experience? First of all, this research suggests that as presently constituted, affirmative action is not an effective tool for **transformative** social change. In corporate settings affirmative action programmes do not - and perhaps cannot - address the national need for redistribution, reconstruction and development of resources (including human resources). Indeed, they tend to run counter to these aims by monopolizing expenditure and momentum at the top of the system, denying attention to the bottom. Affirmative action in South African companies may have the effect of perpetuating existing social arrangements rather than changing them. Its emphasis is on rearranging the elite, so much so that the imperative for general reconstruction and development is sidelined and avoided.

While not transformative, affirmative action in company settings may be viewed as a mild reform initiative within the system. Intentionally or not, it defuses the bomb of race and class conflict by regulating and controlling differences of interest and power in society. It does this by minimizing resistance from the historically disadvantaged and excluded by providing limited access to opportunities for occupational advancement - opportunities which were

Many of the discriminatory laws and practices which contributed to the oppression of black people were not the creation of the apartheid state, but had their origins in the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Measures which contributed to racial inequality were of three types: those which were directed to moving Africans off their land and into the white-owned factories and farms; laws which regulated conditions of service once blacks were employed; and measures which protected white workers from competition with blacks. The inequitable and inadequate provision of education for black people has contributed significantly to the social problems which are now to be addressed in affirmative action. It will take some decades to dismantle the structures which have so relentlessly put Africans at a disadvantage to other groups in South Africa. Social policies introduced by the new Government of National Unity, such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme, and statutory interventions such as the Land Reform Act, the Labour Relations Bill, and the Equal Opportunities Bill, provide a framework to begin correcting these historical imbalances. These policies aim to redistribute the resources and power which have been monopolized by white South Africans, and are consistent with the 'transformative' concept of affirmative action discussed in Chapter Three. Their emphasis is mainly on reducing the inequalities between racial groups, rather than on inequalities within groups. At the time of writing in late 1995, practical strategies to redress class, gender and regional imbalances remained on the outskirts of national policy.

A study of affirmative action in three developing countries - Zimbabwe, Namibia and Malaysia - in which discrimination affects the majority of the population, as in South Africa, revealed clear links between ideology, state planning and affirmative action. The study showed that affirmative action policies often start out broad and temporary, but wind up narrow and permanent. The benefits of preferments go disproportionably to those at the top, while those at the bottom - the rural poor and women - are usually left behind. Interim measures become entrenched by the elite group which benefits most from them. A high degree of state intervention in people's lives is required. Ethnic conflicts may be heightened as a government struggles to strike a balance between national unity, state integrity and the rights of individuals and ethnic or pressure groups.

national level. Locally, the development of a black managers' caucus to address issues of discrimination and advancement should be encouraged within companies and perhaps across industries.

There are aspects of black managers' status in business organizations which cannot be addressed by policy alone. What is required here is active participation by black people in challenging racist practices and hegemonic assumptions in their organizations, and more widely in society. As Bethlehem (1993: 226) has noted in relation to gender discrimination at universities, changes in these spheres are reliant on personal and social engagement. Companies can easily hide behind the promise of 'equal opportunity' policies. They must be challenged, and assisted, to live up to their pledges.

11.5 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

By now it must be clear that affirmative action is a complex, contextual phenomenon. Furthermore, it cannot be considered a politically neutral process, but is rather the result of the political will of the power structure involved to initiate change. This understanding leads to questions about the extent to which affirmative action is a tool for achieving individual and social justice, and the extent to which it legitimates, and even enhances, existing social and economic inequalities. The following section attempts addresses these questions, drawing first on insights from the historical and international experience of affirmative action, then turning to an analysis of the social change brought about by corporate affirmative action programmes.

Chapter Four of this study traced the historical development of South Africa's characteristic imbalances and inequalities, including the period of Afrikaner nationalism in the middle decades of this century - a period which is sometimes referred to as South Africa's 'affirmative action for whites'. What began as an elite-led, socio-cultural movement to address the 'poor white problem' grew into far-reaching programmes of job reservation, job creation and social welfare. Political mobilization and state intervention were crucial to the development of powerful institutions to protect, support and entrench Afrikaners' interests. While the National Party's social policies elaborated a prosperous state for whites, black people's access to jobs, housing, education and social services was severely curtailed.

commitment to equalizing opportunities for employment and advancement, particularly for those already in the company's employ. This would be greatly facilitated if organizations clarify and make explicit their model(s) of competency and good performance, communicate them widely in the organization and hold them up for scrutiny and debate. Such a process may lead to the development of alternative models which actually enhance, rather than simply reproduce, standards of performance. In addition, the motivation and commitment of staff members may be raised as they make a contribution to the 'rules' governing appointments and promotions.

It is equally important to employ black people and women in sufficiently large numbers to prevent token status and feelings of isolation in the company. It is necessary to win support for affirmative action so that black people feel that they belong in the company, and are encouraged, indeed assisted, to develop their full potential. This may involve an overhaul of informal customs and practices which have been comfortable for white men, but which require a rethink as the composition of the workforce changes. Examples of such practices are company-sponsored sporting events and social gatherings. Alternative support systems may include the provision of transport, housing, daycare and bursaries for higher education. In this way, institutional as well as individual responsibility for affirmative action would be demonstrated.

With respect to the formal and informal training and development which are necessary for career advancement, it seems that many current line managers' people management skills require more rigorous evaluation and development, especially in the areas of identifying talent and potential, providing feedback, career path planning, and conducting induction and performance appraisals. Little progress will be made unless these managers understand that advancing black colleagues is an essential (and therefore rewarded) part of their job and that a considerable amount of time must be devoted to mentoring and coaching.

It is unlikely that the above proposals will occur, or will prove successful, without a group of people to drive the process forward and hold company officials to account. In the absence of a state legislative programme including the establishment of a monitoring agency, the BMF and NAFCOC have a continued role to play as pressure groups for affirmative action at

work by white managers. None of these strategies, however, should be seen as a substitute for appointments to high level positions of power.

One policy advocated by Hoffman (1985) and implemented successfully by the Retailer is rotating supervisory positions. This exposes new employees to different management styles and tasks while they develop a breadth of skills and experience which enhance their opportunities for advancement. The process also benefits supervisors who are exposed to a range of employee skills and concerns, and are taught to provide encouragement, training and support. In another departure from conventional practice, the Retailer developed selection techniques based on experiential methods, reducing dependency on unreliable academic qualifications.

Another important feature of successful affirmative action programmes is the availability of credible and effective grievance procedures for handling individual instances of discrimination. These were notably absent in the Bank[7] and present in the Retailer. Regular audits of the incidence and nature of grievances serve two functions: they alert the organization to patterns of discrimination and, along with statistics about the composition of the workforce, they provide a measure of success in affirmative action.

11.4 STEPS TOWARDS MORE INFORMED AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMMES

Affirmative action is still a young policy in South Africa. There is space for much innovation in policy and procedures. Although a coherent set of proposals has been put forward recently for structuring affirmative action programmes (reviewed in Chapter Three), this research suggests that a number of serious problems still exist, especially in relation to the structures and power imbalances which sustain discrimination. Additional work will need to be undertaken by companies to ensure that affirmative action programmes attract, develop and retain substantial numbers of black managers. Chief among these tasks is an unequivocal

[7] The problem with the Bank's grievance procedures lay in their implausibility. Procedures existed to uncover complaints of discrimination reported by individuals, but not to resolve them in a way which seemed to black managers to be fair and expeditious.

programme; and it creates hostility and distrust between 'newcomers' and longstanding employees. It contributes to the 'revolving door syndrome' in which black managers remain with a company for short periods of time only before seeking promotion and premiums elsewhere. Relying on external recruitment escalates the 'diploma disease' (Dore, 1976) in which candidates seek ever higher academic qualifications in the competition for scarce jobs. It undermines the developmental principle of human capital theory and exposes bogus corporate 'commitments' to equal opportunities.

Orientation to Change

The failure of the Bank's affirmative action programme to attract and develop a black managerial corps may be interpreted as local resistance to fundamental organizational change. White managers' interests ran counter to the new corporate objective of equity. An effective affirmative action programme which incorporated advanced managerial education and training and merit-based promotion would inevitably undermine entrenched white privilege. The weakness of the affirmative action programme may therefore be attributable not only to deliberate white opposition, but to the recalcitrant nature of organizational culture in banks which have historically maintained white manager privilege.

A more receptive orientation to change was found at the Conglomerate and the Retailer, both of which have a greater diversity of products and markets than the Bank and the Oil Company.

Strategies for Affirmative Action

Affirmative action programmes which adopt a range of strategies for 'fast-tracking' and 'high profiling' black managers with potential are more likely to succeed in advancing, and retaining, their staff than those which stick to the rigid job structures of the past. Methods which may be used include job creation, job fragmentation and job rotation; mentoring; substitutions; guided short term 'apprenticeships'; and 'clustering' of new employees throughout the levels and parts of the organization. Clustering may be a particularly promising strategy since, according to Blanchard (1985), it contributes favourably to the work conditions of underrepresented groups by reducing the incidence of conscious and unconscious discriminatory behaviour. It also interrupts the exaggerated scrutiny and evaluation of their

mystique,[6] referring to them as 'codes' and 'protocols' which they learned over time. Their difficulty lay in efforts to impact on it jointly, for example by establishing discussion forums and pressure groups - efforts which were largely unsuccessful, for a variety of reasons.

It is not easy to disentangle culture-bound loyalties and understandings. Fuhr (1992) points out that white managers tend to downplay the problem of racism in their organizations, preferring to lay the blame on the past governments' apartheid policies. Rather than conduct a cultural audit to locate problematic attitudes and behaviours, some companies propose to remedy racial discrimination and segregation with 'diversity programmes' which aim to bring people together and treat them equally. An example of such a programme was presented in the case study of the Bank. Unfortunately, what often happens in such programmes is that the structural and power imbalances through which discrimination operates are not explored. Attention is diverted from social and political imbalances to cultural diversity. Differences in cultural values and attitudes are highlighted, but the root causes of racism and sexism are not addressed. Such programmes may be good psychotherapy for the organization, but they are not enough to create an empowering process in affirmative action. In effect they may operate as a smokescreen to prevent people from addressing fundamental, structural issues, such as education and training, and career and progression paths. Changes in 'deep' management values and structures are needed.

The Environment Surrounding Affirmative Action Programmes

The failure of many affirmative action programmes has a lot to do with the environment in which they operate, as observed by Human (1992a), Human and Horwitz (1992), Madi (1993) and others. A culture of production, profitability and cost-cutting prevailed in all four companies studied in this research. When this culture is combined with a hostility towards long term investment in human resources, as at the Bank and the Oil Company, internal training and development programmes are soon abandoned or downgraded and the company comes to rely on external recruitment. This has several negative effects: it undermines the morale and commitment of the existing workforce, who see no prospects of personal development or occupational advancement arising from the company's affirmative action

[6] Perhaps the mystique attached to business organizations is more easily identifiable than that in academic organizations.