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University of the Witwatersrand
School of Human and Community Development
Discipline of Psychology

Principals' perceptions of the key tensions, processes and consequences characterising the secularisation of South African public schools

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A research project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of M. Ed (Masters in Educational Psychology) in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, October 2010

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Abstract

Grounded in the qualitative tradition, the aim of this study was to explore how principals perceive the processes governing, tensions inherent in and consequences, of the secularisation of public schools in South Africa, against the backdrop of the old apartheid system. Principals are key informants who bridge the gap between the political arena and the individuals who are affected at the implementation level and therefore provide a valuable lens through which the process of secularisation can be explored. Eight principals, who had been in this position of leadership for at least eight years, participated in semi-structured interviews, which were then subjected to a thematic content analysis. Principals perceived the process as characterised by a lack of consultation and transparency, with no clear guidelines provided to them and no follow-through from the education ministry. They also perceived tensions in the manner in which principals continued to embrace Christian principles in the management of their schools. Tolerance and respect of different religions were identified as positive outcomes of secularisation but these were perceived to have been offset by the negative consequences of a moral collapse, an ungovernable school and a loss of identity among the students. Through exploring the nature of key socialising agents, in the educational arena, it became evident that the participants often conceptualised themselves as martyrs and perceived parents as morally neglectful. The changing role of the school, as an agent of religious education, was also explored. Overall, all the principals strongly agreed that despite the good intentions of the government in fostering a democratic society, the impact of secularisation had resulted in some unintended effects, including a negative impact on the moral development of the students. In sum they perceived that the negative consequences of secularisation outweighed the promises of the government's overall secularisation vision.

Keywords

Education in post-apartheid South Africa, secularisation, public schooling, education and religion, principal's perceptions, religious intolerance, socialising agents, qualitative research, and thematic content analysis.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Background

Education in South African schools has undoubtedly been influenced by the apartheid system, which dominated and characterised the South African landscape for almost fifty years. Since the democratic elections in 1994 there has been a transition from Christian nationalism to secularism within the political sphere, following the movement from the apartheid era into a democratic society. This change in the political ideology of South Africa fostered subsequent changes in various governmental departments, including the Department of Education. Education policy and service provision were areas which required urgent attention by the government, in order to break from the overtly Christian nationalist agenda of the apartheid past and the racial inequalities inherent therein (Christie, 2006). Christian National Education was utilised during the apartheid period, through appropriating Christian dogma in the service of informing the broader racist agenda of the apartheid government. Following the incorporation of the South African education system under the new democratic government, many attempts have been made to redress the inequalities and injustices inherent in the apartheid administration (Dickson & van Vollenhoven, 2002). In September of 2003, Kadar Asmal, the acting Minister of Education, presented South Africa's new policy on religion and education. This policy reflected an attempt to break with the traditional religious instruction of the past, through creating a new agenda for teaching and learning about religion, religions and religious diversity in public schools (Chidester, 2008). Despite the restrictions stipulated in this policy, there has been much controversy regarding the role of religion in state (public) schools, following recent reports that many state schools continue to embrace religious practices and principles in the education of their students (Claasen, 2009).

Historically, cultural principles have guided education policies, while education has had a clear role to play in promoting tolerance and respect for various religious groups (Smith, 2007). However, constitutional secularisation requires that religion and education separate under the

new constitution and democratic order. South Africa is a country rich with cultural diversity, encompassing a plurality of religions, languages and ethnic groups. The new policy on religion and education attempts to characterise South African society as one with 'unity without uniformity and diversity with divisiveness' (Dickson & van Vollenhoven, 2002, 15).

Given the broad aims of this policy and the importance of the educational environment in South Africa, it is imperative to explore how individuals, within the public school sector, perceive this transition towards secularism and how this fundamental shift in the political ideology of the state has impacted on the educational arena and more specifically, on public schooling in South Africa. Principals can be conceptualised as agents who are able to provide a commentary on shifts in political ideologies. Given the managerial role a principal holds, it can be argued that they are in an advantageous position, as they witness the changes in the political macro-system and how these changes filter down into the environment of the schools. This research therefore endeavoured to explore how principals perceive the secularisation of public schooling in post-apartheid South Africa. Through investigating the tensions underlying this transition, the processes therein and the perceived consequences of the movement, insight could be gained into how individuals negotiate this transition, against the backdrop of Christian nationalism, which characterised the old apartheid order.

2. Research Rationale

Historically, the impact of different political regimes on the educational arena has been significant. Jansen (1990) highlights the power of the scholastic syllabus as a political phenomenon, embodying the values and interests which sustain and replicate its hegemonic control. This is particularly true for South Africa, when one examines the changes in the educational arena in relation to changes in the political climate of the country. When apartheid ended, there was a distinct shift in the political ideology of the state from Christian nationalism, which prevailed during apartheid, to secularism which was symbolic of the new democracy. Legislation was formulated at the governmental level restricting the practice of specific religious instruction in public schools. However, political change does not occur in a vacuum but rather

exerts a powerful force on all members of society through the enactment of legislation and policies, which filter down to the public arena. Exploring the types of tensions, processes and consequences that are inherent in, or result from changes in overarching political philosophies provides an interesting vantage point from which to interrogate the relationship between the state, religion and the school in post-apartheid South Africa.

Various stakeholders in the educational arena have been involved in the transition into secularism, through the policies governing school management and practices. Members of government, educational departments, principals, school management teams (SMT), school governing bodies (SGB), educators and learners have all been directly and indirectly involved in this process and have experienced this transition in different forms. Principals are strategically placed at the nexus of various systems, working with both SMT's and SGB's, to ensure that what is negotiated and formulated at the macro-level, in the form of policies and Acts, is practically realized at the micro-level, in the form of performance and outcomes. Principals are key informants who bridge the gap between the political arena and the individuals who are affected at the implementation level. Principals can therefore provide a valuable lens, through which the secularisation of public schooling in post-apartheid South Africa can be explored.

Although much literature has documented the changing landscape of religion and education in post-apartheid South Africa, limited studies have been conducted, addressing individual experiences of this transition. This research therefore endeavoured to explore principals' perceptions of the transition into public school secularisation in post-apartheid South Africa. Through embracing a qualitative approach, this research also attempted to broaden the existing base of literature surrounding experiences of education post-apartheid, as well as delve into the individual conceptualizations of how these changes in political ideologies filter down to the education sector and directly influence the individuals under their purview.

3. Scope of the Present Study

i) Research Aims

The primary aim of this study was to explore how principals, perceived the secularisation of public schools in South Africa, against the backdrop of the old apartheid system. This research project therefore explored three aspects of secularisation in the South African context, namely; the key tensions underlying this transition, the processes inherent in this movement and the perceived consequences of the transition. Through exploring each of these three elements, an enhanced understanding of the phenomenon of secularisation, as perceived by the participants, was gained. Furthermore, through delving into the individual perceptions and experiences of these members of society, insight was gained into the manner in which these individuals perceived the impact of this transition, from Christian nationalism to secularity, on the educational sphere and individuals therein.

ii) Research Questions

The research questions for the study were as follows:

- What do principals perceive as the key tensions underlying the movement into public school secularisation in South Africa?
- How do principals reflect on the processes which have shaped the transition into public school secularisation in South Africa?
- What do principals perceive to be the key consequences resulting from the transition into public school secularisation in South Africa?

4. Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the existing literature pertaining to education, religion and secularisation in South Africa. Initially a brief historical account of schooling in apartheid South Africa is provided, followed by a discussion of the trends and changes which occurred with the transition into democracy. This leads into an analysis of the current situation of education in

South Africa, which encompasses an evaluation of the rise of secularism, the current legislation governing South African schools and the prevalence of religious intolerance in South Africa. Functionalist and critical accounts of schooling are the next point of discussion, in which these two opposing theories of education are critically examined in the context of schooling in South Africa. Finally this section explores the eco-systemic nature of the school in South Africa through looking at the manner in which it is structured and the role the principal plays in this system.

In *Chapter 3*, the methods utilised in the study are discussed. This section describes the paradigms and design of the current research, provides an overview of the research questions, the characteristics of the participants and the data gathering procedure and analysis. The role of reflexivity and the importance of the ethics guiding the study are then discussed.

Chapter 4 will provide an outline of the analysis and results are described, as well as the eleven subthemes, providing answers to the initial research questions.

Finally, *Chapter 5* contains the concluding remarks of the study in which the key findings are presented, the strengths and limitations of the research are discussed and directions for future research are proposed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

1. Schooling and Religion in South Africa: An Overview

i) A Brief History

The role of religion in schools is inherently linked to a nation's political agenda. With the arrival of the Christian missionaries in the seventeenth century, the value of a Christian way of life formed the foundation of education in schools. The arrival of the Dutch United East Indies Company (DUEC) in the Cape was key in cementing the governmental entrenchment of Calvinistic theology, in the educational arena (Dickson & van Vollenhoven, 2002). Subsequent to the colonization of South Africa by the British, members of the clergy continued to be employed in governmental positions, fostering the perceived supremacy of Christianity, in the more moderate form of Anglicanism, derived from the Church of England. It therefore follows that the system of formal education which was elicited to learners in South Africa, reflected the dichotomous influence of the conservative Dutch and the English (Dickson & van Vollenhoven, 2002). It is imperative to note that prior to the arrival of the missionaries and subsequently the Dutch colonists in 1652, education did exist in South Africa in the form of Traditional African Education (Jansen, 1990). Although this form of education was not institutionalized in the structure of formal schooling, it was led by community elders, through the means of an oral tradition. Education in this era was based on cultural transmission and was closely integrated with the value of life experience (Jansen, 1990). This form of traditional religion was replaced on the arrival of the missionaries, who emphasized the authority of one religious orientation - Christianity. Given the Christian roots of the educational system in South Africa, the continuing prominence of the church in the educational arena in South Africa is understandable (Dickson & van Vollenhoven, 2002).

Following the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), Afrikaners, intent on gaining recognition for their language and for their particular brand of Calvinism, opened their schools on Christian principles (Singh, 2005). Once the Union was formed in 1910, all governmental departments subscribed to the use of Christian principles in public schooling, already established by the pre-Union

government (Dickson & van Vollenhoven, 2002). The doctrine of Christian National Education came to fruition in 1948, with the commencement of the apartheid era. This particular ideology emphasized the government's attempt to entrench the acceptance of separate existences and overt segregation within the country. The Christian Education Policy Act of 1967 clearly reflected these objectives, prohibiting the teaching or practice of any other religion in the scholastic environment, aside from Christianity (Dickson & van Vollenhoven, 2002). It is imperative to note that although Christian National Education utilised aspects of Christianity to make an argument for the assumptions of apartheid, it is significantly different from the religious denomination of Christianity and the principles and practices inherent in this religious grouping.

During apartheid, religion was central to education. Public schooling was founded on Christian National principles, reflecting the government's agenda for a racially organised society. The apartheid state therefore adopted a manner of management and administration which obtrusively intervened in the process of educational provision and delivery (Sayed, 1999). Schools were not autonomous sites where religion could be freely practiced but were rather locations demarcated for the specific purpose of Christian indoctrination. Apartheid education became infamous for entrenching ethnic difference, promoting authoritarian rote learning and teaching citizens of colour to be submissive in society (Weber, 2002). It is therefore clear that the practice of education and schooling were intrinsically linked to the political ideology of that era.

ii) Post-apartheid Trends and Changes

With the end of the apartheid era, the aim of government was 'a totally new and just dispensation in which every inhabitant of the country would enjoy equal rights, treatment and opportunity in every sphere of endeavour - constitutional, social and economic' (Kitshoff, 1998, p. 313). Education policy was at the forefront of the agenda, given the political ideology of Christian nationalism forming the foundations of education, which embodied the principles of segregation, intrinsic in the apartheid system. Following the democratic elections of 1994, it became clear that the new democratic state had enormous challenges to confront, in the establishment of a new and

equitable education system. The nature of political resolution played an essential role in guiding the direction of educational reform (Fataar, 2008).

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (henceforth referred to as the SASA), marked a powerful attempt by government to transcend the principles of Christian nationalism inherent in apartheid schooling and embrace principles of democracy, in line with the new Constitution. However, the mere production and promotion of a new values-based policy in education depends upon more than the simple enactment of legislation. Successful implementation of legislation is dependent upon a holistic approach, which entails an integration of the political economy of the past, present and future direction of a country, the diversity of the 'cultural capital' inherent in its varied communities and the educational policies that are adopted to foster significant transformation (Singh, 2005). In South Africa there is an official acknowledgment of the link between a democratising state and the need for democracy within the educational sphere (Davies, 2002). Fostering this sense of democracy involved challenging the traditionally central place of religion, specifically Calvinist Christianity, in the institution of the school. In the new democratic culture of South Africa, where human rights form the basis of effective governance, it was imperative for the state to adopt a position of non-alignment with any particular religion (Dickson & van Vollenhoven, 2002). This resulted in a model of education which took cognizance of an individual's right to freedom of religion, as no one religion was regarded as superior to any other. This rejection of religious authority symbolized South Africa's transition into secularism.

Historically, the impact of different political regimes on education is significant. According to Davies (1999) the socio-economic base is intrinsically linked to the political ideology, the characteristics of education and the predominant school model during various periods. Jansen (1990) concurs with this notion, highlighting the power of the scholastic syllabus as a political phenomenon, embodying the values and interests which sustain and reproduce its hegemonic control. This is particularly true for South Africa, when one examines the changes in the educational arena in relation to changes in the political climate of the country.

During the apartheid era, issues of race were highly influential in dictating the manner of societal functioning. Racial segregation formed the basis for all apartheid policies, and this system of oppression was based on the premise that one race was superior to the other, specifically that White individuals were superior to African Black individuals. Education during apartheid also adopted these principles of segregation, with the development of separate systems of schooling, which were divided along racialised lines. Apartheid education became infamous for entrenching ethnic difference and teaching citizens of colour to be submissive in society. However, when the literature regarding schooling post-apartheid is examined, it is clear that race becomes somewhat obsolete, not featuring in the manner in which it did prior to democracy. This could potentially be a result of the government's aim of an equitable society in which all members of the population should have the opportunity to equal rights and treatment in every sphere of development, including education (Kitshoff, 1998). The states transition into democracy and subsequently, secularisation, can be conceptualised as an attempt to achieve these aims of equality, through negating issues of race and religion, which were so dominant during the apartheid era. However, it is imperative to note that any phenomenon, including secularisation, does not occur outside of the intersection of various features, including race, class, religion and gender.

The theory of intersectionality can be defined as "the mutually constitutive relations among social identities" (Warner, 2008, p. 454). Social identity is not formed in a vacuum, but is rather shaped by an individual's various intrinsic characteristics. The interaction of these characteristics invariably plays a determining role in the manner in which individuals perceive occurrences in the societal functioning of a country. Issues of race and religion are therefore always at work in determining the nature of an individual's perceptions and cannot be viewed in isolation from one another. Intersectionality theory refers to both a normative theoretical argument, as well as an approach to research which places emphasis on the interaction of categories of difference (including but not limited to race, gender, religion and class) (Hancock, 2007). It is therefore imperative not to isolate these categories, but rather to constantly be aware of the manner in which they present and intersect, informing individuals' experiences and perceptions of this process of secularisation.

It is imperative to note here that the focus of this research endeavour is on public schooling in South Africa. The SASA does allow for the development of independent (private) schools, including religious schools[1], on the grounds that they avoid racial discrimination, register with the state and maintain standards which are not inferior to the practices of comparable public schooling institutions (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). In addition these schools are independently funded and do not receive any monetary support from the state. Although many of these schools are religious, this is not the interest of this research and therefore only issues relating to public schooling will be addressed and explored. This is due to the fact that the proposed research aims to explore the operations between the state, religion and the school, as embodied by the flow of mandates governing religion education, from the political arena to the school environment. Since private schools, to a large extent, operate independently from the state, a focus on the public school sector seems justified.

2. Religion in Schools: The Current Situation

i) The Rise of Secularism

South Africa is defined as a secular state. This implies a process through which various sectors of society are removed from the control of religious instruction and supremacy (Kosmin, 2007). More specifically, secularisation describes "the process whereby religion loses its influence over the various spheres of social life" (Giddens, 1993, 486). It involves organizations and legal constructs that reproduce the institutional expressions of the secular in a nation's political realm and public life. Policy development in South Africa is based on neutrality towards specific religions, as well as cooperation, affirming both legal separation and creative interaction (Mayson, 2003). According to Statistics South Africa (2001), approximately one third of the population (36.5%), followed the teachings of mainline Christian churches[2]. A further third of

[1] Religious schools are institutions which follow one specific religion.
[2] The mainline churches include reformed churches, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and the United Congregational Church of South Africa.

the population was comprised of individuals' belonging to independent churches[3] (26.8%). Therefore, approximately two thirds of the South Africans adhered to some form of Christianity. Only 11.7% of individuals specified having no affiliation to religion, in the 2001 Census. The apparent question which follows is why not embrace the principles of Christianity as opposed to secularism, if the majority of the population was comprised of individuals adhering to the Christian faith? The answer lies in the Constitution of South Africa which upholds the rights of all citizens to the freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, and freedom from unfair discrimination on any grounds whatsoever, including religion, in public education institutions (Republic of South Africa, 2003).

Although the state asserts that secular beliefs are embodied at the macro level of the country, through the enactment of legislation and adherence to the Constitution, there is a large degree of controversy surrounding the extent to which this desired condition is realized at more micro levels. The South African public calendar is a clear example of this tension between the secular and the religious. Although numerous religious holidays have been stripped of their 'public holiday' titles, many Christian holy days remain public holidays and influence the school calendar. Secular public holidays have been included in the calendar[4] to promote the transition towards a secular state; however the remaining Christian public holidays present a dilemma for the congruence of South Africa's political ideology. It is clear that there continues to be these remnants that reflect a strong interaction between religion and the state, despite South Africa's status as a secular nation. The rise of secularism has therefore been somewhat problematic, as there are many aspects of public life which continue to be founded on principles of the Christian religion. While South Africa acclaims to be a secular state with clear division between the state and the Church, it is clear that often this strict divide is not realized in sectors of the political realm as well as in public life.

[3] Independent churches include the Zionist churches, iBandla ImamaNazaretha and Ethiopiantype churches.
[4] Secular public holidays include; Workers' Day, Freedom Day, Human Rights Day, Youth Day, National Women's Day and the Day of Reconciliation.

ii) Religious Intolerance in South Africa

Religious intolerance has historically been a defining feature of many African countries (Hackett, 2003). In South Africa, religious intolerance is prominent among various religious groups and is thus an area of concern. The Bill of Rights overtly prohibits individuals from unfairly discriminating against anyone based on their religion and states that an individual may not be denied the right to practice their religion and to form, join or maintain religious associations with other members of that community (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). Despite these stipulations, there continues to be a large amount of religious discrimination and intolerance in South Africa. The states transition into secularism and the resultant changing relationship between the state and religious groups facilitated new challenges and possibilities. Despite the fact that Christianity remained the dominant religious affiliation in South Africa, its formal influence was limited and minority groups enjoyed a new found freedom. This divide between religion and the state meant that religious groups became competing voices in the marketplace of ideas (Smith, 2005). In essence, this suggests that in order for religious groups to make their voices heard, it was necessary for them to either build multi-faith coalitions or to strengthen their group identities in order to sustain their own belief systems and influence over their followers. It appears that in South Africa the latter occurred, with religious groups dividing from society in an attempt to sustain and reproduce their fundamental beliefs and practices among their group members.

It is often argued that certain conservative and fundamentalist religious groups are associated with social intolerance and an eagerness to make sweeping moral judgements (Beck & Miller, 2000). The traditional and conformist nature of many religions in South Africa may therefore be acting as a facilitating factor in the prevalence of religious intolerance in South Africa. Hackett (2003) suggests that there are four primary factors which have fuelled religious intolerance in many countries. The first is the increased religious pluralisation, which has resulted in a greater competition between religious groups for resources, members and access to the public sphere. The second factor is the greater use of public and private media outlets by religious groups, with a resultant increase in the tensions experienced between the groups. Thirdly, the "marked increase in religious revivalism and militancy..." (Hackett, 2003, p. 69), has been instrumental in

facilitating this intolerance, leading to a greater sense of exclusivism and moralism among group members. Finally, the increased constitutional and human rights awareness, has amplified the expectations of religious freedom by various religious groups. Given the diversity of religious affiliations in the South African context, these factors are instrumental in entrenching religious intolerance. The consequences of this religious intolerance are manifold, manifesting themselves in many corners of society. Thus, despite South Africa's transition into secularism, antagonism between religious groups remains prevalent and is apparent in the scholastic environment.

One of the most notably rising forms of religious intolerance in western democratic societies, which has featured in the global news media with increasing frequency, is Islamophobia. Islamophobia is a problematic neologism, defined as "the most common term used to refer to bigotry, discrimination, policies and practices directed towards Islam and a racialised group of people that includes Muslims" (Love, 1999, p. 402). Islamophobia is manifested in individual's negative attitudes, discriminatory practices and physical harassment towards this population. Islamophobia bears a strong resemblance to its cousin, xenophobia and is thus connected to intolerance towards minority groups (van Driel, 2004). Islamophobia, which began to feature after the terrorist attacks on America, is often seen to be a result of the racial ideology of a country, an ideology which is based on socially constructed categories of phenotypical characteristics, such as how a person appears (Love, 2009). It often arises as a result of stereotypes, which are enforced by the media, and are often untrue. In France, the use of the Burka at school has recently been banned, and can be construed as a form of religious intolerance, epitomized by Islamophobia. Thus it manifests itself in physical, political and particularly linguistic forms (Mohideen & Mohideen, 2008). In the South African context, Islam could potentially be seen as the result of a perceived threat to secularism, and Islamophobia is thus a form of religious intolerance that remains pertinent today.

iii) Legislation Governing Religion in Schools

Many countries (Such as the US), assert that religion should not be taught in any capacity at public schools. Other countries embrace religious principles in their education system, following the belief that religious education fosters the moral development of children (Valk, 2007). Some

educators utilize periods assigned for religious instruction to propagate their own personal belief systems (Mayson, 2003). South Africa is a country constitutionally committed to secularism and thus it follows that religion and schooling should be two matters completely separated from one another. However, Valk (2007) emphasizes that negating to teach religion and its formative influence in shaping the lives of individuals, runs the risk of creating a generation of learners steeped in one worldview (secularism), rendering them woefully ignorant of others. South Africa is a country defined by its rich diverse cultural and religious heritage. In order to maintain and transmit this rich heritage to subsequent generations, measures need to be set in place to ensure that these traditional values and frameworks are not lost forever. This is the key challenge for government officials involved in the formulation of policy governing religion education in schools.

In addition, there is a large body of research suggesting a strong relationship between religious education and moral values (Guttmann, 2002). Numerous studies have demonstrated the correlation between a person's religiosity and the severity of their moral judgement. A study conducted by Cottone, Drucker & Javier (2007) highlighted the positive relationship between moral reasoning and conservative religious ideologies or religious observances. According to this research, moral reasoning is strongly correlated to religious school attendance and religious knowledge. Given the perceived link between religious education and moral teaching, it is imperative to ascertain how the transition into secular schooling, has influenced children's moral development.

Since the end of apartheid and the establishment of South Africa's new democratic society, every policy initiative has had its foundation in the principles rooted in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights (Wagnid, 2004). Education policy has followed suit. In 2003, Kadar Asmal, presented to Parliament the new national policy on religion and education. Overtly rejecting the religious instruction of the apartheid government, this policy established a new educational agenda for teaching religion, religions and religious diversity in South African public schools (Chidester, 2008). This policy is based on four broad principles; a public school must be secular and may not

pursue or force down any religious ethos on its learners; it may not practice the religious apartheid of South Africa's past but should rather embrace an integration of the community at large; reading from any religious holy text and performing religious procedures during class hours is illegal; teaching the supremacy of a specific religion is illegal and a majority adherence to one religion may not lead to the exclusion of other religions or a secular worldview (Claassen, 2009).

In the formulation of this policy, the government embraced a cooperative approach towards negotiating the role of religion in schools. This model departs slightly from modern secularism (separationist model), which demands the complete separation of religion and the state (such as in France and the US). This is due to the fact that drawing a strict and complete separation between religion and the secular state is difficult to implement in practice, given the significant interchange between religion and the public sphere (Republic of South Africa, 2003). In a cooperative model, there are separate spheres for religion and the state, as established by the Constitution, but there is minimal scope for interaction between the two. Therefore the cooperative model was implemented, combining constitutional separation and mutual recognition, providing a framework through which the right to freedom of religion is protected. One of the keynote distinctions drawn in this policy is between the practice of religious instruction and religion education. Religious instruction embodies a form of education which teaches about a particular religion and encourages children to conform to this particular religion (Jeenah, 2005). This includes, performing Catholic Mass at schools, Muslim Madressas and instruction in one specific religion. According to the National Policy on Religion and Education, this form of education is prohibited at schools as it is the responsibility of the parents and communities to instruct children in this manner. Religion education, on the other hand, does not focus on one specific religion but rather teaches learners the value of various religions and their historical heritage (Jeenah, 2005). This form of religion is now a specified component of the school curriculum, as it aims to foster an understanding of various religions and respect for cultural and religious diversity.

A dilemma which Jansen (2002), highlights is why, despite unprecedented investments in policy making and production, in the years following the demise of the apartheid era, does there appear to be minimal change in the daily routine of schools in the classroom setting? One practical situation which exemplifies this problem is the recent controversy over numerous public schools still embracing religious indoctrination in their daily functioning, despite restrictions by the National Policy on Religion in Education prohibiting this (Claassen, 2009). Evidently there is a gap between the formulation of written policies in the political sphere and their practice at the school level. This research will endeavour to shed light on this phenomenon against the backdrop of public school secularisation in post-apartheid South Africa.

3. Functionalist vs. Critical Accounts of Schooling

Systems of public schooling are argued to be amongst one of the most important social institutions in today's society. In line with traditional functionalist views, they are the primary vehicles for forging a unified community identity and for fostering opportunities for children to transcend their parents' socio-economic status (Greenawalt, 2004). Functionalism posits that a society can only be completely understood when one examines how its various 'components' or institutions, combine to give the society stability over time (Giddens, 1993). Consistency and stability over time are therefore key determinants of a successful society, according to this paradigm. Consistent with this line of thought, functionalism also posits that standard skills and norms should be taught to society in order for it to function consistently, instilling the same beliefs and values in individuals. Schooling has a significant role to play in the realization of this goal.

Emile Durkheim asserts that it is the role of the school to "teach students moral conduct oriented toward the larger whole, society of its own kind." (Henry, 2001, p. 267). This line of thought stemmed from his concern with the creation of a moral community, inspired by religious beliefs and evident through all his intellectual activities, predominantly his focus on the moral role of the state (Bottomore, 1981). In this sense functionalism believes that through the education of morals, children learn to become a part of a society and in essence gain a sense of belonging to

the greater social system. In an attempt to mirror the needs of society at large, school practices reflect valued social and economic demands. Schools therefore function as part of a broader attempt to produce citizens who are capable of contributing to the economic development of the country. Schools can therefore be conceptualised as one unit within the larger context serving a particular function within the reproduction of the citizenry. From this perspective, schools can be conceptualised as constituting a component of the smaller micro-system of societal functioning. From a functionalist viewpoint schooling operates at the micro-level, endorsing and educating students in the moral values and social practices of the time.

According to the functionalist theory, institutions have both manifest and latent roles. Manifest functions are those which are recognised and believed to occur, whereas latent functions are often not overtly anticipated, but are as important when perceived and noticed (Burger & Offe, 1982). In the setting of the school, the manifest function would be the provision of education to society through conveying basic knowledge and proficiencies to the next generation. The latent function however, would be the transmission of core values and belief systems which reinforce the social structure of society (Anderson, 1961). Thus the role of schooling according to functionalism is the socialisation of individuals into mainstream society. Illich provides a more critical conceptualisation of a school, asserting that the school can be utilised as a political tool, to keep every citizen in their rightful place. In this manner, the state is intimately involved in the transmission of class and other inequalities.

i) Ivan Illich and the Hidden Curriculum

It is clear that from a functionalist framework, it is the responsibility of the school to impose on the individual a set of values and norms, which is congruent with the political ideology of the period, in order to ensure stability and congruency throughout society. Critical theorists question the role of the school in society and its strong relationship to the political agenda of a country. One of the most contentious theorists in this field is Ivan Illich. Illich contends that all schools have a hidden curriculum, which educates children about their role in society and fosters an uncritical acceptance of the prevailing social order. In addition it serves as a ritual of initiation

into the growth-oriented consumer society for all members of the public. A number of questions are raised when one considers the powerful influence of the institution of the school on the autonomy of the individual. What happens to the individual's private initiative to decide what he will learn and his inalienable right to learn what he likes rather than what will benefit someone else? Illich therefore argues for the public education "would profit from the deschooling of society, just as family life, politics, security, faith, and communication would profit from an analogous process" (Illich, 1972, p. 2).

Illich (1971) asserts that the institutionalization of values leads inescapably to physical pollution, social division and psychological incompetence; three destructive dimensions in a process of worldwide degradation and modernized misery. Through utilizing the school as a political tool, in which children are socialized into the ideology of the state, the autonomy of the person is considerably compromised. The secularisation of the school advocates for the removal of an overarching religious orientation in the education of learners. From a functionalism perspective, this would be noted as a cause for concern, given that the overwhelming majority of the population are religious and it is the function of the school to feed the current social structure. Through embracing secular education, the key function of the school, the socialisation of citizens according to the social structure of society, would be compromised. From a critical perspective, this would be favourable, as Illich argues for the deinstitutionalisation of the school. However, only one aspect of the school, religion in itself, would be deinstitutionalized, and is therefore not optimal. However, critics would still caution that through promoting secular views in the schooling environment, the school continues to impose a set of values on its students even if these are not religious values, but rather secular ones.

4. An Ecosystemic View of the School

The school can be viewed as a microcosm of societal development (Mafisa, 2008). Emerging trends which occur in the larger political arena of societal functioning often manifest in schools, where their effects are practically felt. School leaders, through their leadership and management, act as agents of change, in order for schools to be at the forefront of change and development

(Mafisa, 2008). It is imperative to note that political change does not occur in a vacuum but rather exerts a powerful force on all members of society through the enactment of legislation and policies, which filter down to the public arena. The social ecological model provides a framework for understanding this phenomenon and how change within one sector of the society, indisputably affects all other sectors, directly or indirectly related to it. This model provides a theoretical basis through which individuals, institutions and the overarching environment in which they reside can be comprehensively analyzed and understood, when viewed as a part of a multi-levelled, multi-structured and multi-determined social context (Lazarus, 2001). The social ecological model asserts that various parts or components of a social context are interrelated and exert direct and indirect influences on other parts (Visser, 2001). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory posits that individuals reside in a continually altering context, which is influenced by the changing relationships between the "individual-level contexts and the macro-context in which these micro-systems develop" (Visser, 2001, p. 106).

Bronfenbrenner views the community as being constantly influenced by five sub-systems; the micro-system, meso-system, exo-system, macro-system and chrono-system. The chrono-system refers to the time period in which a set of events occurred. In the context of this research, it is the period following the end of the apartheid system and the transition into a democratic society. In addition, it encompasses the changes that have occurred as a result of this shift, including the state's movement towards secularism. The macro-system is comprised of large-scale factors that have an impact on the lives of communities. These include the political ideology of the state and governmental policies and decisions (Visser, 2001). In the proposed research, the macro-system would include the state ideology of secularism and the function of the state in relation to the scholastic curriculum and religion. The exo-system contains broader contextual factors, such as school governing bodies and school management teams, to which the individual is not directly exposed. The meso-system is characterised by the individual's family and schooling environment, which directly influence their behaviour and beliefs. At the micro-system sits the individual child who is subjected to all the above influences from the larger systems. The child's education and religious affiliation is constantly being influenced by the larger systems. Through

determining the manner in which change at the macro-level filters down to the micro level, a large-scale political ideology, such as secularism, can be thoroughly explored.

i) The Structure of the School

Since the demise of the apartheid era, the school system has been somewhat restructured to resemble a more democratic education system in line with the underlying principles of democracy. One of these changes includes the formation of a school governing body (SGB) which operates at each public school. The SASA stipulates that all public schools in South Africa must have democratically elected school governing bodies, comprised of the principal (in his or her official capacity), representatives of educators, non-teaching staff, parents and learners. These governing bodies are responsible for determining the policy and rules by which the school is to be organized and controlled (Ngidi, 2004). School management teams (SMT) were also created. These teams are comprised of senior educators and hold responsibility for the day to day running of the school as well as ensuring the efficient implementation of policies (Kwazulu Natal Department of Education, 2010). Through granting schools this sense of autonomy, it is envisaged that they will operate more effectively. However, power in the form of policies and legislation, governing the overarching operation of the school, is still directed from the political arena. The Minister of Education is responsible for setting uniform standards and norms through the enactment of legislation which is applicable in all public schools (Sayed, 2002). Legislation is thus a tool utilized by the government to constrain the autonomy of individual schools. This is evident through the 2003 Policy on Religion and Education, which prohibits schools from openly endorsing religious indoctrination in their day to day practices and activities.

It is clear that despite naïve beliefs, religion does have an impact on the scholastic environment through the flow of government mandates restricting and specifying the terms and conditions of religion or religious education. This research will therefore provide a window into the operations between the state, religion and the school, as embodied by the flow of mandates governing religion education from the political arena to the school environment. Through the restructuring of the scholastic environment, the government has attempted to move away from the traditional

autocratic, rule bound approach to more accountable, equitable and democratic form of leadership (Kwazulu Natal Department of Education, 2010). Various stakeholders in the educational arena have experienced the transition to secularism through the policies governing school management and practices. Members of government, educational departments, principals, SMT's, SGB's, educators and learners have all been directly and indirectly involved in this process and have experienced this transition in different forms. In order to fully comprehend the ecosystemic nature of this transition, and the various impacts it has had on the scholastic landscape, it is imperative to ascertain individuals' perceptions of this change. Furthermore, it is imperative that this complex relationship between the state, the school and religion is understood, as it is essential for understanding the role of religion in schools, as an underlying driver of an ethos system enforced by the overarching political ideology of the time.

ii) The Value of the Principal

The SASA defines a principal as an educator who has been appointed, or is acting as the head of a school (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). This Act stipulates that the principal of a public school is responsible for the professional management of the school, under the authority of the Head of Department (the head of an Education Department). Professional management refers to the day to day administration and organization of teaching and learning at the school and the performance of certain departmental responsibilities which are prescribed by the law (Ngidi, 2004). Since the curtain was drawn on the apartheid regime, the role of the principal has been broadened. During apartheid, the principal was merely an administrator who was responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the school, while the Department of Education undertook managerial decisions (Kwazulu Natal Department of Education, 2010). With the transition to democracy, the role of the principal has broadened significantly. In line with the values underpinning the constitution, principals are now responsible for implementing leadership which promotes participation from all stakeholders of the school, in order to promote democracy (Department of Educaiton, 2007). This includes assisting governors in executing their functions, as a part of their new leadership role which aims to foster the transformation of schooling in the country. Principals are accountable to a number of stakeholders. These include, the Department of Education, the school governing body, the educators, the parents and learners (Ngidi, 2004).

Given this degree of accountability, principals' roles often transcend the boundaries of the SASA, as they are expected to function as educational visionaries, curriculum leaders, assessment specialists, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, special programs managers, and professional supervisors of policy mandates and initiatives (Mafisa, 2008; Belmonte & Cranston, 2007).

According to Heck (2003), for educational reforms to be efficiently implemented at the scholastic level, principals must be capable of providing strong leadership and must also fully comprehend how the larger, macro-environment shapes their organisation and individual interactions, as well as the relationship between those interactions and the resulting school outcomes. Consequently, principal leadership is assumed to be dependent on and guided by the principal's own beliefs and value preferences and on organisational and political variables associated with the school and community context. This implies that a principal is permitted (possibly even mandated) to make use of their own value systems, in running the processes of the school. Given this clause, it is interesting to explore the potential contradiction of this mandate. For example, how is a Christian principal expected to run a secular school, given this requirement? Through embracing their own religious belief systems in the management of a school, principals will be in contravention of the national policy on religion and education. However, through negating their personal value systems, the quality of the principal's leadership will be significantly compromised, according to the above argument. How a principal negotiates these two contradictory requirements is therefore of interest in the current research endeavour.

It can be asserted from the above that contextual factors may sometimes play a significant role in shaping the principal's exercise of instructional leadership (Heck, 1993). In the South African context, there has been a shift in the political ideology of the state from Christian nationalism to secularism. Given the influence of this ideological shift on a principal's capacity for leadership, it is imperative to investigate how principals perceive this change and the impact it has had on the scholastic environment. The following figure depicts the current structure of educational governance in South Africa, and the flow of mandates from the political arena to the grassroots level. Principals are located at the core of this system, working with both school management

teams (SMT) and school governing bodies (SGB), to ensure that what is theorized at the macro-level, in the form of policies and Acts, is practically realized at the micro-level, in the form of performance and outcomes.

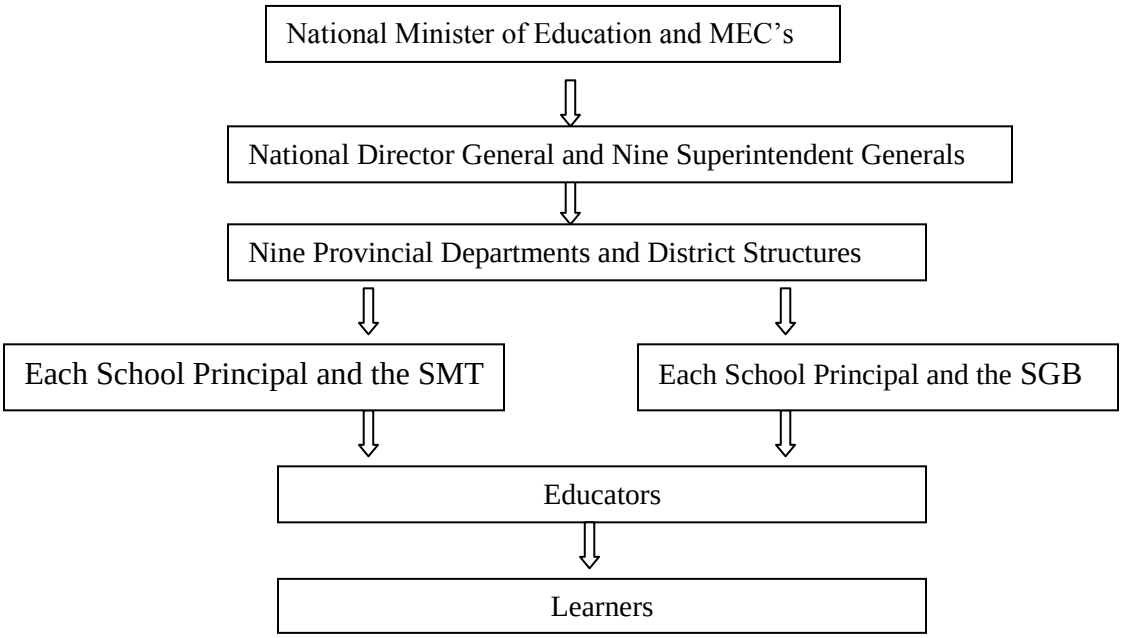

Figure 1: Diagram depicting the current flow of power in the educational sphere of government (Adapted from Kwazulu Natal Department of Education, 2010, 11).

From the above diagram, principals can be conceptualised as key informants who are systematically located between the political arena and the individuals who are affected at the grassroots level. They can therefore be viewed as agents who are able to provide a commentary on the shifts in political ideologies. Given the managerial role a principal holds, it can be argued that they are in an advantageous position, as they witness the changes in the political macro-system and how these changes filter down into the environment of the schools, or the micro-system. Principals can therefore provide a valuable lens through which the secularisation of public schooling in post-apartheid South Africa can be examined. More specifically, through qualitatively exploring the individual experiences of principals, insight into the drivers, processes and probable consequences of public school secularisation, can be ascertained.

The above discussion has provided an overview of the existing literature pertaining to education, religion and secularisation in South Africa. A brief historical account of schooling in apartheid South Africa was provided, followed by a discussion pertaining to the trends and changes, which occurred as a result the country's transition into democracy. This led into an analysis of the current situation of education in South Africa, which encompassed an evaluation of the rise of secularism, the current legislation governing South African schools and the prevalence of religious intolerance in South Africa. Functionalist and critical accounts of schooling were the next point of discussion, in which these two opposing theories of education were critically examined in the context of schooling in South Africa. Finally the eco-systemic nature of the school in South Africa was explored, through looking at the manner in which it was structured and the role the principal played in this system. This composite review indicates that the history, politics and systems underpinning the schooling system in South Africa are complex. Furthermore, the review demonstrates that a qualitative study focused on principal's perceptions of these processes will indeed contribute to current understanding of the politics of public schooling in the country.

Chapter 3: Methods Section

1. Paradigms and Design Section

Qualitative research aims to understand and represent the experiences of people as they encounter, engage and live through various situations (Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999). In qualitative research, emphasis is placed on the personal perspectives and perceptions of participants, when developing an understanding of the phenomena under study. The phenomena under study in the research were the underlying tensions, processes and consequences characterising the transition into public school secularisation in post-apartheid South Africa. Through exploring the manner in which principals perceived the above features, insight was gained into principals' personal experiences of this secularisation, in the educational arena.

It therefore follows that the core paradigm guiding this research was the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm focuses on comprehending and accounting for meaning in the experiences of individuals within a variety of social contexts (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002). In the framework of the research, the perceptions and experiences of principals were explored and interpreted in the context of public school secularisation in post-apartheid South Africa. The research therefore embraced an idiosyncratic approach, concerned with how individuals understand and perceive structures in the world. The research was guided by the theoretical frameworks highlighted in the literature review. These included functionalist and critical accounts of schooling, apartheid style education (CNE), the current secular nature of schools, religious intolerance in schools and the ecosystemic structure of the school.

2. Research Questions

The research questions for the study were as follows:

- What do principals perceive as the key tensions underlying the movement into public school secularisation in South Africa?

- How do principals reflect on the processes which have shaped the transition into public school secularisation in South Africa?
- What do principals perceive to be the key consequences resulting from the transition into public school secularisation in South Africa?

3. Participants

The sampling strategy, which was utilized in the proposed research, was that of judgement, purposeful or purposive sampling. Purposeful sampling is the most common sampling technique in research (Marshall, 1996). It is defined as a sampling strategy in which a large group of individuals are selected on the basis of a set of required characteristics, specified by the researcher (Huck, 2004). From this larger group, a smaller group is then chosen as representatives of the population, provided they meet the specified criteria. In the current research the larger group of individuals was comprised of principals of South African public schools who have witnessed the transition into secularism, within the scholastic realm. The smaller group, which was representative of this population, were Primary school principals from eight different public schools in the Gauteng region, who have been in this position of leadership for at least eight years. This restriction was set in place to ensure that the principals had been exposed to the changes in the laws governing religion in schools, as specified by the 2003 Policy on Religion and Education. The focus on Primary school principals is justifiable for the following reasons. Religion studies forms a compulsory component of their syllabus and is taught under the subject of Life Orientation. Life Orientation is also a component of the Secondary school syllabus; however, it is generally accepted that the foundations set for the children in the Primary school years are vital in the development of children's learning patterns and cognitive structures (Alexander, Entwisle, Blyth & Pipes, 1988). In addition, persuasive findings affirm that achievement and attitude patterns are formed in the early years of education, and to a large degree inform the child's later development in these areas (Hansen, 1985). Furthermore, in South African Secondary schools, Religious Studies is offered as an optional, specialized examinable subject and is separate from the Life Orientation component of the syllabus. However, not all learners chose to take this subject and therefore it is not a standard component of the syllabus throughout Secondary schools. Due to the fact that Religion

Education is standardized in Primary schools, under the umbrella of Life Orientation, it can be assumed that all students receive equivalent training in the subject, as specified by the Revised National Curriculum Statement.

The sample was thus comprised of eight principals who participated in semi-structured interviews. This sample was deemed adequate given that qualitative research seeks depth rather than breadth in order to acquire in-depth and intimate information about a specific group of persons (Ambert, Adler, Adler & Detzner, 1995). The key characteristics recorded by this research were, age, sex, religion and time spent in the position of principal. According to the theory of Intersectionality, an individual's perception of phenomenon is inevitably influenced by mutually reinforcing demographic variables, which comprise an individual's social identity (Nash, 2008). It is therefore imperative to note the demographics of the participants, in order to gain an enhanced understanding of how this influenced their perceptions of secularisation. Noting the age of the participants was important, as an individual's age is indicative of their level of exposure to the ideologies of apartheid, including its Christian National Education system. Individuals over the age of thirty witnessed, first hand, the atrocities of this era, whereas the younger generation were only able to relate to the apartheid system indirectly, through literature and word of mouth. All the participants were over the age of thirty and were thus familiar with the education system, pre and post-apartheid. Gender was also a valuable demographic, given the gendered nature of South African citizenry (Mncube, 2007). Conceptualisations of apartheid and schooling and organisational management are often gendered and can therefore be perceived as a social construct, which inevitably impacts on the manner in which individuals perceive and view political changes. It was also imperative to note the participant's religious orientation, given the nature of the study. Secularisation symbolises a movement away from religion, and therefore the religious nature of the individual would, undoubtedly, influence their perceptions of this transition. The following table depicts the key characteristics of the participants in the study:

Participant Pseudonym[5]	Age (years)	Sex	Religion	Time in position of principal
Fred	48	Male	Christian	9 years
Mike	42	Male	Christian	8 years
Chad	51	Male	Christian	12 years
Linda	40	Female	Christian	10 years
Kate	38	Female	Christian	8 years
James	51	Male	Atheist	13 years
Bill	55	Male	Christian	15 years
Rita	43	Female	Hindu	9 years

Figure 2: Table depicting the key demographics of the participants

It is clear from the above table that the religious orientation of the participants was predominantly Christian. This may have played a role in the manner in which they responded to the interview questions. The composition of the participants according to gender was fairly equal with five males and three females participating in the research. The amount of time each participant had spent in the position of principal differed slightly, however all of the participants had been in this position for over eight years and were therefore able to comment on the manner in which the scholastic environment had changed since the National Policy on Religion and Education came into effect in 2003.

[5] All the participants' names, the names of people and places they refer to and any other identifying information has been changed to protect their identities and the identities of those that they have mentioned.

It is imperative to note here that the focus of this research endeavour was on public schooling in South Africa. The SASA does allow for the development of independent (private) schools, including religious schools[6], which are independently funded (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). The current research however, limited its focus to public schools and therefore all independent schools were purposefully excluded from the sample.

4. Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to contacting the principals, the researcher obtained permission to conduct research from the Department of Education[7], as well as ethical clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee. Following this, principals of public schools in the Gauteng region were approached via telephonic communication. They were briefed on the nature of the research, and the amount of time they had been employed in a leadership capacity, was ascertained. Those who fulfilled the specified criteria of the research (i.e. they have been employed for at least eight years in the position of a principal), were emailed the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Forms[8].

Once the principals had read the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form, a date and time was arranged for the interview to take place. All the interviews took place during school hours and on the school premises. Prior to the interview the participants were requested to sign the Consent Form[9] (for recording), the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form, so that the interview could be recorded for accuracy purposes. The interview[10] took the form of semi-structured questions regarding the principals' perceptions of the underlying tensions, processes and consequences characterising the transition into public school secularisation in South Africa. The use of semi-structured interviews to elicit insight into the subjective experiences of individuals has been modelled effectively in a number of studies in the field of education and psychology and was thus deemed appropriate for the current research (McGough,

[6] Religious schools are institutions which follow one specific religion which they regard as supreme to all others.
[7] See Appendix 6.
[8] See Appendix 1 and 2.
[9] See Appendix 3.
[10] See Appendix 4.

2003). Following the interviews, the recordings were transcribed, read and reread, and a thematic content analysis was performed on the transcripts.

5. Data Analysis

"Content analysis is concerned with what the text talks about and with interpretation: meanings, intentions, consequences and context" (Sveinsdo'ttir, Lundman & Norberg, 2002, p. 416). The form of content analysis which was utilized in this research was thematic content analysis. This specific subdivision of content analysis is regularly used in qualitative research endeavours, as it is effective in "identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns or themes within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79).

Inductive thematic content analysis was employed in the proposed research, given that the identified themes emerged from the interviews themselves, as opposed to being exclusively informed by current research or theory in this area of interest. According to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), one of the key features of inductive thematic analysis is that the themes emerge directly from the participant's discussions and are not fitted to the research questions posed by the research. Although the research questions were formulated prior to the data collection process, the analysis was not theoretically driven, rather theoretical understandings of this phenomenon were utilised to gain an enhanced understanding of the experiences of the participants, subsequent to identifying the emerging themes.

The rationale for utilising thematic content analysis in the current research is that this research was concerned with locating themes which presented throughout the data set. Themes are valuable in that they highlight underlying issues which may present consistently in the data set, enhancing an understanding of the tensions, processes and consequences characterising the secularisation of South African schools. The premise of thematic content analysis is therefore to extract themes which present constantly, to ascertain a deeper understanding of the intrinsically interpretive topic at hand.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) technique of thematic content analysis was employed, breaking down the process into the following six phases. Initially, the interviews were transcribed, and reread a number of times in order for the researcher to familiarise herself with the data set. The researcher also made personal notes following each interview of key thoughts and initial ideas which arose during the interview. This further facilitated the process of familiarisation with the data. Following this, initial codes were generated, in which interesting features of the data were systematically coded throughout the whole data set, in an attempt to categorize the data into meaningful clusters. During this process, the researcher began by coding each individual interview separately. Once this was completed, the coded data was examined across the entire data set, to ascertain which codes were prevalent throughout all the interviews. This enabled the third phase of the analysis to occur, which involved assembling these codes into possible themes and exploring how these various codes may fit together within an overarching theme. "A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). During this phase the researcher constructed a thematic map of the data utilising all the coded data. Main themes and sub-themes were identified and the researcher attempted to ascertain how the themes may be related or linked. Phase four focused on reviewing the themes and sub-themes, ensuring that they generated an accurate thematic map of the analysis. This step was comprised of both reviewing, at the level of the coded data extracts as well as at the level of the entire data set, to ensure a holistic analysis of the data. The researcher took care in ensuring that the themes were established within each individual interview, as well as across the whole data set. In the following step the themes were further defined and named and the researcher ensured that the data captured under each theme represented the fundamental nature of each theme. Clear definitions were given and the names of the themes were carefully considered and appropriately revised. Phase six of the analysis involved producing the final report. Appropriate extracts were selected for final analysis and these were related back to the initial research questions and literature review (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

6. Researcher Reflexivity

Positivist research asserts that the researcher is an objective bystander, detached from the research, and merely responsible for observing objects or phenomena. However, the interpretive paradigm contests this notion, placing emphasis on the assumptions of the researcher and the effects of this on the research endeavour (Mir & Watson, 2000). In qualitative research, the researcher is intrinsically involved in the research process, through making and controlling meaning, through the extent to which they select features which will be subjected to analysis and more importantly, in deciding how the voice of the participants is represented. Researcher reflexivity therefore refers to the degree to which the researcher is aware that they actively participate in the construction of knowledge and meaning and that they hold an influence over the participants, affecting the overall data set (Willig, 2002). It is argued that so long as a researcher is transparent about their prior theoretical position and internal assumptions and views, the process of research will not be impeded (Mir & Watson, 2002). Constantly engaging in this process of transparency, ensures that the results of the research are informed by the data collected, and thus the participants perceptions rather than the researcher's own preconceptions regarding the research, are voiced (Fossey et al, 2002).

This study therefore adhered to a system of reflexivity, ensuring that the findings from the interviews were represented in a manner consistent with the responses elicited by the participants. Self-reflexivity was of vital importance in the current research, given the value laden, profound and complex nature of research pertaining to religion. According to Walent, (2008) the core values of the researcher often may play an influencing role in the interpretation and representation of the findings in a study. Thus, the researcher was constantly aware of her position as a White, middleclass Christian during the interviews and endeavoured to constantly test and challenge her internal assumptions, with the awareness that these too are simply social constructions and not complete truths. Through having a prior understanding of these influences, the researcher attempted to set aside her own personal biases and focus on the perceptions of the principals during the interviews. However, it is imperative to note that the researcher's own internal assumptions were inextricably linked to the questions which were posed to the participants, as well as the interpretations which were made, and therefore her position as a

White Christian was influential in the research process. Supervision was often utilised when the researcher did come into contact with interview content which strongly opposed her own belief system, so that her personal biases could be identified and acknowledged. Through practicing self-reflexivity throughout the research and data collection process, it was anticipated that the bias, created by the researchers own social experiences and context, acted as a resource rather than a hindrance.

7. Ethical Considerations

This study requested that eight principals participate in an interview of approximately one hour, to determine their perceptions of the underlying reasons, processes and consequences which characterised the transition into public school secularisation in post-apartheid South Africa. Although the research topic was not explicitly of a sensitive nature, ethical considerations were made to ensure that the participants did not experience any harmful effects resulting from their participation in the research. Prior to contacting the principals, permission was gained from the Department of Education to Conduct Research in a school. Ethics clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee was also granted prior to contacting the principals. When the principals of the various public schools were approached to participate in the study, they received a comprehensive participant information sheet[11] outlining the nature of the research. This letter clearly outlined what participation in the study would involve, what would be required from the participants, and how this data would be utilized to answer the research questions addressed by the research. Although anonymity could not be guaranteed due to the nature of the data collection, the confidentiality of the participants' narratives was emphasized. Due to the nature of data collection it was impossible to ensure anonymity as the researcher was privy to the identity of the participants. However, every attempt was made to ensure a maximum level of confidentiality, thus all identifying information was altered in the research report. Once they read the participant information sheet, participants were requested to read and sign the recording and interview consent forms[12]. These forms explained to the participants that their participation in the study was completely voluntary and that they reserved the right to withdraw from the study at anytime, for any reason, without being questioned or coerced to recommit to the research.

[11] See Appendix 1
[12] See Appendix 2 and 3

The researcher also provided the participants with the contact details of organisations, which are equipped to offer counselling and debriefing services, including Lifeline, The South African Anxiety and Depression Group (SADAG) and the Emthonjeni Centre. Lifeline and SADAG offer free telephonic counselling services, through which anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed. The Emthonjeni Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand provides affordable counselling services to surrounding community members, which are elicited by postgraduate psychology students under supervision. This was a preventative measure set in place in the unlikely instance that the principals experienced any distress as a result of the research process, ensuring that participation in the research was not of a harmful or disconcerting nature to the participants.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

The initial thematic content analysis was concerned with drawing out and exploring key themes elicited by the data set, which corresponded with the research questions posed by the study. The research was therefore initially concerned with extracting elements of the data set pertaining to the central tensions, processes and consequences inherent in the transition towards secularisation in the scholastic environment. Through the duration of the analysis however, it became evident that these units were not as discrete as initially conceptualised. The terrain of the transcripts was contested at multiple levels, with no clear cut boundaries between the tensions, processes and consequences of the secularisation of education in South Africa. It became apparent that the domains of processes and consequences manifested contradictory concepts and elements, which were infused with multiple tensions. The nature of the thematic content analysis was therefore to tease out these clusters of tensions, producing themes which illuminated the key tensions visible in the processes and consequences of this transition. The key tensions of this process were therefore not a theme in itself but rather spanned the entire data set. The thematic content analysis therefore provided an evidence based reflection of the state of complete tension, contradiction and contestation, mediated by the state, which shaped the transition towards secularised education in public schools in post-apartheid South Africa. The following thematic map provides an overview of the key themes and subthemes which were extracted from the content analysis:

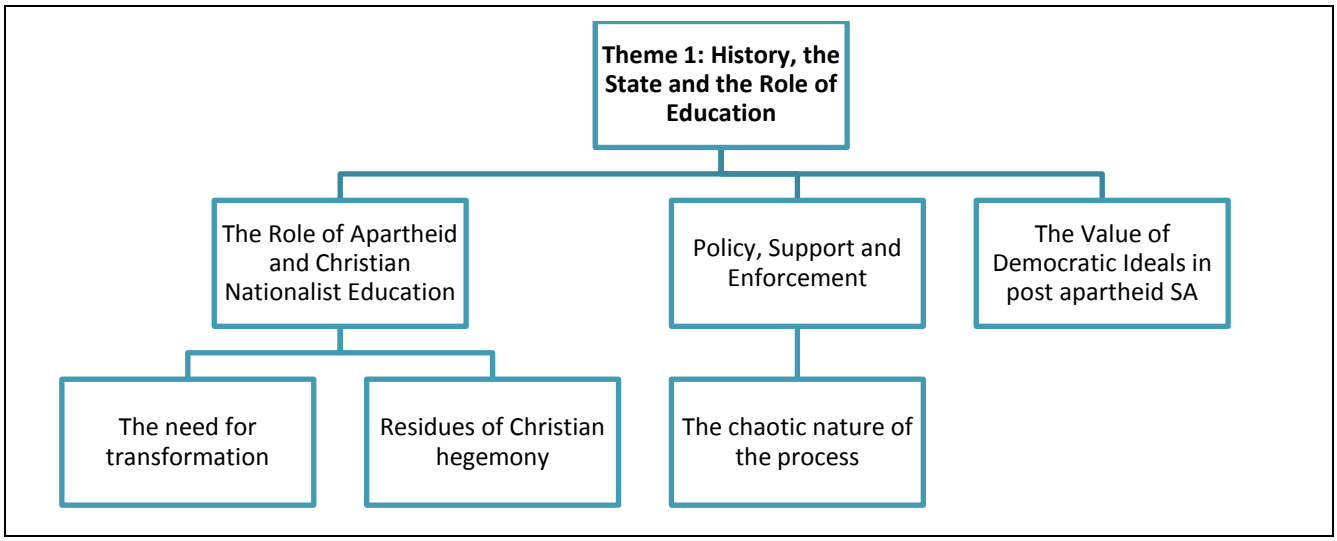

Figure 3: Thematic map depicting theme 1 - History, the state and the role of education: From historical relations to current manifestations.

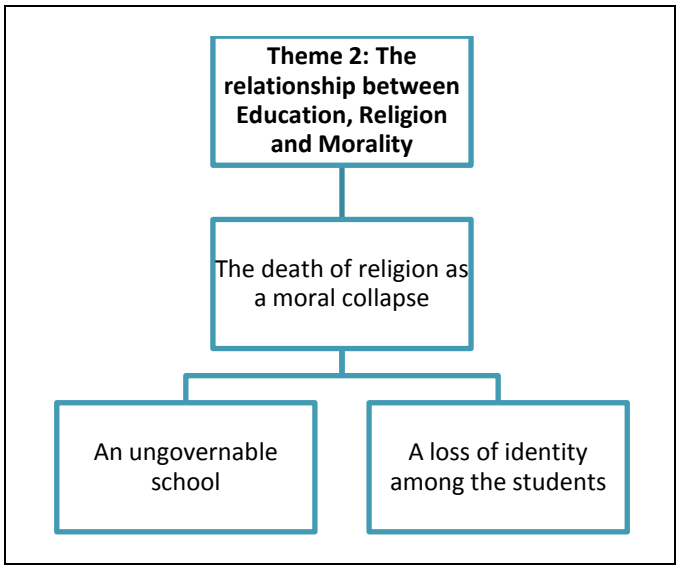

Figure 4: Thematic map portraying theme 2 – The relationship between education, religion and morality

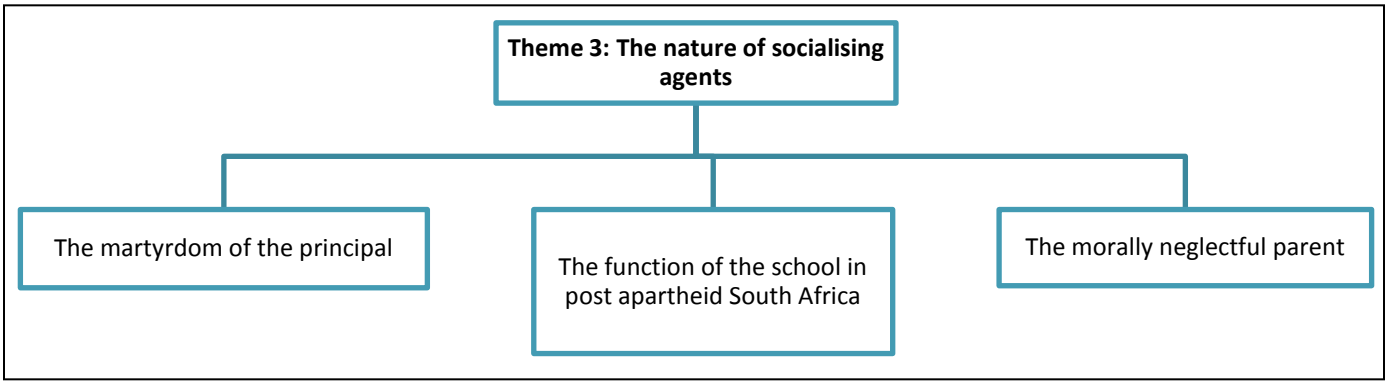

Figure 5: Thematic map depicting theme 3 – The nature of socialising agents

The first theme is "religion, the state and education: historical relations to current manifestations". This theme critically reflects the relationship between these three institutions, exploring the key tensions which arose between them during the transition into secularism. Given the focus of the current research on exploring the relationship between these institutions and the manner in which policy is realised at the grassroots level, this theme was particularly beneficial in eliciting answers relating to the processes and tensions inherent in the transition to secularisation of South African public schools. The first subtheme focuses on the role apartheid and Christian National Education played during this period, including an analysis pertaining to

the contradictory relationship between the vital need for transformation in South Africa to break from the overtly Christian nationalist agenda of the apartheid past and the residues of Christian hegemony which are still prevalent today. The second subtheme relates to the chaotic processes inherent in the transition towards secularism, as perceived by the principals of the schools. The final subtheme describes the participants' evaluation of the value of secularism in fostering democratic ideals in South Africa.

The second core theme described "the relationship between education, religion and morality". This theme conceptualised the death of religion as a moral collapse and explored the key consequences of this process, eliciting two subthemes, namely the move towards an ungovernable school system and a loss of identity among the students. This has particular relevance when evaluating the consequences of secularisation in South African public schools. The final central theme examined the role of key socialising agents within the scholastic environment. The subthemes elicited within this analysis are the role of the principal as a martyr, the nature of the school in post-apartheid South Africa and finally parents as morally neglectful individuals. The above themes will now be further explored in order to extract key information pertaining to the research questions initially posed and to illustrate the promises and pitfalls of secularisation, as perceived by the principals.

1. Religion, the State and Education: Historical Relations to Current Manifestations

Historically the relationship between the state and education has been intrinsically linked (Smith, 2007). As mentioned previously, education services and provision in South Africa has been strongly influenced by the apartheid system. During apartheid, religion was central to education. The government had a very clear agenda for society which was made explicit in the manner of management and administration that was utilised, obtrusively intervening and influencing education in South African schools (Sayed, 2002). Schools were not self-governing environments where religion could be openly practiced but were rather institutions demarcated for the very specific purpose of Christian indoctrination. Apartheid education became notorious

for entrenching ethnic difference, promoting authoritarian rote learning and teaching citizens of colour to be submissive in society (Weber, 2002). This is in line with the conceptualisation that historically, education was not a neutral act but rather a political one (Msila, 2007).

> "You know the thing is, I think if you look back Christian education was in every document, policy etc etc and sometimes people said the focus point wasn't education but the religious aspect, ok, and every document had some reference to religion."- Linda

South Africa's transition into democracy and secular education was fuelled by an attempt to move away from the agenda of the apartheid past, as exemplified in Christian National Education, and the racial distortions and inequalities it fostered. Given the significant role South Africa's history of apartheid has played in shaping its current situation, it is not surprising that many participants reflected on this time period and the inequalities and atrocities that characterised its supremacy in South Africa.

> "remember coming from the old regime, there was a complete lack of tolerance, complete segregation whatnot, basically everybody to himself, you know everybody came from this historic perspective, some of them might have been skewed, everybody had his wounds and his aches and his pains and so forth."- Bill

Bill's quote emphasises the wounds that individuals still bear as a result of the occurrences of the apartheid system. The pain inflicted on the marginalised sector of the population remains fresh in the minds of many, and it is possibly as a result of this that the initial drive for transformation was so strongly supported. Participants perceived that the form of education provided by the apartheid government was wrought with inequalities and discrimination and acknowledged the need for a more equitable education system.

> "I'm all for that and that's part of the education we should have had many years ago that each human being, doesn't matter what creed, belief group or colour they are, should have the same rights, should have the same opportunities. I can't help, be blamed for the silly decisions my grandfather and great grandfather made"- Fred

Despite wide recognition that the state's role in education policy and provision was highly detrimental during the apartheid era, the government continues to play a vital role in determining the extent to which religion can be practiced in schools. The national policy on religion and education, which came into effect in 2003, overtly declares that religion may no longer be practiced in any public schools. Furthermore this policy specifies that reading from any religious holy text and performing religious procedures during class hours is illegal and teaching the supremacy of a specific religion is illegal (Claassen, 2009). Participants also drew a parallel between the manner in which society unconsciously associated the evils of apartheid with Christianity. This may be due to the role that Christian National Education played in supporting and sustaining the apartheid government's political agenda. It is imperative to note that the ideology of Christianity in itself did not, in any manner, support or foster the racialised and discriminatory policies of the apartheid system. Rather Christianity was utilised as a tool, by the apartheid government, in the education policy, to enforce the inequalities of the apartheid period (Msila, 2007). Christian National Education had very specific aims during this era. Article 15 of the Christian National Education Policy of 1948 states the following:

> "We believe that the calling and task of White South Africa with regard to the native is to Christianise him and help him on culturally, and that this calling and task has already found its nearer focusing in the principles of trusteeship, no equality and segregation. We believe besides that any system of teaching and education of natives must be based on the same principle. In accordance with these principles we believe that the teaching and education of the native must be grounded in the life and worldview of the Whites most especially those of the Boer nation as senior White trustee of the natives"

From the above it is clear that the objective of education, as established by the apartheid government, was the politicisation of education, in which the abuse of religion played a vital role (Msila, 2007). Christianity as a religious practice is not a conservative ideology in itself; however, through its incorporation into Christian National Education policies, it may have become unconsciously linked to the apartheid system. Despite the clear separation between Christian National Education and Christianity, participants continually perceived that many individuals still associate apartheid and Christianity, as exemplified in the following quote.

> "Um, I think because, during the Apartheid era, Christianity was forced within the schools, so because of that, they tried to reinvent the wheel and redo everything, like even the way we've had to do prep and everything. Everything has to be given new terminology and a new focus in every way. So they've moved away from that and they've said "right, we're not going to have Religion" because they've associated Christianity with apartheid"- Kate

Kate's perception of the inherent link between apartheid and Christianity is in line with the above argument. According to Kate, this connection which individuals have made between religion and apartheid has been detrimental, as it has fostered a situation in which an ideology which was not supportive of the apartheid policies (Christianity), has been linked to the atrocities of the time and thus dismissed, in an attempt to move as far away from the practices of this period as possible.

When exploring principals' perceptions of this transition into secular education, it is clear that there are two key themes which were elicited. The first is that the transition occurred in order to move away from the racial segregation of the apartheid era, and the second is that there was a very strong perceived link between apartheid and Christianity. It is therefore clear that there has been a drastic movement away from apartheid style education, however one cannot negate the effect the apartheid past had in shaping the current education situation in South Africa.

A) The Role of Apartheid and Christian National Education

As discussed above, the role of apartheid and Christian National Education were instrumental in shaping the current secular nature of South African public schools. The scholastic syllabus can be conceptualised as a political phenomenon, embodying the values and interests which sustain and replicate its hegemonic control (Jansen, 1990). This is particularly true for South Africa, when one examines the changes in the educational arena in relation to changes in the political climate of the country. During the country's transition into democracy, an attempt was made by the government, to divest South Africa of all the remnants of the apartheid period. This included Christian National Education, inherent in the old order. Through creating a secular education system, in which traditional religious instruction was forbidden, government aimed to dissociate

themselves from the practices of the apartheid system. This once again highlights how the political agenda of the government can be seen, when the intricacies of the countries educational policy and provision are examined. As emphasised through Chad's quote, the apartheid regime only made an allowance for the practice of one religion- Christianity- and all others were dismissed:

> "You know, as we had prior 1994, we had Christian National Education, and that's what you did – you had Religious Instruction and whether you were Jewish or whatever, it was Christian based, um, I think there's a danger there."- Chad

Although there were particular schools which did accommodate differing belief systems during apartheid, the majority of schools were founded on Christian principles and adhered to a system of Christian indoctrination, as exemplified by Christian National Education. As evident from the above discussion, all of the principals concurred with this belief that Christian National Education had been instrumental in facilitating the atrocities that occurred during the apartheid era. According to Johnson (1982), Christian National Education was specifically shaped in accordance with the requirements of the apartheid system, in that its content reflected, supported and legitimised the ethnically based stratification system. In addition, Christian National Education embraced a very specific syllabus which included instruction on apartheid and separate development, fostering the government's agenda for society. Robertson and Whitten (1978, p. 109) wrote during this period that "In no textbook is there any indication whatever that there are any alternatives to, or even reasoned criticisms of, 'separate development'; it is presented as an ineradicable, noncontroversial aspect of the social order". It is therefore clear that this specific form of education did play a vital role in entrenching the values inherent in the apartheid system.

Given the above, all the participants concurred that there was a vital need for transformation to occur in order to break from the overtly segregationist nature of the apartheid past. However, there is an inherent contradiction in the manner in which the acknowledgement of this need for transformation is practically realised in the school environment. Despite the recognition by principals of the need to move away from the strong Christian influence of the apartheid period,

the majority of principals are continuing to embrace religious principals in the administration of their schools. The following two sub-themes will highlight and further explore these inconsistencies between principals' perceptions of the need for transformation and the continued Christian hegemony, which appears to be characterising many public schools in South Africa.

i) Transformation as a Necessity

With the end of the apartheid era, the aim of government was "a totally new and just dispensation in which every inhabitant of the country would enjoy equal rights, treatment and opportunity in every sphere of endeavour - constitutional, social and economic" (Kitshoff, 1998, 313). These honourable aims marked the transition into a secular, democratic society which was clearly a necessary requirement for the country, in order to move away from the remnants left by the apartheid period. All the principals perceived this transition as a necessary one, which would facilitate transformation in the country.

> "ok the education system changed, they wanted it to change, political issues and so on so anything that was before, had to change, including religion or religious studies. So there's definitely a political agenda with it."- Linda

> "Look, I think the whole reason was because they moved away from the whole Christian Nationalist based education, obviously they brought in a new educational system, OBE and um just basically they wanted a change, but I think this is just why they did it."- James

Some participants even highlighted the personal difficulties they experienced in adapting to a transformation of such a dramatic nature:

> "When I started teaching here in the year 2000, it was strange for me to see a White child taking crisps from a Black child and drinking from the same cool drink can, um, but those things have changed, ok, and with that I think Religion and the practise thereof have gone through the same changes, and it was needed"- Fred

In the above quote, Fred appears to be constructing a connection between de-racialisation and secularisation in South Africa. This could potentially be as a result of the perceived relationship

between apartheid and Christianity, as discussed above. It therefore appears that participants are associating the termination of the apartheid period, with the end of religion in South Africa, given the historical relationship between Christian National Education and the apartheid state. Although this perception may not accurately reflect the state of affairs in South Africa, when viewed holistically, it does depict the situation in the educational arena. It is interesting to note that although Christian National Education did not exemplify or define the practice of Christianity during this period, many principals have constructed a relationship between Christianity and racial segregation, through unashamedly perceiving a link between secularisation and racial integration. On further reflection, Fred's quote may also inadvertently be equating Christianity to Whiteness, given the manner in which Christianity, (in the form of Christian National Education) was ironically (given the religious distributions by 'race' described in the literature review) utilised as a type of proxy for Whiteness during the apartheid era. Rita appears to inadvertently make the same link between racial and religious groups, further highlighting the perception that race and religion is related, as evident in the following quote.

> "You would find all race groups with the exception of Muslims"- Rita

Both Fred and Rita's statements which equated religion with race can be understood utilising intersectionality theory. During the state's transition into democracy, issues of race became somewhat obsolete, in an attempt to move away from the racialised nature of the apartheid system. However, an individual's perception of phenomenon is inevitably influenced by mutually reinforcing vectors, such as race and religion, which comprise an individual's social identity (Nash, 2008). These apparent slips between race and religion are indicative of the fact that these two concepts do not occur in isolation to one another, but are rather mutually influenced by the others presence. Thus, it may appear as if some of the participants are 'race-blind', as race is no longer the dominant variable it once was during apartheid. Rather the focus has shifted towards secularisation and thus religion, however Whiteness was construed by many of the participants as a marker of Christianity (as discussed above), illustrating the role race continues to play in individual's constructions of phenomenon.

Despite the difficulties many of the principals faced in adjusting to this transformation there was a synonymous agreement that this change was of vital importance and urgent, in an attempt to rebuild South Africa as a democratic society. It is interesting to note that during the interviews, the principal's approached this topic in a very politically correct manner. Given that the majority of the participants were White (one was Indian[13]), they may have felt as if their responses had to be racially sensitive and reflect the universal belief that a transition into secularism was very necessary. However, as the interviews progressed and the participants began to trust the interviewer, their answers appeared to have a more honest feel, as their true feelings relating to secularisation became clear.

> "So even though I initially said I was for it [secularism], I only thought as far as it being politically correct..... As far as it being morally correct, I don't think it's, right."-Mike

This is important to note when moving to the following sub-theme, which explores the continual use of Christian practices in the school. The principals' desire to appear politically correct may have influenced the contradictory and contested nature of the interviews, as this expressed surface sentiment, does not reflect the manner in which they govern their schools.

ii) Residues of Christian hegemony

The above discussion highlights the recognised need for transformation following the apartheid era. However, despite this recognition there is a large inconsistency in the manner in which the principal's desire for change was realised at a practical level. There appeared to be a contradictory element to the interviews conducted with the principals, as despite their recognition of transformation as a necessity, all the principals aside from one (James), continued to embrace Christian principles in the education of their learners. One rationalisation for this could be the participants' attempt to separate out Christianity from Christian National Education. However, as discussed above, this separation is difficult to ascertain when the historical role of

[13] The race categories of White, Black and Indian are utilized in this research for descriptive purposes only. The researcher in no way subscribes to the ideology of apartheid which embraced these race descriptors for purposes of segregation.

Christian National Education is explored. Despite the differing ideologies inherent in Christianity and Christian National Education, their intersecting relationship during the apartheid era, has influenced the preconception that they both fostered the development of a segregated society. This could further account for the manner in which principal's perceived Christianity as fostering a "White" society. Despite this, many principals are attempting to reconstruct Christianity within a new democratic South Africa, in an attempt to move away from its traditional role during apartheid, through continuing Christian practices in schools, despite their earlier views of transformation as a necessity.

> "I say I do run this school on Christian principles – I've made it public and I actually expected somebody to jump up and say "but you're not allowed to, this is against the law", and I've done this twice now and I, you see, I think because people have respect for me, I've got a very good relationship with most people"- Fred

> "But we still have assemblies like we used to have, Christian assemblies."- Linda

The national policy on religion and education is based on four broad principles: (1) a public school must be secular and may not pursue or force down any religious ethos on its learners, (2) it may not practice the religious apartheid of South Africa's past but should rather embrace an integration of the community at large, (3) reading from any religious holy text and performing religious procedures during class hours is illegal and (4) teaching the supremacy of a specific religion is illegal and a majority adherence to one religion may not lead to the exclusion of other religions or a secular worldview (Claassen, 2009). Despite these very clear rules, it became clear from the interviews with the principals that this policy does not hold much ground on a practical level. In terms of restriction (1), Rita, Linda and Kate continue to embrace a Christian ethos within their schools. When exploring criterion (3) it is clear that all the participants, (excluding James) still engage in Christian prayer, run Christian assemblies or read from the Bible during school hours. Criterion (4) is contravened again by Linda, Rita and Kate, as all three participants teach the supremacy of Christianity.

> "I think I am one of the very few schools where our assemblies, I still start off with the Lord's Prayer, we sing hymns and I'm practicing Christian beliefs" - Rita

> "So I don't think they feel threatened at all, we don't like force Christianity onto them, um, but by the same token, we don't compromise where we come from."- Kate

These statements from the principals illustrate the strong Christian element which is still prevalent in many schools. It appears as though principals believe that religion is a fundamental element of education and should thus be kept in the schools. This clearly echoes the apartheid mentality, in which religion was seen as implicit in education. It is therefore clear that despite new policy and forms of governance, the impact of this political system on South African education has been significant.

> "Um, but to say completely that Christian Nationalism Education has died is a lie"- Bill

According to Statistics South Africa (2001), approximately one third of the population (36.5%), followed the teachings of mainline Christian churches. This may also be facilitating the continued practice of Christianity in schools.

> "And I'll tell you why I'm saying Christian beliefs, because I think in South Africa it's something that's practiced largely. You would find all race groups, with the exception of Muslim, you would find an Indian being of Christian belief, Coloureds are of Christian beliefs, African children are of Christian beliefs, so because of all the different races, you have each one practicing Christianity, I believe that would be the common ground."- Rita

A different rationalisation for principals continuing to embrace Christian principals in their schools arose from the interview process. The content of the interviews suggests that there is a perceived threat that the Islamic religion poses to historical Christian hegemony. It is often argued that certain conservative and fundamentalist religious groups are associated with social intolerance and an eagerness to make sweeping moral judgements (Beck & Miller, 2000). Hackett (2003, p. 69) supports this notion, arguing that the marked increase in "religious revivalism and militancy...", has been instrumental in facilitating religious intolerance, leading to a greater sense of exclusivism and moralism among group members. Many of the participants

commented on this phenomenon, emphasising the religious nature of the Islamic belief and their unwillingness to compromise on matters pertaining to their religion.

> "Whereas Islam or that Religion, it's a way of life, it's not just a Religion, it's definitely a way of life and they've got away with keeping it"- Mike

> "And they are a very volatile group when it comes to picking on their um, what you call it? Their, their religion, but as I said earlier on, it did seem that most of the compromise came from our side and not from, as far as that goes, from their side. They will never, ever give up that Friday, the right to go to Mosque on a Friday."-Chad

> "Um, but the Muslim group do stand by their Religion far more than what the Christian folks do"- Mike

Principals appeared to be frustrated at the lack of tolerance and compromise demonstrated by the Islamic parents and children. Statistics South Africa (2001), estimates the current Islamic population in South Africa at 1.5% of the entire population. Despite the small composition of this particular religious group, it appears as if the influence it has in the scholastic environment is perceived as significant. Uniforms have had to be adapted to facilitate their beliefs, children leave school early on Fridays in order to attend Mosque and tuck-shop menus had to change. It is argued that the increased awareness of constitutional and human rights, has amplified the expectations of religious freedom by various religious groups, resulting in an increase in religious intolerance (Hackett, 2003). It is possible that since the institution of the Constitution, and the subsequent changes in educational policy, minority religious groups have a stronger desire to practically realise this new found freedom of religion. The researcher felt as if there was almost a type of religious intolerance towards this particular religious group by the principals, which came about as a result of this. This is exemplified in the following quotes:

> "And the only things you do take notice of – oh all the Muslims have gone because the moon's full and now they're going to slaughter some animals. Now everybody knows about it because they tell you about it. Ok, so you're more aware of their things than ours"- Fred

> "two years ago I had the first request for Muslim children to go off at 12 o 'clock. That irritated me, from the point, from an education point of view, like I said in the last question. That, that, I said to those parents "there's a responsibility here that says education is compulsory, that's the time the school ends."- Chad

> "you know we let them [Muslims] go on a Friday, um, so we don't oppose that, the uniform has been adapted to suit them. It has seemed that a lot of the adaptation has come in to suit the other folks and not us you know - our Holy days all fall during the school holiday anyway, their's falls during the term, so somebody has to look after their class when they're not here. That causes a bit of tension as well"-Mike

There appears to be an undercurrent of intolerance in the above quotes. Islamophobia is a growing phenomenon, which refers to "bigotry, discrimination, policies and practices directed towards Islam and a racialised group of people that includes Muslims" (Love, 1999, p. 402.). It can be argued that the practice of Islam poses a significant threat to traditional Christian hegemony, and consequently the participants perceived this threat of the Muslim population in a negative light. Islamophobia is manifested in individual's negative attitudes and discriminatory practices towards the Islam population, and thus may account for the above statements by the participants.

The Bill of Rights blatantly prohibits individuals from unfairly discriminating against anyone based on their religion and states that an individual may not be denied the right to practice their religion and to form, join or maintain religious associations with other members of that community (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). Despite these stipulations, there was evidence among the interviews suggesting that religious discrimination is still prevalent in South Africa, specifically in the scholastic environment, and more specifically against individuals of the Islamic belief.

> "and of my staff I'd say 98% of them are Born Again Christians, and the others are Christians by default, they're not Muslim or whatever and I thank the Lord for that."- Kate

The above discussion emphasises the religious intolerance, which is evident in the principal's perceptions of the Islamic faith. This religious intolerance may be fuelling the principals desire

to continue implementing Christian beliefs within the school. On further reflection, this could also possibly be as a result of the perceived threat the Islamic religion poses to historical Christian hegemony. Through continuing with a Christian education, principals are attempting to diminish this perceived threat, by ensuring that their own religion remains instrumental in the school

The above discussion highlights the highly contested and contradictory nature of the interviews with the principals. As mentioned previously, in research of a qualitative nature, the researcher plays a vital role in the interview process, as often the core values of the researcher play an influencing role in the interpretation and representation of the findings in the study (Walent, 2008). Throughout this research endeavour, the researcher was constantly aware of her own Christian beliefs and the impact this may have on the participants. Through reflecting on the interview process, it became apparent that the participants may have been more open and honest with the researcher, given her Christian orientation. Although this information was never conveyed to the participants, it appeared as if many of them simply assumed that the researcher was Christian. This could again be related to the perceived link between Whiteness and Christianity (or at least non-Muslim), evident among many of the participants. This may have acted as a facilitative factor in allowing the participants to voice their true sentiments towards Muslim individuals. Had the researcher been of a Muslim religious orientation, the results of the research may have differed, again highlighting the role of the researcher as an active participant in qualitative studies.

B) Logistical Challenges: Policy, Implementation and Enforcement

One of the key aims of this research project was to explore principals' perceptions regarding the manner in which policy, formulated and instituted at the level of the government, is practically realised and managed at the grassroots level. It was anticipated that this would provide insight into the how activities which occur at the macro-level of the country, filter down to the micro-level and affect the individuals directly under its control. Through the interrogation of this process, the relationship between the state, religion and the school in post-apartheid South Africa

can be further understood. From the interviews with the participants it became clear that the government had acted in a dictatorial capacity, simply forcing the policy within schools without consultation with the key stakeholders in the educational environment- the principals.

> "Ok, we were basically forced, it was down talk."- Bill

> "This was a political decision, there was no research done with educators about it, this is exactly how this happened. We were told this is how it's going to be and this is how it is."- James

> "I think that, the problem that we have with our education system is that, and it doesn't only apply to this, um, is that, consultation with grass roots level doesn't often take place – they'll put out little feelers and they'll say "give us comments on this" - I might not get it but the school down the road might get it, um, and I think that processes like this, which are potentially volatile, should be dealt with a lot differently."- Chad

This is in line with the fact that power in the form of policies and legislation, governing the overarching operation of the school, is still directed from the political arena. The Minister of Education is responsible for setting uniform standards and norms through the enactment of legislation which is applicable in all public schools (Sayed, 2002). Principals are not seen by the government as important stakeholders who may be able to offer insight into the policy making process. Rather, it is clear from the above quotes that principals are simply seen as instruments that can be utilised in the implementation of the legislation. Some participants believed that government had a hidden agenda, and that the implementation of the policy on religion and education was an attempt by government to force down their own belief systems on the citizens of the country. However, overall there was a distinct recognition by the participants of the dictatorial nature of the state in the manner in which the policy was presented to the principals.

> "Claire: Ok, thank you, and then I just want to know if you perceive there to be any underlying tensions which influenced this transition into secularised education in South Africa?
>
> "Linda: In other words a hidden agenda within government? I do, I think when there is a movement away from... ok the education system changed, they wanted it to change, political

> issues and so on so anything that was before, had to change, including religion or religious studies. So there's definitely a political agenda with it."- Linda

A pertinent theme, which was recurrent throughout the interviews, was the dismissal of this policy on religion and education by the principals. This policy, which came into effect in 2003, established a new educational agenda for teaching religion, religions and religious diversity in South African public schools (Chidester, 2008). As mentioned above, it explicitly stated that the practice of religious indoctrination in schools is illegal, as well as teaching the supremacy of a particular religion. A dilemma which Jansen (2002), highlights is why, despite unprecedented investments in policy making and production, in the years following the demise of the apartheid era, does there appear to be minimal change in the daily routine of schools in the classroom setting? The answer to this question may raise concern among many individuals and it is that although the new policies are in place, principals are simply not implementing them:

> "For me to implement it at "this school", I mean basically if you look at it I'm not implementing it. If you really look at it, because I am going on with Christian beliefs. And if I haven't had a problem for ten years, I mean, well that says a lot."- Rita

> "and yet what was written in the policy was not really what happened on the ground."- Bill

> "Some people continued, I was one of those people who said ok I will write the policy and I know what the policy says but I am not willing to abide by it."- Bill

A further area of concern is the lack of awareness regarding the policy on religion and education. Although the principals in this study were all aware of the policy, they often made reference to the fact that many of their colleagues in surrounding areas were not aware of the legislation. In addition, they did not believe that the surrounding communities and parents were completely aware of the policy or its implications. This is in sharp contrast to the comments made earlier that minority groups are utilising the new legislation to their advantage. This again highlights the contested and contradictory nature of the interviews conducted.

> "To this day I don't really know that the legislation has come down that hard on us, that everybody even knows that it exists, to be honest."- Mike

> "Claire: And then do you believe that this whole process was conducted in a transparent manner?
>
> Kate: No, not at all. I don't think parents really realised, you know, when they'd say "we're going to do away with everything that was linked to apartheid, it's going to be equal rights" and things like that, I don't think they realised that their children wouldn't be given any form of religious teaching at all."

> "I know that this community probably doesn't even know that there's been a change in the policy."- Chad

According to the state, principal leadership is assumed to be dependent on and guided by the principal's own beliefs and value preferences and on organisational and political variables associated with the school and community context. Given that the majority of principals embraced Christian belief systems, it can be argued that this may have played a role in their obvious dismissal of the legislation. This appears to be a problem related to governmental policy, as the principals are expected to fulfil two contradictory mandates. Through embracing their own religious belief systems in the management of a school, principals will be in contravention of the national policy on religion and education. However, through negating their personal value systems, the quality of the principal's leadership will be significantly compromised, according to the above argument. It therefore appears that principals have continued to run their schools according to their own belief system, and thus the policy on religion and education has not been adhered to.

From the above it is clear that there was a distinct rejection of the policy by principals as well as ignorance among other community members and principals regarding the institution of this policy. This has resulted in a many schools continuing to embrace Christianity in the education of their learners, which is in direct contravention to the national policy on religion and education.

> "In fact, I know this is confidential but what I have done is I still follow the program, based on what the governing body allows me to do and so on. But we still have assemblies like we used to have, Christian assemblies."- Linda

> "Since then we still run the school on a Christian basis"- Kate

> "I say I do run this school on Christian principles – I've made it public and I actually expected somebody to jump up and say "but you're not allowed to, this is against the law", and I've done this twice now and I, you see, I think because people have respect for me, I've got a very good relationship with most people"- Fred

Evidently there is a gap between the formulation of written policies in the political sphere and their practice at the school level. The reasons behind this are unclear, however through the course of the thematic content analysis, it became clear that the principals perceived the process through which this legislation passed as characterised by a lack of consultation and transparency, with no clear guidelines provided to them and no follow-through from the government, which may have played a role in the degree to which it was implemented. The contradictory nature of the principals' mandate, as specified by the government, may also have influenced the degree of execution of the policy.

i) The Chaotic Nature of the Process

Successful implementation of legislation is dependent upon a holistic approach, which entails an integration of the political economy of the past, present and future direction of a country, the diversity of the 'cultural capital' inherent in its varied communities and the educational policies that are adopted to foster significant transformation (Singh, 2005). When the process of implementation is examined, pertaining to the policy on religion and education in South Africa, it is evident that it was entirely unsuccessful. The principals contested that there was no consultation between the key stakeholders in the process. Mafisa (2008) highlights the importance of consultation in the process of policy formation, to ensure that principals, through their leadership and management, act as agents of change, in order for schools to be at the forefront of change and development. Through neglecting to involve these leaders in this process

of change, the government created a situation in which principals felt a loss in their autonomy and capacity to contribute to the changes that were occurring at the macro-level of the country.

> "I think we were basically just told this is how it is going to be. Nobody ever asked us how we feel about it. It's like it was forced onto us, we didn't have a choice in the matter."- James

> "We were not consulted. That was the circular, that was in the South African Schools Act and that's the way it was."- Rita

In addition to the lack of consultation which characterised this process, the principals also felt as if no clear guidelines had been provided as a foundation for them to work from. Principals were therefore unclear of how to implement the policy and how to manage challenging situations which arose as a result of the policy.

> "But the actual policy came to us in a written form and that's it... get on with it. So it wasn't given to us in a workshop to say this is how you must manage it, this is how you must practically implement it."- Linda

> "I don't remember actually seeing the Act. We would have got it in circular form and I remember seeing the circular that said "this is how we deal"- Chad

> "Because they have a policy and they say ok take it out but they didn't think of the practical implication, that's why I said they never ever had a workshop to say ok we're taking religion out and this is how you have to handle it."- Linda

Through the restructuring of the scholastic environment, following the apartheid era, the government has attempted to move away from the traditional autocratic, rule bound approach to more accountable, equitable and democratic form of leadership (Kwazulu Natal Department of Education, 2010). However, this flawed process indicates that these aims have not yet been met. Many of the principals indicated that there was a lack of transparency from the side of the government during the implementation of the policy. This may have contributed to their perceptions that this policy was fuelled by a political agenda, of which they were unaware.

> "I don't know how transparent it was. All that was clear is that they wanted change to take place. That we all knew"- Fred

> "The principal is more part of the government side, the principal finds himself between the government and the school and yet on our side he represents a teacher. There was no transparency from the top, it was talk-down, and from the principal to the bottom it was talk-down so there was no, there was very little, we took the guidelines that were given to the Unions on our side"- Bill

Principals also reported that there was insufficient follow-through on the part of the government. Schools were not monitored by the government, to evaluate the practical implications of the policy. In addition the government was not in contact with the schools to ascertain how they had experienced the transition. Some of the participants did not appear phased by this lack of intervention by the government, as it allowed them to continue the management of their schools on religious principles, without interference from government. Overall however, schools were left to independently manage the implementation of the policy and the challenges that presented as a result of this.

> "That's actually never, well, specifically in my school, nobody's ever interfered from outside"- Fred

> "So ya, they have never come and said to me, show me how you run the assembly for example or what's happening in your school as far as that goes."- Linda

From the above it is clear that there was a state of perceived tension, contradiction and contestation, inherent in the transition towards secularised education in public schools in post-apartheid South Africa. When evaluating the role of the government in the implementation of the policy on religion and education, the process was characterised by a complete lack of transparency, no assistance, monitoring or follow through from the Department of Education, no consultation between key stakeholders and the policy was conceptualised by the principals as unpractical.

C) Democratic Ideals in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The Promises of Secularisation

Despite the challenging and chaotic nature characterising this transition towards secularism, principals identified many positive outcomes of the process. The underlying force which fuelled this process, was a desperate need for government to redress the Christian nationalist foundations of education which prevailed during the apartheid era, fostering principles of segregation and inequality. The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 took the first step in attempting to redress these inequalities. In the new democratic culture of South Africa, human rights were of paramount importance, given their historical invisibility. Through adopting a model of secular education, the state took cognisance of an individual's right to freedom of religion, as no one religion was regarded with supremacy (Dickson & van Vollenhoven, 2002).

The development of the Constitution of South Africa also facilitated this process, as it aimed to "Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights" (Republic of South Africa, 1996c, p. 1243). Despite the negative aspects of this transition into secularisation highlighted above, there were a number of positive changes it facilitated, indicating that if managed correctly, there are definite promises inherent in the secularisation of education in South Africa. All the participants emphasised the democratic ideals which this process of secularisation has promoted. The first was the enhanced knowledge regarding different religious groups among the students. The principals felt as if religion instruction, a component of Life Orientation, had allowed the students to expand their awareness of various religions differing from their own.

> "We brought awareness to it [different religions], because if my memory serves me correct, we got a lot of posters and information regarding the Religions. That will be up in classrooms, children will see it. The LO section of LO that deals with Religion would have been dealt with and ja."- Chad

> "for example it's the Ede for the Muslims, we will obviously push for a bit of that as well, we will teach the children what Ede is about, what Ramadan is about, um and then obviously if it's on the Jewish side again, we will do exactly the same, when it Rosh Hashanah or Pass

> Over or whatever the case may be we will then tell the children about this so that they get an insight into all the different religions, you know that there are in the world."- James

It also appeared that there was an increased awareness and curiosity among the principals regarding other religions which they had not had previously. It was therefore not only the students whose knowledge was developed but also the principals. It was also imperative for principals to take it upon themselves to learn about the different religions so that they were able to adapt the current rules and regulations of the school to facilitate the beliefs of others. Examples of this include: the dress code of different religions and the restrictions on food that are imposed by some religions.

> "In fact, what's interesting though is when they have their festivals and they come back, they always bring us nice eats and they tell us – I'm always curious, I don't want to just eat something, so I go why am I eating this?"- Fred

A further positive outcome of the secularisation of education, as perceived by the principals, was the sense of acceptance and respect of different religions among the students. Through fostering respect and acceptance of other religious groups, it is anticipated that religious intolerance will decrease thus diminishing the amount of religious conflict in the country.

> "Now it seems to have sort of faded into the background um, the, we accept each other, there's no problems. None of the arguments or fights that we ever have at the school are actually because of um Religion – never like that."- Mike

> "I think the aspect of this whole movement has been that we've come to respect other religions." – Linda

Section 185 of the Constitution of South Africa specifies the desire to "to promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance and national unity among cultural, religious and linguistic communities, on the basis of' equality, non-discrimination and free association" (Republic of South Africa, 1996c, p. 1331). It appears as if the secularisation has also had the consequence of promoting tolerance between different religious groups, an inherent aim of the Constitution.

> "um, and yeh, as we are tolerant of them, they are tolerant of us as well wanting to do that, so, ja, there's been no hiccups as far as that goes"- Mike

> "Um, we have, as I say, we have a number of children who are not Christian. We also emphasise that we treat them with acceptance and tolerance" - Kate

The above discussion highlights the positive outcomes of secularisation, as perceived by the participants. As discussed in the previous theme, principals viewed this transition into secularism as a necessity, which was vital in order for South Africa to break away from the ideology of the apartheid system. When one examines the above merits of secularisation, it is clear that despite apprehension among many members of society regarding the negative aspects inherent in not imposing religious order in schools, principals do perceive there to be some positive outcomes yielded by this transition.

However when critically examined, it is clear that there is a blatant contradiction between the manner in which the principals discussed the merits of secularisation, and the earlier religious intolerance towards the Islamic faith, understood as Islamophobia, which became evident in the interviews. It is possible that the principals attempted to conceal this contradiction through openly reciting the democratic ideals of secularisation, in an attempt to remain politically correct. However, it is clear that Muslim children are in fact not tolerated or accepted by the principals but are rather considered a nuisance. This could be due to the perceived threat the Islamic religion poses to historical Christian hegemony, or the global rise of Islamophobia, as discussed earlier. It can be hypothesised that Muslim children are tolerated in public, as a result of the principals desire to appear politically correct, however they are prejudiced in the private, idiosyncratic worlds of the principals. This could potentially account for the contradictory nature of principals' perceptions regarding children of a non-Christian belief system, as exemplified in the following quotes made by Mike at different stages of the interview process.

> "you know we let them [Muslims] go on a Friday, um, so we don't oppose that, the uniform has been adapted to suit them. It has seemed that a lot of the adaptation has come in to suit

> the other folks and not us you know - our Holy days all fall during the school holiday anyway, there's falls during the term, so somebody has to look after their class when they're not here. That causes a bit of tension as well"-Mike

> "um, and yeh, as we are tolerant of them, they are tolerant of us as well wanting to do that, so, ja, there's been no hiccups as far as that goes"- Mike

2. The Relationship between Education, Religion and Morality

According to Emile Durkheim and other traditional functionalist theorists, it is the role of schools to teach morals to their students. This line of thought originated from his concern with the creation of a moral community, inspired by religio-sacred beliefs and evident through his focus on moral education and the moral role of the state (Bottomore, 1981; Cohen & Rosenburg, 1977). Consistent with this line of thought, traditional functionalism also posits that standard skills and norms should be taught to society in order for it to function consistently, instilling the same beliefs and values in individuals. Schooling has a significant role to play in the realization of this goal, as it serves the broader mandate of creating social order within a society. Schooling is thus responsive to the functional needs of society. More critical theorists would argue against the socialising nature of the school, as they simply entrench the inequalities inherent in society. Through implanting norms, values, beliefs, morals and an ideology that legitimises and reinforces the existing political situation, education, according to more critical theories, acts as a pervasive agent of social control (Johnson, 1982). Regardless of which side of the debate one embraces, the relationship between religion, schooling and morality is clear, when one reflects upon the manner in which schools have historically acted as agents of religious and thus moral education. In the corpus of interviews conducted, it became clear that principals assumed a fundamental link between religion and morality. Some participants, such as the examples given below, went as far as to say that religious education is moral education.

> "It [Religion] was a set of moral values, um, I can understand why they wanted to take it out of the school, that you can't favour one over the other, but at the same time I think it has been detrimental." – Mike

> "You can enforce morals through education, um or through Religion and we've got Religious studies now, but that's not exactly the same thing anymore"- Mike

> "Look I, I think in a sense, a lot of religion we used to teach was a lot of morals and things we used to teach, we don't do that now anymore, but we now do that in Life Orientation and other ways."- James

It appears as if principals concur with this notion of religious instruction as a primary means of moral education. Religion, as a practice, can therefore be conceptualised as serving a moral regulatory function within the schools. This is due to the fact that school practices reflect valued social and economic demands and therefore mirror the needs of society at large. According to traditional functionalists such as Durkheim, "religion reaffirms people's adherence to core social values, thereby contributing to the maintenance of social cohesion (Giddens, 1993). However, more critical theorists such as Ivan Illich would question this seemingly neutral moral regulatory function of religion in the school and its relationship to the political agenda of the country. Illich would argue that through embracing this role, the school is further entrenching the inequalities of society and compromising the autonomy of students (Illich, 1972). The state has attempted to move away from this moral regulatory function of the school through the use of religion, through its policy on religion and education, however if principals are continuing to embrace Christianity in the education of students, this transition is not viable. The following quotes highlight the principal's perceived difficulties, in educating children on morals and values without the assistance of a religious backdrop.

> "so as much as religion is neutral, the next step to it has had the adverse effect and so to teach them morals, just basic morals, is challenging and we've sometimes focussed on that more than the actual education. So that has been the negative aspect to that."

> "You know children have to be aware of the spiritual aspect in their lives because it gives them balance, and lots of discipline values from the various religions helps in a school." – Rita

A recurrent theme within the data set was the replacement of religious education with moral education. Given the perceived relationship between religion and morals, many principals

emphasised the importance of promoting moral education, through other means, in an attempt to compensate for the lack of religious education in schools. These strategies include: moral lessons of a non-religious nature, moral themes presented in assemblies and discussions surrounding hypothetical situations, in which ones morals are of vital importance.

> "Sometimes it [assemblies] has a heavy Christian base to it, but I think the important thing is the moral, and I think that that's universal amongst all Religions, just that, the moral of living in harmony and so ja"- Chad

> "I've, since about 2004, I've said to them "right, no more of God and Jesus and Mohammed Ali, we all, all the belief groups have certain moral values that tend to be good."-Fred

It is important to note here that the above quote again reflects the apparent religious intolerance which was evident among the principals towards non-Christian religious groups. Through citing two dominant Christian figures correctly and equating the Muslim religious figure to an American boxer, it appears as if there is a derogatory tone present in the participant's statement, further supporting the finding that there was a perceived element of Islamophobia among many of the participants during the interview process.

When one reflects on the inherent relationship between these two constructs- religion and morals- as perceived by the principals, it becomes apparent that the removal of religion from the educational sphere, as demanded by secularism, would be perceived by the principals as a moral collapse within the schools and among the students. The following theme conceptualises this loss of religion as a moral collapse and discusses the various consequences of this process.

A) The Death of Religion as a Moral Collapse: The Pitfalls of Secularisation

A consistent theme among the participants was their perception that religion, in South Africa is dying. The reasons behind this death of religion will be examined later. Given the Christian Nationalist system many of the participants grew up in, it is understandable that many of them

would perceive a significant decrease in religious practices among the youth, as religion is not regarded with the supremacy it historically was. What is important to note here is that despite students' continual exposure to the Christian belief system, principals still perceive a decrease in the religiosity of the students. Again this highlights the contradictory nature of the interviews conducted.

> "I'm just looking at that now, because Christianity in itself, to me at the moment, is dying, is dying not because it doesn't exist, is because we don't practise it and we actually don't live those principles anymore and that's a worrying factor"- Fred

> "In fact there have been studies saying that the biggest movement of religion at this time is atheism, not believing in anything."- Linda

Furthermore, the majority of participants blamed the process of secularisation for the degradation of morals amongst the students. This is as a result of the above mentioned connection between religious education and moral development. It is often the belief of individuals that religious education fosters the moral development of children (Valk, 2007). Since the majority of the principals hypothesised that religious education fosters moral development among the students, it is clear that the removal of this form of education within the scholastic environment could be perceived as having the detrimental consequence of deterioration amongst the morals of the students. This manifestation of this belief within the interviews is therefore not surprising, given the initial perceptions of the participants of the relationship between morals and religion.

> "there's a whole moral degeneration and we have, no wonder we have so many teenage pregnancies and so many promiscuous children and so many children that are into, you know cultures and watching pornography and all of this is because there's nothing greater, there's nothing – no one teaches them about God."- Kate

> "I think with all the surveys done in America, they've also, they've shown there that when they stopped saying the Our Father and they stopped.... how violence within schools increased and all of that and there's a huge group that's fighting now to have that brought back into the schools. You know and I read somewhere about how you can talk about pornography and you can talk about this and that, but you can't talk about God within the school. It doesn't make sense, you know?"- Kate

When one evaluates the implications of such perceived moral degradation amongst young learners, concern arises regarding matters of discipline, respect and the integrity of students who form a part of the current education system. The following discussion highlights two pertinent themes which epitomise the consequences of such a moral collapse.

i) An Ungovernable School

Through the course of the analysis it became evident that the principals perceived two key consequences which arose as a result of the process of secularisation in South African public schools. Both consequences pertained to the effects it had on the students, the first being a decline in the standard of discipline within the schools. Many principals argued that without a religious backdrop which, according to the principals, facilitates the growth of a child's moral fibre, a child will not have a moral foundation on which their decision making process and decisions are based. Principals appear to have related this lack in religious education to the sharp rise in ill-discipline within the schools, which is consistent with their above perceptions that religious education is invaluable in teaching moral behaviour in children.

> "having taken that out of the school, it has affected discipline in a little way, you know, a good Religious background that you can base something on, um did help us a lot"- Mike

> "You know children have to be aware of the spiritual aspect in their lives because it gives them balance, and lots of discipline values from the various religions helps in a school" – Rita

A further consequence, as highlighted by the participants, is the lack of respect demonstrated by the children in the school environment. The children's behaviour towards the teachers and their peers appears to have a very disrespectful element to it. Furthermore, children are increasingly practicing behaviour of an extremely immoral nature, emphasising the detrimental affect secularisation has had on the children's moral development.

> "So you'll find there is a lack of respect, lack of discipline – and a lack of consequence – they don't realise that there's a consequence for things and that's why the discipline has started to slip. There's a far bigger awareness of immorality, the little ones are involved with porn, um, the way they talk, you know, it was, you've seen such a great change as far as all that's concerned."- Kate

> "but I think it has brought about a lack of respect, as I said the morals and ethics children have, have definitely changed, um, carefree whereas in the past we were taught through Bible education how to behave towards other people, what high morals should be, whereas that has all fallen by the wayside now unfortunately."- James

Again the above quotes strongly contradict the prior argument that secular education has fostered a respect and tolerance for other individual's religions. It seems reasonable to infer that if children are respectful and tolerant towards individuals belonging to various religious groups, this respect and tolerance should also be present in the day-to-day activities of the school. This extreme disparity between concepts of respect and disrespect and tolerance and intolerance illustrates a particular cluster of tensions which was evident in the interviews. It is imperative, however, to argue that potentially principals are describing religious tolerance among the students, while at the same time describing the manner in which children are disrespectful towards others. It is possible that this intolerance and disrespect, which the principals perceive, could not have a religious element to it, but is rather a general disrespect towards members of society, not fuelled by religious differences. This would therefore be congruent with the prior argument that secular education has fostered a respect and tolerance for other religious groups.

ii) A Loss of Identity among the Students

A further consequence of the secularisation of public schools in South Africa, as perceived by the participants of the study was the loss of identity among the students. The principals felt as if historically, religion had created an institution with which children could identify and that this process of identification would foster their sense of belonging to something. This is in line with the traditional functionalist model of schooling which posits that schools, including the values taught there, are the primary vehicles for forging a unified community identity and for fostering opportunities for children to transcend their parents' socio-economic status (Greenawalt, 2004). According to principals' perceptions, when religion is removed from the school environment, there is no clear departure point from which moral education can be conceptualised and therefore taught. The following quotes illustrate the perceived lack of identity and sense of belonging to something, in today's youth.

> "So you can take religion out of the school, but what are you actually doing, you actually taking out everything, the core being of children and what it's all about, you know."- Linda

> "Look um, it certainly does take away the element of belonging to something , um, in these days where especially our younger children, they need something to identify with"- Fred

> "In fact if you ask some of the children, they will say but what are you talking about? So there's no concept of even a being that created them, so this is the scary part. Besides discipline, what do they believe in? Who do they believe in? This has fallen away."- Linda

The above discussion has highlighted the perceived dangers inherent in the transition into secularism in South African public schools. Principals' sentiments towards this transition are that it has fostered a collapse in the moral fibre of the students, leading to the loss of identity within the students. Principals perceive that if children do not have something to identify with, such as religion, this will negatively impact on their development, as they will not have any concept of accountability or consequence. Furthermore, from the interviews it became apparent that principals believe that children's loss in belonging to something has fostered a collapse in the formation of a unified society, in which individuals share the same beliefs and values. This theme is therefore closely related to the above theme, which highlights the lack of discipline in the schools. Through a loss in identity and not belonging to a larger religious grouping, principals perceive that children have no role-models to aspire to, or that are able to instil in them a sense of accountability to something higher. The result is therefore perceived to be a deterioration of the obedience of the child.

In essence, although the government had honourable intentions through the removal of religious education in schools, it appears that principals perceive this as a negative transition which has had detrimental effects on the students:

> "So it sounds like a wonderful idea... everybody's accepted and neutral and we understand that they had to do that because people were saying what about my religion, isn't it better or

more important than the other, so we understand the concept of it, but the consequences of it are quite adverse."- Linda

"I think it's [secularisation] had nothing but a negative effect."- Kate

"I'm totally against that. I believe that in a school, especially working with young children, the spiritual aspect is very important."- Rita

"Ya, I would say the negatives outweigh the positives. Greatly so, and I think that it's because I have had exposure in so many different fields, that I just feel that I realise its everywhere. Lack of discipline, religion brings, funny enough there have been studies made that prove religion brings structure to the society, values. So you take all that away, what will the child have? Nothing"- Linda

There appears to be a general theme of dissatisfaction among principals with the movement into secularisation. For these individuals, this transition has symbolised a process which has, and continues to, chip away at the moral fibre of their students, resulting in a situation in which morality has become a foreign concept to the learners, fostering a decline in their discipline, respect for others and sense of belonging in society. This is in line with the functionalist argument that schooling should, in essence, act as a tool through which standard values and morals are taught to society, instilling similar beliefs in the community so that it can function consistently (Bottomore, 1981). Now that religion is no longer a tool which facilitates this, many questions arise as to the consequences this will have on the students in South Africa today.

3. The Nature of Socialising Agents

A) The Martyrdom of the Principal

The SASA, defines a principal as an educator who has been appointed, or is acting as the head of a school (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). This Act stipulates that the principal of a public school is responsible for the professional management of the school. With the transition to democracy, the role of the principal has been expanded significantly. In line with the values underpinning the constitution, principals are now responsible for implementing leadership which

promotes participation from all stakeholders of the school, in order to promote democracy (Department of Educaiton, 2007). In the context of the current research, principals often conceptualise themselves as martyrs, as they were often forced to negate their own personal belief systems in order to manage the school in the manner expected by the government. During the interviews principals often spoke of how they had made sacrifices, the other religions were not willing to make.

> "That actually caused some tension as well and your Muslim people, they would take it but they would be more discrete, whilst many of your Christians they actually sacrificed, they babysat and the Christians had to make, an almost show of force."- Bill

> I mean in the beginning I'd say" I am a Christian and I'm not going to stand back and there's no ways I am going to allow these people to come in and say what they want to", but ultimately I had to"-Fred

Principals also reflected on the manner in which they put education provision and the well-being of the students ahead of their personal desires, often at the expense of their own religious beliefs. Ascension Day is an example which arose throughout the data set, in which principals were unable to attend church due to their commitment to the school.

> "Okay, it's a tough one, like let's use Ascension Day for example there, um, your commitment to education unfortunately might then, becomes the overriding factor then."- Chad

> "I've learned to live with religions but it's not my first call."- Bill

> "Ya well look; you see from what I've instituted in the school, I do not accept it. I do not accept it because I believe there is a more negative impact on the environment, the school program, everything. So I manage it as much as I can in a positive way, but I do not personally accept it."- Linda

Another pertinent contradiction arises through the analysis of the interviews. Although many principals conceptualise themselves as martyrs, who have had to sacrifice their own belief systems for the greater cause of democracy, many of the principals in fact did not negate their

own beliefs but rather embraced them in the school practices. Fred's two statements below demonstrate a complete contradiction. In the first he makes the point that his own belief system of Christianity had to be compromised, however later in the interview he states that he does still implement Christian practices in the school, suggesting that in essence, he did not have to negate his personal belief system in his capacity as a principal.

> I mean in the beginning I'd say" I am a Christian and I'm not going to stand back and there's no ways I am going to allow these people to come in and say what they want to", but ultimately I had to"-Fred

> "I say I do run this school on Christian principles" - Fred

Principals are accountable to a number of stakeholders. These include, the Department of Education, the school governing body, the educators, the parents and learners (Ngidi, 2004). Given this degree of accountability, principals' roles often transcend the boundaries of the South African Schools Act (1996a), as they are expected to function as educational visionaries, curriculum leaders, assessment specialists, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, special programs managers, and professional supervisors of policy mandates and initiatives (Mafisa, 2008; Belmonte & Cranston, 2007). However, in practice principals are not given this agency from the government, as evident in the following quote

> "Even though they give you something saying you can have your own religious policy, they actually still ratify it, the department have a look at it and if they're not happy with it they send it back and you have to change it so that it's in accordance with legislation."- James

> "Ok, we were basically forced, it was down talk."- Bill

According to Heck (2003), for educational reforms to be efficiently implemented at the scholastic level, principals must be capable of providing strong leadership and must also fully comprehend how the larger, macro-environment shapes their organisation and individual interactions, as well as the relationship between those interactions and the resulting school outcomes. Consequently, principal leadership is assumed to be dependent on and guided by the

principal's own beliefs and value preferences and on organisational and political variables associated with the school and community context. However, this is often not the case, as principles have had to negate their own belief systems in order to adhere to the democratic nature of the SASA. It is apparent that this flags a problem within the South African education system, as principals are forced to choose which mandate to follow, either negating their own belief systems, or dismissing the stipulations inherent in the policy of religion and education. Many principals discussed the difficulties involved in dismissing their own faith in the context of the school This again echoes the nature of the principal as a martyr, having to sacrifice aspects of his or her belief system for the greater cause of democracy in South Africa.

> "In the beginning it was very difficult because I was brought up with Christianity and that's the only thing that's true and that's the only thing you will follow and you will not be shy to admit that. I'm not shy to admit that, I mention it to people but I cannot push the religion within the school, which makes it sometimes very difficult because you feel like a sell-out. You know, you're not doing what you're supposed to do as a as a leader within a certain environment where you're supposed to lead in all aspects, even in the religious aspects."- Fred

> "Teachers have their opinions, they've got their Religions, it's a private matter. At school, well, they do what the school does. The majority of us do."- Chad

It is again important to critically analyse these statements in conjunction with the earlier statements made by the principals, in which they explicitly admit there adherence to Christian principles and methods in the education of their students. The obvious question arises, if the principals are still practicing their beliefs in the school, why do they feel as if they have made a significant sacrifice since the transition into secularism? It can potentially be argued that, given their resistance towards secularisation, the participants wanted to appear as if they had made a significant sacrifice during the transition. Through highlighting the personal difficulties they faced with the implementation of the policy, they were inadvertently drawing attention to its pitfalls, even if in reality this was not the case. Another hypothesis is that the principals wanted to appear as if they had made sacrifices for the greater cause of democracy, in an attempt to appear politically correct during the interviews. The answer to this question remains unclear;

however it does once again highlight the challenging, ambiguous nature of the interviews conducted.

B) The Function of the School in Post-Apartheid South Africa

The transition into secularism has had a large impact on the educational sphere in South Africa, as previously discussed. The school has traditionally been conceptualised as a socialising agent, with the latent function of implanting norms, values, beliefs and ideologies in the minds of its students (Johnson, 1982). The secularisation of the school advocates for the removal of an overarching religious orientation in the education of learners. Emile Durkheim argues that schools function to relay broader morality to their students (Bottomore, 1981). In an attempt to mirror the needs of society at large, school practices reflect valued social and economic demands. From this traditional functionalist viewpoint, the removal of religious education in the schools would be noted as a cause for concern, given that the overwhelming majority of the population are religious and it is the function of the school to feed the current social structure. Through embracing secular education, the key function of the school, the socialisation of citizens according to the social structure of society, would be compromised.

Illich (1971), on the other hand, offers a more critical account of schooling and argues that the institutionalization of values, as in the school, leads inevitably to social division and psychological incompetence. He asserts that through utilizing the school as a political tool, in which children are socialized into the ideology of the state, the autonomy of the person is considerably compromised. Thus, according to Illich, the school is a contested ground which is greatly influenced by the political ideology of the time and in which certain power relations are entrenched within the learners (Tyack & Tobin, 1994). The secularisation of the school advocates for the removal of an overarching religious orientation in the education of learners. However according to Illich, institutionalised schooling in itself, and not simply religion, should be dismissed or re-thought, in order to move away from the inherent control the state has over school practices. This would address the manner in which the political ideology of the government is manifested in the process of education.

.From a functionalism perspective, this will be detrimental to society as a whole, as it will promote segregation and less continuity in the community. From a critical perspective, this would be favourable as religion in itself will be deinstitutionalized. When evaluating the perceptions of the principals regarding the role of the school, the majority of them concurred with the functionalist conceptualisation of the school as an agent of religious and moral education. The principals felt that the removal of religion from the school had resulted in children not being socialised into religion.

> "we always relied on the school to teach about the Bible and Christ and that sort of thing and now it's not happening anymore, so I think a lot of kids are actually losing out, definitely."- Mike

> "Um, the consequences are that in the past, even though the parents might not have been religious, they didn't teach the children morals and values, it was taught in the school, um through Bible education."- James

One participant agreed with Illich's account of the school, and argued that religion should not be taught in the schools but should rather be kept in the homes. However, when this is not a practical realisation, for reasons which will be discussed in the following section, the school does offer a valuable institution in which these lessons can be taught.

> "I don't believe the school is where you need to be given Religious teaching; it should happen at home, in your own, but it's not happening there and I think, um, because of that, there's this huge gap in children's lives."- Kate

It is clear that from a functionalist framework that the school functions to transmit a set of values and norms, which is congruent with the political ideology of the period, in order to ensure stability and congruency throughout society. Critical theorists question the role of the school in society and its strong relationship to the political agenda of a country. The results from the analysis indicate that principals continue to embrace functionalist conceptualisations of the school, which should be responsible for the provision of education pertaining to religious beliefs

and moral standards. However, secularisation has prevented this from being practically realised, which has had negative consequences on the students, as discussed previously.

C) The Morally Neglectful Parent

Given this move away from the school as an agent of religious education, it is now the responsibility of the parent to educate children on matters of a religious nature. According to the national policy on religion and education, religious instruction is "primarily the responsibility of the home, the family, and the religious community" (Republic of South Africa, 2003). The policy works from the premise that the scholastic environment has an educational responsibility for teaching different religions, however it differs from religious instruction and religious nurture which remains the responsibility of the child's family (Republic of South Africa, 2003). There has been a shift in responsibility towards parents and communities to instruct children in this religious manner, as it is no longer a concern of the educational environment. The form of education in the schools no longer focuses on one specific religion but rather teaches learners the value of various religions and their historical heritage (Jeenah, 2005). Through the interview process, it became apparent that principals perceive parents as neglecting this responsibility to educate their children in this respect.

> "Look at the end of the day, it must start with the parent, it's their responsibility to start with it and then the child will make that decision, but at least it was an opening for it, and maybe it even made people lazy, because they knew it was happening at school, they didn't have to do it at home, and now suddenly, because it's not happening at school anymore and it's not happening in the home, moral standards are definitely going down, you can't argue about that."- Mike

> "Um, I think because in general parents don't, aren't Religious in any way, you know, more and more parents don't go to church and aren't involved in any form of Religious practise, so children aren't getting that kind of norm and value. They don't have, their parents are their friends instead of their parents, so they're growing up without any parameters and they will try anything."- Kate

> "parents don't actually take a stand and channel the children in the right direction"- Fred

According to Kohn (1991), it is highly desirable for moral values and social skills to be taught in the home. However, one difficulty in realising this aim, as perceived by the principals, is that along with nurturance and affection, someone to model altruism, opportunities to practice compassion for others, and so forth - is often not found in all homes. Many of the participants perceived parents as neglecting to exhibit and embrace the values and morals which they anticipated the children would mirror in the school environment.

> "So, but I think among the Christian folks, a lot of the morals amongst the parents have also fallen away, there are just bad examples out there..."- Mike

> "Now of course it's open to the parents to ensure that their children are learning these things and if the parents aren't religious and they don't have high morals and values then obviously it won't transcend down to the children."- James

> "No it's not the responsibility of the school, but parents are not taking on that role anymore and I'm just talking about... let's cut religion out of it, where it's just manners or showing respect to elders, you know in today's society the young child shows total disrespect by challenging the adult."- Linda

Given the above argument for the morally neglectful nature of parents, and the change in the role of the school, it follows that the responsibility of religious education now rests with religious institutions such as the Church, Mosque and Shul. Many participants identified this shift in accountability in religious education away from the parents and the school and towards religious organisations.

> "I think the major consequence was that religious organisations had to take responsibility to teach children the basics of their religion, and I think that churches, Mosques and so forth had to play a more dominant part."- Bill

When exploring the role of various socialising agents in the religious education of the youth, it is clear that principals perceive the movement into secularisation as forcing individuals to re-conceptualise the responsibility of the school and parents in eliciting this education to children. A concerning aspect, identified in the above analysis, is that if the school is no longer responsible

and parents are not taking it upon themselves to instruct children in religion, whose responsibility does it become? It is therefore apparent that one of the key consequences of the transition into secular education is the perceived change in the role of historical socialising agents in the education of religion.

The school is no longer allowed to assume the responsibility of religious education due to the stipulations of the national policy on religion and education. Principals perceive an inherent link between religious and moral education and thus infer that this restriction has prevented them from instilling morals within the children. Parents are also perceived by principals as being morally neglectful and therefore not assuming this responsibility of moral education in the setting of the home. It can also be further inferred that there has been a movement towards a lack of socialising agents willing to undertake this responsibility and therefore it now rests with the child. If the child feels the desire to expand their knowledge surrounding topics of a religious nature the onus is on them to join a religious organisation or institution so that this thirst can be met.

From the above analysis and discussion it is clear that a number of themes emerged, relating to the manner in which the participants perceived various elements inherent in the process of secularisation in South African schools. Overall, all the principals strongly agreed that despite good intentions of the government in fostering a democratic society, the impact of secularisation had resulted in some unintended effects, including a negative impact on the moral development of the students. In general they perceived that the negative consequences of secularisation outweighed the promises of the governments overall secularisation vision. The following Chapter will summarise these key themes and findings of the study in relation to the initial research questions. It is also imperative that the limitations of the study are noted, so that they are addressed in future research endeavours.

Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks

1. Overview of key findings

The aim of the current research endeavour was to explore principal's perceptions of the key tensions, processes and consequences characterising the secularisation of South African schools. Semi-structured interviews, conducted with eight principals were subjected to a thematic content analysis, in an attempt to elicit key themes which would provide answers to the initial research questions that were posed. The three questions posed by the research were as follows:

1) What do principals perceive as the key tensions underlying the movement into public school secularisation in South Africa?
2) How do principals reflect on the processes which have shaped the transition into public school secularisation in South Africa?
3) What do principals perceive to be the key consequences resulting from the transition into public school secularisation in South Africa?

As mentioned earlier the domain of the interviews was contested at multiple levels and therefore the aim of thematic content analysis was to tease out these clusters of tensions, producing themes which illuminated the key tensions visible in the processes and consequences of this transition. Three key themes and eleven subthemes were yielded by the analysis.

The first central theme was "religion, the state and education: historical relations to current manifestations". This theme critically assessed the association between these three institutions, exploring the core tensions which arose between them with the transition into secularism. Given the focus of the current research on exploring the relationship between these institutions and the manner in which policy is realised at the grassroots level, this theme was particularly beneficial in eliciting answers relating to the processes and tensions inherent in the transition to secularisation of South African public schools. The first subtheme focused on the role apartheid and Christian National Education played during this period. This theme interrogated the inconsistencies which appeared relating to principals perceptions of a desire for change against

the practical realisation of the continued practices of Christianity in the school, providing valuable insight into the key tensions characterising the transition into secularisation. The second subtheme related to the chaotic processes inherent in the transition towards secularism, as perceived by the principals of the schools. This provided specific answers to the second research question, relating to the processes that shaped this transition. Principals perceived the process as characterised by a lack of consultation and transparency, with no clear guidelines provided to them and no follow-through from the government. In addition it became clear that tensions were present in the manner in which principals were not abiding by the legislation and continuing to embrace Christian principles in the management of their schools. The final subtheme described the perceived value of secularism in fostering democratic ideals in South Africa. This theme provided one set of answers to the third research question pertaining to the consequences of secularisation. In this theme the consequences of the transition were conceptualised as positive, as students were more respectful and tolerant of other religions and had gained an enhanced knowledge of the different religious groups in South Africa.

The second core theme described "the relationship between education, religion and morality". This theme emphasised a further set of tensions, in the manner in which all the principals equated religion with morality. This theme also conceptualised the death of religion as a moral collapse, which provided a further set of answers for the third research question. The two sub-themes, namely the move towards an ungovernable school system and a loss of identity among the students highlighted the negative consequences inherent in the transition into secular education. The final central theme examined the role of key socialising agents within the scholastic environment. The subthemes elicited within this analysis are the role of the principal as a martyr, the nature of the school in post-apartheid South Africa and finally parents as morally neglectful individuals. These themes relate to the tensions and the consequences of the transition into secularisation. Various tensions were evident in the disparity between the principals' belief systems and the state ideology of secularism. Issues of sacrifice and martyrdom were highlighted here. The nature of the school and the parents as socialising agents again emphasised the negative consequences inherent in the transition into secularism, as there was a perception that students were no longer being taught religious or moral values in the school or the home.

Throughout the analysis it became clear that principals strongly agreed that despite good intentions of the government in fostering a democratic society, the impact of secularisation had been extremely detrimental, with the negative consequences unquestionably outweighing the positives.

2. Strengths and Limitations of the Current Research Endeavour

It is imperative that the limitations of the study are noted, so that they may be addressed in future research endeavours of a similar nature. In the current research the key limitation was the demographic composition of the participants who participated in the study. Given the difficulty in locating principals who had been in this position of leadership for at least eight years, the researcher utilised principals who she was referred to and who were willing to participate in the interview process. Inadvertently, it so happened that the majority of the principals were of a Christian religious orientation. This may have influenced the results of the analysis, as the majority of participants embraced a Christian worldview. In addition, only individuals from two racial groupings participated in the interviews, seven Whites and one Indian. It would therefore have been more beneficial to have had a more religiously and racially diverse sample to elicit more varied responses, possibly through conducting a broader survey, or increasing the number of interviews conducted. In addition, all the interviews were carried out within schools of an average socio-economic status. It may be valuable to conduct interviews in different school settings. A further limitation of the current study was that it silenced the non-mainstream religions by foreclosing the possibilities of incorporating indigenous knowledge systems in the sample.

A further possible limitation of this study was the fact that only principals participated in the interview process. This is a limiting factor regarding the extension of literature in this field. However, as discussed above, principals offer a valuable vantage point through which the process of secularisation can be explored. It could be of value in future studies, to examine the perceptions of other key stakeholders in the educational arena, to gain a holistic understanding of the perceived effects of this transition, from various levels.

This research was also of value in gaining an enhanced understanding of the personal experiences of individuals during the transition from apartheid into democracy. Although much research has been conducted evaluating education transformation from a political point of view, limited studies have been conducted, in which the personal perceptions of individuals involved in this process, were elicited.

3. Directions for future research

The limitations above provide valuable insight into the manner in which the research could be improved or expanded on, in future research endeavours.

Given the manner in which many of the participants spoke about religion, education and the state, it could possibly prove worthwhile to conduct a discourse analysis on the interviews that were collected and transcribed, or on interviews of a similar nature. Concrete examples of the focus of these further studies included; the discourses utilised by the participants to discuss issues surrounding immorality, the Islamic population and spirituality as opposed to religion. In the current research, there was also an undercurrent of religious intolerance which presented in the manner in which the participants spoke about individuals belonging to non-Christian religious groups.

Future research could possibly incorporate a larger sample reflecting greater demographic variation, especially across the variables of race, gender and religion. This would provide an enhanced understanding of how individuals from different religious, race, age and gender groups perceive this transition into secularisation in South African public schools. In addition comparative studies could also be instrumental in exploring the similarities and differences between the perceptions of different public schooling stakeholders. This would provide a more composite account of the impacts of secularisation on public schooling in South Africa. These could potentially include members of government, individuals from the Department of Education, school governing bodies, teachers and parents. Exploring the perspectives of learners

could also be especially valuable, given that the perceptions of the principals in the current study that secularisation continues to influence learners, as both individuals and key actors in the schooling environment.

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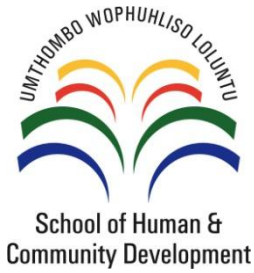
Appendix 1

Participant Information Sheet





Good day,

My name is Claire Bodington and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research will attempt to examine principals' perceptions of the underlying tensions, processes and consequences characterising secularisation in South African public schools. This research will attempt to broaden the existing base of literature surrounding experiences of education in post-apartheid South Africa.

As such, I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Participation in this research will involve an interview with the researcher where you will be asked questions relating to the above mentioned area of interest. The interview will last for approximately one hour. With your permission this interview will be recorded in an attempt to ensure accuracy. Once I have conducted all the interviews I will perform a thematic content analysis on them in an attempt to explore emerging themes which may arise. Please note that your participation is entirely voluntary and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate in the study. All interviews will be kept confidential as only the researcher and my supervisor will have access to them. In other words, all interview material (audiotapes) will be heard only by the researcher and me. The transcripts and recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet. No identifying information will be included in the final research report or any publication that follows. You may choose not to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point. If you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so, without prejudice, at any time. If you choose to participate in the study please complete the attached consent forms.

There are no direct benefits to participating in this project. Similarly no risks are foreseen as a result of participation. However, if at any point you feel that you have experienced discomfort as a result of the interview, a number of contact details for counselling services will be provided.

On completion of the research, the audio-taped interviews will be destroyed. A brief report of my findings will be provided upon request. This feedback will take the form of a one page summary of the study and its results. If you have any questions about the project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Dr. Brett Bowman, or myself.

Regards,

Claire Bodington

Claire Bodington, Researcher
clairebodington@gmail.com
0829288605

Dr. Brett Bowman, Supervisor
Brett.Bowman@wits.ac.za
(011) 717- 8335

Counselling Services:

- Emthonjeni Centre - (011) 717-4513
- Wits Counselling and Careers Development unit - (011) 717-9140/32
- Lifeline - (011) 728 1347

Appendix 2

Participant Consent Form (Interview)

I, _____, having read the participant information sheet, consent to participate in the above specified study and be interviewed by Claire Bodington. In so doing, I understand that:

• My participation in this interview is voluntary
• I may withdraw from the study, and may do so without prejudice at any time
• That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
• My narrative will be anonymised and no information that may identify me will be included in the research report
• My responses will remain confidential, although I may be quoted in the research report
• My interview transcript will be subjected to analysis
• I am aware that the results of the study will be reported in the form of a research report for the partial completion of the degree, Master of Educational Psychology and may be published in a scientific journal.

Signed: | |

Date: | |

Appendix 3

Participant Consent Form (Recording)

I, _____, having read the participant information sheet, consent to participate in the interview and have my interview recorded by Claire Bodington. In so doing, I understand that:

• My participation in the study is voluntary.
• I may withdraw from the study, and may do so without prejudice at any time
• My interview will be recorded.
• My interview recording will be confidential
• My interview recording will be subjected to an analysis.
• No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.
• My recorded interview will only be heard by the researcher and her supervisor
• My recorded interview will be kept in a safe place (a locked cabinet).
• My recorded interview will be destroyed once the research has been collated.
• I am aware that the results of the study will be reported in the form of a research report for the degree, Master of Educational Psychology and it may be published in a scientific journal.

Signed: | |

Date: | |

Appendix 4

Interview Schedule

1) What are your general perceptions of the secularisation of public schooling in post-apartheid South Africa?
2) Do you perceive there to be underlying tensions which influenced the movement into public school secularisation in South Africa?
3) If yes, what do you believe these tensions to be?
4) Do you believe it is important to have secularised schooling in South Africa? Why or why not?
5) Could you please describe the processes which have shaped the transition into public school secularisation in South Africa?
6) Do you believe this process was conducted in a transparent manner? If so how or how was it not?
7) How implementable or easy do you believe the process was?
8) What do you perceive to be the key consequences resulting from the transition into public school secularisation in South Africa?
9) How do you negotiate the tension between the state ideology of secularism governing teaching practices and the religious beliefs and practices of individuals in the school environment?
10) How do you negotiate the tension between the state ideology of secularism governing education and your personal belief system?
11) How do you believe the transition into secularism has impacted on the students directly?
12) How do you reflect on the manner in which the transition into secularism has shaped the scholastic environment since the democratic elections in 1994?

Appendix 5:

Approval from the Department of Education to conduct research in a school

Appendix 6

Ethics Clearance Certificate