

**TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
IN RURAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN THE
OVERBERG EDUCATION DISTRICT IN THE
WESTERN CAPE: A GROUNDED THEORY
APPROACH**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the Degree of
Philosophiae Doctor in the Faculty of Education,
University of the Western Cape**

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September 2016

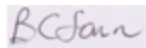
DECLARATION

I declare that *Teachers' understanding of social justice in rural education schools in the Overberg Education District in the Western Cape: a grounded theory approach* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged with complete references.

Brenda Carol Sonn

September 2016

Signed :





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ABSTRACT

TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN RURAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN THE OVERBERG EDUCATION DISTRICT IN THE WESTERN CAPE: A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

Social justice is embedded in the South African constitution and various policy documents as an important concept and vision for a democratic South Africa. Yet, twenty two years after democracy, South African society reflects the entrenched racial and class divisions of the past. The educational context mirrors the persistence of historical, political and social patterns of advantage and disadvantage. The position taken in this study is that social justice and social injustice are inextricably linked. This study is based on the premise that, in order to understand social justice, social injustice needs to be understood and articulated.

This study was situated in a rural education district where past unequal spatial, educational and social stratifications persist. The study was conducted in four rural schools to explore twelve primary school teachers' onto-epistemological assumptions of the world and their interpretations and meanings of social justice and injustice. Three related lenses, social justice, spatial justice and epistemic injustice were used to theoretically frame the study. Teachers' life histories were explored using a grounded theory approach as methodology. A three phased reflective process was used to explore and deepen understandings of social justice. The findings suggest that the perpetuation of past injustices and inequalities are based on deeply held different racialised understandings of social justice and injustice, resulting in racially situated narratives of social justice and injustice. The present narratives of who should be taught by whom, where and what should be taught also contribute to the perpetuation of racially situated narratives and injustices. Through dialogue teachers were able to deepen their understandings of their own experience and gain insight into the experiences of the 'other'.

A further position taken in this study is that in social justice research the researcher is not neutral. This study explored the role of the social justice researcher and drew learnings of the socially just researcher as a reflexive and 'just listener'. The study makes recommendations for further socio-spatial-epistemic justice research and for its inclusion in pre-and in-service teacher courses as extensions of the development of a critical discourse on social justice in South African education.



ETHICAL ISSUES

My duty as a researcher was to ensure that no harm was done to the participants. Towards this end the views of the participants in the study were respected and treated with confidentiality and anonymity. With respect to the commitment given to all the participants in the research concerning their anonymity, I have used pseudonyms to protect their real identities and that of their schools. Schools participating in the study are coded numerically, for example School One.



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KEY WORDS

Rural primary schools

Poverty

Social justice

Social injustice

Spatial justice

Epistemic justice

Pedagogical justice

Socially just research

Dialogical spaces



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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ABET	-	Adult Basic Education and Training
ADHD	-	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AIDS	-	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CBD	-	Central Business District
DBE	-	Department of Basic Education
EPD	-	Economic Performance and Development
FAS	-	Foetal Alcohol Syndrome
HSRC	-	Human Sciences Research Council
LST	-	Learning/Learner Support Teacher
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPDE	-	National Professional Diploma in Education
NSSF	-	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
SMT	-	School Management Team
SGB	-	School Governing Body
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WCED	-	Western Cape Education Department



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of social justice in education has been a primary concern in a democratic South Africa since 1994. As the country strives to correct the political, social and economic imbalances of the past, social justice has become an important concept in many policies and educational debates. At the time of this study, about twenty years after democracy in South Africa, the debates about social justice continue. The principles and goals promised in policy documents have not been realised for many school-going young people in South Africa (Spren and Vally, 2006; Soudien, 2007). Educators and learners face the pervading effects of the inequalities of the past and the daunting task of correcting past injustices with little more than policy guidelines. The reality of many rural and urban communities still reflects the structural racial and class inequalities of the past (Christie, 2012).

This study is an exploration of rural teachers' understanding of social justice and injustice within their primary school contexts. The study is located in the Overberg district, which has a range of rural primary schools, from small multi-grade farm schools, ex-Model C and ex-HOR schools, township schools and large parallel medium schools. The Overberg area presents an interesting historical example of the establishment of these schools and the political decisions made about their location and continuation. My rationale for doing research on this area is to highlight the social justice and injustice aspects pertinent to rural schooling and to contribute to literature on social justice education.

In this chapter I firstly present the background and rationale of the study. This is followed by the theoretical framework, an introduction to the research design and methodology and ethical framework of the study. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the contents of each succeeding chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

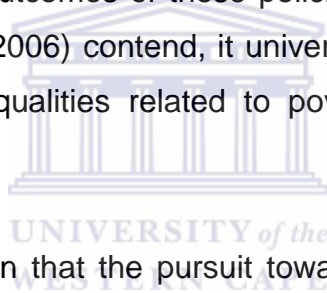
Apartheid was by all accounts an immoral system which entrenched patterns of racial superiority privileging the minority white population and subjugating the black majority (Christie, 2012). The patterns of privilege and disadvantage embedded in the social, political, legal and economic systems under apartheid, even though outlawed, are still deeply entrenched in present South Africa. The present system breeds its own systems of privilege and advantage, built on the old apartheid fault lines.

Post-apartheid South African education policy is built on the premise of equal resources to all schools and that every child and every school should be treated the same. The principles of justice, such as fairness and equality for all and respect for difference are set out in policies such as the National Education Policy Act, No. 27 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996), the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996); White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (South Africa, 2002) and the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998). More recent policy revisions in the interest of redress and equity, such as no fee paying schools, took into account needs arising from historical disadvantages and inequalities and the cumulative effects of poverty, by making greater provisioning of resources to poorer schools.

Section 34 of the South African Schools Act (South Africa, 1996) mandates an equitable funding model for state school which seeks to ensure learners' right to education and to redress past inequalities in state provision. The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSF) (South Africa, 1998) allocated subsidies to schools according to a predetermined formula whereby schools serving poorer communities would receive more funding than schools serving better-off communities. The aim of the NNSF was to direct more funding to under-resourced schools to achieve quality education and improvement in academic outcomes for schools in poor and urban and rural communities.

In spite of legislation to counter and eradicate past inequalities, South Africa is still a deeply divided and unequal society. The policies of the democratically elected South African government were designed to redress past injustices and to bring about equity

in an unequally resourced and economically and socially developed society under apartheid (Maestry and Ndhlovu, 2014; Motala and Pampallis, 2002). South African policy commentators and academics, in their analysis of policy making and implementation in relation to social justice and equity, report on the almost invariable disjuncture between policy intention and policy outcomes. Jansen (2001) relates this disjuncture to the difference between the intentions of education policies as a vehicle for social transformation post 1994 and the persistent structural inequalities within society. Jansen (2001) argues that the aims of social transformation contained in educational policies cannot be achieved because of the structural inequalities. Commenting on the disjuncture, Gilmour (2001) states that the conflation of equality and equity by policy-makers and implementers has resulted in inconsistencies between policy intention and outcomes. Spreen and Vally (2006) argue that South African policies have been based on a liberal conception of rights, favouring individual instead of group rights. The outcomes of these policies resulted in social injustice. In particular, Spreen and Vally (2006) contend, it universalised rights in disregard of the structural and contextual inequalities related to poverty and inequality in a highly stratified society.



Numerous studies have shown that the pursuit towards equality and equity has not brought about difference in relation to educational outcomes and the creation of a just and equitable education system. In his analysis of the SACMEQ¹-111 2007 data, Van der Berg reports that the racial and socio-economic inequalities of the past are still reflected in educational outcomes in South African schools, despite more resourcing and a more equitable policy context post 1994 (Van der Berg, Burger, et al 2011). According to Motala, Dieltiens, et al (2007: 52) many learners, particularly those in rural areas, lack access to proper infrastructure, despite improvements in funding equity.

According to Vincent (2003:2) education is an important site where the societal stratifications are produced and reproduced, and the school is therefore a site where social justice issues can be considered and reconsidered. Rural schools produce and reproduce the particularities of the socio-economic identities and positions of the rural communities they serve (DoE, 2005). Given the inherited socio-economic

¹ Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality.

disadvantage, particularly in rural communities a different way of thinking about social justice and equity formulas in policy formation and implementation is needed, in the interest of a quality education system for all (Subreenduth, 2013:581).

1.2.1 My Interest in the Study

My initial interest in the study started while I was conducting school development and school-based research in rural schools at the Teacher In-service Project, a school development and research unit at the University of the Western Cape, during 2007 – 2010. In response to questions related to the reasons why learners performed so poorly in literacy and numeracy tests, teachers mainly referred to the contextual factors contributing to poor learner performance. The factors they mentioned included what they perceived as the effects of poverty on learners lives, the prevalence of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) in the rural community, the limited world experience of rural learners, and the fact that many learners are not school-ready when they enter Grade 1. Where teachers mentioned curriculum matters and teaching methods, they related basic aspects they needed to include in their lesson planning, for instance how to address learning barriers related to the socio-economic context; how to cultivate a love of reading, how to address learners' fear of mathematics. The most important aspects for teachers in their deliberations on low learner performance were connected to the ways the curriculum could be more relevant for the rural context, and concomitantly how teaching could be more effective.

A few teachers specifically mentioned issues related to social justice and injustice affecting the learners' right to learn. Although teachers did not specifically name these issues as social justice or injustice, they were concerned about the built-in systemic and contextual disadvantages portrayed in the curriculum with regard to rural schools. An example of disadvantage mentioned in these discussions was that teacher perceived of the curriculum as being written for the mono-grade school and therefore mostly irrelevant for the multi-grade classrooms with which rural teachers are familiar. According to the teachers this disadvantaged both learners and teachers: teachers were underprepared to teach a new and demanding curriculum in the multi-grade classroom and their learners bear the consequences. Mention was also made of the fact that the successful implementation of the curriculum and 'firming up' (vaslegging)

depend largely on independent work done by learners outside of the classroom, either at home or in a library. Teachers reported that homework could rarely be given as learners do not have the material or physical support of parents and do not have easy access to libraries. In support of their claims they mentioned the high unemployment and low literacy levels amongst adults in their schools. Employed parents and caregivers work long hours and were unable to give at-home support to their children. Teachers also mention that the public library services are not situated close to where learners live. Learners would have to rely on public transport which is either sparse or non-existent in the rural communities and the taxi services are expensive and unsafe for young children.

In the interviews with teachers, my interest in the spatiality of the rural context and the life stories of teachers was stimulated. I was interested to find out more about the rural teachers personal, professional and political identities, and how their identities have been shaped in their interactions with learners in the rural context. I became interested in the dilemmas teachers face given the poverty of the context, low learner performance and low throughput rates. I was particularly interested in what teachers were attempting to do to improve the lives and conditions of learners in the interest of social equity and justice. These initial thoughts inspired me to do further research on rural teachers and their understandings of social justice.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

In this study I take the position that our understandings of social justice are shaped by our knowledge of social justice and injustice and our lived experiences thereof (Janse van Rensburg, 2014). Rural teachers were selected to participate in this study in order to provide a glimpse of how social justice and injustice is understood in the rural education context. Teachers are chosen for this study because they face the realities of the transformational intentions of policy, as it relates to social justice specifically, and the stark realities of the rural communities as lived and realised in the classrooms. The aim of this study is to explore teachers' understandings of the inequalities in South African education generally and rural education specifically, from a social justice perspective.

1.4 RATIONALE

Rural education in South Africa is highly politicised. It is hard to speak about rural education in South Africa without being 'historical' and 'political'. Public schools in the rural areas generally present a pattern of concentration of social and historical disadvantaged groups of learners. Present day South African rural public schools are predominantly black². In the Western Cape the rural communities are predominantly, but not exclusively, 'coloured'³ and learners are mainly drawn from farms and small, remote rural towns.

There is no all-encompassing defining concept for the rural areas in the South African context and internationally, and in the same sense for the rural school (Sauvageot and da Graca, 2007). Rural has generally been defined by what it is not, i.e. not urban. Even though there is no definition, the concept 'rural school' conjures pictures of remoteness and isolation, coupled with either inaccessible and/or scarce resources. Some descriptions of rural education contain stories specific to the interplay between racial identities, location and politics within historical time frames. Some descriptions refer to locations such as 'deep rural' communities, completely cut off from the metropole; those in smaller towns skirting the metropole and communities located on farms and further distinguished as farm owners and farm labourers (DoE, 2005). This is characterised by what Green and Letts (2007: 71) refer to as a 'geography of distinction: an articulation of socio-economic disadvantage and indigenusness, of race and class'. Self-notions of 'the other' live in the imaginations of learners and teachers in the rural schools. Assumptions that the town/white/city/urban schools are better off and have a richer life experience than the rural child are part of the stories told in the rural school.

The rural context is not similar to the urban context (Balfour, *et al*, 2008). Relatively little systematic research has been done in the rural schools in South Africa compared

² Racial terms are apartheid constructs and highly contested. In this study the racial terms black and white are used in a general sense to describe experiences and patterns of privilege and disadvantage in South Africa.

³ 'Coloureds' are politically part of the black community. The term coloured is an apartheid construct to describe people of 'mixed descent'. In this study the participants use the term used to describe the experiences of this particular group of people. The terms 'coloured'/brown/ black/african and white are used throughout this study in the way participants describe themselves and each other. Due to the contested nature of the term, references to 'coloureds' are placed in abbreviations.

to research in urban township settings (Balfour, *et al*, 2008). Consequently, very little is known about the relationships between the rural context and rural schooling (Hlalele, 2012). Admittedly, rural learners are predominantly, but not exclusively, from historically disadvantaged communities, similar to those of urban learners. They come from families in socio-economic distress, single parent families and parents or primary care givers with low literacy levels, as are learners in urban townships. The tendency in educational research in poor and disadvantaged contexts is to draw generalisations from the urban schooling context to the rural contexts, based on the similarities in the rural and urban schooling context. These generalisations miss the nuances in the structural and pedagogical differentials between urban and rural contexts (Balfour *e al*, 2008).

The rural school has typically been seen as a 'container' within which education simply takes place with varying degrees of effectiveness and efficiency (Schroeder and Nicola, 2006; Green and Letts, 2007). When the results of South African rural schools are compared to other locations and settings, e.g. urban locations, their contexts, histories, advantage and power become invisible and the school becomes a neutral, a-historical, a-political educational site. This is clearly not the case as historically and politically, the provisioning of education in South Africa has been different for different race groups and in both urban and rural settings (Christie, 1991; Kallaway, 1984). The educational outcomes linked to the historical, political and social outcomes of black and white children in the racially segregated schools in the rural setting were also different. Reporting on research done post 1994, The Nelson Mandela Report on Education in South African Rural Communities (HSRC and EPC, 2005) argues that the "historical development, contours and consolidation of power relations between urban and rural, and within rural areas, have resulted in neither formal (access to schooling) nor substantive equality (experience, quality and outcomes of education) for people living in rural areas"

National and international literature on rural education stress the importance of research to identify the issues related to learning and teaching in the rural context (HSRC and EPC 2005; Hardré and Sullivan; 2008) and to identify instances of social justice and injustice in policies and practices in the provisioning of material and human resources to rural and remote schools (Gibson, 1994; Green and Letts, 2007). Odora-

Hoppers (2004) argues for more nuanced research in rural education which renders the rural space more visible. More importantly she argues for research in rural education which uses theoretical constructs to study rural people rather contexts. This study attempted to give voice to rural teachers and their understandings of social justice through their narratives and lived experiences.

1.5 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

1.5.1 The Meta-theoretical Framework of the Study

The study is localised within sociology of education and seeks to understand the meanings teachers attach to social justice and injustice within the rural context. The significance of the study is to be found in the theoretical, methodological and pedagogical implications of social justice in education. The study can be theoretically located within critical theory and post structuralism through which the ontological accounts of social injustice are accounted for and the epistemological orientations for social justice are arrived at.

Ontology, as it is concerned with the nature of being, asks the question about the nature of the world, what really exists, the nature of our being in the world and the nature of our relationship with the world and with each other. Ontologically, the social justice questions in this study relate to who teachers are, how they construct their relationships with others and conversely, how these relationships shape teacher identities. Further ontological questions related to social justice and injustice are those which relate to the links teachers make between themselves, their practice and the schooling context. In this study, the ontological questions provided a lens to understand how the relationships between the school context, practices and lived social relations of teachers to their environment can be explored.

Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge, its construction, production, preconceptions and limits. In broad terms there are different knowledge claims which can be placed within certain research traditions. In the critical theoretical position meaning of our world is made by the recognition of relations of power and powerlessness and of privilege and marginalisations brought about by our

understanding of the world. An important contribution made in the critical tradition is that knowledge is constructed not only to understand and explain the world but to bring about transformation and emancipation in society (Babbie and Mouton, 2011).

Epistemologically our knowledge and understandings of social justice or injustice is shaped by our experiences in a historical and politically constituted world. These understandings of social justice are developed from our own experience, our personal histories and in our dialogues with others. What we conceive of as social justice is informed by what is conceived of as just, fair, and equitable on an individual and social level.

This study into rural teachers' understanding of social justice and injustice was framed within these broad ontological and epistemological positions. Positioning this study within these onto-epistemological frameworks also gave me insight into the onto-epistemological identities of the rural teachers participating in this study. In teachers' narration of their life stories, teachers revealed the development of their sense of self in relation to the rural context (ontology) and their view of knowledge of the context, knowledge of their practice and knowledge of social justice and injustice in the rural context. (See Chapter Four for a more detailed exploration of this theme).

This study was also informed by the participating teachers' onto-epistemological identities and how they were shaped by the rural context. Except for a few stints where the teachers either studied or lived in the urban areas for a short while, the teachers spent most of their childhood and their professional lives in the rural areas. All the teachers in the study, except one, who originated from Kenya, grew up under the apartheid regime and their recollections and understandings of social justice and injustice were informed by their race and/or class positions at the time. The patterns of privilege and disadvantage, entrenched in apartheid legislation, contributed to a large extent to teachers' identity formation and their access to knowledge. Their understandings of social justice and injustice were influenced by their experience of the abysmal spatial divisions along racial and class lines in rural towns. The research process in this study was developmental and allowed teachers to explore and expand their understandings of social justice and injustice. In their explorations and discussions they linked their professional identities to the social, historical and

economic realities of the rural area and formed a deepened more nuanced understanding of social justice (See Chapter Five).

In summary, this study is based on the ontological/epistemological position that reality and truth are socially constructed and constructing and knowledge about reality is constructed through our own participation, perceptions and understandings of being in the world. The ontological/epistemological position of this study locates itself within the critical theoretical position which not only seeks to explain and interpret social phenomena, but also to understand and make meaning of the historical, social, political and economic conditions which inform it. Within a critical theoretical position the study advocates that teachers' understanding of social justice is socially constructed and constructing and teachers' ability to make meaning of the world empowers them to make changes to their world.

1.5.2 Social Justice in South African Education

The South African education system under the apartheid regime became known as an unjust system of education, because it served the interests of a minority to the detriment of the majority of the citizens of the country. Since the apartheid system advantaged the minority and served their interests best, the effect of the system was to the detriment and often to the exclusion of the majority of the citizens.

During the apartheid regime, different social groups held different understandings of justice and injustice. Perceptions of justice and injustice as well as practices thereof were defined in accordance with where you stood in relation to the dominant apartheid ideology. For example, during February 1963, during the height of apartheid, a few (white) school principals in the Western Cape were asked to express their views on children of 'dubious origins' (twyfelagtige herkoms) in white schools. In the report published in *Die Burger* (26 February, 1963), one principal was quoted as saying that it was an **injustice** (my emphasis) to allow a child to attend a white school, if there was any doubt about his whiteness, especially if he (sic) has a dark skin colour. According to the principal the child would be most disadvantaged (mees benadeel) because his friends would make him feel unwelcome. He noted that Portuguese and

Italian children (who were classified white under the apartheid system) would have the same problem because 'their skin colour darkens as they grow older'. Furthermore, he said, if the child is already enrolled at the school and his skin colour darkens, the school committee would send a letter to the parents strongly suggesting that the child would not be readmitted to the school.

This understanding of justice and injustice, which was based on skin colour and ethnicity, was shaped and legitimated by the dominant social order, which placed a higher premium on whiteness. Allowing a child of a darker skin colour to attend a white school was perceived as an injustice not only to the school but also to the child who would be excluded and ostracized as a result of these policies. This understanding of justice and injustice was translated into practices of inclusion and exclusion and imposed on schooling system through the hierarchical power relations in society, which privileged 'whiteness' in society. The definition of justice and injustice restricted access to educational institutions to those deemed different.

Our understanding of social justice or injustice in the South African education context was shaped by our experiences in a historically and politically constituted world (Kincheloe, 2008). These understandings of social justice are developed from our own experience, our personal histories and in dialogue with others (Odora-Hoopers, 2004). In this study, the experiences, perceptions and understandings of social justice of teachers who have been marginalised or privileged, are investigated through their life stories.

In order to gain a nuanced and deep description of teachers' understanding of social justice and injustice in the rural context, the triadic lenses, namely social justice, social space and epistemic justice were used. The triadic social-spatial-epistemic lens takes into account the structural and relation inequalities as explored through social justice theories; the spatiality of the context, spatial architecture and histories of the towns and their inhabitants as explored through spatial justice theories; and the epistemological inequalities with regard to the unequal distribution of knowledge and differences in understandings and experiences of social justice in different communities and groups of people, as explored through epistemic justice theories.

1.5.3 Social Justice

In post-apartheid South Africa the achievement of social justice has become a central theme in the eradication of past injustices and inequalities and the establishment of a democratic society (Maestry and Ndhlovu, 2014). The term social justice is contained in South African education documents post-1994 such as the National Education Policy Act, No. 27 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996), the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996); White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (South Africa, 2002) and the Employment Equity Act, No, 55 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998). Within these policy documents social justice is set out as an educational goal, a principle on which education is based, and as an ongoing process in the achievement of equality and equity in an unequal society. Yet, it remains an elusive goal and a contested term for many educators, learners, policy makers and for members of the general public, and as a process, it is unspecified in the South African education terrain.

The concept of justice has a long history of debate and contestation, yet the concept of 'social justice' has its origins in fairly recent times (Barry, 2005). The underlying theme in the different theoretical understandings of social justice is that it is, in a general sense, related to principles of equality, equity and fairness, towards groups or individuals who have been marginalized, disadvantaged or excluded economically, politically and socially, based on constructs such as race, social class, language, gender, religion, age, ability and sexual preference (Bell, 1997; Vincent, 2003; Adams Bell and Griffin, 2007; Hemson and Francis, 2007). In order to achieve social justice, concepts such as redistribution, recognition, representation and participation (Fraser, 1997) have been proposed and developed in the literature.

The goal of social justice, as Young (1990: ix) points out is:

A goal of social justice ... is social equality... It refers primarily to the full participation and inclusion of everyone in a society's major institutions, and the socially supported substantive opportunity for all to develop and exercise their capacities and realize their choices.

In order to achieve social justice, it is necessary to examine the nature and effect of issues such as power, agency, structural constraints and resources on impoverished,

oppressed, disadvantaged, stigmatised or disenfranchised people to develop capacities of privileged and disadvantaged persons or communities to address and challenge injustice.

1.5.4 Spatial Justice

Numerous international studies have shown the interrelatedness between educational context, teachers' pedagogical classroom practices and learner success (Hannaway and Talbert, 1993; Gerwitz, 1998; Fagan and Davies 2000; Lupton, 2005). Spatial justice literature recognises the conditions which produce and reproduce the forms of advantage and disadvantage in different locations e.g. rural, urban, township and suburban communities and the privileges and marginalisations inherent in each (Green and Letts, 2007). Furthermore, spatial justice refers to the recognition of the effects of history, space and location in different communities.

In the context of this study, spatial justice theory provides a lens to understand how the relationships between the school context, practices and lived social relations of educators to their environment can be explored (Green and Letts, 2007). In spatial analysis theory, space is seen to be more than a fixed geographical or architectural concept (Green and Letts, 2007). Space in this sense relates to situated everyday practices which are both material and metaphorical and mediated through power relations in specific sites (Fataar, 2007).

Rural education in South Africa is the perfect 'space' for a spatial analysis, given the historical, social and political impulses which have given it shape over the years. Within the rural geographical, political and historical space, with its multiple poverties overlaid with issues of disadvantage, isolation, race and identity, it is of interest to see how teachers work with their practice, in their interactions with learners and the broader education community and their interpretations, reflections and learning within that space.

Social space and teachers' lived experience and the meanings they attach to social justice and injustice are thus connected. Through a consciousness of space and the refinement of who they are, teachers may develop a sense of what is a right, and what

is just and unjust within a social setting. In this study I explore the connections between teachers' understandings of social justice and injustice, their consciousness of teaching in a rural space and their life stories.

1.5.5 Epistemic Justice

Life stories and experiences differ conceivably across different and similar contexts and situations. They present nuanced and alternative insights of social phenomena – not just one way of seeing, interpreting and knowing. This study, which contains the life stories of rural teachers, acknowledges the unequal power relationships and unequal access to education, resources and social networks in the rural education setting. In my retelling and analyses of teachers' life stories (See Chapter 4), the underlying theme is that the differences in teachers' understanding of social justice and injustice are not only based on contextual, spatial and personal differences but also on epistemic differences. In the South African context in which participating teachers were socialised and educated, they did not all have the same access to knowledge and the same resources to interpret their experiences. Fricker (2007:20) refers to the unequal access to knowledge and opportunities as epistemic injustice. She makes two points in this regard. The first point is that in unequal relations of power, the stories and perspectives of the disempowered individuals and groups will often be different from those in more powerful and privileged positions. The second point is that those in power do not see or acknowledge the stories and perspectives of the powerless, silencing them, rendering them invisible and, as in the case of institutionalized oppressive systems such as apartheid, classify them as illegal. Fricker (2007:1) argues that as a result of these inequalities, individuals and groups have gaps in knowledge of themselves and others, epistemic deficits, which affect their ability to convey and receive knowledge i.e. their capacity to hear and to be heard.

Medina (2013: 33) argues that epistemic injustice is endemic in the inequalities in power relationships brought about by social injustice. According to him social injustice and epistemic injustice are inexorably linked:

In a situation of oppression, epistemic relations are screwed up. Inequality is the enemy of knowledge: it handicaps our ability to know and learn from each other. Social injustices breed epistemic injustices; or rather they are two sides of the same coin, always going together, mutually supportive and reinforcing each other.

In socially just research it is important to understand power and powerlessness and its effect on whose stories are silenced and whose are heard and why, whose stories and experiences are misrepresented, misinterpreted or 'obscured from understanding due to prejudicial flaws in shared resources for social interpretation' and whose stories are excluded from the collective social understandings (Fricker, 2007). Using the notion of epistemic justice, Fricker (2007) explains how injustices in knowledge and interpretation may arise in situations and contexts where individuals and groups have unequal access to knowledge, opportunities and resources brought about structural imbalances of power. In this study which explores teachers' understandings and interpretations of social justice and injustice through their stories and life histories it is of relevance to explore epistemic injustice and to acknowledge deficiencies in social knowledge and understandings as a result of living in an unequal society.

1.6 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this study, I investigated twelve teachers' understanding of social justice and injustice, and their understandings of just pedagogical practices as contained in their life stories. The teachers were located in four schools in the Overberg rural education district of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

The main question informing the research was:

What are rural teachers' understandings of social justice and injustice in a rural school setting?

The subsidiary research questions were:

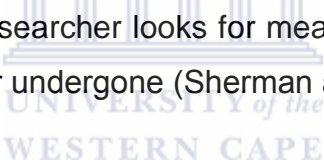
1. What are teachers' understandings of social injustice?
2. What meanings do teachers have of social justice?
3. What are teachers' understandings of just pedagogical practices?

1.7 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 The Research Design

The study is located within a qualitative research design in order to understand and analyse the constructs of social justice, spatial justice and epistemic justice in rural education settings. Grounded theory methodology was used in this study to understand social justice and injustice and the meanings teachers attach to these concepts in their interactions in the rural context.

The grounded theorist is interested in understanding the meanings people have constructed of their world. Charmaz (2006: 507) argues that grounded theory methods can fruitfully be used in qualitative research to understand social justice. The reasons for using grounded theory for social justice research, in this study, can be listed as follows:

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- ✓ The grounded theory researcher looks for meanings embedded in experiences as they are 'lived', felt or undergone (Sherman and Webb, 2001).
 - ✓ The researcher is not neutral and the researchers' own meanings and understandings also form part of the research data.
 - ✓ Acknowledgement of the researchers' active role in the research process allows for insights and meaning to be mediated through dialogue between the researcher and the participants and the researcher-as-participant.
 - ✓ The iterative process of grounded theory enables the researcher to explore deeper meanings from the participants' perspectives.

1.7.2 The Research Approach

The approach used in the study was a combination of the interpretivist and critical theory paradigms. Both paradigms were found useful in this study on social justice.

Working from within the interpretivist paradigm, I was able to form a relationship with participants within clear ethical frameworks and was able to gain participants' perspectives according to their interpretations and understandings of events. Working within the critical perspective societal issues and problems were examined critically to understand issues of power and powerlessness. The combination of both paradigms allowed me to present a critical perspective of participants' understandings of social justice.

1.7.3 Research Participants

The teacher participants consisted of four principals and eight teachers in four schools in the Overberg district. The schools were selected on the basis of their location and their history: two schools located on farms - one enrolled historically disadvantaged children pre-1994 and the other enrolled white farmers children pre-1994; one ex-Model C⁴ school in a rural town and one ex-HOR⁵ school in a rural coastal town.

1.7.4 Research Instruments

Open ended interviews were conducted with the two rural education district directors to obtain historical, socio-economic, political and educational data pertaining to the rural education districts in the Western Cape. These interviews assisted with the selection of the participating schools.

Individual interviews were conducted with the four principals to obtain background information about the schools (See Appendix One: Instrument one). In-depth interviews were conducted with the twelve participating teachers, inclusive of the four principals, to obtain life stories (See Appendix One: Instrument two). The twelve teachers were asked to keep a journal of their observations of social and social justice events, structures and procedures at their school (See Appendix One: Instrument three). Four focused group interviews were conducted with the participating teachers at the four schools (See Appendix One: Instrument four).

⁴ Under apartheid during the late 1980's, Model C schools were administered and largely funded by a school governing body and alumni. They could also decide on their own admission policies. These schools were predominantly white.

⁵ Black education was divided into three groups: HOR – House of Representative for 'coloureds'; House of Delegates for Indians; and Bantu Education for Africans

I kept a research reflective journal from June 2012 in which I recorded my reflections on the research journey and my insights of my role as a social justice researcher. Extractions from my research journal are presented in at particular intervals in Chapter 4 and 5. The extractions serve two purposes in writing up the findings and analysis of the study. Firstly, I include extracts of my reflective writing at the actual moments on my research journey to highlight critical points I considered at the time. Secondly, I present extracts from my reflective journal in the overall analysis of the data and present them as insights gained from my journal and my reading of the literature.

1.7.5 Data Analysis

Throughout the data gathering period I reflected upon, analysed and ‘conversed’ with the data, persistently going back and forth as patterns and new insights emerged. Early coding of the data collected enhanced and strengthened the categories which emerged further down the data collection process. I constantly checked my emerging understandings with the participants and with the literature. The nature of the research design made it possible for participants to communicate their understandings and questions with one another and the world around them. I digitally recorded all the interviews and manually coded the data into categories according to the techniques used in grounded theory. Using the data from the in-depth interviews, teacher observations and focus group discussions, inter-case and cross-case analyses were made to determine common threads and distinctions in and between the schools. This process enhanced my continual interactions with the data. Categories were linked and cross-referenced through constant comparisons and sorting and recorded in a journal. The data were further sorted into themes for further analysis.

1.8 RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethical statement

The study was conducted within the ethical framework as stated below. All aspects of the research were conducted within this framework. The ethical framework was explained to participants prior to the commencement of the research and revisited during the research. The ethical framework which guided the research follows:

Privacy and confidentiality

In my role as the researcher in the study, I ensured participants that every precaution would be taken to respect the privacy of participants, maintain the confidentiality of personal information and safeguard their health and human rights. In keeping with this statement, no names of respondents, schools or other identifying personal information were used. It is thus impossible to identify the individual participants in the study.



Participation

I communicated with participants that their participation in the research was on a voluntary basis. In accordance with this statement, consent to participate was voluntary and detailed information was supplied to participants to ensure informed signed consent.

Participants were also informed that the information collected in this study would be used for the purposes of this study only. In accordance with this statement, all data was kept securely to prevent loss, unauthorized access and the divulgence of confidential information. All questionnaires, interview transcripts, audio recordings and reflective journals were destroyed on completion of the study.

Recording and reporting

Prior to the commencement of the data collection phase, permission was gained from the participants for all the recordings in the study. Participants were informed of their right to discontinue and withdraw from any recording process either verbally or non-verbally, without giving an explanation.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The thesis is presented under the following chapter headings:

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

In the introductory chapter I give a brief overview of the study. I start off by presenting the background and rationale for the study. I further introduce the theories informing the study as well as the research methodology. The research methodology introduces the research paradigm, approach, design, data collection instruments, research instruments and data analysis used in the study. Finally, the ethical considerations are outlined to elucidate the ethical frameworks of the research, inclusive of the considerations to protect participants in the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Study and Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I review different aspects of social justice and injustice and their relation to pedagogical practices and socially just research. A conceptual framework is formulated to explain the relationships of key themes and concepts related to social justice and injustice in education. Methodologically, the study is located within grounded theory. Literature related to grounded theory is reviewed and an argument is made for grounded theory for social justice research.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

In this chapter the rationale for selecting grounded theory as a methodology for social justice research is explained. The different aspects of the research, i.e. the research paradigm, approach, design, methodology, research instruments and data analysis, are explained. The selection criteria for the participants are explained and an outline of the research process is given. The data gathering and data analysis procedures are introduced and my role in the research process clarified.

Chapter Four: Teacher Voice and Social Justice

This chapter explores social justice and injustice as presented in teachers' life stories. I present teachers' understandings of social justice and injustice, gathered during individual interviews, in their own voices. The data thus generated are presented according to emerging overarching categories. From these categories I identify and discuss emerging themes which are followed through in the focus group discussions, presented in chapter five.

Chapter Five: Exploring Social Justice through the Dialogical Nature of Focus Groups

In this chapter the discussions in the focus group interviews are presented to reflect the intertwined narratives of teachers' lived experiences. Teachers' experiences of social justice and injustice as filtered through their individual and collective lenses are explored. These explorations are further presented against the backdrop of teachers' political-historical contexts and the particularities of their spatial contexts. An organising framework for social justice is presented in this chapter.

Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusions

The conclusions of the study are presented in this final chapter. Based on the findings of the research and my involvement in the research process, my contributions to social justice in education are presented as well as my contribution to socially just research. Thereafter the limitations of the research are presented as well as recommendations for further research. The study is brought to a close by my reflections on the research process.

1.10 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this introductory chapter described the scope of the study and gave an indication of what to expect from this thesis. In the next chapter I focus on the literature review and theoretical framework which guides this study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the literature on different aspects of social justice and injustice and their relation to pedagogical practices is reviewed. The literature reviewed is in accordance with my research questions which seek to understand teachers' understandings of social justice in rural settings and its relations to educational practices. In order to situate this study meta-theoretically, the literature review states the ontological and epistemological positions adopted in this study. Theoretically and methodologically, the argument in this chapter is made for a grounded theory for social justice and further supported by a literature review of grounded theory for social justice.

In 'grounding' the study in grounded theory for social justice, the different notions of social justice inclusive of spatial justice and epistemic justice are presented to understand teachers' understandings of social justice within a specific rural setting. There are two overall defining positions taken in the literature on social justice: an abstract, idealist notion of social justice and social justice as realised. An overview of both perspectives is provided. The study is underpinned by the notion of social justice as realised.

After presenting the position, this study explores epistemic knowledge of social justice to establish what shapes teachers' understandings of social justice. The study combines two positions on how social justice and social injustice are shaped. In the first instance, the position is that our experiential knowledge of social justice is based on our positions in, and experience of, living within a historically and politically constituted world (Kincheloe, 2008). Our experiential knowledge of social justice is made conscious through our experience of social injustice. Our understandings of social justice, therefore, are formed by our experience of living in a socially unjust

world. In order for us to understand socially just education practices we have to make conscious our knowledge and experience of social injustice.

In the second instance teachers' epistemic knowledge of social justice is related to Fricker's notion of epistemological and hermeneutical injustice as set out in her seminal text, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and Ethics of Knowing* (2007). Here gaps in the construction of knowledge (epistemology) and interpretation of knowledge through language and speech (hermeneutics) occur in unequal power relations resulting in prejudice towards, and marginalisations of, those affected. Fricker (2007) refers to this as epistemological injustices which are analysed, in this study, in relation to teachers' knowledge, understandings and interpretations of social justice and injustice in the rural spatial context.

The relation between social justice and education practices is scrutinised. The premise here is that teaching for social justice starts with teachers' understanding of social injustice and can enable the implementation of socially just education practices.

2.1 THE META-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The study is situated within the sociology of education and seeks to explore teachers' understanding of social justice and injustice, specifically within the rural school setting in the Western Cape Province. The study aims to analyse the interconnectedness between the meanings rural teachers attach to social justice and injustice, and their 'lived experiences' of teaching in a rural school in order to establish the relations between the ontological/epistemological understandings rural teachers have of social justice and injustice and the relations they sustain with educational practices. The study is more specifically located within interpretivism and critical theory to account for teachers' ontological perspectives and epistemological orientations of social justice and injustice.

Ontology, it is concerned with the nature of reality and its characteristics and asks questions about the nature of the world and what really exists (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Cresswell, 2013). The ontological basis of this study can be located within the critical theoretical framework and more specifically critical ontology as espoused by

Kincheloe (2008). The critical ontological framework holds the position that reality and truth are socially constructed and constructing. Within this framework our understandings of the past, present and future and our being in that reality are interpreted and reinterpreted by our understandings of ourselves in a historically and politically constituted world (Kincheloe, 2008). Other exponents of the critical ontological position state that the nature of our being is embedded in our language, social practices cultural conventions and historical understandings of that reality (Somekh and Lewin, 2005).

Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge, its construction, production, preconception and limits. In broad terms there are numerous definitions of knowledge claims which can be arranged within certain research traditions. One knowledge claim, which can be read within the positivist tradition, is that there is a world which can be discovered, invented or analysed: knowledge about that world can be produced and passed on. Another claim is that our world is constructed through our own experience, perceptions and understandings of it, in the interpretivist tradition. In the critical theoretical position the interpretivist tradition is extended to recognize the historical, social, political and economic relationships which inform our understandings of the world. Following the critical theoretical position, meaning of our world is made by the recognition of relations of power and powerlessness and of privilege and marginalisations brought about by our understanding of the world. An important contribution made in the critical tradition is that knowledge is constructed not only to understand and explain the world but to bring about transformation and emancipation in society (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

The ontological/epistemological framework of this study in relation to social justice considers unequal power relationships within social contexts. This framework acknowledges that in an unequal society the 'social institutions and practices favour the powerful' (Fricker, 2007) and that our understandings of the social world are shaped by our relative positions within social contexts. Epistemologically this means that those with more power, by virtue of such differentials as race, class, gender, religion and sexual orientation have an unfair advantage over those with less power in the manner in which collective social understandings of the world are shaped. Ontologically this means that the powerful have more resources to shape knowledge

about the nature of reality in the terms whereby they understand and come to constitute that reality. Within the context of social justice this means that the ontological/epistemological constructs of the powerless or oppressed people are marginalized and silenced. Social justice advocates and socially just practices endeavour to take the voices of the marginalized into account when undertaking socially just research.

In this study the critical ontological framework provides a lens to understand how the relations between school context, practices and lived social relations of teachers to their environment, especially in terms of social justice, can be explored. Ontologically the social justice questions in this study relate who teachers are, their understanding of the social, political and historical processes which shaped them, how they construct their relations with others and conversely how these relations shape who they are. Further ontological questions related to social justice are those which relate to the links teachers make between their understandings of how they perceive themselves, their practice, their community and schooling context and their understandings and experiences of social justice and injustice.

In summary, this study is based on the ontological/epistemological position that reality and truth are socially constructed and constructing and knowledge about reality is constructed through our own participation, perceptions and understandings of being in the world. The ontological/epistemological position of this study is set within the critical theoretical position which seeks to explain and interpret social phenomena as well as understand and make meaning of the historical, social, political and economic conditions which inform it. Within a critical theoretical position the study advocates that teacher understandings of social justice are socially constructed and constructing and teachers' ability to make meaning of the world empowers them to make changes to their world.

2.2 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Three distinct yet interrelated theories frame the study: social justice, spatial justice and epistemic justice. The study is "grounded" within a grounded theory approach. For the purposes of this study these three interrelated theories are located

conceptually and methodologically within a grounded theory framework. Procedurally thus, I firstly explain the main tenets of a grounded theory approach as it pertains to social justice research. Thereafter I explore some of the main debates pertaining to social justice and injustice, with special reference to the links between social justice and spatial justice to gain insight into the socio-historic-political and geographical distinctiveness of the rural school and how it relates to teachers' perceptions of social justice and injustice. Thereafter I explore, epistemic justice with special reference to epistemic and hermeneutic injustice to gain 'the bigger picture' of teachers' understandings and interpretations of social justice in an unequal society.

2.2.1 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory originated with Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L Strauss in 1967: it was first set out and published in their seminal text *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Cresswell, 2013; Bryant and Charmaz, 2010; Dey, 2007). According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010), the publication set the tone for qualitative researchers to conduct inductive and emergent qualitative studies in new ways. Prior to Glaser and Strauss' seminal text, the debates in qualitative research mainly centred around methods of data collection and issues related to quantitative research, such as validity and reliability. Subsequent to their text on grounded theory, debates around qualitative research were redirected to strategies of data analysis and theory construction based on empirical and inductive approaches which established a logic and rigor in compliance with the nature of qualitative research (Dey, 2007; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2010).

Since then, grounded theory has become widely used and popular as a qualitative research method (Bryant and Charmaz 2010; Babbie and Mouton (2011); Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2010; Dey, 2007) and extensively developed and widely adapted in use. Adaptations to the original texts have resulted in a number of ambiguities and contestations amongst researchers, including the originators, Glaser and Strauss. Evidence of this is well documented in the way descriptions of grounded theory have diverged from their originators Glaser and Strauss (Dey, 2007; Cresswell, 2013). Although the approach has been adapted in use by various researchers and research

paradigms, the basic tenets of a grounded theory as proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) form the basis of many interpretations of grounded theory.

An overview of the literature attests to grounded theory as an essentially contested concept, with 'variety of descriptions' and 'considerable modifications' (Bryant and Charmaz, 2010:3). The tradition of contestation and proliferation of grounded theory, (and also in grounded theory as a concept), has been evidenced in the use of grounded theory in qualitative and social science research (Charmaz, 2006; 2011; Roulston, 2010). This has resulted in openness towards the interpretation and application of grounded theory to the extent that multiple versions have been used extensively in different and often conflicting methodologies: positivism, post positivism, constructivism, postmodernism, situational and computer assisted research (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005, Denzin, 2010). The adaptability of grounded theory to these divergent methodologies has resulted, however, in an absence of a unified framework (Denzin, 2010; Roulston, 2010; Cresswell, 2013).

Despite the lack of a unified framework, literature on 'grounded theory methodology' have (at least) the following in common: flexible yet comparable guidelines for concurrent data collection and analysis, a commitment to stay close to the world being studied and the generation of theory that goes beyond description with explanatory power of the social world being studied (Birks and Mills, 2011). Aspects of these guidelines, such as coding practices and categorisations, have been taken up by many qualitative researchers who may not necessarily situate their work as grounded theory (Maxwell and Miller, 2010; Roulston, 2010). Instead of weakening the impact of grounded theory on social research, the contestations have, according to Bryant and Charmaz (2010), been inherently valuable for social research. Various contributors to the debate on grounded theory, for example Charmaz (2006, 2011), Clarke (2005) and Denzin (2010), whether through acquiescence or dissent, have contributed to development of the philosophical and methodological issues in social research generally.

What is Grounded Theory?

Grounded theory seeks to develop theory on specific social phenomena or research topics in specific contexts which go further than the description of the context. In grounded theory the context is described not as an end in itself but to the present a 'unified theoretical explanation' (Corbin and Strauss, 2007:107) of a process or an action based on participants' lived and relational experiences of the social phenomenon. The theory which emerges is iteratively triangulated with literature reviews and the intuition of the researcher (Lewis, 1998, Orton, 1997). Grounded theorists literally take the position that theory can be developed inductively from the ground up from participants' own experience and perspectives. The theory can be generated from the data and insights emerging inductively from the study rather than being driven by deductively by theory (Henning et al, 2004). The aim of grounded theory is to generate and develop social theory grounded in participants own experience of the showing process, relations and social world connectedness (Roulston, 2010): integrating new and existing understandings of the social world.

A grounded theory methodology consists of inductive, systematic and simultaneous data collection and theoretical analysis of a topic in an iterative way. During this iterative process of data collection and analysis the researcher records emerging categories and core themes (Dey, 2004: 85) until an explanation or understanding of the research topic develops: that is, a grounded theory about the research topic. (Charmaz, 2006; 2011; Birks and Mills 2010; Cresswell, 2013).

When to use Grounded Theory

I chose grounded theory as a research design and methodology following the guidelines for choosing grounded theory as a research design proposed by Birks and Mills (2010: 12) and Cresswell (2013: 88). According to these theorists, grounded theory is a good design to use in qualitative research under the following conditions:

- where little is known of the field of study and where there is no theory available to explain or understand the social phenomenon;
- where the field of study is open to different interpretations and is contested

- where the theories and explanations available are of no relevance or interest in the context within which the research is planned;
- where the generation of theory to explain how people understand and experience a phenomenon in distinct contexts is a desired outcome; and where
- an inherent process is imbedded in the research situation which could be explained by inductive and iterative grounded theory methods.

My decision to choose grounded theory for this study is informed by these guidelines and is based on the following reasons:

- Very little is known of teachers' perceptions of social justice in the South African post-apartheid rural context, which is the focus of this study.
- The theories and explanations of research studies in different contexts and with different participant groups are interesting and illuminating, but they do not adequately or directly answer the questions which inform this study.
- Approaches to social justice in general are contested between ideal concepts of social justice and situated understandings of social injustice in the real world. This study explored the epistemic knowledge of social justice and social injustice from the perspectives of participants in a rural setting in post-apartheid South Africa and aims to contribute to the current social justice debates in South African education in particular and society in general.
- The concept of being rural is contested and is understood differently in South African society. The concept of social justice has been applied differently in South Africa in the pre-and post-apartheid state; different communities have experienced injustices differently.
- The anticipated outcome of the research is to generate theory about how teachers in a distinct context, the rural school context in the Overberg district in the Western Cape Province South Africa, understand social justice.
- The research design has an inherent developmental process which tracks teachers' increased awareness of social justice.

The overriding objective of using grounded theory in this study is to allow for the emergence of richly layered descriptions and perspectives of social justice and injustice in discrete rural school-community contexts in the Overberg education district.

I do not lay claim to developing a social justice theory. However, I used the iterative grounded theory process to provide a rich account of teachers' understandings of social justice and injustice in the rural context. A grounded theory approach allowed me to understand the complexities and ambiguities of social justice and injustices from the rural teachers' perspective and to gain new and nuanced insights about social justice education.

Grounded Theory for Social Justice Research

Cresswell (2013) states that there are many and different ways to undertake social justice research in the qualitative research tradition. Despite these differences, he mentions a few common elements in social justice research studies which are:

- The study aims to explore and understand unequal relations of power and inequities which disadvantage and exclude individuals or cultures;
- The researcher recognizes unequal relations of power in the research process and works inclusively by allowing the multiplicity of participants' views to be included in the research process;
- Participants are co-constructors of the knowledge generated in the research process and the 'true owners' of the data collected; and
- The research may prompt action and transformation.

The use of grounded theory as a qualitative research design in this study was informed by these elements mentioned by Cresswell (2013). A further reason for using grounded theory was informed by Kathy Charmaz's (2006; 2011) arguments that grounded theory methodology can advance social justice research. In stating her position for grounded theory to advance social justice, Charmaz (2011:362) describes social justice research as studies that:

address power, agency, structural constraints, resources, and analyze a wide range of questions including specific problems of impoverished, oppressed, stigmatised and disenfranchised people as well as those that interrogate relationships between a social justice issue and social structure.

She also describes grounded theory as an 'emergent method'. An emergent method is 'inductive, indeterminate and open-ended' (Charmaz, 2011: 155) which means that all aspects of the initial research plan can be modified as information. Insight about the topic of study can be obtained throughout the research process which allows for new conditions and consequences to be studied. The emergent method in grounded theory allows the grounded theorist to see actual connections between things (Maxwell and Miller, 2010) which comprise an important aspect of social justice research.

The social justice researcher concentrates on aspects such as context, power, inequality, marginalisation, the relations between structure, culture, policies and practices and people's experiences of suffering. Charmaz (2011) argues that the strategy of grounded theory is a useful toolkit for social justice researchers. The emergent and iterative process of data collection, analysis and theory construction allows for themes to emerge which could be used to explain relations, interactions and connections in the social situation being investigated. The emergent themes which emerge through grounded theory for social justice allow for clarifications and understandings of connections between specific social situations and structural limitations. The advantage of using grounded theory for social justice in the way described by Charmaz (2011) is that it can potentially challenge conventional understandings of the studied social phenomenon and advance social justice research.

Constructivist Grounded Theory

This research study is located within a constructivist notion of grounded theory and includes the critical ontological framework which states that participants' (teachers and researcher's) understanding of the self is developed within distinct and broad contexts and environments, as constituted in past, present and future realities. This understanding of the self is further interpreted and reinterpreted by our understandings of ourselves in a historically and politically constituted world (Kincheloe, 2005; Giroux, 2009; Holstein and Gubrium, 2011). This understanding and construction of ourselves-in-context is embedded in our language, our social practices; cultural conventions and our historical, social and political understandings of that reality (Somekh and Lewin, 2005; Visser and Moleko, 2012).

The constructivist notion of grounded theory has its roots in the pragmatist tradition of Anselm Strauss (Charmaz, 2011). In contrast to traditional approaches to grounded theory which studies a single process or core category as in Strauss and Corbin's approach (Cresswell, 2013) or the objectivist approach of Glaser (Charmaz, 2010), the constructivist approach works from the assumption that the social world (s), as lived, experienced and perceived, is diverse and complex and no single description and explanation can be regarded as the 'truth' which is valid for all (Visser and Moleko, 2012). The constructivist view is that epistemologically realities do not exist outside of participants. Realities are shaped by and shape participants living in those realities: the subjective realities of the participants in their contexts count as data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Holstein and Gubrium, 2011).

Constructivist grounded theorists work with multiple realities of participants in their natural settings. These multiple perspectives of social phenomena within specific contexts and environments are investigated from participants' perspectives, their interpretation and understanding of how their selves, their actions and relations are constructs of these realities and are constructed by these realities (Charmaz, 2006;2011; Cresswell, 2013).

This study adopts the constructivist position concerning grounded theory as proposed by Charmaz (2006; 2011; Cresswell, 2013). Charmaz (2011) makes the argument for the constructivist version of grounded theory to advance social justice. According to her, the attention social justice researchers pay to issues of power and structure can offer important contributions to how social, historical and spatial conditions shape current situations and in so doing enrich the development of grounded theory.

Within this perspective of grounded theory the researcher is as much part of the research process as the participants and is in dialogue with the participants and the research process. The reality, views and influences of the researcher are integral parts of the research process. Social justice researchers are aware of their own subjectivities, the power imbalances between the researcher and the participants and acknowledge the participants as 'the true owners of the information collected' (Cresswell, 2013:35). Social justice researchers should be aware of these influences

and make these views explicit (Charmaz, 2010). The way in which this is done is through memo-ing, which is both a process and a document: the researcher reflects on and records ideas as data are collected and analyzed. The memo gives direction to the research process and forms an integral part of the data.

According to the constructivist notion of grounded theory for social justice, the social justice researcher maintains a critical stance and a critical consciousness throughout the research process. The constructivist social justice researcher is concerned not only with the *what* of social justice (social inequalities and oppression), but *how* our knowledge and experience of social justice in context is constructed by who we are in that reality and also *why* it is thus constructed (Charmaz, 2010). The constructivist social justice researcher aims thus not only to interpret and describe social justice as a social construct but to transform society.

In summary, a constructivist grounded theory for social justice aims to understand the meanings and actions that participants (myself included) ascribe to social justice and to understand how processes of power, privilege, oppression, inequalities and inequities differentially affected and affect people in the South African rural education context and to construct theory based on the data which could lead to action.

The position taken in this study is that there are multiple and diverse understandings, meanings and interpretations of social justice (North, 2008). In the next section I explore the philosophical and conceptual understandings of social justice within education. I also present the main theoretical frameworks contained in the literature on social justice in education.

2.2.2 Social Justice

The achievement of social justice in education is one of the most pressing issues in educational reforms both globally and locally: it is seen to be a crucial element in the making of a more just society and yet, one of the most elusive and difficult to define concepts. In post-apartheid South Africa the achievement of social justice has become a central theme in the eradication of past injustices and inequalities and the establishment of a democratic society. The term social justice is contained in South

African education documents post 1994 and is set out as an educational goal, a principle on which education is based and as an ongoing process in the achievement of equality and equity in an unequal society. At the same time it remains an elusive goal and a contested term for many educators, learners, policy-makers and for members of the general public; although social justice is also referred to as a process in South African education policies, the process towards social justice is unspecified in the South African education terrain.

The literature shows that historically, social justice has been a contested term internationally and consequently does not have a single or static quality (Sturman, 1997; Bogotch, 2002; Gerwitz, 2002; Vincent 2003; Barry, 2005; North, 2006; Sen, 2009; Zeichner, 2009; Boyles, Carussi and Attick, 2009). The meanings and interpretations attached to it are embedded within specific historical and political discourses and are reflective of the social and economic conditions of particular times in history (Young, 1990). The term is thus understood differently, in different parts of the world in societies with different social structures and at particular points in history (Miller, 2007). There is thus no one 'correct' way of interpreting justice. In fact, Campbell (2010:9) states it would be a 'mistake to have an overall theory of justice which has an equal force in all spheres'. According to Smith (2012), there are different interpretations of justice, all equally valid, which make the study of social justice in education challenging, yet interesting.

Even though these spatial and temporal dimensions of social justice do not allow for a single, uncontested, universal description, this study does not propose a relativist or ambiguous notion of social justice. This study seeks to understand social justice from the multiple perspectives and diversified experiences of rural teachers in order to arrive at an understanding which is dynamic, emerges in or from dialogue and gives new, deeper meanings to our experiences of being human (North, 2006).

The origin of social justice

The notion of justice and its principles have been the source of debates over the centuries. The use of the concept of justice can be traced to classical times, notably by

Aristotle and Socrates (Tyler and Smith, 1995). Miller (2003) quotes a classical definition of justice as stated by Roman Emperor Justinian, “Justice is the constant and perpetual will to render to each his due.” Within this quotation lies the basic principle of justice: that people should be treated fairly, equally and consistently in a way that is relevant to their needs and to what they deserve.

Amartya Sen (2009) traces the origins of the debate around justice and states that even though it has been deliberated extensively over the ages, it only really received prominence during the radical political, economic and social transformations of the European Enlightenment period: during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In his treatise on *The Idea of Justice* Sen (2009) identifies two distinct approaches which emerged during this period and which lay the foundation for ‘modern’ approaches to justice. One approach, led by proponents such as Thomas Hobbes and Jean Jacques Rousseau, Sen (2009) identifies justice as *transcendental institutionalism*, which concentrated on ‘the identification of just institutional arrangements for a society’. Proponents of the *transcendental institutionalism approach* developed theories of justice which focused on a transcendental search for a perfectly just society guided by understandings of perfect justice and ideal institutions (Sen, 2009).

The second approach Sen (2009) identifies and names justice as the *realization-focused comparison*. Although proponents of this approach, such as Adam Smith, Karl Marx and John Stuart Mill, made distinctly different social comparisons (Sen ,2009), when located in the *realization-focused comparison* approach to justice, they share a common platform comparative to *transcendental institutionalism*. Sen suggests that the fundamental difference between the two approaches is that adherents to a realization-focused comparison of justice would more often emphasise the removal of injustice rather than the pursuit of perfect justice and ‘were all involved in comparisons of societies that already existed or could feasible emerge, rather than confining themselves to transcendental searches for a perfectly just society’ (Sen 2009: 7).

Sen (2009) dichotomises the two approaches yet concedes that although proponents of *transcendental institutionalism* such as Immanuel Kant and John Rawls explore the nature of justice as right, socially appropriate behaviour and the right institutions, their accounts of justice take into account moral and political imperatives regarding socially

appropriate behaviour. Sen (2009) refers to the *transcendental institutionalism* as 'arrangements focused' because it focuses on the arrangements between right behaviour and right institutions. By contrast, realisation focused understanding concentrates on the actual, realised behaviour of individuals rather than ideal behaviour.

Another distinction which Sen (2009) draws between the two is the analysis used in the approaches related to the type of questions they raise. The realization approach focuses on process type questions such as 'How would justice be advanced' and the transcendental institutionalism approach on the product: what would be perfectly just institutions. Process type questions focus on the actual realisations of social justice through the lived experiences of members of a society and product type questions of the transcendental approach would focus only on the identification of right institutions and rules.

Broadly speaking, when two notions of justice are related to their epistemological positions (i.e. what their knowledge claims are), there are differences in the way they understand and interpret justice. Transcendental institutionalism adheres to the claim that knowledge is out there, in the sense that justice is out there and can be found in organisations, institutions of society: the nature of justice is found in arrangements between right behaviour and right institutions (Sen, 2009). In the realization approach, social justice is seen to be both a process and a goal that allows for full participation of all members of society. According to Sen (2009), in order to promote a just society, it is not as important to know what justice means in a transcendental, abstract sense, but rather to recognise forms of injustice, in a justice as realised sense, that is the lived experiences of persons as their expressions of justice.

This study takes the position of justice as realised: that is that justice can be understood in the lived experiences of people rather than in an abstract idealised sense. In the next section, the concepts 'social justice' and 'social injustice' are explored. The position of the study with regard to social justice is stated.

The Meanings of Social Justice

The concept of justice has a long history of debate and contestation, yet the concept of 'social justice' has its origins in fairly recent times (Barry, 2005). The underlying theme in the different theoretical understandings of social justice is that it is, in a general sense, related to principles of equality, equity and fairness, towards groups or individuals who have been marginalised, disadvantaged or excluded economically, politically and socially, based on constructs such as race, social class, language, gender, religion, age, ability and sexual preference.

The goal of social justice, as Young (1990: ix) points out is:

A goal of social justice ... is social equality... It refers primarily to the full participation and inclusion of everyone in a society's major institutions, and the socially supported substantive opportunity for all to develop and exercise their capacities and realize their choices.

In order to achieve social justice, it is necessary to examine the nature and effect of issues such as power, agency, structural constraints and resources on impoverished, oppressed, disadvantaged, stigmatised or disenfranchised people to develop capacities of both privileged and disadvantaged persons or communities to address and challenge injustice existing there.

Social Justice and Social Injustice

To gain an understanding of social justice, it is important also to understand what injustice means. The term 'social injustice' is commonly used in social science literature, but is rarely defined. Injustice, always used in a societal context, is used to describe societal relations such as those which exist in the interrelationships between persons, organizations and the state. In this context, the term is used to describe any act, omission or event which violates the rights of a person or group of people. A useful definition in a broad sense is offered by Gil (1998:10) in *Confronting Injustice and Oppression* in which injustice is referred to as:

... coercively established and maintained inequalities, discrimination, and dehumanizing, development-inhibiting conditions of living (e.g. slavery, serfdom, and exploitative wage labor, unemployment, poverty, starvation, and homelessness; inadequate health care and education),

imposed by the dominant social groups, classes, and peoples upon dominated and exploited groups classes and peoples.

In conclusion, when we define and understand justice, it is also important to understand injustice. When people try to understand what justice means, a clear sense of what injustice is, helps them to understand and strive for justice. A sense of injustice as inequality, dehumanizing and development-inhibiting gives people a sense of what justice could be: the elimination or minimising of such conditions.

Towards a Social Justice Framework

This section explores the different frameworks used in the literature to understand social justice. The view held most commonly of social justice is that of distributive justice, or economic justice, which refers to the distribution of resources in such a way that there is equality of opportunity and resources: all the citizens either have or have access to material and cultural goods, benefits, services and symbolic resources such as knowledge and skills and rights and duties (North, 2006). John Rawls (2001: 42-43) the most referenced writer on distributive justice identified two principles of social justice, as stated below:

- Each person has the same indefensible claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all.
- Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society.

These two principles of distributive justice pertain to how the benefits or the goods of society, such as wealth, income, educational opportunities and other resources are distributed. The act of distribution of the resources of the community are made in accordance with principles of equality, equity, and in accordance with what they deserve, with what they need and should benefit the least advantaged in society (Rawls,1971:302)

Fraser (1997) identifies three challenges to distributive justice which are of particular significance for South African rural communities characterised by social inequalities based on primarily on race, class and gender. The first challenge is that of *exploitation* which refers to situations where the distribution of goods i.e. the gains of labour, is distributed to those who were not part of the labour force, leading to worker dissatisfaction. The second challenge is that of *economic marginalisation* where participation and opportunities for participation in the labour force are limited to poorly paid work or no work at all leading to job insecurity and unemployment. The third challenge to distributive justice refers to situations of *deprivation* for marginalised groups where the material standard of living is inadequate and often illegal. These concerns are particularly relevant in the rural education context where the patterns of inequality are persistent and often inhumane. With respect to the intention of the democratic South African government to distribute resources to equalise educational opportunities for all, equality through resource provisioning has not been met (Christie, 2012). The poor and historically disadvantaged in the rural communities are in many cases not able to access the equal opportunities afforded by equal access to educational institutions stipulated in the South African Schools Act (South Africa, 1996). For example, the introduction of school fees has resulted in inequality of provisioning. Non-fee paying schools, of benefit to the least advantaged, have not eradicated past inequalities and have in fact widened the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged within rural and urban communities and between urban and rural schools (Christie, 2012). In the rural communities in this study, historical inequalities of race, class and gender rely on a form of distributive justice which is too simplistic and finally counter-productive: it perpetuates inequalities based on past injustices.

Another concern of distributive justice raised by Fraser, as cited in Gerwitz and Cribb (2002), is related to instances where resources are distributed in a manner which can lead to cultural domination and non-recognition of marginalised groups and disrespect for the way different cultures present themselves.

Gerwitz and Cribb (2002) present, in this respect, a second and related understanding of social justice, cultural justice or the recognition of difference. According to Gerwitz and Cribb (2002) cultural justice occurs where there is recognition of difference, respect and tolerance and freedom from misrepresentation and stereotyping.

Recognition is used here in the way Bourdieu (in Grenfell and James, 1998) describes it – the acknowledged value or power a group possesses in relation to its symbolic capital and the recognition it receives. Misrecognition (*méconnaissance*,) a related concept, refers to the non-acknowledgement or non-recognition of groups and of the ways in which social differentiation is perpetuated. Cultural injustice is the result of recognition of groups and different cultures while misrecognising their voice, or the denial of opportunities to participate in democratic process and decision-making which affect their lives: recognition without power (Gerwitz and Cribb, 2002). Theories of recognition prompted further research into gender, ethnicity, multiculturalism, disability and have raised important questions regarding exclusion and inclusion in the pursuit of democracy and equality.

A third form of social justice is referred to as voice by Nussbaum and associational justice (Cribb and Gerwitz, 2002) or representation (Evans, 2003). This form of social justice involves the creation of opportunities and forums where marginalised communities or groups are included in decision-making processes that affect their lives. Although this is laudable, it is not easily achievable and requires an understanding of the interrelationships between language, institutions, subjectivities and power. A closer analysis of these interrelationships can uncover power systems at macro and micro levels and related knowledge differentials and epistemic injustices (Fricker, 2007) at play. Such an in-depth analysis of unequal power relationships, the unequal distribution of knowledge and the effect on the 'voice' of marginalized groups can offer a commentary of the effect this has on the continuation of inequality and social injustice.

2.2.3 Spatial Justice

The next form of social justice relevant to this study is the examination of the differences in context and power relations in different community settings which limit social justice practices. Spatial justice recognises the forms of advantage and disadvantage in different locations: rural, urban, township and suburban communities as well as the marginalisations inherent in each (Green and Letts, 2007). For instance, urban communities are in closer proximity to, or are better able to access resources, than rural communities, which are often further away from resources. Spatial justice

refers to the recognition of the effects of history, space and location in different communities. An investigation of social justice-in-context extends the distributive, cultural and associational forms of social justice to include an exploration of space. In their research in rural Australia Green and Letts (2007: 73) use a spatial analysis of the rural condition i to clarify the differentials in terms of identity, value, knowledge and power and argue for spatial equity to make these differentials explicit. Spatial justice provides a lens to understand how the relationships between the school context, practices and lived social relations educators have in relation to their environment can be explored (Green and Letts, 2007). In spatial analyses space as analytical construct is seen to be more than a fixed geographical or architectural concept. Space in the sense Green and Letts (2007) use it refers also to the situated everyday practices, both material and metaphorical, which are mediated through power relations in specific sites.

Rural education in South Africa is the perfect 'space' for a spatial analysis, given the historical, social and political impulses which shaped it over the years. Characteristic of this particular rural context are the unequal power relations which were institutionalised in colonial and apartheid practices and policies entrenching land ownership to white South Africans and enslaving and disenfranchising black South Africans (Kallaway 1984). The unequal relations of power have created relationships of servitude, 'baasskap', deference and oppression. The result of this inequality has been a dual economy in the rural area with considerable wealth mainly located in the white communities and multiple poverties overlaid with issues of disadvantage, isolation, race and identity in the black communities. Of interest in this study is what the 'situated everyday practices' of teachers are in this rural context, what their understandings and interpretations of social justice and injustice are, how they reflect on, and learn from, their understandings and their practices, and what their understanding and experiences are of whether education policies – on a micro and macro level support the development of teachers' social justice practices.

In this study I explore the rural school as both a historical and geographical, socio-political educational space. In this exploration the school is viewed as a site which produces relationships and is the product of relationships which are closely linked to

the identities and the inter-subjectivities of the teachers within and outside of the school site.

In the exploration of teachers' understandings and interpretations of social justice and injustice their life stories and histories are important ways in which different understandings of social experiences of social phenomena can be arrived at. Using the distributional, cultural and associational forms of social justice, Taysum and Gunter (2008) explore how school leaders in England understand and describe social justice. They show in their research how school leaders' knowledge of social justice was shaped by their lived experiences as school pupils and how this understanding influenced the way they interact with learners and the promotion of quality in education. With reference to Henkin (1998) they propose that, because of the plurality of understandings of social justice, life stories or biographies are useful ways to understand the individual and collective meanings teachers make of social justice. According to them 'life stories give access to cultural insights that provide the lens through which a glimpse of an alternative way of knowing the world can be captured, a 'grasp of the circumstances of life and the social mechanisms that affect the entire category to which an individual belongs (Bourdieu, 1999).

Life stories and experiences differ across different and similar contexts and situations. They present nuanced and alternative insights of social phenomena – not just one way of seeing, interpreting and knowing. In this study, which acknowledges unequal power relationships and recognises the resulting unequal access to education, resources and social networks, it is understood that not everyone will have the same access to knowledge and the same resources to interpret their experiences. Fricker (2007; 2012) makes two points in this regard. The first point is that in unequal relations of power, the stories and perspectives of the disempowered individuals and groups will often be different from those in more powerful and privileged positions. The second point is that those in power do not see or acknowledge the stories and perspectives of the powerless, silencing them, rendering them invisible and, as in the case of institutionalised oppressive systems such as apartheid, classify them as illegal. As a result of these inequalities individuals and groups have gaps in knowledge of themselves and others, epistemic deficits, which affect their ability to give knowledge

to others and to receive knowledge from others: their capacity to hear and to be heard (Medina, 2012).

In socially just research it is important to understand power and powerlessness and its effect on whose stories are silenced and whose are heard and why, whose stories and experiences are misrepresented, misinterpreted or 'obscured from understanding due to prejudicial flaws in shared resources for social interpretation' and whose stories are excluded from the collective social understandings (Fricker, 2007). Fricker (2007) puts forward the notion of epistemic justice to articulate how injustice in knowledge and interpretation arise in situations and contexts where individuals and groups have unequal access to knowledge, opportunities and resources brought about structural imbalances of power. In this study, which explores teachers' understandings and interpretations of social justice and injustice through their stories and life histories, it is of relevance to explore epistemic injustice and to acknowledge deficiencies in social knowledge and understandings as a result of living in an unequal society.

2.2.4 Epistemic Injustice

Fricker (2007) introduces two forms of epistemic injustice, namely testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice, both arising from unequal power relations. In both forms of epistemic injustice the subject of the injustice suffers prejudice and oppression based on their belonging to a marginalised group based social constructs such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, country of origin etc.

Testimonial injustice is defined as the epistemic injustice which 'occurs when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's words' (Fricker, 4). The prejudice is based on social constructs such as race, gender, accent, etc. and results in the illegitimate devaluation of a speaker as giver of knowledge because of a listener's prejudice about the group to which the speaker belongs. As a result of this wrong, the speaker might not be able to share or articulate many things about his or her own social experience to others. On a more practical level, where people's testimonies are not given credibility, the testimonial injustice can result in social injustice. For instance, people from a disadvantaged group may be wrongfully imprisoned, not receive proper health care and essential services, be excluded from

certain jobs, not be promoted or become victims of sexual harassment or racial discrimination and racial profiling. The victims of testimonial injustice know or feel the injustice, or are in a position to know but their words are not taken seriously.

Of interest to this study which looks at teachers' understandings and perspectives on social justice, what they know and have come to know about social justice, is Coady's (2010) extension of Fricker's testimonial injustice: epistemic injustice of the distributional kind. In addition to, and in contrast to, thinking about epistemic justice as the instances where a listener doubts the credibility of the speaker on the basis of prejudice towards the speaker, Coady (2010) proposes epistemic injustice where knowledge is unequally, unjustly and illegitimately distributed. He contends that important forms of distributional injustice occur when the state deliberately withholds information, or systematically and wilfully spreads misinformation through propaganda in the media. He identifies two kinds of epistemic injustice of the distributional kind. Firstly, 'being put in a position where one does not know what one is entitled to know and (secondly) being unjustly put in a position where one is wrong about something one should be right about' (Kotzee, 2013:345). In the first kind of epistemic injustice of the distributional kind, poor or marginalized individuals or groups are 'kept in the dark' about matters which affect them and what they should know about in order to make a contribution, or are not afforded with opportunities either to know more or to have access to such information. In the second kind, individuals or groups are misinformed or deliberately given the wrong information in a matter they should be right about. In short, these two instances refer to people being kept ignorant, or being lied to (Kotzee, 2013).

The second form of epistemic injustice Fricker (2007) refers to is, hermeneutical injustice. Hermeneutical injustice is defined as 'the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from the collective understanding owing to a structural identity prejudice in the collective hermeneutical resource' (Fricker, 2007: 155). Testimonial injustice is referred to as a negative-identity prejudicial stereotype and occurs on a transactional level between individuals or groups of individuals where a speaker is silenced or discredited due to the speaker's race, gender, accent etc. Hermeneutical injustice is a structural-identity prejudice which occurs when a person is unable to make sense of her experiences because of a lack of available epistemic

resources (Frank, 2013). Structural-identity prejudice is not only located on an individual level but exists primarily at the level of our collective hermeneutical resources. The result of this injustice for individuals or groups disadvantaged in this form of injustice is silencing or marginalisation because their knowledge and experience of the world cannot be articulated because there is no concept or reference to understand their experience. The epistemic resources they require to make meaning of their world or to affect the way meaning is made of individual or collective experiences in society are lacking or are not available. This means that they are not able to participate fully in political and other decision making (Kotzee, 2013) due to their marginalization in society and they may be 'unable to affect the way in which a given society makes sense of the world' (Dotson, 2012). Fricker refers to this as hermeneutical marginalisation. According to Fricker (2007: 151) hermeneutical marginalisation renders:

... the collective hermeneutical resources structurally prejudiced, for it will tend to issue interpretations of ... (the marginalised) group's experience that are biased because (the interpretations are) insufficiently influenced by the subject groups, and therefore are unduly influenced by more hermeneutically powerful groups.

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Epistemic Injustice and the Social Justice Researcher

A researcher as inquirer of knowledge, working within a framework of social justice grounded theory, has to critically reflect on her/his role in the research process. The reality, views, influences and knowledge which the researcher brings are integral to the research process and should be made explicit (Charmaz, 2013). In this critical reflection it was necessary for me to reflect on my role as a listener, in keeping with testimonial injustice i.e. how much credibility do I give to a knower, the participant, in retelling their stories. In my reflections I consider whether I perpetuate testimonial injustice by prejudicing or stereotyping the participants as knowers (Medina, 2012). Fricker's (2007) concept of epistemic virtue is useful in this regard. I use Fricker's concept of the 'virtuous listener' to envision myself as a 'just listener' within the social justice context. The 'just listener' should strive to acquire the following abilities:

- sensitivity to context, to the speaker's sincerity and openness to trust the speaker;
- accepting ethical responsibility to reflect on her/his own socialization and life experiences and able to use the testimonial exchanges in ethical ways to inform her/his own background and knowledge;
- ability to adjust those judgements which, through critically reflection, are deemed to be prejudicial and stereotypical; and
- ability to develop a critical awareness on the impact of stereotypes and prejudice on credibility judgements.

In terms of hermeneutical injustice the 'just listener' must

Acknowledge that there can sometimes be more than one interpretation of the truth ...must correct for the credibility deficit resulting from the speaker's marginalisations and adjust for the impact of identity prejudice. The virtuous listener is one who uses critical self – reflection to recognise what might be a lack of intelligibility by the speaker due to a gap in the collective hermeneutical resources and corrects or adjusts her credibility accordingly (Fricker, 2007).

In this study I critically reflect on my role as a 'just listener' and the way in which I might perpetuate epistemic injustice as a result of being socialised in an unequal society.

2.3 CONCLUSION

There is no universal definition for social justice. The best theories of social justice include the individual, structural and interpersonal relations of power and powerlessness. Such theories recognise the embedded nature of social justice in political, economic and social institutions; it is embedded in our discourse, our histories, our life stories and in the way we relate to each other. The various interpretations of social justice lie at the macro, the institutional and the micro level, the everyday level. In this study which explored teachers' understandings and perspectives of social justice through their life stories and their testimonies it was important to explore both what their understandings of social justice and injustice are and what the gaps in their understandings are due to epistemic injustice.



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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of social justice research is to speak the truth about the reality of people's lived experiences in an unjust world. It aims to end oppression in its many forms by engaging people to speak to oppression and to engage in struggle to end oppression (Marshall and Olivia, 2010). In the previous chapter the position was taken that for social justice research to reach these aims, a socially just research methodology should be adopted. An argument was made for grounded theory as the socially just theory to inform the research process of this study. The literature review in the previous chapter gave the theoretical framework for social justice and grounded theory on which this study is based.

In this chapter I give an outline of the research design and methodology positions informing grounded theory.

3.2 THE QUESTIONS GUIDING THE RESEARCH

This study is an exploration of teachers' onto-epistemological assumptions of the world and the interpretations and meanings they give to social justice and injustice in a rural educational setting. The main research question I attempt to answer is:
What are rural teachers' understandings of social justice and injustice in a rural school setting?

The subsidiary research questions are:

- a. What are teachers' understandings of social injustice?
- b. What meanings do teachers have of social justice?
- c. What are teachers' understandings of just pedagogical practices?

3.3 DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The terms research design and research methodology are used interchangeably in the literature. Babbie and Mouton (2011: 74) categorically state that the research design and the research methodology are two distinctly different processes which are often confused by researchers. They describe the research design - using the analogy of the architectural design of a house - as 'plan or blueprint' for how the researcher intends conducting the research and with a focus on the end product (Babbie and Mouton, 2011). The research methodology focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. Research design thus describes the kind of research being planned and the kind of results which are sought and includes consideration is to what the research question is and kind of evidence which will be sought to adequately describe the research question. Birks and Mills (2011) draw a distinction between the terms research methodology and the research method. In their distinction, the term research design as outlined by Babbie and Mouton (2011) is understood as a part of 'research methodology'. According to Birks and Mills (2011:4), the research methodology describes the philosophical framing of the study and 'is a set of principles and ideas that inform the design of a research study' and the research method as the practical procedures used to gather and analyse data, while admitting to a considerable amount of interplay between the research methodology and the research method.

For the purposes of this study the terms research design and methodology will be used in the following ways: *Research design* to inform the 'architecture' of the research process and *research methodology* to describe the actual research process. In Chapter two the literature review on grounded theory gave an overview of the metatheoretical, philosophical and historical foundations of grounded theory. In this chapter on the research design and methodology, the research paradigm, the philosophical underpinnings and the set of principles and ideas informing Grounded Theory and the Grounded Theory Method are discussed.

3.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM: GROUNDED THEORY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Grounded research is qualitative research. Qualitative research is described in the literature as research undertaken to understand a phenomenon in its natural setting, from the insider's perspective, taking each unique context into account and using in-depth data collection methods with the intention of describing and understanding rather than explaining and predicting human behaviour (Hussey and Hussey, 1997; Babbie and Mouton, 2011). Roulston (2010:75) extends this broad intention of describing and understanding to include the intention of qualitative research to include change by stating:

Broadly speaking, qualitative inquiry encompasses work that seeks to understand, promote change, or seeks to break apart and trouble – or deconstruct – current understandings of topics.

Socially just qualitative research in the constructivist tradition has a transformation agenda. The transformation processes implied and proposed in social justice research and interventions leading to the eradication of injustice have to be understood and acted upon at multiple levels. The meanings and interpretations of social justice and injustice are diverse and layered with complex relational structures and systems. The goals of the social justice researcher are multi-fold: to seek to understand social justice from the standpoint of those affected by injustice; to raise awareness amongst marginalised communities about the effects of unjust social arrangements (Sen, 2009); to address unjust institutional arrangements and to promote a decolonising and social justice agenda (Roulston, 2010).

Social justice researchers acknowledge that research is a social and political process which impact on the participants and the researcher. The social justice researcher is not neutral, but brings to the research process subjectivities which include a history, certain assumptions, epistemologies, methodologies and theoretical frameworks. Being critically reflexive of these subjectivities is not uncommon for social justice researchers. They are conscious of these subjectivities in relation to the research participants as well as the research topic and the relationship these subjectivities have with the research findings (Roulston, 2010; Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Cole and Knowles (2001:49) observed:

When we embark on a research journey we take a lot with us. And even if we think we can 'pack lightly' and leave a substantial part of ourselves behind at the home or the office – our biases, social location, hunches, and so on – we cannot. What we can do however, is know the contents of the baggage we carry and how it is likely to accompany us on the research journey from beginning to end.

In the same way in grounded theory the researcher looks for meanings embedded in experiences as they are 'lived', felt or undergone. These meanings are mediated through the researcher's own perceptions and reflect an inter-subjective interpretation of events (Bakhtin, 1986). The researcher plays an active role and conveys different aspects of self, either consciously and unconsciously, throughout the research process.

Peshkin (1988), who forwarded the idea of the subjective-I in the research process, advocates for the open acknowledgement of the self, the subjective-I, in the research process. He states that the unique set of circumstances of each research project can invoke different sets of subjective – /s. The subjective – Is portrayed through the research process impacts on the relationship between the researcher and the participants. In socially just qualitative research methodology it is important to acknowledge the subjective – Is the researcher brings to the research process and to acknowledge how they might influence not only the power differentials (Birks and Mills, 2011:57) but also the relationships and interactions between the researcher and participants in the research study (Roulston, 2010). In this study, making my researcher identity known to both participants and the reader was about being conscious of what I bring to the research relationship, how this influenced the relationship between the participants and me and how it contributed to the co-construction of meaning, through dialogue, in the research process (Gergen and Gergen, 2000).

One way of being self-reflexive of these subjectivities in the research relationship, was clarifying my subjectivities to participants, and readers, and how these subjectivities position me in relation to the research process. In the next section I briefly clarify my own subjectivities and what I brought with me in the research process.

3.4.1 Positioning Myself Methodologically

Methodologically my role as a researcher is textured, nuanced and influenced by my history, culture, lived experiences, values, beliefs and understanding of the world in which I live. Situating myself methodologically required of me to reflect critically on myself as a researcher (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Babbie and Mouton, 2011) in order to tell the audience and readers who I am within social contexts. This self-identification in the research process was critical to reveal any biases I might have had in the research.

Clarifying my subjective–Is allowed me to examine the stories, clarifications and explanations I brought into the interviews with the participants as we co-constructed meaning through the dialogue and established a we-context, rather than a me and them context. Another way in which I gained insight into my own inner dialogue and biases as they developed through the research was by keeping a reflective journal during the interviews and throughout the analysis of the data. My reflections allowed me to critically examine myself as a researcher and to examine the assumptions I made which informed my research. In this way my reflections became a data source throughout the study.

The first subjective-I I brought into the interview was the racialised-me. The racialised-me grew up in apartheid South Africa as a member of the oppressed community. I am a black South African woman who was identified as ‘coloured’ under the apartheid Population Registration Act (1950) I grew up in the Western Cape where I completed primary, secondary and tertiary education in racially segregated educational institutions. During the interviews I was aware that participants were making assumptions about me based on my race, gender, age, language, profession and my role in the interview process, as much as I was making of them. Living in a deeply racialised society means that we subconsciously understand our own collective stories, histories and prejudices based on group identity formation over centuries. We also hold assumptions about other groups we were forcibly excluded from: those who were as powerless or even more marginalised than we were and those in positions of power. Since the participants in the study came from diverse backgrounds, I

understood that different assumptions and understandings were being made during the interview process.

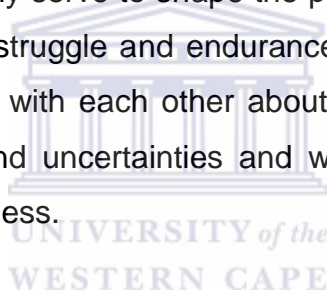
The racialised-me played a significant part in my identity formation as an educator and researcher. In brief, the stages of my racial identity formation went from unawareness as an eight year old when my family was part of the displacement of communities through the Group Areas Act (1950) to critical awareness during secondary and tertiary education. I first became aware of being treated differently in primary school, although I could not fully comprehend it. My burgeoning understanding of the inequalities of apartheid only started in secondary school through political discussions with teachers and reading anti-apartheid texts. Fuller political consciousness came to me through involvement in the Black Consciousness Movement in my university years and in anti-racism workshops as a post graduate student. Critical consciousness of the inequalities based on race, class and gender became part of my identity as a secondary school teacher, a researcher, an activist and a post graduate student.

Throughout the research process I identified with the participants and we consciously and unconsciously shared our collective experience of living in a racially structured society. In the introductory sections of the interviews I would locate the rationale for the research historically in our apartheid past and in the present. During the interviews I took an in-between stance of being an insider, who understood what was expressed and what was omitted due to an assumed common understanding and experience, and a curious-outsider-researcher engaged in an enquiry to co-create meaning about our individual and shared understandings of social justice. Equally in my insider-outsider role I was aware of being black and sharing a social history with black participants and curious about what it meant to be white during apartheid and being white in present day South Africa.

The second subjective-I is the professional-me. In this role I am gendered, a female teacher and researcher from an urban context. My aim in this research is to acknowledge the role of female teachers in the rural context and to join with the voices of others who speak out against the multiple, invisible and unequal roles they play in society in general and in rural schools in particular (Lather, 1988: 571). In my reflections I express both empathic understanding and empathic anger at the multiple

roles female teachers play at home and school at high personal and emotional costs (Lather,1988).

My third subjective-I is the personal-me. During the course of my research I went through a transition in my career, from a full time educational development practitioner and researcher to a self-supporting full-time doctoral student. As I shared this with the participants I became aware of how this affected my professional identity both in positive and negative ways. As I reflected on my own transitions in both its uncertainties and opportunities, I reflected on the political transitions we were making as a country and the uncertainties and contradictions which these transitions bring. I was especially intrigued with the amnesia and historical blindness some participants displayed as they struggled to recall examples of social justice and injustice. I was struck by stories of how the inequalities and injustices of the past served to describe that past but did not necessarily serve to shape the present. What struck me were the complexities in the stories of struggle and endurance and of damage and resilience. As such the dialogue we had with each other about social justice and injustice was layered with contradictions and uncertainties and with feelings and experiences of empowerment and powerlessness.



The fourth subjective- I is the social justice-me. Pre-1994 South African society has been characterised by injustice and the framework for our collective experience as disadvantaged Black people has always been our reference to what constituted justice and what did not and how to attain justice in society. After 1994 there is a perception that the injustices of the past have been removed and replaced by a fair and just society. My experience of living in an unjust society has predisposed me to examine instances of marginalisation and privilege we continue to experience in South Africa. In the interviews in this study we, the participants and I, sought to understand what the meanings of social justice and injustice are currently in South Africa.

3.4.2 The Philosophical Underpinnings of Social Justice Research

In an attempt to locate grounded theory within a social justice research framework, I posed the following questions:

Question One: What is the ontological position in the research?

Question Two: What knowledge claims can the research make?

Question Three: What is the relationship between the researcher and the participants?

Question Three: Does it move people to action?

Question One: What is the ontological position of the research?

A key assumption about the ontological framework of qualitative research is that reality is constructed by individuals in their interaction with the world (Merriam, 1998). The qualitative researcher is interested in understanding the meanings people make of how these realities are constructed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:3; Babbie and Mouton, 2011:53). The ontological position taken in this research is that social justice is a social construct which is historically and politically constituted. In a grounded approach to social justice the starting point for the researcher is to make visible and to deconstruct the systems and structures from which justice and injustice is derived. The grounded theorist has an interest in developing accounts of how systems of oppression affect people's lives and/or in describing criteria for determining whether individuals or groups are oppressed (Young 1990; Bell 1997). Social justice grounded theorists are interested in how social justice and injustices are constructed from the perspectives of the oppressed in culturally specific settings.

The ontological position in this study with regard to social justice as a social construct seeks to explore how our understandings of social justice (the participants and mine), are shaped by our being and knowing in a historically and politically constituted world, i.e. on a systemic and structural level. This ontological position includes how we make meaning of social justice from the perspective and experience of our personal histories and understandings of social injustice, i.e. how our experience of social justice is constrained, influenced and limited by personal, interpersonal and systemic systems of social domination (Urquhart, 2013). Lastly, it includes the meanings we make of social justice and injustice through our interactions and dialogue with others. In this study I therefore focus both on teachers' understandings social justice and social injustice.

Question Two: What knowledge claims can the research make?

The epistemological position taken in this study with regard to social justice rejects the notion of a universal, absolutist and generalisable definition of social justice. Grounded theorist located within the critical theoretical positions such as constructivism, feminism, critical race theory (Denzin, Lincoln and Smith, 2008; Collins, 1998), argue against universalisable, logocentric notions of social justice and propose methodologies which enable multiple voices and multiple interpretations of injustice and of social justice to be heard.

This study takes the position that there is not one way of understanding the world and of knowing and supports the critical theoretical positions that 'ways of knowing and being are shaped by one's standpoint and position of being in the world' (Denzin, Lincoln and Smith, 2008; 24). Teachers' ways of knowing and being in a socially unjust world and the meanings they give to social justice are therefore contained in their stories as it is woven in their everyday lives (Denzin, Lincoln and Smith, 2008).

While every effort has been made to stay true to the meanings participants gave of social justice and injustice, this cannot be vouched for unconditionally. Experiences and meanings of experiences in natural settings are to a certain extent distorted in the retelling or objectification of the experience in the research setting. Brown and Dowling (1998) refer to this as epistemological paradox: 'the act of making your experience explicit of necessity entails its transformation.'

Question Three: The relationship between the researcher and participants

Another key question in qualitative research and which the grounded researcher needs to ask is how the researcher works with the participants, i.e. whether there is a distance between the researcher and the participants or whether there is acknowledged inclusion of the participants in the process and product of the study (Birks and Mills, 2011). In grounded theory the meanings made and theories derived from the research process are made collaboratively between the researchers and participants. This sense that meaning is co-constructed between the researcher and participant has evolved as grounded evolved as a qualitative research paradigm.

(Olesen, 2007). In their discussion on the early works on grounded theory by Straus and Corbin, Birks and Mills (2011) state that not much was made of the relationship between participant and researcher. They describe references to the relationships between researcher and participant in these early works as 'scant' and Collins (1998) refers to the manner in which data was gathered as 'smash and grab'. In their later works, however, and in more recent works of grounded theorists, the collaboration between researcher and participant in the co-construction of meanings is emphasised (Birks and Mills, 2011).

In different research methodologies the level of participation of both the researcher and the participants in the process varies to a great extent, depending on the distance between the researcher and the participants. Qualitative methodologies, participatory approaches in particular, strive to diminish the distance and the power relationships between the researcher and participants by attempting to involve participants in all aspects of the research process. Charmaz (2005) and Morse (1998) both contend that it is not possible to involve participants in all aspects, especially in the analysis and theory building phases of the research process. The power and status differentials between facilitators and participants affect and determine the roles of participants and researcher. These differences could have methodological challenges. An example of the methodological challenge is presented by Charmaz (2005:312) who contends that in the analysis of the data the participants and the researcher do not have an identical relationship to the data. The participants' stance in relation to the data is more descriptive and less analytical than the researcher's. The researcher may also be aware of different interpretations of the data, which the participants may be unfamiliar with or unaware of. In order to overcome this participation challenge, Dick (2007) proposes that dialectic processes are included in the research methodology which could be mutually beneficial for both researchers and participants.

In this study I attempted to co-construct the meaning of social justice and injustice with the participants, from their perspectives and experiences with the participants. Every effort was made to diminish the real or perceived distance between myself and the participants and to create a relationship which is not only equal yet different as Dick (2007: 406) proposes but equitable and different. An equitable and different research relationship recognises the power and status differentials between the researchers

and participants and strives to reduce unjust relationships and processes in the research process. In this study my role was clearly that of the researcher and in that role I recognized the power of the researcher in relation to the participants and the research process. The approach of grounded theory methodology process used in this study included focus group discussions where themes could be further explored. Towards the end of the focus group discussions, participants discussed how the knowledge and insights they gained from the research could benefit them. Even though I aimed to involve participants in key aspects of the research process and supported their plans this was limited by the time and resource constraints of a doctoral study.

Question Four: Does it move people to action?

An important aspect of a socially just research framework is that it moves people beyond *Verstehen*, or understanding, to action or the desire to act, toward emancipatory and democratic goals (Guba and Lincoln in Denzin and Lincoln: 2005).

In this study attention was given to the possibilities for action embedded in the research process. In the first instance research process was designed to lay the foundations for possible action or desire to act by the participants and the researcher. The overall process was designed to increase understanding and to develop knowledge in order to create the desire for future possible action. Secondly, the dialogic interviewing process was designed to be an active interview, borrowing from Brinkman's epistemic interviewing (Brinkman: 2007), Rubin's responsive interviews (Rubin and Rubin: 2005; 2012) and Roulston's reflective interviewing (Roulston: 2010). These interview practices are viewed as interactive and aimed not only to convey experiences but to develop knowledge (Roulston: 2010) Thirdly, based on the premise that agency and action are informed by what is perceived to be unjust and unfair (Sen, 2009), teachers were asked to relate stories of injustice in their own lives and in their roles as teachers and examples of injustice in learners' lives.

In this study which attempted to make sense of, and interpret, the meanings that rural teachers make of social justice and injustice in the rural education context, the teachers' experience and knowledge of social injustice was first explored and

discussed before discussing the meanings and perspectives they have of social justice. Furthermore, their accounts are given in the first person to centre the reality of socially just experiences in the voices of twelve different teachers. Due attention was given to include a multiplicity of experience and voice by considering individual differences and social diversity in the research: by representing participants in terms of the following categories race, ethnicity, gender and social class (Griffiths, 2009). Differences with regard to religion, sexuality and (dis)ability were not specified in the selection criteria and were not presented by the participants and could therefore not be covered in the research.

3.5 THE RESEARCH METHOD

3.5.1 Selection of Participants

According to Bryant and Charmaz (2007) the first task the grounded theory researcher undertakes is to get the 'bigger picture' of the research topic and to estimate the boundaries and trajectory of the research process. The grounded theory researcher uses various sampling techniques to attain this initial overview of the research topic and research process. In this study a mixture of convenience sampling, purposeful sampling and theoretical sampling, specifically theoretical group interviews were used (Patton, 2002; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007).

Participants in the study were purposefully selected from the Overberg rural education district in the Western Cape. The selection of participants was delimited to teachers from schools in the Overberg region and officials in the rural education district office.

Convenience sampling was used at the beginning of the research process with the two rural education district directors as 'informed participants' to discuss the scope and nature of the study. An invitation letter was sent to the education district directors which included all relevant background documents i.e. the information letter, permission letter from WCED and a request for an open-ended interview for directors. The two district directors were chosen because both of them held those positions since the restructuring of the WCED's districts post 1994 and it was felt that they held important information on a macro level about the historical, socio-economic, political

and educational developments in the rural education districts. Both directors agreed to the interviews, which were subsequently conducted in their district offices.

After the convenience sampling, a snowball sample (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007) was used. Snowball sampling refers to the sampling which happens after the initial interviews where possible participants could be identified. The district directors identified possible participating schools in their districts. They also identified an education official with more knowledge of the school context who would be able to fine tune the school selection.

In order to select from a wide range of teachers to find out what their perceptions of social justice is, I then proceeded to consult with the education official in the Overberg district office. I set up a meeting with the official and explained the purposes of the study and sought permission to conduct the research with teachers in the schools in the area. The criteria presented to the officials for the selection of the schools were that they needed to be drawn from a range of primary schools in the rural district i.e. farm schools, church schools, or those who were historically church schools, township schools and former Model C schools. A further discussion focused on the location of the schools and my accessibility to the schools, especially since most of the data had to be collected after school hours and teachers at some of the schools live far from the schools and travelled in lift clubs. (These time–distance practicalities effectively excluded far-flung or ‘deep rural’ schools.) Thereafter we looked at the selection of teachers and the consideration that the group of teacher participants ideally needed to be representative of race, gender, age and ability. The participants would be selected from the schools after the schools agreed to be part of the study.

At the end of these discussions ten schools which suited the selection criteria were initially identified and purposefully selected as potential participating schools. After the schools were identified, the information letters about the research and requests to participate in the study were sent to the schools via email (See Appendix: Two). The emails were followed up with a telephone call to ensure that the correspondence was received and to answer any questions and to offer further clarification.

Of the ten schools, four schools elected to participate in the study, namely two farm schools, one township school and one ex-Model C school. The two farm schools, school 1 and school 2, were selected for the study because they differed from each other in a historical-political way. School 1 traditionally and exclusively provided schooling for farm labourers' children, i.e. black children while School 2 catered for white farm owners and/or workers' children. In the democratic South Africa both school 1 and school 2 provide schooling for all race groups. As a result of the history of the schools, the teachers at school 1 are predominantly black and the teachers at school 2 are predominantly white and the learners at both schools are exclusively black.

The teacher participants in the study were from the four schools, which will be named School 1, School 2, School 3 and School 4 for purposes of confidentiality and anonymity. At the smaller farm schools the invitation to participate was open for all the teaching staff. At the larger schools a maximum of four staff members, who ideally suited the selection criteria for teachers were invited. In total twelve teachers across the four schools elected to participate in the study. All the criteria for the selection of teachers in terms of race, gender and age were met, except for ability. No disabled teachers were part of the study.

A short description of the schools, the participants and how they were elected follows. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants. A more detailed description of the participants and the schools will be given in Chapter Four.

School One - farm school. Three participants: Bill (principal) Martha and Tom (teachers). All the teaching staff elected to participate except a fourth teacher who was hospitalised at the time of the study and was unable to participate.

School Two – farm school. Two participants: Anne (principal) and Sonja (teacher). Two out of three teaching staff elected to participants. The third teacher elected not to participate.

School Three – township school. Four participants: Ben (principal), Lungiswa, Cheryl and Sarah (teachers). The participants were selected by the principal and staff at the school.

School Four – ex Model C school. Three participants: Helen (principal), Sandy and Wangui (teachers). All the members of the teaching staff were invited to participate and the three participants volunteered.

3.5.2 Data Collection

The main sources of data in this study were drawn from the principal and teachers' individual interviews, focus group interviews, teachers' notes and my own reflective journal. These multiple sources of data were collected, compared and contrasted with each other as a form of triangulation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) during data analysis.

3.5.2.1 Interviews as a Socially Just Data Source

Interviews have been used extensively in grounded theory as a principal method of data generation (Birks and Mills, 2011). Fontana and Fey (2005: 696) describe the interview as a 'contextually bound and mutually created story' between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interview can thus be seen as a form of social interaction and conversation between the researcher and the participants on the one hand and, on the other hand, an internal dialogue for both the researcher and the participants. Through these external and internal dialogues participants construct knowledge, restore knowledge and come to new insights and questions about the concepts and experiences being explored in the interview process (Fontana and Frey, 2005; Rubin and Rubin, 2012). At the same time the choice of questions and the design of the interview schedule is in itself a narrative which invites the participants to tell their story. This dialogic approach to interviews was chosen for this study because it opened up spaces for critical reflection on personal and professional experiences of social justice and social injustice. In this sense the empirical data presented in this study reflects the dialogic relationship set up in the interviews as both the participants and the researcher seek to make sense of social justice and injustice.

The interviewer is not neutral and by being critically reflexive listens to the interviewee and sifts through data using his/her own experiences, cultural lenses, biases and understandings to make meaning and interpretations. In my role as an interviewer, I kept a reflective journal to examine my subjectivities, and my role in the research process, including my strengths and limitations. I also reflected on how the research affected me, and how my understandings and perceptions grew throughout the process. Extracts from these reflections are recorded in Chapters 4 and 5.

In a grounded theory approach to data collection Rubin and Rubin (2005) propose the responsive interviewing model which they also describe as a form of depth interviewing. In their explanation of depth interviewing, they locate the responsive interviewing model epistemologically as a combination of an interpretivist constructionist paradigm and critical theory. They argue that in responsive interviewing using the interpretivist constructionist paradigm, the researcher is able to form a relationship with participants within clear ethical frameworks and to gain participants' perspectives according to their interpretations and experiences of events. By conducting responsive interviewing in the critical theory tradition, they further contend, societal issues and problems are examined critically to understand issues of power and powerlessness to present the perspectives and stand points of the oppressed and marginalised.

The responsive interviewing approach was used in this study as a data collection method to accumulate the empirical knowledge of social justice and social injustice in the rural school setting represent it from the participants' historical and lived perspectives.

The questions used in this study were designed to be sufficiently open-ended as to elicit biographical data related to teaching and being in a rural school context. I therefore approached the actual interview using a non-directive, open questioning style. I was careful during the interviews to elicit participants' understandings of social justice and injustice in an open-ended way. After the interviews I examined and recorded my feelings, my biases and initial interpretations of the data.

The entire interview process comprised of three rounds of data collection. All the interviews, except one, were conducted on school premises' after teaching time. Heavy rains made access to one school difficult and the teachers preferred to have the interviews in the principal's study at home. The first interviews with individual participants were designed as a narrative of the teacher-in-context by focusing on gathering biographical information of the teachers, contextual information of the school and teachers' experience of teaching in a rural school. Thereafter teachers were asked to record over a two week period, either through keeping notes or taking photographs, of instances or examples of social justice and injustice in the school context. In the last round focus group interviews were designed as a dialogue where teachers from the same school could share stories of social justice and injustice and to discuss how the injustice could be addressed and social justice could be promoted or strengthened.

The interviews took the form of guided conversations, with open-ended guided questions, which allowed the participants enough latitude on content and style. In the first round of interviews with individual teachers I concentrated on capturing the teacher's story, rather than capturing the answers to specific questions. I used further probes to explore issues in more depth, where necessary, and encouraged teachers to tell their stories and to express their feelings about their experiences (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; 2012).

The following questions guided the interviews with teachers and participants:

Questions	Rationale for the questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What inspired you to become a teacher? • Who are/were your role models? • Why are you teaching in a rural school? Why are you teaching at this school? • Describe a typical 'good' day at school. Describe a typical 'bad' day at school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To find out what motivated/inspired the teacher. • To find out what persons and qualities the teacher identifies in inspirational persons • To find out what the situational reasons are for teaching. • To get a picture of the teacher's understanding of what constitutes a positive and a negative experience of working at a rural school

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes you want to go on teaching? Why? • Have you ever thought of leaving teaching and why? • What are the typical challenges learners face in your school? • What are the typical challenges teachers face in your school? • What is done at the school to help learners and teachers face these challenges? • What is your understanding or experience of social justice and of injustice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To find out what continues to motivate the teacher and why these are motivating. • To find out what demotivates the teacher and why. • To find out what the teacher perceives as hardships or challenges in the rural school. • To find out what teachers' sense of agency/possibility is at the school. • To explore initial understandings of injustice and social justice.
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Table 1: Interview questions

3.5.2.2 Teacher Notes

In the second round of data collection the participating teachers from each school kept a journal and recorded events, structures and procedures which, according to their own understanding, constituted social justice and injustice in the school context. The teachers were asked to record these events over a two week period. The following questions were given as a guide to what they could record in their journals, while allowing participants enough latitude in content and style.

The teachers were asked, firstly, to give a short description of the event using the following questions to describe the event: What is happening? Who is involved? What preceded the event? What were the outcomes, if any? In the description of a structure and/or procedure they were asked to describe and name the structure and/or procedure. Why is it there? What purpose does it serve? Who benefits from it? Who does not benefit from it?

Thereafter they were asked to reflect on what was really happening and to give an account of other contributing factors related to the event or to the structure and/or procedure which might be invisible. To conclude the description and reflection on the event, participants were asked to relate the events to social justice or injustice using the following questions as a guide.

1. How does it relate to social justice or injustice?
2. How does it affect the learners?
3. How does it affect your life?
4. How does it affect the school?
5. What could be done about it?
6. Any other comments you would like to make?

Participants were encouraged to share thoughts, ideas and events with each other during the two week period. This was suggested in order to keep the conversation going in the school context of what could constitute social justice and injustice.

3.5.2.3 Focus Group Interviews as Dialogic Spaces

The individual interviews sought to unearth participants' understanding and experience of social justice and to use this as a basis for formulating a conceptual frame for social justice specifically as it applies in the rural schooling context. The focus group interview includes two or more participants, led by a researcher, engaged in a specified area of discussion. Birks and Mills (2011) are of the opinion that the focus group interview is especially useful in grounded theory methodology. They contend that the group dynamics in the focus group engenders conversation and the possibility of eliciting different perspectives; making it valuable to develop categories during the data collection and analysis phases of the research. Focus groups were used in this study to further unearth data collected in the individual interviews and the teachers' notes to deepen understandings of social justice and social injustice. Participants brought their knowledge and experience of social justice and injustice to the fore through their teacher notes and constructed a collective concept of social justice in the school context in the focus group interview. The focus group interviews together with the individual interviews and teacher's notes were collectively used as a

process to seek and compile teachers' knowledge and experience of social justice and social injustice as the collective knowledge base of teachers' understanding of social justice in the rural school context.

The focus group interviews took the form of a dialogue between participants from one school. The participants were asked to bring their teacher notes to the focus group discussion. The first part of the process was designed as an open-ended group reflection session informed by the stories each teacher brought to the discussion. This was followed by the following structured questions to the participants at the selected schools.

- What new insights do you have about yourself as a teacher in a rural school?
- What has changed for you and why?
- What is your understanding of social justice in your context?
- What does it mean for your teaching?

The focus group interviews were designed to open up spaces where we could critically reflect on, and discuss, social issues which affect life in schools, to help develop socially responsible thought and to provide a possible framework for participants to reflect on socially just practices in the school. More specifically, these discursive spaces “offer an alternative interpretation of reality that relaxes taken-for-granted assumptions, thereby creating a place where new things can be said and new social structures envisioned” (Fletcher, 2005).

3.5.2.4 Researcher Reflective Journal

Grounded theory methodology acknowledges the subjective role of the researcher, the contribution the researcher makes to the research process and the effect the research has on the researcher. Reflexivity, reflective writing or memo writing, is defined by Birks and Mills (2011: 52) as an ‘active process of systematically developing insight into your work as a researcher in your future actions’. The value and use of reflexivity or memo writing is a source of debate in the literature. Lempert (2010: 245) feels strongly that memo writing is essential and ‘*the* fundamental process that results in a ‘grounded theory’. Charmaz (2006) places an obligation on constructivist grounded theorists to include reflexivity as a strategy in their research design as the practice of

reflexivity is the first step in the data analysis process and lays the ground work for further levels of abstraction in the analyses.

The reflective journal or memo is kept throughout the research process as a narrated record of the researcher's conversations with him or herself (Charmaz, 2006). I used a reflective journal to record the way the data 'spoke' to me. It was a space to jot down my insights, ideas, questions, concerns, contradictions about the process and the internal conversation I had. In my reflections I looked for patterns in the data as it emerged and also marked areas where I needed to consult the literature to gain more insight into particular issues (Lempert, 2010: 254).

3.5.3 Data Collection Process

The first step in the data collection process was to send an information letter about the study (Appendix Two) via email to the district director and the schools requesting permission to conduct the research. Both district directors responded affirmatively and I made arrangements with them for an interview at the district office. I sent the interview schedule to the directors prior to the interview for their perusal.

The interviews with the district directors were conducted to gain macro perspectives of major trends in rural education post 1994. The interviews contained questions related to policy at a national education level and how this impacted on developments in their districts. Questions related to their understanding of social justice and social injustice in rural education specifically were also included.

The interviews with the schools were conducted after the directors' interviews. They also received information letters and after an affirmative response I requested a meeting with the staff to answer any questions and concerns and to obtain permission to interview individual teachers. At that initial meeting dates and times of interviews were arranged with the participating teachers.

After the individual teacher interviews teachers collected their own data using the questions guiding them in the observation schedule. (See Appendix One: instrument three.) Teachers recorded their observations of events, structures and procedures

which contribute to social justice in a journal over a two week period. The observations were discussed in focus group discussions in each school. (See Appendix One: instrument four).

3.5.4 The Data Gathering Process

The following data gathering process was used in this study:

Open ended interviews were conducted with the two rural education district directors to obtain historical, socio-economic, political and educational data pertaining to the rural education districts in the Western Cape. These interviews assisted with the selection of the participating schools.

The teacher participants consisted of four principals and eight teachers. Individual interviews were conducted with the four principals to obtain background information about the schools. (See Appendix One: Instrument one). In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the twelve participating teachers, inclusive of the four principals, to obtain life stories. (See Appendix One: Instrument two). The twelve teachers were asked to keep a journal in which to record their observations of social and social justice events, structures and procedures at their schools. (See Appendix One: instrument three). Four focused group interviews were conducted with the participating teachers at the four schools (see Appendix One: Instrument four).

I kept a research reflective journal from June 2012 in which I recorded my reflections on the research journey and my insights into my role as a social justice researcher.

3.5.5 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis is the process whereby meanings and interpretations are attached to the data collected during the interviews. The two-phased responsive interviewing process followed in the study was conducted in the following stages. firstly, the interviews were audio taped and transcripts prepared. After the data was transcribed, I translated the Afrikaans into English and checked the accuracy of the

translations with participants. My translations of the interviews enhanced my understanding of the data.

During the second stage of the responsive interview process, concepts and themes were identified within the individual teacher data sets and across the data sets of teachers at a particular school. The concepts and themes emerging from the threads and stories in the narratives were then followed through across schools, to gain multiple perspectives, as in a bricolage (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Kincheloe, 2011), in order to create a rich, multi-vocal, descriptive analysis of the data.

The data was further refined. Concepts, themes and events were first identified and cross-referenced, then coded. I manually coded the data into categories which further enhanced my understanding of the data. This was an extensive and time-consuming process which required me to classify, code, compare, contrast and combine different sets of data from the interviews (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Babbi and Mouton, 2001). This coding process assisted with the recognition of emerging themes, concepts and clarification of events. The first coding stage was then followed up with further questions for exploration in the focus group interviews.

The concepts and themes from the teacher interviews were further explored through the observations teachers made and brought for discussion during the focus group interviews.

3.6 Emerging Theory

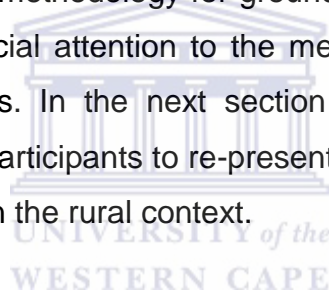
During this stage of the research process, concepts, themes and theories are identified and a grounded theory is developed or 'emerges' from the research process. A pure grounded theory approach, according to Rubin and Rubin (2005:241), 'rejects using literature to generate theories and concepts and relationships between them'. In pure grounded theory methodology theory is allowed to emerge by exhausting the data coding process. Rubin and Rubin (2005) propose a hybrid model where the researcher combines the 'emerging' theory from the data with findings in the literature and when satisfied that the research question is answered, presents the findings. The

'grounded theory' which emerges is then compared and contrasted with related literature in the field.

In this study, I identified and presented the concepts, categories and theories which emerged after the teacher interviews. These concepts, categories and theories were further developed during the focus groups discussion. The themes, categorisations and learnings abstracted from the research process were compared with the literature. The emerging theories were then presented as contributions to the debate on social justice in rural education.

3.7 CONCLUSION

In this section I provided the research design and methodology for grounded theory methodology. I presented the methodology for grounded theory for social justice while at the same time paying special attention to the methodology which would inform a socially just research process. In the next section I provide the biographical and contextual information of the participants to re-present their stories and understandings of social justice and injustice in the rural context.



CHAPTER FOUR

TEACHER VOICE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I explore the notions of social justice and injustice in conjunction with spatial justice and epistemic injustice in a rural school setting through the stories of teachers participating in the study. Using the form of a life story I explore what Green and Letts (2007) have called 'the spatial-difference dynamics and politics' in a rural school district in the Western Cape, as outlined in Chapter Two.

A multi-method developmental data gathering process, as described in Chapter Three, was followed in this study to explore teachers' understanding of social justice and injustice. The data gathering process was divided into three phases: the Pre-Reflective Phase, the Reflective Phase and the Dialogical phase. The purpose of a multiple phase approach was to allow for teachers' understandings of social justice and injustice to emerge. My rationale for using a multi-method data gathering process was informed by the abstract and complex nature of social justice which is open to a multiplicity of interpretations. In order to explore teachers' understandings of the abstract and complex nature of social justice a deep, exploratory process was necessary. This chapter contains the presentation and analysis of the data gathered during the first or Pre-Reflective Phase. The presentation and analysis of data gathered during the Reflective and Dialogical Phases are presented in Chapter Five.

In the Pre-Reflective Phase, teachers were individually interviewed, shared their backgrounds and perceptions on social justice within the rural school context. Later, during the Reflective Phase, they were asked to observe, reflect on or share examples of social justice or injustice over a two-week period. During this two week period they were asked to keep a journal or make notes about examples of social justice and injustice in the school context. In the third round of data collection, the Dialogical Phase, focus group discussions were conducted with participating teachers at their individual schools. During the dialogical phase they shared their observations and

further explored, through dialogue, what their understandings of social justice and injustice were.

During the Pre-Reflective Phase teachers' immediate thoughts and feelings which emerged in relation to the questions posed in the interview were recorded. The motivation for using individual interviews in the Pre-Reflective Phase was to gain insight into teachers' initial perceptions of social justice and injustice. During this phase I assured teachers that the process would be open-ended and that I would not bring a pre-determined view of social justice or injustice. In practical terms this meant that aspects of what we understood and knew about social justice might be missing, wrong or contain ambiguities and uncertainties.

The interviews during the Pre-Reflective Phase were conducted with individual teachers within the context of their respective schools. In the presentation of the data which follows, the school is first introduced to give a brief background to the context. The school context data is then followed by the individual presentation of the biography and understandings of social justice and injustice of each participating teacher at that school. I present each teacher's story in the first person, selecting words directly from the interview transcripts highlighting each individual's life story and understanding of social justice and injustice. Using a grounded theory methodology, I simultaneously analyse the data as it was presented, interweaving the narrative with analysis. I mediate the stories by selecting the words from the transcripts to convey the information as it pertained to my research questions.

In the Reflective Phase, teachers were asked to observe and record school life through a social justice and injustice lens. The rationale here was that the purposeful act of observing and recording concrete examples of social justice and injustice would enable teachers to develop a discerning perspective of their understanding of social justice and injustice. In the third round of data collection, the Dialogical Stage, the rationale was that the dialogue and reflective thinking created through the focus group discussion would enable teachers to reflect critically on social justice and injustice in their different contexts and allow for a deepened and shared understanding to emerge (Cohen, Mannion and Morrisson, 2003).

My role in the interview process was not that of an anonymous or invisible audience. I was present at each interview: my reflections during the data collection and my analysis of the research process are presented as an integrated data source. My presence and voice in the interview process are reflected in the retelling of teachers' stories. In addition, my reflections during the research process, memoing, also form part of the data, in keeping with grounded theory methodology.

4.2 SCHOOL ONE

School one is a typical farm school in the Overberg area. The school is located on a farm and draws learners from the surrounding farms and the nearby town. The school is described by the teachers and district officials as a 'multi-grade' school and provides education from Grade R to grade 7. Only Grades R and 7 are mono-grade. The other grades receive combined tuition in multi-grade classrooms.

The school is named after the farm on which it is located. Although no official historical records of the school exist, the teachers trace its existence back to the early 1950s. It was started as a farm school for farm labourers' children exclusively and not for the children of the white farm owners or white farm workers. My first impressions of the school are contained in my reflections after my first visit to the school to interview the teachers and are as follows:

My Reflections

As I drove through the mountain pass to get to the school I visited today, I was once again enchanted by the beautiful landscape, the lush vegetation, the sheer drop of the mountain and the wide expanse of the ocean in the distance. It is spring and the signs of new life were everywhere. At the turn off to the school the highway is replaced by a gravel road leading to the little farm school.

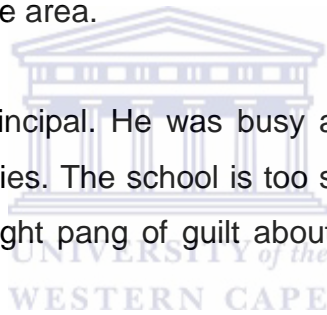
I arrived at the school at the end of the second break for my interview with the principal - scheduled for after school. I stopped at the locked gate. "Who are they keeping out?" I jokingly asked the woman who came from the little labourer's cottage adjacent to the school fence to unlock the gate. "Ag no," she said, "it's to keep the sheep and stray

animals off the school grounds”. I waited inside the school grounds and watched the children play. A few minibus taxis were also waiting to transport learners at the end of the school day.

The school ground is bare red earth with a small indigenous garden to the side closest to the ablution block. Little pools of water, from the previous evening’s rain, gathered in the potholes on the uneven terrain between the main building and the ablution block. This small, muddy space is the school playground. I saw no sports field.

The bell rang and the learners lined up to go into their classes. They stood in orderly straight lines and vigorously wiped their feet on the mat at the entrance to the classrooms. “No muddy shoes in the classroom”, I heard one teacher saying. When I looked at the learners I could not help noticing the signs of poverty which contrasted sharply with the affluence of the area.

I announced myself to the principal. He was busy attending to his class while also attending to administrative duties. The school is too small to qualify for a secretary or administrative staff. I felt a slight pang of guilt about being there and felt that I was intruding.



4.2.1 Interview Summary: Bill, the School Principal

Bill is a 58 year old ‘coloured’ male who has lived and taught in the Overberg Education District for most of his life. He left the area for a few years to complete his initial teacher training course in Cape Town. He has been at the school for 30 years, initially as a teacher before becoming the principal. He has seen many changes at the school over the years which he attests have been achieved through struggle:

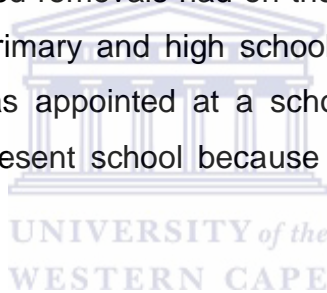
We fought for everything. We used to have pit latrines and we fought for the new toilets we have now. Our classrooms were not all together in one building. Some were under the trees and others were across the road, in that small house you see across the road from here. Now we have all the classrooms in one building. We fought for Grade R classes and this was realised. We could not achieve much because the buildings belonged to the farm owner.

Inspiration and Role Model

Teaching was not Bill's first choice. As a young man growing up during the apartheid years, he had few choices. He recalls the forced removals of the Group Areas Act (no 41 of 1950) and the difficult choices his family and siblings had to make to survive:

There was nothing which inspired me to become a teacher. Those years we all used to live in the town. During the apartheid years we were all put out of town. We had to move to another part of town and my older brother had to leave school to help my parents build our home. So he left school early to help my parents and in a way he also had to support me while I was at teachers' training college. I did not have a passion for teaching at that time because I wanted to become a fitter and turner and wanted to go for the big bucks, as they say. But I could not get there and then I landed up as a trainee teacher at the college.

In spite of the effects the forced removals had on them, he feels a strong connection to the town. He completed primary and high school there and after completing his initial teacher training, he was appointed at a school in a neighbouring town. He applied for the post at his present school because it was convenient and close to home.



Experience of Teaching at a Rural School

Despite his earlier reservations about becoming a teacher, he now enjoys teaching. Being a principal of a small farm school means that he has to teach full-time and be a full-time principal. This dual role makes serious inroads into classroom teaching, which he considers his primary role. He describes a typical good day as follows:

A typical good day at the school is when everything functions well and the day ended without any problems, or when the children make my day... So, if I can teach my class without any interruptions, that is a good day. I had to do so many things this morning before you came, especially now in the middle session. I had to do admin work. I had to leave my class just like that, give the children some work and do those tasks, but as I had to say something about a good day, then today was not a good day. If I could work a full day with the learners, that would be a good day. But a full day of teaching seldom happens, because there is always something in between that needs to be done or the district office wants something. Here I am sitting again with this thing ... It has to be in tomorrow ... I have to go and do it at home. It is a new data system...

Ms M is also busy with it. Basically a good day is when I can teach for the whole day other than leaving the learners to carry on their own. Actually, I am letting them down.

A typical bad day for Bill is a day when he spends less time with learners due to the unreliable school transport. The transport is provided both privately and by the state. Parents who live in the town, whose children do not qualify for state provided transport, arrange private transport to and from the school. The state transport picks up learners who live outside a 5km radius from the school. The learners who live within five kilometres from the school have to walk to school.

Transport is a big thing at farm schools. Those who live close to the drop off points are lucky. But many live about 3 or 4 kilometres and then they have to walk that distance. Sometimes they are one or two (in a group) and still small. This is very dangerous....

If the state transport breaks down, the contractors must provide alternative transport and that presents a number of problems for the school.

A bad day is when ... sometimes when the kombi breaks down and the learners do not arrive at school, that's not a good day. Because then there are a number of absentees and teaching stands still. Tasks cannot be done, because we have to wait for those learners. So many will be absent, you cannot carry on with the day's work. That is definitively a very bad day.

Lately we've had such a problem with the one. He always tries to fix his transport but then he does not succeed in time. Then I have to wait here until six o'clock in the afternoon with the learners and this has resulted in a number of squabbles. Really, those are not good days. The children get hungry. When they get dropped off...and then they still have to walk a distance. Yes ... it is very unsafe. And they do not get their homework done because they get home late.

Bill considers the transportation of rural learners to be insecure and unsafe; an injustice in the provision of education to the rural child. He compares the difficulties children have getting to farm schools with how easily urban child reach their schools. He feels this disadvantages the rural child, especially children who attend farm schools.

The farms have their problems. The city child can take a taxi...very quickly. There is always transport for them, but there is not always transport for the rural child and if there is, they have to walk a long distance.

Socio-economic Conditions

Because of his physical and emotional proximity to the town, Bill speaks passionately about the changes in living conditions of the learners he has seen over the years.

There have been changes in the living conditions of the learners. Now there is water and electricity in the homes of the farm workers, where there was none of this in previous years. The provision of water and electricity in homes only happened over the last two years. I know of two houses just here on this farm, close to the school where there was absolutely nothing, not even water or toilets. Now there is electricity, they can stay up later to do their homework. Previously they had to use candles.

Although there have been infrastructural changes to the living conditions of most learners over the years, he is cautious in his assessment about whether the improvements lead to improved living arrangements. He is particularly concerned about the messages learners receive from living in overcrowded households and the effects this has on their values:

So I will say the social conditions have changed to a certain extent and have played a role in the lives of our children. You can see many of our children are better off. You can almost say they are well-off in their present condition, compared to the past. This does not apply to everyone. But there are certain households where the living arrangements have an effect ... for instance, there is not enough space for everyone to sleep. In some instances the family is too large or the home is too small. The things that happen there (silence)the things they are exposed to ... and the effect on the child's values (shakes head). A person picks it up at school - that which they learn in their homes.

In recent years Bill saw families living on farms moved to towns either as a result of the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (no 62 of 1997) or a change in their living conditions. He recalls one such incident where the misfortune of one family on the farm highlighted the insecurity of farm workers on farms and caused panic and flight to town.

Life is not always easy on the farm for farm labourers. If I take our farm, for instance, we had a case of a parent who lived on the farm. He was a driver. He went to deliver sheep and was high-jacked and was never found. His wife and children remained behind on the farm and then they had to vacate the house. The owner did not make provision for the wife. He gave her a month to move from the farm. From then onwards the workers on the farm tried to find housing elsewhere – some applied for RDP houses, others live in informal settlements. So many of them still work on the farm and they travel in and out to work every day.

The move to town was detrimental to learner enrolment at the school, to a certain extent. Many parents who prefer the farm school arrange private transport to and from the school, at their own cost.

Only a few families live on the farm. So that affects how many learners we have at the school. Because they live in town, they have to attend the schools in town. That is the policy. But the parents who moved to town still send their children to our school. They hire taxis to bring their children here. Of course, it is also the parent's choice and many of the learners prefer this school because they are used to the school. They feel safe here. The discipline is better and according to the parents they get a better education here because the classes are smaller and they can get individual attention.

We have an agreement with the town school to keep the children in one school, even though it is parental choice to change from school. It worked for a while. But very often the learners fail there because of the large classes. The parents then feel the child is not making progress because of the conditions and then they bring the child to us.

In his opinion their altered socio-economic conditions in the town weaken their school performance:

You can see the change in the families who used to live on the farms and are now living in the town. There has been a complete reversal of norms and values in those families. You can definitely pick it up at school. They have been swallowed in by town life, with those circumstances and dirty language and that type of thing. We get children from the town school here and you can see the difference in the child from the farm and those from the town.

Despite his opinion about life in town, Bill does not romanticise life on the farm. In his experience the socio-economic conditions of learners who remained on the farms are

not better than those in the town. He sees the links between abuse on the farms and the effect this has on learning and teaching in the classroom.

Alcohol abuse is a problem. I will say many if not most of our learners are FAS (Foetal Alcohol Syndrome) learners. You can see the signs. They are the slow learners. They need a high level of intervention. This is how life is on the farm. Lots of money is spent on alcohol and not much on food. You can see it when it is pay weekend. On that Monday after pay day the learner has some money and does not partake of the food (sic) provided by the feeding scheme. But after a few days when the money is up they are in the feeding scheme again. And they will spend more money on that ... than on buying their children suitable school bags or a pen or pencil. They will only buy these things at the end of the year when we send notices about what the children need for the new year.

Challenges Learners Face

Although all the learners at the school come from very poor households, Bill does not see poverty in itself as a challenge for learners. He sees poverty as a relative concept and one that is difficult to define: he sees the lack of access to finances as an obstacle to access secondary and tertiary education, but he does not see finances as a burden for the primary school child. The most debilitating form of poverty for him is the social and psychological impoverishment brought about by the limiting living conditions it presents.

One thing I have to say, with our children there are actually no challenges. Poverty in itself is not something which affects them ...mmmm.... the learners are very aware of their circumstances, but they do not have a work ethic or motivation. This they do not get from their parents' side so... it is basically a matter of living with it. But there is nothing to motivate them ... that is why you can see there is no motivation in the children with regard to school ethics. You have to continuously motivate them otherwise they will not do it. And I think it is the same for the children in the town.

Perceptions of Difference Between Schools

If there is a child who has the potential to excel, the school works with the parents to inform them about the choices and opportunities they have. Only the best learners can apply for bursaries to attend the ex-Model C town school and the school hostel.

Usually we motivate the children who excel. We call in the parents. We tell them what the child's potential is and that there are bursaries available they can apply for. So we are just the mouthpiece in a case like that. So we tell the parents where to send the child to, what his best option is ... what the best schools are ... usually the white schools if we see the child can excel ... and that they can apply for exemptions and so on ...

Perceptions of Social Injustice

According to Bill, the inequality of access to secondary education is an injustice for learners from the school. Over the years, a few of their best learners were accepted at the ex-Model C school. The rest of the learners apply to the township school where there is no hostel. They travel a longer distance to the secondary school. Although the school fees are lower than at the ex-Model C school, parents cannot afford the total costs of keeping a child at secondary school. A few farm owners offer financial assistance to some learners. The rest usually drop out because of the adjustment to secondary school, town life and costs.

Finances are the main challenge in most cases. If they go from here to the high school, finance proves the main problem. A few owners I know of support the learners in such cases.

The most glaring form of injustice for Bill is still based on race. He speaks emphatically about what he terms the injustice practiced by white farm owners.

For instance, particularly the owner of farm A. She drops the blacks off here then she drives off to drop her children off at the White school. Do you understand what I am saying? What is the wrongness of putting her white children there, but she still drops off the other children here at this school? This is definitely an example of social injustice or inequality.

The children come from the Eastern Cape and are dumped there (on her farm), as she mentioned it to me once here at the school. So she also just dumps them here with us.

4.2.2 Interview summary: Martha

Martha is a 56 year old 'coloured' female teacher who has taught at the rural school districts for 27 years. She has been a post level one teacher at this school for 12

years teaching grade one and two; a multi-grade classroom. Before she came to this school she was a principal at a small farm school which closed down because of dwindling learner enrolment. As a result of this experience she assists with management responsibilities at the school, doing as she says, “the work of a head of department without the pay”.

Inspiration and Role Model

Martha grew up on a mission station in the Overberg region, attending a small missionary primary school. She was inspired to become a teacher by two of her former teachers: her sub A teacher who had a loving, caring nature and her needlework teacher who was also the netball coach. She recalls those early years with lasting endearment:

I loved playing netball. Our coach was also the needlework teacher. I will never forget this. She taught us to knit from English patterns and I also taught my sisters. To this day we cannot knit in Afrikaans. She still teaches and when I see her then we still hug each other.

Experience of Teaching in a Rural School District

Her early years at a small missionary school created a fondness for the intimacy of the farm schools she eventually taught at. When the school at which she was principal closed, she was given the option to teach at the larger town school or the smaller farm school. The farm school was an easy choice for her because of her understanding of the children.

I chose this school because of the children. They are close to my heart and I love working with children. Our children are still shy. They only know their mothers. We have to gain their trust first before we can teach them. If you do not acknowledge them, they will not come to school.

The town school is a bigger school and I did not look forward to the cliques. I chose the farm school because with the farm child you can still do something with regard to discipline. They still listen to a person. Teachers at the town school are suffering, if you listen to them. I do not regret the choice I made.

The teachers at the school all work together to instil pride in the learners in spite of their poverty:

People get the impression that we are not a poor school. You as a teacher have to tell the children to look neat and tidy. I will never forget. Once when I was a key teacher I went to another school. I was surprised at how poor the children looked. The teachers do not worry. The children's hair was untidy, holes in their jerseys and they were not wearing school uniform. We emphasise school uniforms, but we are not strict about it. In winter I will say, "Wear your purple jersey under your uniform. We understand if your shoes are broken and you wear your 'tekkies' ". We understand where they come from.

She also speaks about the supportive relationships and camaraderie established at the school.

We are a small staff. We cannot speak about conflict here. When we work, we work together. Nobody pulls to one side. When the teacher next door was absent I supported her replacement. I showed him what he needed to do and told him to ask whenever he needed help. Here we all know about each other and we look out for each other. We work together. We also travel together and discuss the good and the bad and which children I am worried about.

Perceptions of difference between schools

Martha has a high regard for the culture of the farm school, especially compared to learners at the others schools in the town. According to her, the ex-Model C school does not treat learners with the necessary respect, whether they are black or white, or as she refers to them, "from across the railway line."

My own grandchild attends this school. I do not want to send her across the railway line. I do not want my child to be treated like a dog. Do you know how many parents remove their children from that school! We have had a few children from across the railway line. In the report it is stated that the child is a problem child - she stole a pencil - but the reporting on her academic records, which are more important, are not as detailed at all.

She holds the same feelings towards the township school which mostly underprivileged children attend. While she is proud of their own achievements with

struggling learners, she resents the fact that after successfully working with struggling and problem learners, they return to the town school.

This other child came from the township school. She could not write her own name. It seems as if they sideline these children. Today I told her to make a sentence and she could. I had a child from the township school who could not read. As soon as they can read, they go back to the school. This year my colleague had six children from that school. She is very efficient. There is one she was struggling with and today he could write the alphabet on the board. I told the teachers at that school we are not a remedial institution. When the children struggle at the other schools, the parents send them here – when they can read they go back to the other schools. It makes us angry but we are also very proud of what we can achieve. We work hard. It seems as if the teachers at the other schools do not care.

Two kombis come from the town to our school at the parents' own costs. Children from another farm must actually take their children to the township school but they would rather pay the extra cost for the taxi. Many families have moved from the farms to the RDP homes. On this farm there are four households and about six children. The school is no longer for mostly this farms' farm labourers. Without the children from the other farms and the towns, we can close our doors.

Perceptions of Social Justice

Martha's perceptions of injustice are based on what she sees as an unfair practice towards children who are disadvantaged. Referring to learners at her school, she considered that the difficulties disadvantaged children have to access the school are compounded by the lack of support they receive from the education department. She made an example of the difficulties a learner with several barriers to learning has to get to school:

The other day I told the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) officials about a small child who lives very far from the school. If I were her and I had a choice, I told them, I would have stayed at home. That's why I do not blame her if she does not come to school when it rains. But she has a learning difficulty. Her parents also have problems and they drink a lot. The WCED does not have a plan for children who live so far away from school. They said they were going to look into it. Nothing is being done. In other instances the taxis drive past children. It is so sad. Especially in winter when the children are wet when they get to school.

Personally, she does not experience inequalities based on race. She believes that equality is created when learners receive equal treatment at school. Although the structural inequalities she referred to are real and limiting, she referred to the relational inequalities between races as something in the past.

In terms of equality, I think we treat all learners the same. We've had white learners here from the ex-Model C school who had family, financial, and learning problems. In one year we had three siblings from there. They moved to another town. Another one also had problems when both his parents died and left to live with his aunt.

We had a good laugh one day. My (black) colleague told one (white) girl she was going to put a photograph (of the two of them) in the newspaper to show who the madam is now. I then said she does not even know about that story. I told her that her it was a good thing her mother brought her up this way, because that is all in the past.

4.2.3 Interview Summary: Tom

Tom is a 68 year old white man who took the voluntary severance package and retired from teaching in 1996. Before his retirement, he taught for 36 years at a comprehensive school. He is not sure this was the right decision because he experienced financial difficulties after that and worked in the retail business – selling shoes. He returned to teaching and has been at School Two for two and a half years. He is a post level one teacher in a school governing body post teaching a multi-grade class, grades five and six.

Inspiration and Role Model

Tom grew up in a Karoo town and was inspired to become a teacher by his high school woodwork teacher. He loved woodwork and dreamed of becoming a woodwork teacher.

I first thought of becoming a teacher in standard eight when I developed a love for woodwork. I thought this would be a good thing to do when I retire some day. Then I wanted to become a woodwork teacher.

The reason why I am teaching is because I love working with children. I did not apply for other jobs. Woodwork was my inspiration. Then I got asthma and moved to the primary school. I enjoyed the primary school

more than the high school. Teaching is in my blood. That's why I am still in teaching

In addition to the inspiration of his teachers, Tom was drawn to teaching because of the conditions of service of the teaching profession.

A plus was that you had a permanent position and a salary and a holiday four times a year. This was an inspiration (smiles.)

Experience of Teaching in a Rural School District

Tom taught at a range of rural schools before coming to this school. He mainly taught at schools previously reserved for white children ranging from primary to high school. After he took the voluntary severance package, he taught at small farm schools where he was at the time of the interview.

With Tom's religious background, he feels he fits in well with the culture of this school.

It is my best school of all schools because it is a Christian school. Here the children are disciplined and well mannered. I worked in big schools before. I love the small school. If I had to start all over again it would be in a rural school like this. The atmosphere and the principal, colleagues and children ... it is a large family, actually. I am retiring at the end of the year, I will definitely continue next year, if I can. I offered my services as a substitute teacher at the school.

He does not see any problem with being an older white man teaching at a predominantly black farm school. According to him, he does not see difference in terms of colour and he does not see the difficulties which exist for people from different race groups.

I have been colour blind since childhood. I say they must treat Julius Malema in a different way, in a Christian way. From my childhood days I have not had a problem with different races and nationalities.

It is also this Christian ethos which drew him to the school and which he tries to instil in the learners. Without this stability of faith, he fears the learners will be drawn to life on the streets.

I have always been very religious. It started in my parents' home. I try to live according to these guidelines and try to instill it as a role model in the children. I do not want them to lie about in the streets and become drunkards and get involved with TIK and stuff. I want to motivate them to do better. That is what we want – for them to have a good life.

We pray the 'Our Father' every day at the end of the day ... then the learners wish me a good weekend or they say it was a good day.

His motivation to stay in teaching is grounded in his Christian faith and the excellent conditions of service the profession offers to him.

It is absolutely fantastic. You work with professional people. You work with the most precious possession of all parents, their children. You have the motivation to teach learners because the Great Teacher taught us what is written in the Bible. Teach, test, assess, mark, and watch how they progress. I am thankful because as a young man I did not think that I would get a job with medical aid and all expenses covered. It was just fantastic. When I worked in the factory I only had three weeks holiday. That was an inspiration ... school holidays are a plus from my childhood days. It is part of teaching. But not the primary goal ... the love for people is.

Over the course of the years since his return to teaching the demands placed on him in the profession have changed. The demands of the new curriculum required him to do forward planning during the school holidays. He particularly enjoys the forward planning aspect of the curriculum: it provides him with more contact time with the learners.

Although in the last while I have to do schoolwork during the holidays. Because I want to be more involved with the learners and make their tasks neat, I use the holidays for forward planning. During the September holidays I can set the assessment tasks for the fourth term so that when I walk in in the fourth term I know I am ready for school.

I prepare on a Friday for Monday and do schoolwork on a Saturday morning. Then I have the contact time only for learners.

Friday is a good day for him because he can test learners. Mondays are not good because of the distractions over weekends at home for learners.

Mondays are not good days because over the weekend they are sidetracked...they wander around...maybe people unsettle them...maybe

it is not so nice at home. They are talkative and noisy on a Monday and it is difficult to get through the day. They wait until Tuesday to come right. But Mondays have an effect on them. Now that I am older I am calmer in class and my voice is also softer ... It is remarkable the stuff that happens on the farm that unsettles them.

Challenges for Learners

Multi-grade teaching is a challenge for Tom because of the planning required to teach two grades at the same time. In addition to the forward planning, he developed a few coping strategies to deal with teaching two grades at the same time. One of his strategies is to physically split the class in half and to use visual codes to alert the different groups while he is teaching.

Multi-grade teaching is a challenge because you have to be prepared because you have two grades next to each other. I try to position the learners like that so that they can see two sides of the blackboard and I use different colours for the different grades. They like colourful work. I have to make it interesting and colourful. I also use different codes... a few times in the lesson I will say 'Grade Five, are you ready'. So I talk to them the whole time ... I mention them specifically.

Tom saw the challenges for learners one dimensionally: their difficulties with their doing well in grade and systemic tests could be corrected by drilling and memorising tests in preparation for grade and systemic tests.

A typical challenge is to do well in a learning area ... and to do well in the tests I give them tests that are based on the systemic tests.

The difference between this school and other schools

According to him, Christianity and respect for elders distinguishes learners from this school from the other (white) schools he taught at.

The children have lots of respect at these schools. They do not backchat. Parents also have lots of respect for the teachers. Not at the ex-Model C schools. Parents there give the teachers a hard time. I feel honoured at this school.

Here they call me 'Sir'. At the other (White) school they called me Uncle Tom, my nickname. No, I have no problem with being a White male at this school.

Socio-economic Conditions

His knowledge of the contextual challenges learners face is limited. Unlike his colleagues, he does not make any reference to the living conditions of learners on the farms. He sees differences in learners' disposition or performance as part of their normal developmental challenges.

I do not know if they are unhappy some days...classmates can be vicious sometimes...it's been like that all the years in all the schools I taught at.

With this understanding Tom sees his role as that of a motivator.

I motivate and drive them to do better. In my class I put up study tips: Learn and Achieve for the Grade 12s. I point them towards the twelve (grade 12) I show them how to get there. Give them a goal to strive towards. I try to make the class interesting with teaching aids. You have to do all of this at home. They must enjoy coming to school. I tell them I do not want to fight with them when they are naughty because not all of them are academically strong. But I also write motivational notes. One of them is good in maths in Grade 6. I tell him: "Do you know what I wrote down next to your mark? 'You can work neatly'". He always writes untidily. I always motivate and praise them...I tell them to use their neatest handwriting. I do it on the board and in their books to motivate them and they are much, much improved.

Tom described the extent of the challenges for teachers in rural schools in relation to their ability to teach learners correctly according to Christian values, and in what he understands as the 'right way', the Christian way.

The challenge for teachers is to teach learners right, like the Great Teacher, and in the right way and that they understand the work and ask if they do not understand ... and gain the right knowledge and be enriched by the school ... to use the right methods so that they understand the work. I always see myself amongst them ... they must not struggle. They have to understand the work.

Perceptions of Social justice

According to Tom, he does not have any experience of social injustice. At first he interpreted the term 'social' in social justice and referred to the social problems

learners have. He later referred to instances of injustice he read about and understood it in terms of equality and inequality. With that understanding in mind, he could not bring to mind any examples of injustice in the schools or in the town.

Fortunately, I do not personally have any experience of it ... It is a difficult question. We have a few instances of social problems but I do not have to deal with it. I have read of injustices...it must not be like that. Everyone must be treated equally and give each other a better life.

I cannot think quickly of any injustices. I am as far as that is concerned very lucky. I have not seen any in any of my old (ex- Model C) schools. Not here – there aren't any ... and also not in the towns. What is really bad is the far distances children have to walk in the winter when it is raining. They have all the other amenities like at the other schools ... the ablution blocks have everything. They get food at school and there are those who bring their own lunches.

Although Tom saw no difference in the living conditions of learners at this and other schools, he noticed the effects of poverty and tried to help when he saw learners are struggling.

One day I felt sorry for one little girl and bought her a rain coat and warm clothes. You can see they are poor. They pay for the bus to bring them to school from the town because they want to attend school in a peaceful farming environment, I feel sorry for them when they do not have pencils and erasers and then I buy it for them.

Tom came to an understanding of injustice and based it on what he saw as the unfair distribution of wealth. This, he felt, can be corrected by sharing with, and helping others who do not have.

I always tell them that we are not all well-endowed with worldly goods. We do not all have a good salary and homes. That feels unjust. Sometimes, because I do not know what parents earn and what they do with it, I say ... share with those who do not have.

Tom started speaking of social justice in terms of equality and access: how he and the other teachers motivate learners to make use of the opportunities they now have to overcome systemic inequalities.

I show them that before '94 it was like this and things have changed with the new government and we are working together for a bright future ... and they must be the grownups tomorrow and earn money. They have equal opportunities and access to secondary and tertiary school.

We encourage them not to give up. Their parents are not educated. They only have to do their best. We encourage them to get to secondary school. Some of them do not make it. There are a few who fall out. There is not a hostel so we do not know what happens when they are at home.

According to him, if learners have to get by without the basic necessities simply because of the social position within which they find themselves, this would be an injustice.

We do not have the funds to take children to Cape Town or to the sea. We do not have school busses or the money to pay for those trips. The ex-Model C children have and that gives them an advantage. It worries me that everyone cannot be equal as far as housing, clothing and access to modern technology. The teachers at the school have to improve their (the learners) conditions. We must encourage them to do well and to get a good job, a family and so forth.

By the end of the interview his initial perception, that there is no injustice in the school and community, shifted. He acknowledged that there are inequalities in the living conditions in the community and in education, which he saw in his classroom. This awareness unsettled him and he planned to do something about it, in his own way.

We do not have equality ... I can see that in the class. It worries me a lot now. I have money with me now and will buy a few pencils and so forth...

4.3 SCHOOL TWO

The first time I drove to School Two I was struck by the similarities and differences it shares with School One. They are both farm schools in the Overberg Education District and fall under the same school circuit team. The staff of both schools commutes daily from the same town. School One is to the east of the town and School Two to the west. Both schools receive basic services from the same central rural town.

The main difference between the two schools is historical and political. While School One was established for 'coloured' farm labourers' children, School Two was established in 1932 for white children from the white farming community, the owners and white farm workers. Historically, school One employed 'coloured' teachers and School Two white teachers. The functioning and maintenance of the schools fell under different education departments and education policies. School One fell under the Coloured Education Act (No.47 of 1963) and School Two under the National Education Policy Act.(No.27 of 1996). Under the apartheid government's policies, the provisioning of education was different for the two schools: School Two was more privileged than School One.

School Two started as a small school, drawing white learners from the neighbouring farms. Learner enrolment steadily increased over the years with the closure of smaller farm schools for white learners in the area. Prefabricated buildings (which are still being used) were erected in the 1970s to accommodate the increasing number of learners. By 1994, with discussions of the merger of the different education departments and the de-racialisation of schools, the enrolment of exclusively white learners decreased to 10. After 1994, the school was opened to all race groups and enrolled 'coloured' and black farm labourers' children from the surrounding farms. In 2004 three smaller farm schools, previously for farm labourers' children, amalgamated under the management of School Two and the learner enrolment grew to 90. The learner enrolment at the time of the study was 120, excluding Grade R, and the pupil teacher ratio was 1:35. The learners are drawn from a 25 km radius from the school. As is the case with School One, state funded transport is provided for learners who live further than 5km from the school. At the time of the study, no white learners were enrolled at the school.

The school is situated on a working farm and signs of community life pre-1994 are visible. It is surrounded by buildings which were once the hub of the white farming community, namely the Christian Youth Centre and homes of school staff and farm workers. As the white farming community dwindled in number, the buildings are currently used for different purposes. The labourers' cottages, where the present learners live, are located further from the school.

The school enrolls learners from Grade R to Grade 7. At the time of the study, the school staff consisted of 4 teachers, including the principal, and a part time administrator. Except for the Grade R and Grade one classes, all the other classes were multi-grade. The principal and one teacher volunteered to participate in the study.

4.3.1 Interview Summary: Anne, the School Principal

Anne is a 49 year old white female with 29 years teaching experience of which 27 were spent at rural schools. She teaches Grade 1 and is the school principal. She grew up on a farm, attended a farm school and a rural secondary school, and spent most of her life in the Overberg. She was the principal at the school when it was for white farm children only and continued as a teacher and as the principal since then. She expressed a fondness for the rural school setting and for the farm child in particular:

So, I teach at a rural school because I like the children. The farm children are very loving and they are in need of love.

Inspiration and Role Model

Anne recalled that she always wanted to be a teacher from a young age. Her inspiration to become a teacher did not come from any role models. Instead she identified the passion to teach as a central quality in herself and others, from whom she draws her inspiration.

We always played school as children on the farm. I often played the teacher and since that time I always wanted to be a teacher. My role model is someone who has a passion for what they do, who works hard and is focused. I realise that I am not describing a role model, but qualities I admire in someone. And maybe they are my own qualities. There is no-one in particular whom I can describe as a role model. No-one else in my family is in teaching.

A Typical Day at School

As a full-time teacher and principal, Anne spends her day between the office and the classroom. She is fortunate to have a part-time secretary to assist her three days of the week. On those days she can teach with few interruptions, if any.

A typical day at school is a day when everything runs well and I am not interrupted. I have a secretary three days of the week and on the days she is there and there are no interruptions, then it is a good day. I prefer teaching and doing administrative work after school or over the weekends.

Changes in Socio-economic Conditions

Anne has not noticed major changes in the socio-economic conditions of farm workers since 1994. She bemoaned the fact that, despite the election promises made to farm labourers about poverty alleviation, there have been no major improvements in their socio-economic conditions. She has noticed recently that more parents are applying for the Social Services Grant, which she has to sign off. She interpreted the increase in applications for social services grants as a drop in the socio-economic status of the parents, rather than an increase in their knowledge about social security benefits.

The changes (in the country) did not bring about many changes for our children. The only thing now is that more are applying for 'All Pay'... this term more than before.

She admitted that she does not have first-hand knowledge of the living conditions and family life of learners. She noticed an increase in learners' knowledge and attitude towards substance abuse in her classroom, which is a large concern for her.

They are exposed to drug usage and know the names and stuff associated with drugs. There is also a lot of alcohol abuse. And dagga is common. There are days when you can see it went bad at home ... but not all of them ... not all of them.

She avoids going to town over the weekends because that is when parents are reportedly drunk and misbehave, according to her colleagues.

The parents are drunk in town. And the children are so shy. I am very careful about these things because I don't want to embarrass the learners.

Challenges Learners Face

Anne mentioned two challenges faced by learners who attend the school. One is the low literacy and numeracy rates and the other is transport. In both instances, she mentioned the education department provided sufficient support for learners to improve their results and get to school safely. The challenge therefore, in Anne's estimation, is not with state provisioning but parents' and learners' inability to make use of these opportunities.

Literacy and numeracy is a problem. You have to put in a lot to prepare them well. You know, there is a lot of support from WCED. We get lots of learning material. So, the standards cannot be dropped because of those who do not do well. So the reason for the low literacy (sic) is because there is no learning culture at home - and that's all about poverty.

Further evidence for the lack of a learning culture at home is parents' inability to help their children with homework and reading.

I put a note in the homework for the parents to read to their children and tell them stories. It is not that they do not want to do anything...it is just that they do not know what to do.

She admitted that the school could have contributed to the problem because learners could not take books home with them for fear the books would not be well cared for. Recently teachers tried sending books home with learners and were pleasantly surprised with the results.

I gave them stories to take home for the first time this term and it was so good to see that they brought them back and they were clean.

She attributed learners' low literacy levels to the combination of a lack of a learning culture and the limited exposure learners have to the outside world. Coupled with a limited vocabulary, she experienced that learners have a limited frame of reference to

the learning material and topics they are exposed to in the classroom. They are therefore limited in understanding and relating to the curriculum material.

Their world is so small. We take them to Cape Town in Grade 7. But most of them are not exposed to life outside of the farm or the town. My own child went to all these things and his vocab was so good. Now what do you expect from a farm child? They do not have a vocab and no experience to write about things.

She referred to learner drop outs between Grades R and Grade 7. She attributes the considerably low number of learners who progress to Grade 7 to the lack of a learning culture at home. According to her, there are adequate opportunities to attend the secondary schools in town. The ex-Model C school with hostel facilities and bursaries is where the stronger learners are sent. Weaker learners are sent to the township school where they, reportedly, do not perform well.

Unlike School One, transport is not a problem for learners at School Two. The state provided transport is reliable, according to Anne. Learners who live closer to school, but not within walking distance, also came to school by bike, which the education department provided. Transportation by bike did not always work out well with younger and older siblings. The younger siblings had to walk while the older sibling rode the bike, which caused rivalry and insecurity in families. The maintenance of the bikes was not affordable and the provisioning of bicycles was discontinued. Previously, teachers picked up learners on their way to school. They are not allowed to do this anymore. She feels sorry for learners who have to walk to school in winter. Sometimes they are brought to school with the farm transport, if the weather is really bad and there is no transport available.

Anne acknowledged that learners are directly and indirectly affected by the lack of transport. Parents, who have to attend teacher consultations and parent meetings at school, experience great difficulty in making their way to the school. Parents who live further from the school are unable to participate in school activities, are not familiar with the demands of the curriculum, cannot fully support their children and do not have a voice in school matters, such as school governance.

The parents live far from the school and it is difficult for them to get to school for meetings. They're not allowed to get on the school bus.

Perceptions of Social Justice and Injustice

During the interview, she was unable to give any examples of social justice or injustices, past or present. While acknowledging the lack of opportunities for farm workers during apartheid, she says the constitution now emphasises equality and there are no instances of inequalities or differences in opportunities at present. She admitted to one difference between the past and present, namely that the present curriculum makes provision for teaching learners about their rights and responsibilities. She regarded learners' living condition on the farm as a fact of their life and regularly tells them that there is nothing wrong with living on a farm.

Anne does not see any difference between children on the farm and in the town. She has not noticed a difference in school attendance between boys and girls.

To me children are children. I see no difference in children. They are poor and farm life is difficult, but there is nothing wrong with living on a farm. We try to instil norms and values and expose them to a learning culture ... and to dream. If you do not have a dream, then it is a bit bad.

An aspect Anne expressed strongly is health provisioning for rural children, especially dental health. A mobile clinic regularly visits the farms and children are sent by the school for dental check-ups. Learners' teeth are always extracted. They do not get fillings or any other intervention. The ease with which extractions are made compared to preventive health care is a concern. According to her this is an unfair practice, as her own children and those of her friends always have extractions as the last resort. At the end of the interview Anne expressed her continuing passion for teaching at a farm school. She believes the school makes a valuable contribution to the young learners and gives them more than what is officially required by the curriculum.

I tell them, you have to believe in yourself that is all. And we as teachers, we only have to love them. They are in need of love.

4.3.2 Interview Summary: Sonja

Sonja is a 26 year old white female teacher. She was born in the Overberg District, moved to a farm in the area with her parents where she spent most of her school and university years. She is a post level one teacher, teaching a multi-grade class for Grades 6 and 7.

She studied B. Ed. (Psychology), specialising in Learner Support and majoring in Life Orientation and English. After graduating from university she looked for posts in the rural schools as a learner support teacher and learnt that she needed to gain experience as a class teacher before she could be appointed as a learner support teacher. She applied for the post at this school and at the time of the study, has been here for three years.

Teaching at this school is a stepping stone for me to become a Learner Support teacher. I am gaining more knowledge about what I really want to do. I chose teaching as a profession because I want to work with people and especially children. As a student I had to choose between human resource management and teaching. The B. Ed. degree with its focus on the child interested me more. I always thought I would do Foundation Phase teaching but discovered the older child is more to my liking.

Inspiration and Role model

Sonja's role models are close to her, namely her mother and a few good friends. From them she only received positive messages about the teaching profession.

My mother was my role model. She is a teacher and some of my friends too. They all have good experiences and never spoke badly about the profession. She stopped teaching when we moved to the farm. She never returned to teaching after that. My younger friends are also not negative.

Perceptions of Difference between the Rural School and other Schools

Sonja identifies with the rural child because she is from the rural areas. Except for a regrettable teaching practice experience at a town school, she has only taught at this farm school.

I am not a town person. It was bad enough teaching at a town school.

Sonja experiences the difference between the rural child and the urban child in the obedient demeanour of both the rural parent and child and their easy acceptance of the authority of the teacher.

I did practice teaching at a school in town school and that is a totally different child you work with. These children (at the rural school) appreciate that which you bring to them – everything you bring to the classroom. I do not struggle with learners - my problem is parents who are not involved – this also means that everything I say is right – they do not interfere.

For Sonja, the difference between the two sets of learners manifests in their life experience and locality, which can be a drawback for both the urban and rural child. The disadvantage for the rural child, compared to the urban child, is that the rural child is exposed to little outside farm life and this isolation affects the teaching and learning in the classroom.

If you are at one of the other schools the learners are more advanced and also more streetwise. This can work against you too but then it can work against the town child too if we speak about cows and sheep – then our children will know more. It is negative in the sense that some of our children have never been at the sea and do not know words such as plankton and so forth ... I then have to use lots of pictures, words descriptions ... a lot of extra effort you have to put in. But if you do it, they understand.

Because of their limited exposure to life outside the farm, learners have a limited knowledge of most of the topics covered in the curriculum. Her task as an educator is to bring that world into the classroom. In her experience the rural child is more appreciative of the knowledge the teachers possesses and more accepting of it than the urban child, because they do not have preconceived ideas.

We do the same work as the town school – only the child is different. The children at this school are more appreciative. They do not have preconceived ideas. We spoke about a lift the other day ... it felt as if I were teaching them something they know nothing about. They are not as informed about what is happening outside (of the farm). You bring everything to the classroom.

I do not want to put our farm children in a bad light. The Grade 4 child is not exposed to many things. This is not the reason why they do not do well. If I ask him about his world he is knowledgeable, but if I ask about an airport or something associated with the town – like language which is used in the town – I have to bring extra pictures and descriptions.

A good day is when everything happens exactly as you planned it. You write out your planning and you can complete it without shouting and being pressurised to complete it. You know the tempo of your class and you can complete your work at that tempo.

Multi-grade Teaching

In Sonja's experience, teaching a multi-grade classroom requires extra planning and a high level of insight as to what is required in and across the grades at any particular time in the classroom.

Teaching the multi-grade class means you have to do extra planning and you have to know exactly what the one and the other is going to do. Sometimes it is the same topic, then you get the one (Grade) started and then the other ... you have to physically plan it that way.

In addition to the more focused work in the multi-grade classroom, the workload intensifies as she has to complete twice the amount of subjects for the two grades. In spite of pre-planning for work to be completed at the same time across the grades and subjects, learners sometimes lag behind which means that she cannot coordinate her teaching.

Multi-grade is extra planning but it is not that which results in work not being completed. It is mostly the amount of subjects – you have nine subjects per grade. You do not always teach the same subjects to the different grades, because the Grade 7s are able to work a bit faster already and sometimes the Grade 7s have a longer piece to complete than the grade sixes are done. You do not always do the same work across the grades. On a good day you manage to complete everything.

Coupled with the challenges of a multi-grade class is the size of such group classes. Teaching a multi-grade class works best for Sonja when she has a smaller class. With a large class she feels that she is unable to cope most days.

On average two or three days in a week are bad days. Most of the times I feel like I am coping ... it's better with a smaller class of 27 learners. When I had Grade 4 and 5 there were 43 learners – then 5 days out of 5 were bad days. It also works better with older learners. We have a good understanding. When it takes a while to get going on the one day, it usually goes better the next.

Sonja experiences a sense of failure when, in spite of forward planning, she is unable to complete the work planned for the day. In addition to differentiating between the two grades in her delivery, she has to differentiate her teaching according to the learning needs of the learners in and across the grades. A further task is to do the assessments when learners have not completed the tasks according to her planning, which adds to her burden. She then experiences learners with learning needs as uncooperative and detrimental towards the faster learners.

A bad day is when learners prevent you from completing the work and then those who want to work have to suffer. For instance today I could only do two subjects because learners did not want to give their cooperation. It is bad for me. Multi-grade means that you have to plan the finest detail to cover all the work and then the assessments also have to be done. It is such a rush ... then the day ends up in a mess. That is bad. And another day is lost.....

Challenges in Socio-economic Conditions

Sonja is aware of the background of the learners whose parents are farm labourers and what their socio-economic conditions are. She noticed that some learners are better off than others because of the material goods they bring to school. For her this difference in income does not advantage the more affluent learners judging by their performance in the classroom. According to her judgement, all learners are equal in the classroom, irrespective of parental income.

It is farm labourers' children we teach. Their socio-economic conditions also differ. We have children who wear pretty clothes and have DVD players and then the learners who walk bare feet and do not have warm clothing and food. But in the classroom there is no difference. The child whose parents have a little extra are set up to help them. If I think quickly now the children who have stuff also struggle with the work. Yes, so obviously if the child does not have enough to eat he will not perform adequately. So if there are no rules at home for doing homework, there will be no homework done tomorrow. So you can be

poor and still give your child rules to do homework ... but then many parents are illiterate too.

According to Sonja the socio-economic conditions learners experience do not determine learner performance. She considers learner motivation to be the main influencing factor to their success, irrespective of socio-economic conditions.

This is difficult ... there is a child in my class who has everything his heart desires ... his work is not good ... he can do better. Now you get the poor child who goes out of his way to work. I cannot go as far as saying that the socio- economic conditions are holding the child back. This is not easy for me to explain. People say that learners who are better off do better ... but they do not always have pens or pencils...and then they are all just the same.

She saw, however, a correlation between alcohol abuse in the farm worker community and its influence on learner performance. She makes a lay person's judgement on the number of learners who have Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS).

We also have a number of learners who are 'FAS learners'. We do not have any learners who have been diagnosed as such You can tell by looking at them. Alcohol abuse has an influence on family life therefore it definitely has an influence on their performance.

Sonja lamented the fact that the infrastructure for supporting teaching and learning for learners in general, and low performing learners in particular, is lacking. Even though promises were made for follow-up and supportive systems and structures such as psychological support services and libraries, these have not materialised.

In the Western Cape we have a test for slow learners and they qualify for learner support. We have three who are tested. But there is no follow up ... and they do not have a library. We were going to get one (a mobile library) last year this time, but it has not arrived yet. They do not have the resources and this is the same for everyone in the class.

The result of these socio-economic factors means that the teacher's role in the curriculum is extended to include a wide range of pastoral duties. With this in mind the most important subject for Sonja, is Life Orientation in its theoretical and its everyday, practical sense. She integrates Life Orientation in all aspects of her

classroom teaching in addition to teaching all the subjects to two grades simultaneously. This is a necessary and time-consuming task.

You do more than the curriculum. You are busy ... every moment ... with that type of education. Everything is part of Life Orientation and everything becomes part of the Life Orientation period. I do not know where we get the time for it ... but you cannot get on with your other tasks if you do not do it. You cannot teach a child about (it). Take an example, you physically get the child and explain that he has to bath and brush his teeth and why. For instance, tuck in your shirt and why. Explain why, because one day this and this and this. You are actually constantly busy with it. You are always busy with it. How do you handle conflict ... you are always busy with it.

Typical Challenges for Learners

Sonja had to think hard about the typical challenges her learners have to deal with. For her the main challenge is the way learners cope with some of the challenges associated with the low socio-economic conditions on the farm, such as alcohol abuse and teenage pregnancy.

Alcohol abuse. Definitely. With parents and learners. Unfortunately we have parents who get drunk and then the children also do it. It is a joke for them. It happens from Grade 1 – parents who pass out and are then unaware of what is happening. It is a joke, but they do not realise the dangers of it. Now I have a young girl who is pregnant in my class.

Sonja mentioned access to secondary education as a further challenge for learners who attend farm schools: usually those who do well can apply for bursaries at other schools in the neighbouring towns, but the cost involved in secondary education is unaffordable for most parents which means that most learners leave school with only a primary education qualification.

Another challenge for Grade 7 is when they have to go to the high school and there is no transport or a hostel. There is only one hostel in town at the model C school. They can ask for exemption for the school fees and if they did well they could qualify for a bursary. The transport to the nearest hostel is a problem. Last year we had a problem with a promising Grade Seven learner who could not get a place at the hostel ... and the rest of the class did not apply! We talk and motivate up to a point. This year one of our ex learners is in Grade 12 at the ex-Model C school and another in Grade 8.

Another major challenge for Sonja is access to transport for learners and parents. She regarded lack of transport as a problem which has a many detrimental effects on school life: it negatively affects parental involvement; and limits learner participation in extra mural activities resulting in the school not offering an extramural curriculum.

Transport is a problem. Children come to school by bus. The school's radius is 25km. Parents cannot always attend meetings because they do not have transport and there is no public transport. This is the closest school for learners on the bus route. If the bus route changes they will have to go to another school and not this school. We are totally dependent on the transport system. We cannot have extramural activities or have extra classes. We have sport once a week on a Tuesday and this we work into the LO period. We do not have the opportunity to compete with other schools. Netball is OK, not rugby ... there is not enough to fill a team and then, again, no transport to get there. Then we have to take our own cars on our own costs. We have not played any match this year. Or cross country. We had children who had Boland colours and then we take them to the training field. If they continue, it is my responsibility – I cannot expect the parent to take the child.

Sonja related that the school was aware of the effects of these challenges and has developed a few strategies to assist learners to overcome them.

We help them to overcome these challenges by helping them with transport. We also ask all the time whether they have applied (for high school). I will get the forms from the high school and drop the completed forms there. They enter the Eisteddford in the poetry and art sections... which opens their world a bit for them. They are good at drawing. We also have a sports day at school at a time that does not interfere with planting and other busy times on the farm.

Perceptions of Social Justice and Injustice

Sonja struggled to articulate what social justice and injustice mean and could not recall any experience of injustices. She is aware of the social problems learners and parents face, but do not see them as injustices: rather obstacles which they need to overcome with hard work.

I don't know. I can't think about it right now. Our learners have problems, yes, but the Constitution says we are all equal and we treat everyone the same, rich or poor. At the end of the day it just comes down to hard work.

My Reflections

In my reflections after visiting the two farm schools I struggled with the obedience culture at both the schools and the way this seems to perpetuate disadvantage and poverty in the area. The teachers at both schools were proud of learner obedience which was part of the culture of the school.

My own record in my reflective journal has the following insert: I am missing something here. The teachers at both schools speak about a loving and caring culture at their schools. They speak about how obedient and well-disciplined the learners and parents are. Sonja speaks in particular of how this means that she is always right and that parents will not argue with her or contest what she says. Is this subservience? Does this attitude and teaching style unintentionally keep learners in the cycle of poverty? (Reflection after visiting School One and Two)

I detected an underlying theme of power and powerlessness in the culture of obedience at the farm school both on the side of the teachers and parents. I also detected an expectation from teachers that learners and parents would be obedient, subservient and respectful. I explored these themes further in my interview with Bill, the principal at School Three.

Another theme which emerged after the interviews with the teachers at the farm schools was the links being made between the identity of the farm labourer and his/her socio-economic status. From the interviews with teachers and my observations of the living conditions on the farms it seems as if there are trans-generational patterns. For instance, the socio-spatial identity of the farm labourer and the farm labourer's child is entrenched in a socio-economic position which has been carried over generations. This became clear when the teacher speak about the loyalty of the parents to the school. Many of the parents of the children who are at school were taught by the same teachers. There is a concern that the present generation of farm school learners' great-grand parents was farm labourers. With the exception of single top achievers who can secure bursaries and whose parents can afford the costs of secondary school, many learners of this generation will probably not be able to escape the life of being a farm labourer. There seems to be no escape from it.

Parents and learners are blamed by teachers for their inability to escape their socio-spatial identity and class position. Scholastic achievement, which is a way out of relative poverty, is not realisable for these children. Teachers appreciate their respect and subservience but this offers no way out. The farm school system is keeping farm learners in constant servitude with little or no opportunity to migrate out of poverty.

Political and economic intervention is needed. A system of redress according to the redistribution principle is needed in the interest of equity. This might give people the opportunity to improve their living conditions and break the cycle of poverty and subservience.

4.4 SCHOOL THREE

This school is located in a picturesque coastal town, nestled between the ocean and the mountain. The history of the town is that of many South African towns. After the proclamation of the Group Areas Act (no 41 of 1950), the section of the community classified as 'coloured' was forcibly removed from the prime coastal residential areas to the outer reaches of the town. Many families lost their homes and their livelihoods. The community was largely a fishing community who, through loss of proximity to the ocean, lost their source of income and their identity.

Almost 50 years after the forced removals, the section of the town proclaimed as whites only by the Group Areas Act (no 41 of 1950) thrives as a prime coastal area. The coloured area of the town is impoverished; with high unemployment rates due to limited employment opportunities in the town and neighbouring areas. In spite of the unemployment, large numbers of homeless and unemployed people have moved to the town, seeking work. A sprawling informal settlement became home to a large and cosmopolitan black community, inclusive of the original Afrikaans-speaking 'coloured' community, South African Xhosa speakers, and more recently Zimbabweans, Somalians, Congolese and many other African migrants.

The majority of the inhabitants of the town are employed in the construction business; although a few still fish for a living. These occupations are mostly seasonal and dependent on weather conditions. Public transport to and from the town is non-

existent. A few entrepreneurs in the town have started taxi businesses which commute between the coastal towns and the city. A few residents, who work beyond a walking distance, commute to work by taxi. School children all live within walking distance of the primary school. The nearest secondary school is 25km from the town.

There are three primary schools in the town: the school in this study, a former Model C school and a private primary school. To accommodate the learning needs of the different languages in the community, the school in this study has two streams: the traditional Afrikaans stream from Grade R to Grade 7. More recently the school started a Xhosa stream from Grade R to Grade 4 to accommodate the growing Xhosa community. Grade 1 is mono grade, Grades 2 and 3 are combined and so are Grades 4 and 5. After Grade 5 the learners either continue at that school in an Afrikaans stream or commute to an English school in a neighbouring town 25km away.

4.4.1 Interview Summary: Ben, the Principal

Ben is a 52 year old 'coloured' male. He has 28 years teaching experience, all of which has been spent at rural schools. At the time of the interview, Ben was the principal at the school for eight months. In addition to his leadership and management portfolio he teaches English for Grade 8 and Life Orientation for Grade 7.

Educational Background

Ben grew up in a rural town in the Overberg District and pursued his initial teacher training at a teacher training college in Oudtshoorn. When he was in his second year during the students' protests, about 90% of the students failed and a number of them decided to drop out and look for work. The future looked bleak for him then and he decided to drop out of college. His parents were not happy with his decision because they made many sacrifices to support his studies. It did not take him long to find a job. He managed to find a teaching post as an unqualified teacher at a farm school. Determined not to disappoint his parents, he decided to pay them back and to continue his studies with the money he earned. He enjoyed applying the knowledge he gained over the first year at college and tried and tested new methodologies while

at the school. He recalls that they were very valuable two years which inspired him to complete his teachers' qualification.

Inspiration and Role Model

As a nineteen year old, Ben was a Sunday school teacher. The superintendent of the Sunday school was a primary school principal who taught Ben a few basic steps of teaching to help him with Sunday school teaching. He found Sunday school teaching satisfying and saw the value of the approach he had been taught, especially after the feedback he received from his class. It was especially heartening to find out that the children remembered what they were taught and that he had a part in it. This experience and his friendship with the superintendent of the Sunday school had a great influence on his later decision to become a teacher.

Teaching Experience in the Rural Education District

On reflection he admits that he did not make a conscious or moral decision to teach in a rural school. In contemplating why he spent most of his teaching career in a rural education district, he comes to the conclusion that his decision to teach in the rural education districts was made because of his familiarity with the context. It was his 'comfort zone' and because he does not relocate easily, he says teaching in a rural school was an easy choice to make. Another factor which influenced his choice was his love for children; especially children at farm schools after his first teaching stint at a farm school as an unqualified teacher.

...also, a love for children, especially at farm schools where children are humble and have a great admiration for the teacher. The teacher is held in great esteem by parents and children. Then you work well together. You do not have disciplinary problems and they are very vulnerable and you can mould them. In any case, they want to perform and they want to see that the teacher sees them trying and that's why they have to be given credit for what they are doing.

At this point in our interview, and in keeping with grounded theory methodology, I pursue the theme of subservience and respect for elders and teachers in the farm schools as presented by teachers at both School One and School Two. As Ben did, all

the teachers gave a positive account of the high regard the children and their parents have for the teacher. The concern I raised was that, despite a positive and pleasant experience for teachers, the learners do not perform well at primary school. Only a few learners enrolled at secondary school. For the majority of learners the cycle of poverty seemed to continue. Ben admits that he has not given it much thought. He attributes a combination of respectfulness and lack of ambition to the farming community generally. He attributes this further to the limiting influence which living in a small farm labourers' community has on learners. According to him, their physical distance from town and city life contributes to their lack of exposure to anything beyond the limits of their immediate circumstances which in turn reduces their self-esteem and limits the choices and decisions they are able to make.

One of the reasons is a lack of exposure. Although they are eager to cooperate the finances are not always there to give them the exposure... for instance to take them over the boundaries of the area where they live. Also the exposure they had till then limits them and everything they are now going to try, they will shy away from especially when confronted with larger groups of children who were not part of their growing up like town children ... then they are inclined to withdraw ... I can almost say this is a lack of self-confidence ... a low self-image when it matters... they consider themselves second, to put it like this, "They are better and know better than us " (referring to the town children). That is also how they underestimate themselves.

Ben has a sports background and sees sport as an equaliser in the lives of farm children. Here too he sees a difficulty for farm children. Competing in sports is difficult for farm schools which do not have the necessary resources to compete on an equal basis, he says.

So the farm schoolchild needs more exposure and what other exposure can there be to integrate with other schools than through sport? Here they can show that in spite of the size of school and in spite of where I stay I can compete with others of my age and show that I am better... in many cases. Talk about rugby and netball, for instance, there are only so many players on the field and they are equal to each other. Unfortunately it is so that lots of schools do not have the resources to compete in sport. That and the lack of exposure remains a large factor in this matter.

He compares the learners in this school to learners from a farming community. Compared to a farming community, this community is more open to other people and ideas from the city which he views as a positive factor.

The children from this community compared with the farm child has more exposure ... a person must not underestimate the role of people who come to live here ... they go to the cities and they get family at holidays and they bring lots of knowledge from the city ... so the exposure is big as a result of them being there when that (from the city) is brought to them.

Experience of Teaching in a Rural School

Although Ben does not live in this community (he commutes about 40 km to and from school every day) he is familiar with the town and its people. He enjoys the hiking routes in the town. In spite of this familiarity, he had to adjust to the school. According to him the present school lacks the kind of infrastructure he was used to at his last school and he feels inspired to establish something similar at this school. In addition to the dissimilarities in infrastructure, he senses that the previous school management team had an autocratic style which is different from his. He believes in collaborative decision-making and would like to start from scratch to establish a management style where staff can offer input and own a decision.

He describes a typical good day at the school as a day in which he can get through all the administration without too many interruptions from children who need to go home or to the clinic. This takes up a lot of his time but he prefers taking them himself instead of sending them on their own. These interruptions are, however, not typical of a bad day. The high incidence of teacher absenteeism due to sickness is more disruptive.

There will be illnesses, but at times it is so coincidental that up to 5 teachers are absent and then you have a crisis. Classes have to be combined ... Grades 5, 6 and 7 and no teaching and learning really happens. In the end the children are disadvantaged.

Typical Challenges for Learners

The typical challenges for learners are the high rate of unemployment in the area, the access to secondary school and learner involvement in poaching.

The biggest challenge is the unemployment. Children are handicapped ... marginalised because of a lack of money. Access to the secondary school is also a challenge in the sense that the free transport is only to Mountain Secondary which is not necessarily the parents' choice, but they cannot afford anything else. There is a big drop out after Grade 9 because of other reasons. There is only one bus, but there are more learners for only the one bus. There is a minimum requirement for another bus...so not all learners have transport to the secondary school. I have also heard of children who are involved in poaching. This is certainly a trade for those who do not want to go to school and want to make money quickly.

Ben sees the multi-grade teaching for the Xhosa stream and the large classes at the school as a challenge for the teachers and the school. He refers to challenges as the extent to which teachers are able to manage their large classrooms and multi-grade classrooms and not how well they manage discipline.

Discipline is not the biggest challenge ... it can be managed. The biggest challenge is the multi-grade. Teachers put a lot into it I wonder how much they get out. Also the large classes, rather than two Grade 6 classes of 45-50 each ... the preference is for three classes of 35 each ... this is more manageable

Challenges in Socio-economic Conditions

Being relatively new in the area, Ben is not sure of any changes in the socio-economic conditions in the town which could have had an impact on education. He does not have the facts and can speak only from what he has heard from his staff. He mentions a number of poverty-related factors such as the impact of the fishing quota system, the downturn in the building industry and the inadequate provision of housing.

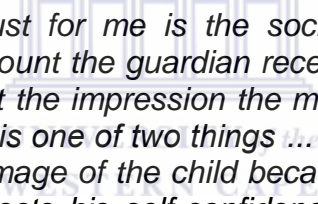
The quota system ... some people think it is good because you can catch a certain amount and have an income. Others think it is bad because those without a quota do not have access to the industry. Work is also scarce in the building industry ... there is huge unemployment. The harbour development ... apparently they made sure that a certain

percentage of the labour had to be local ... but I do not think it makes a great impact on the community.

The housing developments are positive ... but it may attract more people to the area. There are squatters already ... back-yard dwellers can augment your income. This changes the structure of the community. There are say, two children enrolled at the school. Some children may not have access to the school because they disappear.

Perceptions of Social Justice

Ben speaks of social injustice when he clarifies what social justice means to him. The unfair disbursement of social grants in households constitutes an injustice to him. Parents qualify for social grants for school-going children but his impression is that the child does not benefit from it. According to him, this is an additional disadvantage to the child who is already at a disadvantage, and results in negative behaviour or low self-esteem in the child.



Something which is unjust for me is the social grants which children receive. I suspect the amount the guardian receives ... the child must get a portion of it ... and I get the impression the money is not divided to the child's advantage. Now it is one of two things ... the child either withdraws and this affects the self-image of the child because he does not look that neat anymore ... and affects his self-confidence ... or he has to assert himself in a negative way. He has to take on a new identity to protect himself.

Another form of social injustice is the effects of the integration of previously separated groups: blacks and 'coloureds', in the community. Ben is aware of the complexities which integration in the school and the communities brings. While previously disintegrated groups mix in the social settings of the school playground and in the streets of the townships, the underlying racial stereotyping and derogatory racial slurs remain part of the narrative between groups of children.

To a great extent children are enjoying that freedom, justice, safety and so forth. There is reasonable integration in this town. When I drive through I see the different groups playing with one another ... it's actually strange that there are incidents (at the school). Maybe it is worth mentioning, you notice that type of conflict because here are also other language and race groups and in these enlightened times you would not want to see this. Complaints of the K-word are often heard. Not sure if he is provoked to say it /or you are a lower class than I am or they hear it at home. We have

to stop it before it gets out of hand. In a subtle way children have to be made aware of respect and acceptance of other people. It is a slow process.

The existence of a separate Afrikaans and Xhosa stream and the experience of it at the school in the light of the difficulties mentioned above is a pressing issue. Ben feels that there needs to be awareness about these issues at the school.

Attention needs to be given to the two streams. There is definitely such a feeling amongst staff. And also for instance the way they refer to the (Xhosa) multi-grade teacher. Children are keen observers so we need to have serious discussions about this.

The discussion about the complexity of the diversity issues in the school and community helps clarify the problems he has to deal with as a principal and leader. This awareness also makes him think about the action he could take to address these issues at the school.

Maybe we need to get someone with the necessary skills to make us aware of the diversity and how to address it and how to manage it. This must of course be handled with great sensitivity.

4.4.2 Interview Summary: Cheryl

Cheryl is a 50 year old 'coloured' teacher with 31 years teaching experience. Born in this town, she attended this primary school at its original site, an Anglican school in the harbour area, where most of the fishing community lived. After the promulgation of the Group Areas Act (No. 41 of 1950), this school and a large section of the community declared non-White was relocated to the outskirts of the town, distanced from their livelihood and their sense of identity. The school was then built on its present site and became a state school.

Teaching Experience

Apart from five years at a Cape Town township school, she taught at rural schools for 26 years. She has been at this school for 14 years teaching Grade 1. Teaching was not her first choice.

I wanted to become a secretary with smart office suits but my parents were not privileged. When my sister completed at Songe (Teacher Training College) my father said typing school would be too expensive and he had other children at school. I had to go to Songe. I took my sister's clothes and books and that saved my father.

Her first teaching post at 19 years old was at a farm school which consisted only of a bare classroom without furniture and teaching and learning resources. She was unprepared to teach under those circumstances. At the end of the first week, she was determined not to return to the school after the weekend home. She recalls the conversation she had with her father:

"I am not going back. You said I had to be a teacher". Then I cried... there were no kindergarten tables and chairs, still the old fashioned long desks and no table for the teacher. It was not my ideal ... and then I had to start in those circumstances! I told my father, "Call the principal ... I am not coming back".

She went back, accepted her circumstances and tried to make the best of her circumstances with the resources she had at her disposal. This decision was a turning point in her early career as a rural teacher. It inspired her to develop a love for teaching.

I told the children to collect apple cases. I covered it for furniture. Later a new principal got new furniture and other stuff was ordered for us. Then it went a lot better. Later I started to love teaching. About 4 years after that I really started loving the work, but I always loved children.

Inspiration and Role Model

Her role model was her primary school teacher. He was a committed teacher who was passionate about teaching.

I have a passion ... I think if you do not have some passion for teaching today, then it would be difficult to cope. It is a challenge. But in Grade 1 you get the greatest satisfaction. A Grade 1 learner knows nothing. And as the year progresses, and at the end of year, he who knew nothing reads to you. And that is for me the greatest pleasure. The passion is here, the desire is still here – just like Mr. Gibson had. His passion was contagious. It is just the little stuff that makes you tired.

Experience of Teaching in a Rural School district

She has not always taught in a rural school. She taught in township schools before she got married to her husband who is a local townsperson. Her experience of the rural school is that it is a safer environment than the urban school.

We decided the city is not a place to raise children and then we moved back to the rural areas. In Mitchell's Plain the children also have to walk in dangerous areas and take the train. Here you can walk to school and you are walking with people from your home until you get to school. No danger involved. Children walk from here and also from other areas close by. This is the closest school for the whole area. A few use state transport to go to the high school in the neighbouring town. Others go to another school further away with a hostel. And then there is a taxi to another town further away and they use private transport.

Good days are rare in her experience. She experiences a typical good day when learners give of their best; which is not often during the week.

A typical good day is when they give their best. I do not listen to complaints like ..."Miss, he took my pencil"... and they work well together. On Mondays they come across tired and they are late after the weekend and then they... it is not so nice. By Wednesday and Thursday it comes right and by Friday they are fidgety because then it is weekend.

A bad day is when the time she would like to spend with learners is taken up with long staff meetings. This is a reflection of her love for helping struggling learners.

Oh, bad days are when we have meetings. We have lots of meetings in the afternoon. You want to work with a child then there are meetings - curriculum and this and that and loong meetings. That is not a good day. Sometimes the meetings are so long. We leave at 4 or 5 and it is not nice for a person. Sometimes it is good to have the meetings ... a few colleagues want to waste time and repeat the same story and so the time goes by. I want to do extra work with a little one who takes the bus and I can strengthen him a bit and then I do not have the time.

According to her, more time is spent on administrative work in the new curriculum than on actual intervention time for slow learners. This affects the amount of time she could spend with a child who needs extra help.

There are lots of forms to fill in especially if you want to keep a child behind who needs more time than you have so many forms to fill in. But in the old days the teacher decided to keep the child behind. Now you have a long path with interventions and this has to be written down ... and that is what I say about the admin ... with the CAPS they said we will have less work. Let's see, if it happens.

In spite of the added administrative duties, her love for the children she works with motivates her to stay in teaching.

I had a 'laat lammetjie' who is only 11 and she has a long way to go. And a son at university. But it is good to work with the children. It keeps me going. It is nice to work with children, even if I could for longer ... but it is the admin

Challenges for Learners at the School

According to Cheryl, the diversity of learners at school is a challenge for learners. Learners do not know how to handle their differences and resort to violence and swearing to deal with their differences. She sees this as a replication of what happens in the home and community environment and this becomes part of the culture of the school.

Challenges? Yes, there are. Here are children from different backgrounds and the quiet one has to cope with the more lively one. Here is a fighting culture amongst the children. He who is not from that environment has to deal with it. It is the order of the day. Today during break I heard a big girl using ugly swear words. I spoke to her. Later the small ones learn this too because the bigger ones do not set the example. The fighting culture is brought from home ... their environment.

Challenges in Socio-economic Conditions

When Cheryl refers to the socio-economic conditions which have an impact on schooling, she speaks from the perspective of both a concerned resident and a teacher. She speaks with the ease and assurance of someone who has an intimate knowledge of the town and as someone who has retold the story a number of times. For her, the spatial geographical factors such as the lack of social amenities and activities for young people, coupled with the huge unemployment in the area

constitute an injustice which has a detrimental impact on the levels of poverty and limits the employment choices young people can make.

The unemployment is as a result of a slack in the building trade. All fishermen did not get quotas - and only a certain number got and this has an effect on the poverty in the town. The alternative work for fishermen is to go to the building industry ... and there is little work ... and if you are not qualified, you have to do unskilled work ... and then that is low paying. This is not right, because what can young people do? The new supermarket in the town centre will give some work for a few young people who are sitting at home without work.

Coupled with the unemployment is the growing incidence of drug abuse and alcoholism in the town. She sees the effects of this in her classroom and in the school.

TIK and alcohol abuse is a huge problem in this town. Young boys and girls who came through your hands ... these are the children whose children we are going to get next year in Grade 1 and we have the alcohol syndrome children in this area. These young mothers' and fathers' children are the ones we are teaching. And if mom gets home late at night, how does the child get to school the next day? ... I am shocked when I see this.

The Grade 8s and 9s are under the influence (of alcohol) over the weekend... and how are they on a Monday if they drank on a Sunday? They are not ready for school. I don't know about TIK use by learners at school, but alcohol definitely.

Cheryl feels strongly that the lack of social amenities and supportive structures in the community do not help young people lead a drug-free life. According to her, the available organisations cannot deal with the problem and the cycle of drug dependency and related social problems continues.

There are a few community organisations and there is a police forum and at the church there is a prayer group. They go to rehab but when they get back ... there are no organisations or anything to do. The social workers and clinic help to get them to rehab but, when they get back there is nothing.

Another effect of poverty on school and community life for Cheryl, is teenage pregnancy which is on the increase amongst younger girls.

Yes, we have teenage pregnancies. Now again we have a girl in Grade 8 who is pregnant and one who was in Grade 7 last year who had a baby earlier in the year... it happens every year.

Cheryl sees a correlation between the socio-economic conditions in the town and the performance of learners in the classroom. Of special significance for her is the lack of a reading culture and the inability of the parents to provide learners with reading artefacts, which are considered to be luxury items.

*The curriculum ... he comes from the area where he does not have stories read to him ... and this is the beginning of good reading. The parents are not doing enough. Lots of children come to school with very little knowledge. And you find stuff in the curriculum they have not heard of and you have to start from scratch. If parents can read to their children ... I tell them to paste words up at home and buy colouring in books- what **our** parents tried to do. You see very little of it. I think its finances. A good colouring-in book costs a lot and the parents are unemployed. There is a high unemployment rate in the town and the children do not have these luxury items. Mom provides the basics only.*

Challenges for Teachers



Cheryl takes the past as her measure of whether teachers at the school have challenges. Looking back and comparing this with what she has now, she finds this time easier.

I do not see so many challenges as we had in the past. This time is good for me.

There are, however, a few things she mentions as challenges in the rights-based school environment. One is the right of the child to a clean environment, which she feels she can do something about. The other is the right of the child to be taught in his/her mother tongue, which is more complex and to which she does not have an answer.

The school is dirty for me and the windows have never been washed since I am at the school. I decided my children and I will keep it clean... It is a challenge and when I get to school I do not know how I will find my

class. The right of the child to be taught in a clean and tidy environment is what I want to do something about ...

Language teaching for Xhosa children is a challenge. There are lots of Xhosa children in my class but the parents have a choice and they chose the Afrikaans class and they are with me. The one boy's mother I spoke to ... and I told her he is not doing well ... if she could not put him in the Xhosa class? But she says even if he must repeat he must stay in the Afrikaans class. So ...

In Cheryl's estimation, little is done by community organisations and the school system to assist teachers, learners and parents to deal with the problems in the community. Although learners can stay after school for extra programmes and after-care, teachers do not live in the area and leave early.

There are no programmes - here is nothing like this for teachers...no enrichment programmes for learners or parents. We do not have anything because most teachers do not live in the area. When school closes the teachers leave early. We are three or four and cannot deal with all of it. The children can stay but not the teachers. There is aftercare and the NGO does lots of nice things for the learners.

Changes in the Area which had an Impact on Schooling

The most positive change Cheryl sees is the new RDP (Reconstruction and Development Project) housing development in the area which will provide home ownership for a large number of people in the area.

The children are excited because they are moving to new homes and they are looking forward to a home ... it's not big but a home. They are moving into a home and it is something big for them. This will uplift them and their morale.

The new housing is not adequate, however, since a number of learners are still backyard dwellers or live with their grandmothers in overcrowded homes.

The backyard dwellers are almost half of my class. They still live with grandma and it is overcrowded.

The new housing development sparked controversy in the community, with perceptions by 'coloureds' of preference bestowed on Xhosa speakers. This has caused feelings of injustice amongst the 'coloured' people and raised perceptions of unfair treatment based on old apartheid divisions. The feeling of injustice is based on a perception that resources are not distributed fairly and equitably.

Here has been an influx of Xhosa people to this area and they get preferential treatment. And here are many 'coloureds' who are in informal structures. The injustice is at the municipality. They first see to the Xhosa people. There is a waiting list and some families have been on the list for years and the Xhosa only came the other day.

Perceptions of Social Justice and Injustice

Cheryl's framework to assess where the school and the community is in terms of social justice is based on what applied during apartheid, her frame of reference. In terms of this framework, her estimate is that the school is doing well. One example of this is that learners have access to many more resources than in the past. It is their choice to take advantage of these opportunities; unlike in the past when their choices would have been limited.

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The school does well and learners are exposed to a lot. Their education is not like ours was. We were restricted. They have good libraries and the school has a good library and there's the community library ... and they have access to technology and all these things. They have free access to the latest technology. In the past we could not use the white library. Now they can and the child can do well if he wants to.

She does not apply this same sense of personal responsibility towards new opportunities and the enactment of social justice to the Xhosa community. Her answer to a question of whether there are circumstances which prevent people from accessing the resources and opportunities presently available reveals racial stereotyping from the past. Her perception is that the 'coloured' community she identifies with is more proactive, while the Xhosa speaking community are held back by factors such as culture, socialisation and attitude.

Yes, (there are circumstances) but not under our people. In the Xhosa community not all children attend school. On a rainy day there are only

three or four of them. They do not come to school. They grow up like this. Their background is like this. They do not worry that much even though President Mandela encouraged them. They want it too easy

Her further examples of social injustice relate to the limited social services available to people in the township. She first compares the present situation to the past inadequacies and then explains the inadequacies of the present.

For social injustice I am going to mention the health services. I feel today it is different. Today we have a clinic, but here is not an ambulance stationed here and if there is a serious illness or accident it may be too late. My daughter was knocked down and we waited three hours for the ambulance. If you do not have medical aid the doctors do not want to help you.

Even though the present is an improvement on the past as far as access to social services is concerned, the fact that the social services are not close to the community they serve is an injustice in her opinion.

Being far from the services is a social injustice. Today it is better but everything is not fine.... It will take us years to get there.

An issue which affects her deeply, and which she interprets as an injustice, is the way in which limited finances prevent children from pursuing further education and getting out of the confines of the community. Here she does not distinguish between different race groups.

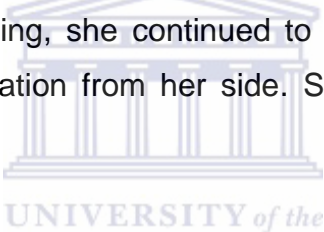
Every child has a chance to get out of this community. There are very clever children and it is sad to see them dropping out because of finances. If parents can be educated to save or have a policy the child can become something. The state has bursaries, but it is very little... parents must give the most. The good child is lost after matric and do not achieve anything because they cannot get tertiary education as a result of the financial conditions in the family. My son is at the University of the Western Cape. My husband is a builder and was unemployed since February and I know what it means to keep him at university. I cannot disappoint him. So what if both parents have no job. I am in the fortunate position that I have a job which pulled us through. But I know it. The going is tough.

4.4.3 Interview Summary: Sarah

Sarah is a 50 year old 'coloured' teacher. She teaches a Grade 3 Afrikaans class. She was born and bred in this town and now lives and works here. She has 29 years teaching experience and has been at this school for 11 years. She taught at a number of schools in the area. The last school she taught at closed because of low numbers. She was acting principal at the last school. After the retrenchment of teachers, she asked to be relocated to this school.

Educational Background

Sarah attended this school when she was in primary school and attended the neighbouring high school and hostel up to Standard 8 (Grade 10). Thereafter she attended the teacher training college and qualified as a Foundation Phase (FP) teacher. While she was teaching, she continued to improve her qualifications. This required hard work and dedication from her side. She does not have a favourable recollection of that period.



I was not very intelligent and realised I could do this (enroll for a teachers' diploma after Standard 8). I was qualified as a teacher with Standard 8 and two years. I did matric (part time) and stayed up nights to get matric. I registered for another diploma. I completed the NPDE in 2008/9 ... While I was doing this others who only had Standard 8 plus two years were just got moved up to matric ... and when that happened I decided not to study further.

Inspiration and Role Model

Sarah was not highly motivated to become a teacher. She recalls that there were only a few professions open for young black females; teaching being one of them. She also struggled to choose a role model and eventually settled on her high school teacher because of her communication skills.

In those days this was the only profession and I always admired teachers. My role model was a teacher at the high school at that time. She always had a way of communicating well with learners

Motivation for Teaching at this School

Because Sarah lived in the town, she always wanted to teach at this school to be with her family. It was not easy to find a suitable post at the school but she persevered until she was successful.

I am at this school because my husband and children were living here while I had to wait for a post here. There was never an opportunity for teachers from this area to teach at this school. Always teachers from another area ... outside areas ... and there are a number of us who were outside and could not get in. And I told myself that one day I will and I shall teach here because I feel I was born here. I made an effort and I went for anything that came up and did not get it - until a teacher took the package and I got her job.

Experience of Teaching in a Rural School

Sarah has positive memories of teaching at a rural school. Her Grade 3 class is smaller this year, only 27 learners, compared to previous years when it was more than 30. She experiences a sense of accomplishment when she can manage most of her work in a class with differentiated learning needs. Her experience of being a Foundation Phase teacher and the sharing culture amongst her colleagues helps her to cope with the demands for differentiated teaching.

There are different levels in my class because all are not the same. No, it comes naturally if you are a Foundation Phase teacher, you know. I go back to their previous teachers and I go to different resources to find out how I can accommodate them at their level.

I will say about a quarter of the class is able to achieve, but I do know why the rest cannot achieve ... they are not on the same level as the other Grade 3s so I have to go back with them to the other level ... to grade 1 level. Because ... if they are not accommodated, they disrupt the class. They cannot do the work and feel frustrated and disturb the others who want to work. So when I want to have a good day I have to plan very well to teach them at their level.

Sarah is able to deal with these disruptions of learners in the differentiated classroom but is not able to deal with the lack of discipline among learners during break times. According to her discipline is, in a general sense, an area of concern at the school. Of particular concern for her is the bigger playground which contains areas teachers

cannot access and areas which are dangerous for children. She describes these areas as follows:

Yes, at the dam walls on the top and at the park where it is not completely enclosed and children can get hurt. So, those two places... and next to the fence during break time ... when people come to the fence to give stuff to learners. I do not want to get involved in these cases, but sometimes we ask the police to patrol, but they do not always do it.

Sarah has reached a low point in her teaching career. All the changes at the school and in the education system had a negative effect on her. Her motivation to continue teaching is low and she considers leaving the profession.

Nothing motivates me now. I do not feel like teaching anymore. There is too much admin and too many changes in education and I have too little time to work with the children. I love the profession but I do not feel for it anymore because now you are in this system and then there are changes. Then you go for training for a day or two or a week. I feel it is not enough information we get ... except for the litnum training in June in Stellenbosch. It was good and we could apply it in the school. The children enjoyed it and I enjoyed it. Because we moved back to the old system we were familiar with at that time and that was good and it works. I was only motivated at that time.

The uncertainties accompanying the changes in the curriculum and the changes in management and in the management styles at the school made her feel inadequate and insecure. She expresses a sense of injustice, of 'that is not right' when teachers who are passionate about education are made to feel inadequate, demotivated and alienated.

I feel I have had enough of teaching and would like to take early retirement ... especially now with the heavy load on you and the changes we had at school with principals. We have a permanent principal only now. The principals rotated all the time when Mr P left four or five years ago. And everyone had their own way of doing and this affected me. You feel you are floating and you feel like this now and then there is a change. That did not make me feel good because it was not a steady way of doing - a pattern. It is not right what is happening in school.

Challenges which Learners from Rural Communities Face which Affect their Progress

According to Sarah, the cost involved in secondary education, and primary education to an extent, is a challenge for learners from this community. Most learners in the community have a primary school education. Depending on their finances, they either attend this school or the ex-Model C school which provides primary education up to Grade 7. The other primary school, a private school with predominantly white learners from the surrounding coastal towns, provides access to those who can afford it. Learners are transported by state-provided transport to the secondary school in the nearest town. Parents who choose to send learners to other schools 'on the other side of the mountain' have to do so at their own cost and this places a financial burden on families.

If we could have a secondary school in this area so that learners can attend here. Now the learners have to go to the other side of the mountain and they have to be transported by bus or taxi and financially this affects them.

Sarah sees access to secondary school as a huge challenge for learners from the community, including her own son. The fact that there is no secondary school in close proximity to the learners has a detrimental effect on their further education. The result of this is that learners have low skills levels and low employability in an area where unemployment is rife. Learners who have dropped out of secondary school for various reasons are furthering their education through a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). According to her, the demand for a secondary education is high enough to warrant a local secondary school for learners from this town and the surrounding coastal towns.

Yes, because lots of young people are studying further in high school and doing different types of training – by an NGO training centre and everyone is streaming to it because it is in the area and they can attend there. My son who is there to improve his grades, says he can get better grades because he is in the area and he can achieve more because he is from the area.

Reflections on Socio-economic Changes in Town Impacting Teaching and Learning.

In reflecting on the changes in the community which brought about changes in education in the area, Sarah referred to the social challenges brought about by high unemployment such as substance abuse, crime such as petty theft, teenage pregnancies, learner absenteeism and dropping out of school. According to her these social challenges affect classroom teaching and learning and increase the high unemployment rate in the area.

Another educational challenge she mentioned is the change in the demographics in the community. Over the years the demographics in the community changed from predominantly Afrikaans-speaking community members to an increasing number of Xhosa-speaking community members. The demand for housing increased and could not be accommodated: resulting in an informal housing area. According to her, the 'squatter camp' is not the problem in itself; educating Xhosa-speaking learners is. The fact that the school can accommodate a separate stream for mother-tongue Xhosa instruction is commendable and in keeping with education policy. She does, however, experience difficulties when parents enrol their Xhosa-speaking learners in the Afrikaans stream from grade one or when they opt to continue their education at this school rather than travel to the English primary school twenty five kilometres away.

I will not say there are changes now that we have a squatter camp in the area. We have Xhosa classes and all the learners go to those classes. They learn in their own language and also English second language instruction. Till Grade 3 they have Xhosa and then English. So that is not a problem. But many parents insist that their children, especially from Grade 1, or from Grade 4, that their children should be taught in Afrikaans. But the teachers have problems.

Teachers are not equipped to deal with Afrikaans home language instruction to Xhosa speaking learners. This causes animosity towards the Xhosa speaking learner and parent population. In order to deal with this, the school is reviewing its language policy. Although Sarah is aware that language should not be used to exclude learners, she says that the language policy under review is to have exclusive Afrikaans and Xhosa streams at the school.

But we are now busy reviewing our language policy. Because we have Xhosa classes they have to attend the Xhosa classes. And because we are an Afrikaans medium school, we teach in Afrikaans. We do not have a clause preventing access to learners. It is the parents right and if they insist ... But now the teachers struggle

In her opinion, low mathematics results comprise the greatest challenge for teachers. She links the underperformance of learners to teachers' lack of pedagogical knowledge and low parental involvement.

Actually our maths is weak ... not everyone can do it ... Maybe some teachers cannot teach maths well ... but I cannot say which teachers ... but our results are very bad. The learners are weak from the Foundation Phase. There are the good ones, but because the majority are not able to cope, it brings the percentage down. I feel the maths educators are doing their best. The parents have to put pressure on the learners

In her experience of teaching in rural schools, it is difficult to draw good mathematics and science teachers to the rural education districts.

It is difficult to get good maths and science teachers in this area. Because there are so few, we struggle to get them. That's why they are encouraging them (learners) to become maths and science teachers.

Experience or Evidence of Social Justice

Sarah starts off the answer to the question by reflecting on the interview and her references to her examples of what she considers injustices, inequalities and unfairness in the community and in the school. Her answer is guarded in the beginning. By referencing values such as equality, non-discrimination, tolerance and respect, her estimation is that the school is doing well with regard to social justice.

We are doing well because we have Xhosa speaking learners. We treat everyone the same ... and many who come to this school for a short while always praise us because we treat everyone the same. They want to know what our secret is. We don't have a secret. Our team work is good and we give to those who need it. And we will not discriminate and we teach our learners that we are one and we all must work together

and if something happens between the two races then we deal with it immediately.

As she continues the exploration, she admits that she is not sure what social justice really means and whether it has been achieved or realized. In her opinion, the effects of poverty, unemployment and substance abuse on the child constitute a social injustice.

I do not know what it is. Can I speak about the community as a whole? And the injustices I see every day? What makes me very furious is the unemployment and the drugs which make me very angry. I have children in my class whose parents are involved in it and then I get the problems in the class.

She senses injustice in the fact that the children in this community are already disadvantaged because of their circumstances and doubly disadvantaged because of unemployment and substance abuse. She feels strongly about this and believes something needs to be done about it.

That is what makes me mad. I know the child has to struggle through all these things ... because he is disadvantaged, because he cannot ... perform well and he has so many things that stand in his way. I feel something must be done about this ... I will jump high if this happens ... something must be done. I get frustrated about this. It is an injustice to the child.

4.4.4 Interview Summary: Lungiswa

Lungiswa has been a teacher for 15 years; six of which she spent at this school. She taught at neighbouring schools in the coastal area. She is a post level one teacher responsible for Grade 2 and 3, a multi-grade class. She grew up in a large rural town and attended the local 'township' school up to Standard 6 (grade 8). Thereafter she went to the Eastern Cape and returned to Cape Town to complete her teachers' training at Good Hope College in Khayelitsha in Cape Town. In later years she upgraded her training and achieved a Higher Teachers' Diploma in Worcester. Lungiswa comes from a caring and supportive family. Her mother took care of neighbourhood children and that is where her love of children originated.

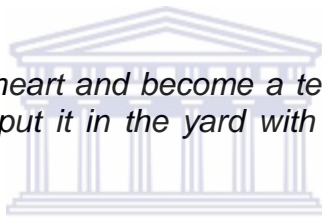
I became a teacher because of my love for children and I like to talk. I got this from my mother. She loved children so much she reared children from other families whom we grew up with. So we learnt that from her. She taught us to love other children. I grew up with stepsisters and we all became teachers.

Although she loved children, teaching was not her first career choice. Her two role models growing up were her mother and a nurse who recognised her potential and advised her to follow nursing as a career.

My mother and another lady who was a nurse were my role models. The nurse advised me to become one. I tried it out in hospital, but I couldn't stand blood.

After this experience, she decided to return to her childhood dream of becoming a teacher.

I decided to follow my heart and become a teacher. There at my home were many poles. We put it in the yard with a writing board and took poles as learners!



She has a strong connection with her parents and decided to live and teach in the rural areas to be with them and care for them in their old age.

My parents were always ill and that is why I just want to be in Western Cape so that I can visit them anytime. I got a job in Eastern Cape, but can't be so far from my parents up until my mother passed on in 2005. My father is still alive, but very sick so I go home every weekend.

She attended teacher training college in Khayelitsha in the early 1990s during a particularly violent time in our history. That experience put her off living and working in the urban areas, particularly Cape Town.

Life in Khayelitsha was terrible. We had to sleep on the ground. We were afraid of bullets always gunshots in 1993, so I was very afraid ... did not like Cape Town just for that. Everyday there was an accident or violence. I'm very afraid of Cape Town. I never visit there for longer than one day.

Being a young black teacher in a rural area was not easy. At first she struggled to find a permanent post and her tri-lingualism was exactly what School 3 needed at the time.

That time I was looking for a permanent post. I was a substitute ... so another lady, a Xhosa subject adviser, told those who are not permanent teachers about a post in (this town) at an Afrikaans school. It was a Xhosa post for the Xhosa class, but you must know at least a little bit of Afrikaans and English. So the first two years, 2006 and 2007, I was teaching Xhosa and Afrikaans as first additional language. After 2 years the school had English as first additional and then Afrikaans as second additional. I teach English and Xhosa in my class. My children have a great advantage because they have three languages.

Typical Challenges Learners Face

Comparatively speaking, in Lungiswa's experience of living and teaching in rural schools, the challenges facing Xhosa-speaking learners who enter primary school in this community are intimidating. Teaching and learning in a Xhosa medium of instruction multi-grade stream at a mono-lingual medium of instruction school poses a particular difficulty for her and the Xhosa-speaking learners. As with the Afrikaans teachers, Lungiswa refers to the change in the language policy of the school. She is not as confident as the Afrikaans-speaking teachers about whether this is right or feasible. Her sense is that the language policy of the school changed as a result of the difficulties the school faces with Xhosa speaking learners who enrol in the Afrikaans stream from Grade 1 or Grade R and does not address the needs of the Xhosa speaking learner and parent in a predominantly Afrikaans community.

Another teacher said they (Xhosa speaking learners) are struggling especially if they are new children in school. As a result the school changed so that they (the Afrikaans stream) cannot take Xhosa learners again for lower grades, Grade R up to Grade 3. They must come to me or another (Xhosa) teacher ... and the Grade Rs must attend a local crèche with a Grade R Class. I don't know if it's going to work ... it starts from next year, we'll see. If parents want them to be in Afrikaans class they (the school) must take them. It depends on the parents.

Another challenge for Lungiswa specifically is teaching a multi-grade class. The multi-grade streaming is, according to her, not successful. Learners from four different grades with differentiated learning needs are placed in a single class. This does not give her enough time to attend to all the learners.

I have thirty three children now, was thirty seven ... four children went with their parents to the Eastern Cape. You must know there are weak

children in the same class ... four different grades in one class. I have to group the children according to their levels. When I'm busy with that group, who is looking for those grades whose work is not the same? ... each grade has its advantages and disadvantages, weak children, average and stronger children. So the stronger children are very fast. Every time they are so fast they are finishing their work quickly. Sometimes I take them like teachers to go and check that group's work for me. So that is good. Yes, that is good for me.

The multi-grade class exists at the school to address the rights of Xhosa speaking-learners in the community to equal education and access to a school close to where they live. The reality is that the Xhosa learners in the multi-grade classes receive a qualitatively different education compared to the Afrikaans learners. According to Lungiswa, she cannot cope with the demands of the multi-grades and multiple levels in her class.

This is a big problem of a multi-grade class for me. I don't know about the other people. Because, after school I must do interventions and planning for the next day. Maybe I have to make copies for the children for a task that they must do tomorrow, so there is no more time for that child.

A bad day is if the children are struggling and I have no time to give them special attention. Special attention is a big problem in this class. And after two when the other children go home, maybe I'm really tired and have no time for that specific child.

So, that is my problem. I must speak and speak and speak and speak. Sometimes my head is ready to explode. By the way, I'm always tired. Two classes are making me mad.

Experience or Evidence of Social Justice

Lungiswa's experience of growing up in an unjust society increased her awareness of present inequalities in the provision of educational services at the school. Although she does not refer to past injustices as evidence of social justice or injustice, she speaks out against the present injustices she experiences on a personal and organisational level at the school. The unequal level of learning support provided by the education district office is an example of an injustice to her. For example, the Learner Support teacher (LST) the department of education provides to help learners with barriers to learning cannot attend to the learning needs in the Xhosa stream. The

LST is an Afrikaans-speaking person who visits the school and has to support the Afrikaans and Xhosa speaking learners in the school.

My biggest problem is the learner who is struggling. I have no Learning Support teacher for them because it's an Afrikaans lady ... she speaks English and Afrikaans and my learners are Xhosa speaking and they really need a Xhosa LS teacher.

Take for instance Grade 3. I'm really not sleeping with this kind of problem. I have children who cannot write and read. In any case, in any class there are those children, but these children are supposed to be tested. I do interventions. I contact the person here in school the, LS teacher, but she can't help my children because ... they don't understand her. Maybe they can hear the question, but cannot do what she asks him or her to do. So that is my problem. Maybe if we as black teachers can also get a black LS teacher, things will be better than now.

She expresses her frustration that the language needs of the learners at the school are not being met. She expresses her frustration that her voice is not heard when she raises the question at school and at district level.

So this is the question I am raising each and every time. When they are talking about learner problems, I raise this, but we are still waiting and our children are really struggling. I really can't hide it 'cos it is. They need their language support teacher. There are people like that, because in other schools there are. Why can't we get that kind of person here? Then that kind of person is just for the struggling learners and then we can carry on with the learners who are coping.

The problem is not peculiar to her class but something the other teachers who have multi-grade classes experience as well. Determined to solve the problem, she 'fought' for mono-grade teaching, at least for Grade 1, reasoning that that put them at a greater advantage.

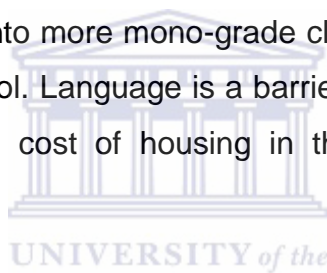
The teacher who has Grade 4 and 5 has the same problems as me. Years before I fought for Grade 1 to have a separate class so as from last year I got that right so that the Grade 1 can have that special attention.

Her struggles and frustrations in the multi-grade classes influenced her firm belief in mono-grade teaching. At present, the numbers in the classes, according to departmental policy, do not warrant provision of a teacher for a mono-grade class.

Determined to ensure that Xhosa-speaking learners receive the same quality education as the Afrikaans learners at the school, she encourages more and more parents to enrol their children at the school.

The problem is the little numbers in the grades. In Grade 1 there is 21, Grade 2 18, Grade 3 15 ... We need 20 plus to make a class. I don't know whether the black children are influenced not to attend.... because every day I go and visit the parents and fight for children who are not coming to school.

Lungiswa finds the school and the community an alienating place. Although there are attempts at integration locally in terms of housing and education amongst the Afrikaans and Xhosa speaking communities, they are still marginalised on racial grounds from the greater town. In this local community the Xhosa speaking members still feel alienated despite the attempts at integration. So even if having more Xhosa speaking learners translates into more mono-grade classes, it is hard to recruit Xhosa speaking teachers to the school. Language is a barrier and the shortage of housing in this community and the high cost of housing in the wider community is another difficulty.



There is no place for teachers to stay in this town. I'm changing places all the time. I'm still here because I love children and there are few people who like this place. I'm just thinking of the children, their future. Because here in this town most people are illiterate, so I don't want the children to be like their parents. At the beginning of this year there was no teacher for Grade 4 class, I think for a month or more the learners were without a teacher, because the people don't like this place and some of them say, "I don't like Afrikaans, I don't always like to ask, ask, ask. I don't understand, can you repeat in English"

My Reflections

Language at the school is steeped in racial stereotyping. The township community is geographically marginalised and within this there are further marginalisations as the communities struggle for scarce resources. I feel uncomfortable about the blatant racial stereotyping and the ease with which teachers have confessed this to me. Do they think I share their sentiments? I wonder and worry about these remarks. It makes me wonder about my role as a researcher. Do I remain quiet or do I speak up when confronted with the blatant racial stereotyping?

I take a drive through the township to get a sense of the conversations we just had. The new housing development represents the home many families have aspired to. The houses are brand spanking new and they have a magnificent view of the mountain and the bay. There is calmness about the wintry afternoon as people go about their normal activities. Children play in the street and shout out loud to each other in Afrikaans. Groups of young people sit outside their homes and on the street corners.

I leave the township and go into town. I see what I already know. I have been to this town before as a holiday maker and enjoyed the beauty of the town. I now look at it through the eyes of the teachers. It saddens me. The social spaces in the town reflect the divisions teachers spoke about. In the town there are mostly white people. It is almost 5h30 and streams of black people are leaving the town by foot. I stop to buy fruit from a pavement fruit stall run by an elderly white man. Without asking he warns me against the “kleurlinge (‘coloureds’) and swartes (blacks)”, whom, he says, regularly rob him and others. It is clear. The social, cultural and economic spaces in the town are not shared equally by its inhabitants. While the section of the town where the school is located is dealing with the complexities of integration, the spatial geography of the larger area still reflects the exclusions and racial divisions of the past.

4.5 SCHOOL FOUR

The school is located in the leafy suburbs of a large rural town in the Breede River Valley. The town is a typical, large rural town with a central white residential area close to the central business district and ex-Model C schools, a ‘coloured’ residential area with historically ‘coloured’ schools, a black township on the outskirts of town and township schools and farms and farm schools along the periphery. Historically, the school provided access as a preparatory school to white children from the town and neighbouring farms. After the changes to the education system post 1994, the school underwent significant changes. The identity of the school gradually changed from a predominantly white Afrikaans school to a diverse dual medium (English and Afrikaans) school. Presently they enroll more Black learners from the townships and

informal settlements which resulted in an increase in learners from a wider and more diverse catchment area.

4.5.1 Interview Summary: Helen, the Principal

Helen is a 57 year old white female with 25 years teaching experience. She taught in rural schools, mostly in the ex-Model C schools in the rural towns, except for a short stint in a multi-grade 'coloured' school. She is the principal of the school and she teaches Grade 2 as a learning support teacher for learners who struggle with Mathematics.

Educational Background

Helen was born on a farm in the area and completed her schooling in rural White schools in the town. She recalls that she went to school in town where there were separate schools for white and 'coloured' children. Her father used to take her to the school in town and dropped the 'coloured' children off at the farm school situated on the neighbour's farm. Being an only child, she spent her childhood playing with the farm labourers' children. She recalls a childhood friend (a farm labourer's daughter) who used to sleep over. She is grateful for these experiences and considers her parents 'ahead of their time'. Upon reflection, she states that the reason she adjusted so well to diversity in her school is because of her childhood experience.

Inspiration and Role Model

Helen comes from a teaching family. Her mother and aunt were both teachers and they were her role models. She was exposed to teaching early in her life. When she was in Standard 8 she 'taught' at the farm school. At the time the white and black schools had different school calendars and she 'taught' at the neighboring farm school during her school holidays. The farm school was a small 'two person' school with 40 children. Fifteen children from their farm attended that school and she taught them Art during the week and Sunday school on Sundays. Her positive experience during that time inspired her to become a teacher.

Experience of Teaching in a Rural Education District

According to Helen, she did not choose to teach in the rural education district. It was a natural selection for her because of familiarity with the context. While at teacher training college, she completed her Teaching Practice at an urban school but preferred the rural school context. It is her belief that the advantage of teaching at the rural school as opposed to the urban school, is the close contact she has with parents. She admits that she does not know all the parents, especially those who come from the Black townships which are located on the outskirts of town.

As an ex-Model C school, they continue to charge higher school fees with exemptions for those who cannot afford the fees. With a larger budget they are able to afford to have smaller classes and appoint more than 5 teachers per grade. She experiences these changes as positive because they brought about greater teacher interaction and innovation than they had in the past with one teacher per grade and only learners from the White Afrikaner community.

On a personal level she did not find these changes difficult to adapt to. According to her, her upbringing made her colour blind and prepared her for the changes the school underwent.

Because of my background, as I told you, it was not strange to change. I always saw people and not colour. I had brown friends on the farm. We just had a course and I shared a bed with a brown colleague and did not think now I am sleeping next to a brown woman. As a child I had a friend who used to sleep over. I think my parents were ahead of their time and this is something they gave me in life for which I am very thankful.

Challenges the School had to Face

Helen recalls the greatest challenges for ex-Model C schools were after 1994 when they had to open their doors to all learners. The changes came slowly and did not present any challenges to them as a preparatory school offering Grade R to 3 at the time. Their learners progressed to the ex-Model C school which offered Grades 4 - 7. Things changed when that school applied to offer the Foundation Phase and competed with Helen's school for the same learner population. They recruited all the

White parents to enrol their children there. The result was that Helen's school was running empty because the perception created amongst white parents was that they were the 'black school'. The most critical time was in 2005 when they, as a staff of white teachers, had to make a decision about whether they would enrol black children from the townships and remain open, or close the school because of the dwindling numbers of white learners. They made the decision to remain open and accept the challenge. The decision was not without stereotypes and prejudices on the part of the teachers.

2005 was our big shift ... This was a blow to me. Will we still have children or will we have to close? I spoke to the teachers and we had to decide. The children are here and the question is: Are we going to pull them up and pull up the parents? Now I say this to Hill Primary who see their parents moving away. I say, do not be afraid the Lord blessed us in unbelievable ways. Our parents became more involved. We have wonderful school funds, even better. But there are challenges, especially with regard to language. It is not easy to have a Xhosa speaking child who comes from an Afrikaans speaking environment and he is in an English class. You have to teach him basic things. So this is not easy. But it is not such a problem any longer. You can speak to the teachers and hear what they have do think. I do not think it is

Another challenge they and other ex-Model C schools in similar situations had to face was the challenge of parental involvement. In her perception, the dominant attitude towards parents is based on stereotypes of the past. For her it is a complex matter which she says requires a shift in understanding and perceptions. Black or 'coloured' parents who enrol their children at ex-Model C schools have to deal with race and class prejudice. She uses an example of white advantage. White schools have certain attitudes with regard to how and where parents should be involved in school activities. She regards this attitude as a barrier. She sees the challenge on the side of white teachers and parents who have to shift their understanding from a racialised past to seeing all parents as equal partners.

The challenge for us is that when we were a Model C school. We had parents who all had cars. We had parents who owned farms ... and when we had a function the mother brought four housekeepers to clean. This was like living a spoilt life. We come from a background where parents are more involved, I think. I cannot say that white or brown is more or less involved. I think it took a long time for those parents to have self confidence to say I am coming too. Let me give you an example ... I

am now working with a school who has huge problems. I am working closely with them and helping the principal. The first thing I noticed was at a function. They involved the parents on the basis of colour. The 'grand' mothers stood in front and did all the work. The other parents from a different colour were washing the floors. Now you see, if you have that attitude the parents won't come again. Now, you see, that is the thing. A mind shift is needed. We are all equal now – you are the parent whether you are the mayor's wife or work in the garden. All is equal. The child does not understand ... Do you see what I mean?

Challenges for Learners

The location of the school presents a number of challenges for learners and parents. Helen sees the transportation of learners as a significant challenge for learners and parents. Parents have to pay for the transportation of learners to and from school by private taxi which is an additional financial burden to the higher school fees. The transportation of learners by taxi means that many children, especially from the township areas, cannot participate in sporting or extramural activities after school. Another challenge she sees is the lack of parental support. In her experience, parents from poorer communities have fewer resources with which to support their children with take-home projects or homework. In a diverse classroom, this disadvantages the child from a poorer background. The fair assessment of learners on self-activities or take-home activities is a question she is trying to come to grips with.

If the one child has a mother who takes him to the library and has access to the internet ... and then parents do the project ... and the other child lives in a squatter camp without these amenities and we have to do an oral ... and this happens from Grade R - then you are disadvantaged if you are poor. That is why I tell the teachers, do not give a child a task to take home that will be assessed. The resources must be available in the class for an assessment to give everyone an equal chance. You have to be sensitive to this.

Challenges for Teachers

As much as transport is a problem for learners and parents, it is a problem for teachers too. With the changes in the learner population at the school since 1994, teachers had to adjust from parents who drop their children off by car to learners who are transported to school by taxi. Late-coming has become a problem. While the school is strict about punctuality, they cannot be harsh on learners who are dependent

on the taxis, which have to be filled before they leave the township. The hired taxis are unreliable and children are not always picked up from school; teachers are not able to take learners to their homes in the township. Helen considers this to be a challenge:

We sometimes sit with children who are not picked up from school. Lots of times it is the same children. We leave them at the police station. The police take them home. This is a headache for me ...

Transport is a problem for parents too who have to collect school reports at school during school time. A few parents are not able to get off during work time or cannot afford an extra taxi fee for the day. Parents have to fetch reports at the school and a few parents do not collect the reports. They are not aware of the child's progress and where the child possibly needs assistance. The school prepares a letter for the employer so that the parent can take the day off to collect the reports but this has not worked out.

Helen experiences communication with parents as a challenge for the school. English and Afrikaans are offered as the medium of instruction and as 'mother tongue' instruction.

The number of non-mother tongue learners has increased. We have Xhosa learners; we also have Somalians, Portuguese and French speaking learners here.

Communication with parents who are not conversant in English and do not understand the letters the school sent home is a challenge.

Although parents experience all these challenges in sending their children to this school, they prefer it to others closer to their homes. Helen says she has asked parents what their reasons are for sending their children to this school where transport, language and finances are problematic. The parents' perceptions are that this school is better compared to those schools nearby.

I always ask the parent in the interview why this school and they say this is the best school. Lots of Xhosa parents say they prefer English because English is the language of the future. They say at the other

schools the teachers are lazy. Other parents say they want to give the learners a better chance. Others say that white teachers are better, which is shocking. Others say the school environment is safe. Where the child has the choice to walk to school or go to a no fee school they will still pay to come here. That is what parents will do.

Socio-economic Changes in the Community which Affected the School

Helen is not very aware of the socio-economic changes in the community from which the majority of learners are drawn. The socio-spatial differentials between the school and the community, where the majority of learners are drawn from, are historically steeped in class, race and cultural differences. An example of this is the diversity amongst learners and teachers in the school community which is not echoed in the community within which the school is located. Another example is the affluence of the community within which the school is located which is in stark contrast to the townships and informal settlements where learners come from. Helen's reference to socio-economic changes signifies only the changes she sees in learners at school. She links these changes to those economic challenges to which she alluded to earlier and which the community underwent. She particularly noticed the worsening financial position of more black parents from the township especially in single parent households or teenage parents.

We have some children we have exemption from school fees. We hand out 80 forms and in many case there is not a father so we cannot process these. If we look at the children who come from poor circumstances, live with a single parent or with grandparents ... then it is about 50% of our learners. There are lots of parents who are children who are parents who need parental guidance and parents who are illiterate. We have to physically show parents how to help their children.

Another observation she made is substance abuse amongst parents and an increase in the number of 'AIDS orphans' at school.

We have parents who are TIK addicts and then children are placed at a grandparent. We now had a case where a mother is placed in rehab and a father is taking charge. We also have children who are 'AIDS orphans' who stay with grandparents. And 'AIDS children' ... one we know definitely and the other we suspect.

Perceptions of Social Justice and Injustice

Helen recognised to some extent the privileges she experienced as a white person under the apartheid system. Her experience of apartheid was that it did not 'touch' her. She was unaware of the implications of the system regarding the lives of her childhood friends and how the system of privilege and discrimination based on race and class affected white and black people differently. Her interaction with black people in the school and community context in recent years made her aware of the implications of the system for those who were disadvantaged. She reflects on the complexity of trying to understand the experience of black people from a position of white privilege and white ignorance experienced during the apartheid years.

Apartheid did not touch me and we do not realise how apartheid affected other people.

She mentioned two examples of her burgeoning understanding of how apartheid affected the lives of community members: one is an example of systemic injustice and another of interpersonal and systemic injustice.

I saw an older black person waiting at the ATM. She was illiterate that was why she was just standing there. She could not use the ATM. Now she feels inferior. It was not her fault. She did not have the opportunities.

I drive home and see a woman carrying a child on her hip. I stopped and asked where she was going. She said she was going to baas B's farm. I told her to get in. By then she has walked 12 k's with a sick child on her hip. I asked where is baas B. He dropped her at the hospital in the morning and told her to walk back because he could not wait until she was done. At the hospital she was humiliated and they did not help her. I felt sorry for her and took her to the farm. You know, she does not know what to do to get support for her. We do not have an idea of what people have to go through with persons who are insensitive.

In her estimation, social justice and injustice are presented in the issues they have to deal with at school. When she compares her school to neighbouring ex-Model C schools, her estimation is that they are well ahead. According to her, the school is doing well with regard to the diverse learner and teacher population. In her estimation the school has done well in dealing with the challenges presented by diversity. Her

perception is that everyone is treated the same, that they are all equal and they work together harmoniously.

I think we are far ahead of the other schools. I really think so. Just the diversity on our staff – this is absolutely not an issue. They all treat everyone the same and work well together. They laugh sometimes at Wangui who is from Nairobi and has a different accent. With the diversity at school, equality is the strongest principle. It is important.

She does, however, admit to racial tensions at school, not between whites and blacks but between black and 'coloured' people.

I thought apartheid and racial hate is between white and black but I find between black people and brown people there are lots of issues. I have a class with black and brown children. One light skinned brown girl said I said I am the only white child and do not want to sit next to blacks. Some Xhosa parents say to their children, "You do not allow that person to speak to you like that". I tell them inside we are all the same, do not name call in front of your children. This comes from the parents who carry this from the past. It is the example we show to children. They learn with two eyes what to do.

4.5.2 Interview Summary: Sandy

Sandy is a 53 year old 'coloured' teacher. She has 26 years' experience in the education profession. At the time of the interview, she had been at the school for 4 years as a Head of Department (HOD) and a Grade 3 teacher.

Educational Background

Sandy originates from the Eastern Cape where she completed her schooling and teacher training. Her experience as an educator is diverse. After her first teaching experience in the Eastern Cape, she taught in Namibia for several years and upon returning to South Africa, she worked in the Breede River Education district as a Learning Support teacher in an acting position. After this experience, she was unemployed for a while and went to assist at the school for the deaf and ended up staying there for 15 years.

They were looking for someone and I was there for one week. Then I told the principal this is not for me. He said: "Teacher, go back to your class, because if you are feeling like you are not coping – then you are in the right place". It was a challenge and I still miss it now. It is very different working with special and mainstream children. I learnt a lot there which is helping me, especially with the children who have barriers – to approach the child differently and to do things differently and to teach every child differently and at his own tempo.

Inspiration and Role Model

Sandy decided at high school to become a Junior Primary teacher because that was the chosen direction at the time for females at her school. She thinks it might have been a love of children which inspired her to choose teaching. Her role model was her kindergarten teacher at college who gave them lots of advice which she still uses.

My kindergarten teacher always said you are going to have little and you have to use that little to either serve the community or you can bring them down further. She gave us lots of advice which I still use today. She said open the thing up and go right to the bottom and then work from there. You can't help a child if you do not know what's the matter. Reroute the child in a different direction.

Teaching Experience in Rural Education District

Sandy considers the town she lives and teaches in as more urban than rural, even though it is in a rural education district. She taught at a farm school before and recalled many fulfilling years as a farm school teacher. She also recalled the difficulties the learners had to confront during their primary school years at the farm school: transport used to be a huge problem for learners. When she compares her experience then with what she sees happening in the rural schools now, the present transport provided by the state has not lessened the transportation problem for all the learners. As in the past, there are two categories of learners who have to walk long distances despite the availability of transport: those who live too close to the school (five kilometres or less) to qualify for state transport and those who live far from the pick-up point. In both instances learners have to overcome a number of challenges. One of the challenges is the extreme weather conditions in summer and winter which

often result in learner late-coming and absenteeism. Another challenge is that young and vulnerable learners are often preyed on and harmed by older children when they walk home from school.

Another difficulty which affected her teaching and the functioning of the school then was the great influence the farm owner had:

The boer would cut the water and electricity to the school if the labourers annoyed him. The owner has a big influence on what happens at a farm school because the land belongs to him.

She speaks passionately about the difficulty learners from farm schools still have in accessing and completing secondary education. The short distance between the school and home and the financial costs of living at the school hostel, precludes learners from qualifying for the hostel accommodation. Where transport is available learners have no alternative way to get to school if they miss the bus or if the bus does not turn up. They have to decide to either the walk long distances to school or miss school altogether.

We have children from a neighboring farm at the high school (sic). He is too close to the school to live at the hostel and if he misses the transport he misses out. Then he has to walk about twenty five to thirty kilometres per day, or be absent that day.

Experience of Teaching in a Rural School

Sandy has taught at various schools in the rural education district. She enjoys teaching at her present school because it is well-resourced and the teachers are all well equipped to teach in the Foundation Phase. She likes team teaching with another teacher who excels in one area, mathematics. They are both able to learn from one another and teach the area of mathematics they most enjoy.

Sandy described a typical good day at the school as a day when she can teach without constantly admonishing the learner. She specifically had problems with learners who speak loudly, which was an adjustment she had to make after teaching at the school for the deaf.

Our children have no voice control. You do not want to target a group, but the black child talks loud. I tell them to whisper. Our children cannot whisper.

A bad day for Sandy is when she is in conflict with the leadership of the school. Her experience is that as an HOD she is not always part of the decision-making processes at the school. She recalled incidents where she was not aware of decisions which were announced in the staffroom. When she questioned the decision in the staff meeting, she was reprimanded afterwards for undermining authority. She felt she was excluded because she is 'coloured' and the rest of the management team is white.

Sandy felt the exclusion in different aspects of life at the school. Although she is an HOD, she did not get the same opportunities to attend workshops as her white colleagues.

One HOD was appointed after me. She is white and has a teacher's aid and then she gets opportunities to attend workshops because she has class help. I do not have information about what needs to happen and we need to talk about these things. I am that stage of my life where I do not want those things to bother me anymore. One day I will decide this is enough.

Being and feeling excluded makes life difficult for her at the school.

It is very difficult for me here. Today again I saw when we had this exhibition. Everyone walks past me. They don't tell me what's going on. They are all friends. Later I asked what I could do. Fortunately I found something to do. They all walk past you. I do not know what it is. I am not friends with anyone. I am a just a colleague.

She shared her experience with friends in similar situations at ex-Model C schools. She found that being excluded is a common experience for her friends too. Her understanding is that the HOD position does not carry much authority if you are a 'coloured' teacher at a white school.

I spoke with other teachers at similar schools and it is like that... all the time. They do not want to be under your authority. I decided I am not going to be bothered.

Typical Challenges for Learners

A large challenge for learners, she feels, is that the teachers do not understand them. According to her, most teachers at the school are not adequately prepared to teach the diverse and multi-cultural composition of learners in the classroom. The result is that learners are stereotyped and labelled in ways that do not address their learning needs. She is concerned that teachers do not make the effort to understand what their barriers and needs are and how to teach a diverse class of learners. Sandy felt that learners who are not quiet and obedient, especially black learners, are easily labelled as noisy, hyperactive or troublesome when the teacher does not know how to deal with them.

Yes, every child's needs are different and they have social as well as intellectual barriers to learning. What worries me is that every lively child ... if you are black ... they want to describe as ADHD. But children are children ... sometimes when they complain I say to myself you are big and they are children – they have to be like this ... You have to know how to teach them.

According to Sandy the stereotyping and labelling of learners limit their development in the classroom.

Challenges for Teachers

Sandy's experience is that the difficulty teachers have in understanding what it means to teach a diverse group of learners originates from their knowledge of teaching white children. She gave an example: hair and hairstyles which result in misunderstandings and problems for the learners. Learners are punished because their hair does not fit into what the school considers neat and tidy.

We are a multi-cultural school, yes ... I wonder very often if we know each other's heart beats. It is so ... what matters to us does not matter to them. Take for instance the children's hair. Some have problems with braided hair. For them hair is either straight or untidy. That seems to be the norm. I wonder what the fuss is all about. Braids are neat for me, but not for the other teachers. They are not in favour of it and will not allow it.

Another challenge for teachers which Sandy feels is an aspect of teaching in a multi-cultural environment, is language. The English language is a challenge especially for Xhosa and Shona-speaking learners.

He cannot spell and write sentences because he is language impoverished. There's nobody to speak with them at home. Parents in my class are so scared to speak English. How will you teach your child at home if you are scared of the language? The child only uses English in the classroom. At home and in the playground he uses mother tongue.

It is especially challenging for the teacher who does not know how to teach English to learners for whom it is an unfamiliar language.

Language is a big challenge for the teacher because you do not really know whether you are really reaching that child.

Socio-economic Changes in the Community which Affected the School

Sandy is aware of socio-economic problems the children experience, especially those which are related to poverty. She felt that she and her colleagues are not well informed: they do not really know what is happening where the children live, so it could be worse than they think. Although she is aware of substance abuse and AIDS in the community, she does not know of anyone at school experiencing problems with substance abuse. She is not aware of any child who has AIDS. She is aware of about 12 to 15 learners who receive assistance from the school emergency fund. The school does not belong to the School Feeding Scheme because it is considered to be a wealthy school. The school is aware though of many children who are hungry at school. The teachers have a 'lunch club' where they bring lunches from home to feed hungry children.

Sandy spoke about the changes in the education sector in the community and how the admission policies of the ex-Model C school in their area affected parents' school preference. Black parents choose the ex-Model C schools above the township schools, because the perception in the community is that the education at the township school is inferior. English as the medium of instruction also became higher rated than Afrikaans, which is the dominant language in the community. Sandy's

school offers English as medium of instruction which became the parental preference above mother tongue instruction, for both Afrikaans and Xhosa speaking parents. The township schools offer English as a medium of instruction too. Because parents attach a higher status to the ex-Model C schools, they would rather send their children to the ex-Model C school than the township school, and incur the extra costs.

Now there is a school which also offers English. It is not an ex-Model C school. Lots of parents do not want their children to go there because it is too 'in the township'. It is a good school. It cannot help to be situated there.

Parental preference creates a dilemma for parents and schools. The admission policies of the ex-Model C schools are strict and, in Sandy's view, exclusionary. Parents enrol their children at School Four and then try to enrol them for Grade 4 at the neighbouring school, which accepted all the learners from School Four in the past. The school selects the top 30 Grade 3 learners out of the 75 at School Four. The rest of the learners then have to enrol either at the township school or at a private school. This causes unnecessary hostility and rivalry between the schools and amongst the parents. Sarah suggested that the exclusionary policy of the ex-Model C school fuels and increases the prejudice and racial stereotyping of white teachers at her school.

Here are some teachers here who say that the parents say they do not want to send their child to a 'coloured' teacher's class....they say it pertinently: The parents want white teachers...

Understandings of social justice or injustice

Although Sandy is clear about racial stereotyping and exclusionary practices and the effect of them on herself and black learners, she was not able to articulate what social justice or injustice mean. She was unable to relate any examples from the past or the present, even after probing.

I don't know what I understand and what I don't understand about social justice ... I don't know what I understand about it.

4.5.3 Interview Summary: Wangui

Wangui is a 36 year old black female from Nairobi. Her background is in the creative arts where she taught movement and dance to youth groups in Nairobi. Her husband is an Afrikaans-speaking white male who relocated to South Africa with his family. They lived in Gauteng for a short while and then moved to this town.

Wangui started volunteering at the school after her child was enrolled for Grade R at the school. The staff saw her potential and employed her. She is employed as a teacher's assistant and offers kinaesthetic classes for learners with learning difficulties. She is currently enrolled for a degree at the University of South Africa.

Role models and inspiration

During her stint as a volunteer at the school, Wangui enrolled at the Adult Basic Education and training (ABET) school and completed Grade 12. Her role model is the ABET teacher who inspired her to become an educator and motivated her during difficult times when she was tempted to give up.

...she is just someone you can look up to. She is honest and she is so sincere and she really has a heart for people. I know the place is not well run, they have everything they need, but she gets over the obstacles, motivating the people and nothing ever gets her down.

Experience of Teaching in a Rural School

Wangui volunteered to work at this school because it is the school her child attends. It is close to home and the medium of instruction is English, the only language in which she is fluent in South Africa. She prefers to teach at a rural school because the environment is calmer. When she compared the rural school to the urban schools she was familiar with in Gauteng, her observation was that children in urban schools are faster, expect more and are more vibrant than the children here.

... not in a good or bad way – I think they just expect so much more than the children I see here. The expectations of rural children are lower – I do not know if it is the exposure the children get.

She appreciates the sense of community she experiences in the rural school.

Everyone knows everyone – it is a community thing. There it was a big school and everyone for themselves. Even if you come to know a parent you can still feel the connection is not there, it is purely business. Whereas here when you meet a parent, there is a connection even when you get outside the walls of the school, there is a connection.

Reflectively, she compared the South African school-going child to one in Nairobi and noticed the differences. According to her, South Africa and Nairobi are markedly different places just as the school and community cultures are noticeably different.

I'll say back in Nairobi children are much more ... they still have the value of respect. I don't know if it is culture or community, I am not sure, maybe it is only in the black community. There a child in Grade 11 and 12 can still stand on the road and a stranger 'skells him out" (scolds him). They will listen. They do not backchat – whether you are qualified or not that respect thing is still there. In the primary school there is the same thing. The children there are still very accepting of what they are being given from teachers and adults... It is a respect thing and ... how can I put it ... they do not expect a lot more. This is what we see, this is what we are given, accept. They do not challenge a lot like here.

Wangui described a typical good day at school as a day when she can practice the concert items with various grade groups. Each class has an item for the forthcoming school concert and she worked out the choreography. When she can work with children in movement and dance, she is in her element. The learners are responsive and seem to enjoy the kinaesthetic nature of the sessions.

I just love giving it to the children. I worked on it all weekend. I want to see if they can do it. Then I say, "Wow, you can".

Mondays are typically bad days for her at the school. In her experience, it is difficult for learners to adjust to the classroom after a weekend at home. The Grade 3 class is particularly taxing on a Monday. When nothing works with the groups, she feels like a failure.

... they want to continue with the weekend and their parents and are not interested in anything. You think maybe I did not prepare well, and you start feeling like a failure. I think it comes from home and things look like it does not work.

As with Sandy, Wangui experiences the management style at the school as autocratic and mono-cultural. For instance, the annual school concert does not reflect the multi-cultural nature of the school. The theme for the concert is discussed at the beginning of the year and teachers are asked to provide input. One Head of Department (HOD) makes the final decision and according to Wangui, because the school still operates as a white school and English and Afrikaans are the norm, the HOD has the monopoly and makes the easier, more familiar decision. Last year, they had a Proudly South Africa concert which reflected the different languages and cultures at the school. Parents appreciated it. This year they went back to Afrikaans and English.

It is something that I have been worried about. It is a white school... and because they know much about Afrikaans and English, she tends to take that it is much easier. Previously it was also only Afrikaans and English. We have many black and 'coloured' parents. You want to see something that reflects this. Last year when we had it, parents were quite happy.

Typical Challenges for Learners

Wangui's experience in South Africa of being different and speaking a different language made her more aware of difficulties learners experience with language at the school. She identified language as a communication tool which facilitates understanding amongst people who share similar languages. The cultural differences and sometimes conflicting messages which different cultures carry is another challenge for learners in a diverse classroom.

Language is a big thing and I don't know if I can say the difference in the cultures of children in understanding each other. What you think is wrong in your home is not wrong in my home... then you have to explain you cannot do that to that person because in their culture it is wrong. For the child it is confusing because, why do you tell me it is wrong when my parents do not say that?

Typical Challenges for Teachers

Because Wangui is not a class teacher, she could not speak about the challenges teachers face in the classroom. Her only reference to challenges which teachers face, was the learners whom the teachers send to her for kinaesthetic therapy. Here her

reference to the challenges is not race, but class: the learners who are referred to her are diverse in terms of race and class. Paradoxically, the learners from more advantaged backgrounds tend to need the kind of support which she provides more than those from less advantaged backgrounds.

In the end the children who sit in front of TV so much they cannot write and concentrate anymore ... actually, if I think about it, the ones with the disadvantages are less. Sometimes I concentrate on vision and muscle tone ... bad muscle tone is more with rich backgrounds not the poor because they play and move around more.

Understanding of Social Justice and Injustice

In the discussion on social justice and injustice, Wangui uses Nairobi as her frame of reference to start off the discussion. Her perception is that social justice and injustice are topics which have only recently been raised in Nairobi.

Things are becoming open in Nairobi which has not been open before. Like there you do not talk about gay – they are talking about it here. There it is not on the lips of people, it is still hidden. The more hidden, the less they talk about it. With all the political changes, it will change the whole thing.

When referring to the South African context, she is more aware of racism having been the targeted as the wife of an Afrikaner in a rural town. Her experience at school is that social justice, which for her means equality, cannot be realised. The divisions between black and white people are entrenched and the diversity which schools try to bring about is not being realised.

..... I have to be careful and think about my words ... I think about the justice and equality thing I think I would like for instance... look at this school. What the system is trying to get rid of what they are trying to do is for people to mingle black and white. I don't think a place like this... it cannot really be realised because of where we live. Black teachers live in the townships and white teachers in town. You do not see them coming together. White people will not take their children to the township. That school ... it just remains one race. They want to stick to their culture, so I don't know...

I don't think it is really happening in that way ... it is not happening for the school. Here is a lot of white teachers who only understand their

culture. They do not understand the black culture, For instance, there is that clashing and not understanding the other person's point of view or coming from the other person's perspective.

It is expecting too much. I know. I look at myself for me to be in an Afrikaans culture there is so much to know and understand. It is not easy. It is something bigger in society that has to change, not only the teachers and the school.

4.6 DISCUSSION: EMERGING THEMES

The position taken on social justice in this study, as presented in the literature review in Chapter Two, is that there is no universal definition. The multiplicity view as presented by Young (1990) is sustained in this investigation. Young holds that there is a multiplicity of understandings of social justice which rise out of sites of political endeavours in different historical and cultural contexts. In the analysis of the data, the multiplicity of understandings of social justice requires a flexible and variable analysis to interpret the range of teachers' understanding of social justice. At a meta-analytical level, data was analysed to account for personal, interpersonal, intrapersonal and structural understandings of social justice. At the 'grounded' level and at the Pre-Reflective Phase, the data was analysed using grounded methodology to arrive at core categories to account for teachers' initial understanding of social justice and injustice.

In the first phase of the presentation and analysis of the data, open codes were selected to establish patterns and links from teachers' initial understandings and initial recollection of experiences of social justice and injustice. The patterns and links developed through open coding were presented and analysed in the presentation of each teacher's interview data. In next stage of the presentation and analysis of data, key codes were selected to establish core categories or emerging themes across the different data sets. The following themes emerged from individual teachers' interviews.

The Rural Teacher

All the teachers in the study have some aspects of a rural background in common. They identify strongly with the rural child and are familiar with the rural education

context. With the exception of Wangui, who grew up in Nairobi, all the teachers were educated in rural education institutions in South Africa. They found their role models and inspiration from the rural role models in the rural areas. This suggests that rural schooling is to a large extent by and for the rural person. In a positive sense, this means that the rural teacher in the rural school is a role model for learners in as much as the participants' teachers were role models for them. The rural teachers' familiarity with the rural child contributes to an ethos of care and understanding of their living conditions. This ethos of care and understanding offers a safe haven to learners who come from disadvantaged communities. On the other hand, the caring and understanding ethos does not offer teachers a critical stance towards limiting micro and macro conditions in the school and the community such as the assumptions and approaches in the logocentric curriculum, structural inequalities in the communities and their own attitudes towards learners.

Although the study did not investigate incidence of rural and urban teachers in the rural education district, the observation was made that none of the teachers who we interviewed at the schools were from the urban context. A few teachers studied and taught in urban schools for short periods in their early careers. By their own admission, teachers' recollections of these experiences were not positive. The outlook on schooling of all the teachers in the study and their professional identity was shaped in the main by their rural experience. Although this was not the focus of this study, it would be germane to explore in further studies, whether the presence of urban teachers would offer the possibility of a wider or different educational experience for the rural child.

Teachers' Initial Understandings of Social Justice and Injustice

During the Pre-Reflective Phase of interviewing, teachers found it difficult to express their understandings of social justice. In reference to interview questions which probed their understandings both on a conceptual level and experiential level, they found it hard to articulate what they knew and experienced of social justice and injustice. The responses by Sarah and Sandy '*I don't know what I understand about social justice, but can I speak about what is happening in our communities today*' represent in

essence all the teachers' initial responses. Social justice was harder to define and exemplify than social injustice.

Although teachers tried to explain social justice by what they considered fair, equal and equitable, using the South African Constitution as their reference, such references often raised the complexities of what fair, equal and equitable mean. In most cases, the existence of the terms in the South African Constitution was used as an example of social justice in society. This self-explanatory assumption of fairness, equality and equity closed the discussion on justice and injustice and inequalities experienced in rural schools.

Social justice and injustice were difficult to explain on an experiential level. Black and white teachers spoke about apartheid as 'the way it was then'. The difference in understandings of past injustices for black and white teachers was linked to the extent that they could acknowledge injustices in terms of advantage and disadvantage. Black teachers made reference to hardships, disadvantage and inequality in their personal stories as the way life was then. White teachers did not make reference to their own advantage or the disadvantage suffered by black people. White teachers made no reference to apartheid as an unjust system. In instances where white teachers had black childhood friends on the farms it was accepted that they would have different educational and socio-economical opportunities. For the white teacher it was accepted that the black rural child would not have the same future as a white rural child. White teachers did not refer to the present patterns of social stratification based on race and class in their own schools and communities as reflective of the same patterns of the past. No reference was made to the inherent advantage or disadvantage of present social stratifications for the black and white rural child.

Black teachers made more reference to injustices in the past either explicitly or implicitly than white teachers did. Black teachers articulated the injustices and hardships during the apartheid years and linked past injustices to present poverty issues, such as unemployment and substance abuse to past injustices.

The complexity of social justice was a prominent theme in the study. Although teachers found it difficult to express their understanding of social justice, they

attempted to give reasons for their difficulty. The following 'reasons' quantified teacher understanding of social justice:

It's all in the past

'It's all in the past' was a response for teachers who experienced difficulties either speaking about social justice or injustice or mentioning any examples, in the past or present. The equality in the post 1994 South African constitution and the Bill of Rights, specifically, heralded a break from the past. Although a few teachers explicitly mentioned the injustices entrenched over centuries in South Africa as cruel, inhumane and unfathomable, it was considered as something of the past. Past injustices were not considered appropriate as a 'conversation-starter'. The response from these teachers was that the past has no significance or relevance for the present or the future.

I do not see colour

The white teachers in the study claimed to be unaware of the injustices, disadvantages and inequalities of the past. All the other teachers grew up as if the difference in social and political dispensation was 'normal'. Tom explicitly mentions that he is not aware of any injustices then and now; that he does not see colour and that we are all the same. The white teachers at the two farm schools in the study express a benevolent ignorance of the present inequalities in the farming communities stating that the learners at their school need love and nurturing. The colour blindness of the teachers acted as a barrier to an in-depth expression of their understanding of social justice and injustice.

We are all equal now

The inequalities of the past were seen by both black and white teachers as a 'given'; as a way of life for that time. A sense of wrongfulness and injustice was expressed more by black teachers than white teachers. Although the white teachers did not refer to apartheid as unfair discrimination, they express that things have changed and we are all equal now. Martha and Sonja, both black teachers, expressed the same

sentiment that we are all equal now. In all instances where this sentiment was expressed, it silenced a historical view of social injustice and de-sensitised teachers to the incidence of present injustices. The present inequalities are seen as a-historical obstacles which can be overcome with hard work.

All the schools participating in the study were diverse in terms of the racial composition of the teachers and the learners. All the teachers made reference to 'us' and 'them' from different communities with different expectations and different opportunities in their stories. In their reflections on the present situation in the school and the community, they made the same apartheid racial divisions and references to 'us' and 'them'. At School Four, Helen's perception of racial relations at the school was that they were all equal and accepting of each other, while Sandy and Wangui recalled racial divisions and marginalisation at the same school where black learners are the majority and black teachers the minority.

The equation of social justice with a perceived equality in the school community was a common theme in all the interviews. Different perceptions of equality offered different understandings of social justice. In situations where teachers perceived more equality, their sense of social justice in those situations was higher than those who did not perceive the same situation as equal and vice versa. In the case of School Four, Sandy and Wangui's articulation of their experience of inequality and marginalisation was silenced by the articulation of a majority view of equality.

It will never be realised

'I cannot say what social justice is about because it will never be realised' was a sentiment expressed by Wangui. Wangui's argument is that communities which are still segregated as they were during apartheid are spatially apart, in reaction to factors such as physical location, culture, language and their experiences of the past. Even though they share a common space at the school, either as teachers or as learners, the apartheid narrative still informs who they are and with whom they should associate. This translates into racialised social groupings in the playground, in the staff room and at school functions. The cultural differences and the unwillingness to learn from each

other, make it impossible to speak about social justice or share experiences of social injustice.

Teachers' Understandings of Injustices in Rural Education

From the interview data, different levels of injustice were identified - at the individual, personal, institutional and structural level. Strong relationships exist between individual and institutional levels of injustice, the one often reinforcing the other. The following themes related to social injustice emerged from this round of interviews:

Access to schooling limits opportunity

Although access to schooling irrespective of race, gender and class is enshrined in the South African Constitution, the patterns of access to schools are still in a general sense based on these exclusionary categories. The architecture of the rural landscape has not changed. The towns reflect the residential spatiality of apartheid which means that learners, who have greater proximity to schools, have greater ease of access. In effect this means that learners from the farm schools have limited access to secondary schools because of distance and difficulties with learner transport. They also have fewer opportunities to attend ex-Model C schools, which are perceived to be the better schools. Only the most deserving students can apply for a bursary and a place at the hostel.

The difficulties learners and parents experience in transport to and from schools are indicative of the difficulties rural communities have in general to access essential services. Services which complement and are essential to a healthy and effective school environment such as access to education district support, health services, communication including internet services, access to libraries, social services including social workers and school psychologists are limited when coupled with no, limited or expensive transport services. Farm school learners and parents are further disadvantaged as the transport to and from towns are further from the Central Business Districts (CBD) and hubs of services. Farm labourers often have to rely on the schedules and goodwill of farm owners to access essential services.

Access to schooling is limited by personal narratives

Although teachers refer to parental choice as the most determining factor in choice of schooling, different criteria are applied to those learners who are actually allowed to attend different schools in the community. Exclusionary criteria such as language, race, ability, financial status and proximity to the school are applied by schools in the community to limit access to schools. Teachers and school managers make these decisions based on assumptions they make of who should attend and who not. Examples of this are: the integration of Xhosa speaking learners in the Afrikaans stream at School Three which is limited through the multi-grade Xhosa stream and prohibited through the school's language policy. An example from School One is a farm owner enrolling a Xhosa learner at School One and her own white children at an ex-Model C school in town. At School Three a black disabled learner is sent to a 'township' school on the other side of the mountain, at great cost to the parents and inconvenience to the learner instead of a closer ex-Model C school. Exclusion of black learners from School Four to further their primary education at a neighbouring ex-Model C school, occur. At School Four there is the perception amongst parents that white teachers are better than 'coloured' teachers. These exclusionary practices are based on internalised perceptions of inclusion and exclusion, based on patterns of past discriminatory practices. The practices become part of the community narrative: determining which schools are valued higher than others and which learners should be allowed to attend and who not, in the absence of any counter policies and practices.

The breadth and relevance of the curriculum

Teachers' perception of the curriculum is that it disadvantages the rural child. The perception of the rural teacher is that the curriculum is urban-centred, prescriptive and not broad enough to incorporate the experiences of the rural child and specifically the farm child. According to teachers interviewed, learners cannot identify with concepts outside their knowledge and experience and therefore many areas of the curriculum are blank spots, or are not covered by the teacher. Although teachers bring pictures and magazines to enable learners to relate to the topics and make meaning, this still places rural learners at a greater disadvantage with regard to urban learners.

Multi-grade teaching

The teachers at three of the schools who taught multi-grade classrooms reflected on the difficulty they experienced in teaching a comprehensive curriculum to two or more grades in a single classroom. One of the coping strategies they used, because of time and space constraints and limited teaching resources, was to teach core concepts or aspects of the curriculum across the grades. This strategy of teaching to multiple grades resulted in an inability to teach all the aspects of the whole curriculum to a single grade. Progression in the grade and teaching more advanced aspects of the curriculum for the higher grades were often neglected for the sake of teaching to the common denominators across the grades.

Another shortcoming of this strategy of only teaching core and common aspects of the curriculum across the grades, according to these teachers, is the limited time it leaves for consolidation and deepened learning. With the limited time and resources to adequately teach, using different methodologies to consolidate and assess, teachers make the assumption that learners will 'catch it'. In addition to this, they have to spend teaching time assisting learners with social and psychological problems, resulting in less time spent on curriculum.

When teachers related their experiences of teaching in a multi-grade classroom, they indirectly made reference to social justice and injustice. According to them, it is not fair that, because they do not have enough time to teach all the learners well in all the grades in their classroom, the learners are not given the opportunities to excel in the multi-grade classroom. They make further reference to the cumulative effect of this injustice by referring to learners who spend subsequent years in multi-grade classrooms with these limitations.

Teachers generally make epistemological judgements on a regular basis of what learners need to know and who needs to know what. In the multi-grade classroom these decisions are circumscribed by factors such as the number of grades in the class, the developmental levels of the learners in and across the grades, the class size, time, space, amount of teaching material at any time of day. Teachers in mono-

grade classrooms have to deal with similar factors. The difference is that in the multi-grade classroom the factors increase as the number of grades increase. In the rural school classroom where learners come from historically marginalised communities and experience multiple poverties the socially just position to bring about equity would be to have more resources, instead of sharing resources such as teachers time, access to knowledge, teaching and learning material and classroom space. A more equitable distribution of resources to bring about justice in the rural community would be to have more teachers and resources rather than shared and fewer resources. This would expose communities who have been, and continue to be marginalised, to a high quality education which would offer them the opportunities to access secondary and higher education and a way out of the poverty cycle.

Socio-spatial identity of the rural child

In the interviews teachers made reference to the differentials regarding identity, value, knowledge and power in the rural landscape in the rural context for the rural child. Their perception was that the rural child is educationally disadvantaged because of his socio-spatial identity. Socio-spatial identity refers to the interrelatedness of one's physical location in society, your historic-political position, your lineage and socio-economic status (Green and Letts, 2007). This was expressed in a stronger sense by the teachers from the farm schools, namely School One and School Two, with special reference to the farm labourer's child.

The socio-spatial identity of the farm labourer and the farm labourer's child is entrenched in a socio-economic position which has been carried over generations. Teachers refer to teaching the parents, and in some cases the grandparents of learners. These families have lived and worked on the farm over generations. The socio-economic status of the farm labourer has not changed significantly over generations. A combination of factors such as a lack of educational opportunities, the limitations to access secondary school, little or no access to educational resources and support services might restrict the employment opportunities of the farm labourer's child to a continued existence on the farm and the socio-spatial identity of the farming community.

My Reflections

My reflections after the teacher interviews contain a number of questions and critical reflections which were raised for me after the individual teacher interviews. My questions related the contradiction between the perceived equality in South African society and colour blindness of some of the teachers, on the one hand, and the experiences of inequality and injustice by other teachers, on the other hand. The espoused equality in the South African Constitution translates into a perception of enacted equality for some teachers, both black and white, although more significantly amongst all the white participants. This sense of the eradication of apartheid past through the values of democracy and equality embodied in the South African Constitution blinds them to the present inequalities and injustices experienced in the schools and communities alike.

My reflections on my role in the interview process raised my personal concerns as a black South African about how I listened to the white participants, particularly. In my first interview with Tom I recorded a sense of disbelief that white South Africans were not aware of the injustices of apartheid. This sense of disbelief grew with subsequent interviews. In order to hear the interviewees I had to examine my own feelings and emotions and how they could block a full understanding of the white experience in the old and new South Africa. For me and the black participants the past and aspects of the present were clear injustices, while for white participants, apartheid in its human relationships in rural towns seemed to be, in part, an act of benevolence by white people towards black people.

In terms of becoming a 'just listener' I needed to become aware of my own stereotypes with regard the white participants and become sensitive to their context and open and willing to hear their understanding of social justice and injustice as sincere. This required a conscious effort on my part to listen with self awareness and to examine my own prejudices in the initial coding and analysis of the interview data. This consciousness awareness of the credibility judgements I made in the initial teacher interviews (based on my own racial stereotypes as a result of living in a society where

structural inequality shaped the way we were socialised, and still continue to shape society), influenced how I listened and mediated the focus group discussions.

Another complex aspect which was a concern for me as the interviewer, during this phase of the data analysis, was whether it was a heuristic injustice that White participants did not have the language, concepts or knowledge to articulate the past injustices or whether it was an act of wilful ignorance (Medina, 2012) or whether they were socialised to accept segregation as a form of justice in the apartheid South African context. These complexities of being a 'just listener' related to me on a personal level my role as a social justice researcher and on a conceptual level to a substantive theme for social justice research. These aspects I continued to question during the focus group interviews.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In the first phase of the interviews, teachers gave biographical information and their initial responses to questions related to social justice and injustice in the school and community context. The data was analysed using a grounded theory approach. In the next section the data gathered during the focus group interviews is presented and analysed.

CHAPTER 5

EXPLORING SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH THE DIALOGICAL NATURE OF FOCUS GROUPS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

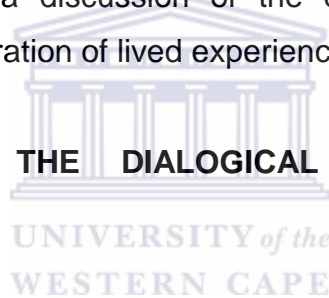
The research design of this study, as outlined in Chapter Three, followed a multi-method data gathering process. The argument was made that the abstract nature of social justice and the multiplicity of interpretations attached to it support a multi-method approach. In this study the multi-method approach starts with an initial exploration of teachers' understandings of social justice and injustice through their life-stories through individual interviews, followed by a deepened enquiry process underscored with contextual evidence of social justice and injustice, culminating in a focused dialogue, designed as focus group discussions where a multiplicity of voices-in-dialogue were heard (Heck, 2008; Davis and Ellis, 2010). The dialogue in the focus group discussions in this study was open-ended and designed to allow for the emergence of multiple meanings and experiences of social justice to emerge. Intentionally, it was designed as a process which could be mutually processed between teachers who held different perspectives, shaped in locations which held radically uneven social, material and symbolic circumstances (Wood and Roberts, 2013). In this chapter data gathered during the focus group discussions are presented to reflect the intertwined narratives of the lived experiences of the teachers. These represent the teachers' understanding of social justice and injustice as filtered through the individual and collective lenses of their experiences and understandings of their political-historical context and the particularities of their spatial context.

In the first round of data collection, the Pre-Reflective Phase, teachers were individually interviewed and shared their background and their perceptions on social justice within the rural school context. Thereafter, in the Reflective Phase, they were asked to observe, reflect on, or share with, each other examples of social justice or

injustice over a two week period: the act of observing and recording school life through a social justice and injustice lens would create a discerning perception. During this phase they recorded examples of social justice and injustice in the school context, using a journal or keeping notes. During the focus group discussion, the Dialogical Phase, linkages were made with the interview data, teacher observations and responses to the focus group questions. The dialogue created through the focus group discussion allowed for deepening of those perceptions and for greater shared understanding of social justice to emerge (Cohen, Mannion and Morrisson, 2003; Roulston, 2010; Babbie and Mouton, 2011). The insights they gained throughout the data gathering process were then discussed to a gain a deeper sense of social justice and injustice in the rural education context.

In this chapter I present the Dialogic Phase, the focus group discussion interviews. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the data and conveys the themes which emerge from the integration of lived experience, history and space.

5.2 THE DESIGN OF THE DIALOGICAL PHASE: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS



Four focus group discussions were held with the teachers from the four participating schools. The focus group discussion consisted of thirteen members: one additional staff member at School One, who was ill during the individual interviews, participated in observation exercise and joined the focus group discussion. Each focus group discussion lasted approximately ninety minutes. The focus group discussions were recorded and I kept notes of key points and emerging themes and threads.

At the start of the interview I reiterated that the discussion would be an open-ended dialogue: they could ask each other probing and clarifying questions and they could share insights and examples as they emerged during the discussion. I explained that in my role as an interviewer and facilitator of the discussion I would ask key questions and probing and clarifying questions. I explained that I would be listening for emerging themes and threads. I also added that I would be listening across groups and would cross-reference the information I was getting. At the end of the

discussion I would summarise the examples and from the summaries present to what I heard as their understandings of social justice and injustice were.

Each teacher was given the opportunity to share their example(s) of social justice or injustice. The examples teachers brought were in accordance with their understanding of social justice and injustice. They brought new examples and elaborated on examples from the individual interviews.

The key questions I asked were:

What examples do you have of social justice or injustice in your school context?

In the case of an injustice, why is it an injustice and who benefits?

What is your understanding of social justice in your context? What new insights do you have about social justice and teaching in a rural school?

What action do you propose in the interest of social justice?

The data generated from the focus group discussions were individually transcribed per school and coded according to the themes which emerged. Cross-cutting themes were then identified and thereafter concurrently categorised and analysed according to grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998; Clarke, 2005; Charmaz, 2006; 2011; Birks and Mills, 2011).

The participants' responses to the focus group questions were categorised across the four schools according to common social justice and injustice themes which emerged. Within each of the categorisations illustrative excerpts from the data were drawn on to substantiate the categorisation. The categorisations were concurrently analysed and interpretative comments formulated to 'carry forward' (Gibson and Hartman, 2014: 188) into a theoretical framework in Chapter 6.

The table below is an example of the coded transcript and an example of how the analytical categories were identified.

Transcript Extract	Rationale for social justice or injustice	Why mentioned as a social justice category.	Action proposed
<p>Multi-grade teaching: examples from schools: Schools One, Two and Three</p>	<p>Disadvantages the disadvantaged: the learner doubly disadvantaged</p> <p>Unfair distribution of human and physical resources in poor communities; No redistribution of resources to eradicate inequalities and poverty</p>	<p>There has been no development in this area to promote advantage; perpetuation of inequalities; perpetuation of patterns of advantage and disadvantage.</p>	<p>Resource provision – more teachers instead of more textbooks; training in innovative methodologies for multi-grade teaching;</p>
<p>Breach of sanctity of life and bodily integrity</p>	<p>Physical and emotional exploitation of vulnerable children</p>	<p>Overcrowded living conditions; bullying of younger learners; exposure of young and vulnerable learners to sexual activity; long walking distances to and from schools put learners at risk of sexual molestation.</p>	<p>Develop a school protocol to identify vulnerable learners. Advocacy highlight to the plight of vulnerable learners and the duties and obligations of duty bearers. After school care support for all learners. Improvement in the transportation policy and system for learners, especially farm school learners.</p>

Voice of the Marginalised not heard	No representation and recognition; no participation; exclusion from mainstream matters.	Parents are not heard or represented at school meetings and functions; The curriculum is urban, mono-cultural and mono-grade; curriculum is not relevant to rural learner; Curriculum perpetuates marginalisation of black and coloured rural children.	Advocacy to parents and schools about representation and participation of parents in school matters. Curriculum workshops to innovate teachers' classroom practices. Advocacy for curriculum which represents the lived experiences and aspirations of all learners.
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Table 2: Example of coded transcript and analytical categories

The themes emerging from the categorisations are named and discussed in the next sections. The themes are discussed with excerpts from the four individual focus groups discussions and compared, verified and substantiated across the four data sets. In instances where there are differences and contradictions these are noted under the relevant themes. Also discussed under each theme are the teachers' considerations of why it is an injustice, who benefits and what action they propose in the interest of social justice.

5.3 TEACHERS' INTERPRETATIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE IN THE RURAL SCHOOL SETTING.

When teachers interpreted their observations and interpretations of social justice in their school setting, in preparation for the focus group interviews, they merged their personal histories, as shared in their individual interviews (Chapter Four), and the present day-to-day realities of their school context. For instance, teachers at the two farm schools are presented with the same set of learners and circumstances, yet their interpretations of social justice and injustice differ substantially. The 'coloured' teachers at School One use the lens of past and present structural inequalities on farms and draw on the historical relationship of subservience and dominance

between the farm owner and farm worker to give their examples of present injustices. The white teachers at School Two use poverty in its many guises, as a social phenomenon of rural life, as the lens through which they interpret social justice. Similarly, Schools Two and Three share important features: the learners are drawn from semi-rural settings and live in close proximity to well resourced rural towns. They differ in an important aspect which affects their experience and interpretation of social justice. School Three draws a learner population of ‘coloured’ and black children, (similar, but to a larger extent compared to School One) while school Four, an ex-Model C school, draws a wider diversity of learners, namely, black, ‘coloured’ and white as well as foreign nationals. All the school teachers’ interpretations of social justice and injustice reflect the contradictions, ambiguities and controversies inherent in a society transiting from an apartheid state to a democratic state. These differences in personal histories, perspectives and school settings and the dialogical nature of the focus group discussions made for varied and richly nuanced interpretations of social justice.

In the next section the main coded categories of social justice and injustice as presented in Table 3 are listed and discussed as social justice and injustice indicators. The social justice and injustice indicators identified across the four schools are presented in Table 3. The schools and participants are represented in Table 4. This is followed by a discussion of each indicator with excerpts from the focus group discussions.

	Social justice and injustice indicator.	School One: Farm school historically for coloured children.	School Two: Farm school historically for white children.	School Three: Township primary school in coastal town.	School Four: Ex-Model C primary school in a large rural town.
1	Quality of living conditions of learners on farms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2	Voice of the marginalised	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Multi-grade teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Language preference			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5	Access to services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Bodily integrity and sexual Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Access to available resources and opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 3: Social justice categories as presented in focus group discussions

Table 4 represents the codes for the schools and the teachers and principals at the four schools. The codes used for the teachers are used to identify teacher data in the presentation and analysis of the focus group interviews.

School One	Three teachers: T1; T2; T3; One Principal: P1
School Two	One teacher: T4; One Principal: P2
School Three	Four teachers: T5;T6;T7; One Principal: P3
School Four	Two teachers; T8;T9 One Principal: P4
Interviewer	I

Table 4: Coding of participants in the focus group discussions.

5.3.1 Quality of Living Conditions of Learners on Farms and in Informal Settlements

In the focus group discussions the teachers at the two farms schools reflected on the living conditions their learners experience on the farm and in the informal settlements. Their discussions were framed by the implications of the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (No 62 of 1997) on the lives of the farming community. They reflected on the insecurities and uncertainties this impending legislation had on the individuals and families who lived on the farms at the time. As a result of the uncertainties and lack of information, many moved or were moved or evicted to the

neighbouring towns before the legislation was passed, leaving a small labour corps on the farms. Teachers felt that there are still uncertainties and misinformation about the security of tenure and employment on the farms, not only with the labourers but also amongst the teachers. Many of the farm labourers affected moved to informal settlements on the outer fringes of the towns or found accommodation as backyard dwellers, also in poor housing areas. The loss of community, income, possessions, proximity to schools, and other social and cultural structures established over years amongst the farming community, resulted in a loss of identity and purpose for many individuals. Many learners did not return to school because of the distances and did not enrol at township schools. According to the teachers those families living in informal settlements and as backyard dwellers were not better off than those who remained on the farms.

Both groups of teachers from the two farm schools spoke about the effects of the economic injustice of poverty on the lives of farm workers in the area, yet their examples of the injustice are significantly different. The focus group discussion at School One (predominantly 'coloured' teachers raised in the area) focused mainly on the historical and structural relationships which exist between farm owner and farm worker. In sharing their experience of the present living conditions on most of the farms the teachers at School One concurred that they had not changed qualitatively. They maintain that despite the changes in the country, the relations of servitude between owner and workers and the residue of historical enslavement remain a feature of life on farms. In support of this position they add that farm workers live under the same conditions at present as they did under apartheid and have limited voice in matters which concern them. In addition, they have observed in the classroom and on home visits, that the opportunities for redress and advancement in the democratic South Africa have not made a difference in the lives of farm workers and their children.

The teachers at School One felt strongly that the appalling living conditions of farm workers were an example of social injustice. One teacher reflected on a home visit she made to enquire about an absent learner. In the ensuing discussion the teachers in the focus group discussion shared her sentiments and agreed that her experience

represents the living conditions of not all the learners on farms, but the majority of learners living on farms in the area.

In her account of the visit, the teacher commented that the living conditions of the farm workers are reminiscent of the past and an example of a persisting social injustice. According to her the conditions on the farms surrounding the school have not improved, even after a change of ownership in at least two of the farms. At this particular farm she visited to enquire about the absent learner lived with her parents, the farm was sold and a few of the workers were part of the sale agreement and the rest had to leave the farm when the new owner arrived. This family she visited were amongst those required to leave the farm, but remained because they could not find accommodation elsewhere. She recalls her visit to the learners' home as follows:

T3: I went to his house to find out why he was not in school. They live far from the road. (Daar diep!) When I came there I was shocked. It was an old dilapidated one- roomed house. The door was just a hole in the wall. I looked in and it was dark inside even though it was still light outside. No electricity ... a table and a bed and stuff stacked high against one wall. Depressing. I could understand why this learner did not come to school, does not do homework ... why he is angry.

I: What did you say to them?

T3: I could not say anything. What can you say? It is like people have been forgotten ... left behind.

T3: The boer (farmer) knows but he prefers not to know. They moved into that deserted house because there was no other accommodation. He does not give better housing and if they complain they are told to find a place to stay in the town.

T1: Yes, people are scared of losing their jobs or the little accommodation they have.

P1: I don't know. This is the new South Africa but ... nothing has changed.

The teachers at School Two, who were exclusively white, also mention the living conditions on the farms as an example of social injustice. In contrast to the reference

School One makes to the structural injustice and the relationship of power and dependency between the farmer and worker, the teachers at School Two mention the effects of the social and financial deficiencies in the family structures of the farming community as social injustices. Examples of the deficiencies mentioned in the focus group discussion are low levels of parental education, the inability of parents to manage their finances and indiscriminate spending on alcohol, resulting in a decline in family values. The teachers at School Two place the blame for the effect of these deficiencies on the living conditions of learners on the farm on the parents and caregivers.

P2: Eighty or ninety percent of the learners are on the feeding scheme ... less at the beginning of the month and more towards the end of the first week. It's as if everything is used up in the first week.

T4: The problem lies with the parents who can't manage their money right.

P2: There are literally families who only have dry bread at home. Close to month end they are not in school. The little ones will tell you, if you ask ... on that Monday... when they do not settle down...was because things did not go well at home. The bigger ones are just quiet. You can see there are things they cannot speak about.

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5.3.1.1 Why the Living Conditions is an Injustice and who Benefits

All the schools find the rationale for including these examples as a social injustice in their observations of learners in the classroom. According to them the living conditions on farms and the social problems and deficiencies learners are exposed to impact negatively on their performance in the classroom. Even though they have access to schooling and the resources are provided to support their learning, they are unable to participate or reach their potential due to the detrimental effects of poverty and subservience.

On the question of who benefits, the teachers concurred that neither the teacher nor the learner benefits. Teachers at School One argue that the farm owner would benefit from the subservient position of the workers in the short run, and added that farm workers are being made aware of their rights in the district and this could have negative implications for the farmer. Teachers at School Two were of the

opinion that nobody benefitted from the situation because the relationship between owner, worker, teacher and learner is cyclical and the effects would be felt by everyone.

5.3.1.2 The Action Teachers Proposed to Promote Justice and Address Injustices

The teachers in the focus group discussion at both schools felt that the housing on the farms and the surrounding areas where learners reside should improve quantitatively and qualitatively. This action is not in their hands, but resorts with the relevant governmental authorities and the farm owners and would take a long time to resolve. Their deliberations on the kind of interim but necessary action they could undertake, were to agitate for the improved transportation of learners and for measures to ensure the safety of learners walking to and from school.

5.3.2 Voice of the Marginalised is not Heard

The teachers at the four schools mentioned examples of the lack of parental 'voice' in school matters as a social injustice. The lack of parental 'voice' was described as a social injustice because a lack of 'voice' translated into a lack of parental influence in matters which affect them or their children's lives. In the experience of the teachers at the four schools the parents, in particular, who were historically disadvantaged under the apartheid schooling system do not fully participate in the systems, structures and procedures of the school. These parents are still seen to be marginalised under the present democratisation of schools which allows for greater involvement and participation of parents than in the past. A common thread in all four schools which is attributed to the low or non-parental participation is the low socio-economic conditions of parents on farms and in the townships together with the lack of transport to and from school and extramural venues. As a result of the absence of parents at extramural events and parent meetings they do not hear the important messages from the school and in a sense are silenced. As a result their concerns and questions about schooling are not heard and their interests are not nurtured and consequently learners' needs are not articulated.

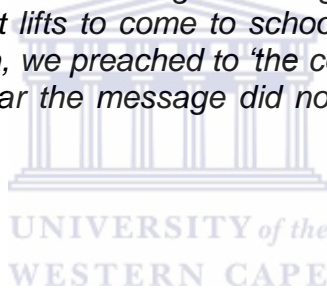
In terms of social justice, teachers at all four schools view parental involvement and support as an important contribution to the eradication of inequality in education. According to the teachers the amount and quality of at home support parents can provide plays an important part in learners' performance at school. In addition to the at home support for homework duties, teachers also value the involvement of parents in extramural events and parent meetings.

School One

P1: With this new curriculum parents must be involved in homework and they must support learners at home.

T3: But they do not know how to give help at home ... they have little or no schooling or they went to school under the old curriculum ...

P1: We tried in the past to arrange meetings on the farms because parents struggle to get lifts to come to school meetings. So we asked the pastors to help... ja, we preached to 'the converted'. But the parents who really need to hear the message did not come and their children need it the most.



School Two

T4: The biggest problem is in Grade 4 with a different curriculum and the teachers are different and the children between the ages nine and ten are difficult. If a person understands that, you know what the child is going through. But there are so many things that we learn now, but the parent on the farm do not know about it.

The teachers at both farm schools made reference to the dependency of farm workers on the transport of farmers when it comes to attendance of parent meetings.

School Two

P2: They cannot come to parent meetings because there is no transport. There are farmers who do not care ... but sometimes they also ask too late and there is no bakkie (truck) to take them.

School One

P1: The biggest problem is transport. They have no transport...there is no public transport and the boer does not always want to give his bakkie at night... so they cannot attend school meetings

School Four

The principal at School Four spoke about the difficulty black parents at ex-Model C schools have in participating in school matters. In the discussion she mentioned cases where parents were marginalised because of stereotyping and discriminatory practices which were still present in spatially and racially stratified communities. When this happens, she recalled, parents lose interest and consequently lose their 'voice' in school matters. The principal related the story of her domestic worker whose child attended the neighbouring ex-Model C school and qualified for exemption from school fees. The parent was very excited about her child's attendance and keen to participate in school functions. At an athletics meeting she had a humiliating experience which made her reconsider her desire to participate. The principal related the scenario as follows:

P4: I could see the disappointment on her face. When she asked to help, they told her to take a broom and sweep in front and then she could leave. The grand moms did the hotdogs ... I followed it up with the principal and said do not say you get no support from black and 'coloured' parents. Our parents (at School Four) fight to work at school functions. You empower a person, and they will treat you with respect. They treated her with little respect.

The teachers at School Four mentioned the complexity of teaching a diverse learner population and building a relationship between the teachers and the parents. According to them they have to build trust between themselves and the parent community which is hard at times, especially if a child underperforms and the parent perceives this as a form of discrimination.

P4: Our black children ... it takes a long time before they trust you ... only later the parent accepts the teacher.

T9: It comes from the parent to the child.

P4: If you ask them to do something extra or if you say something negative or if the child must stay behind, then the parent wants to know: Is it because I am black?

The principal acknowledged that even though the teachers are doing good work in the classroom, they still have to work on the subtleties of discrimination which create a communication barrier between the school and the parents. In her opinion many teachers do not know that they are being discriminatory. She related the following story as an example:

P4: One teacher has a very stern way of speaking. And one day I heard her speaking to a parent like that. After the conversation I told her I do not like the way you spoke with the parent. I told her if that was me, I would have thought: She thinks she is the madam. It was a brown parent. She did not realise this. I told her you have to be sensitive because you are a white teacher. She said, 'Really, did I talk like that'. The father came to complain and we sorted it out. We have to be aware of how we speak – not to speak top down to parents. I realise that I have to be sensitive and aware that because I am White I have to realise that discrimination could be happening.

T8: She would not have spoken like that to a white parent...

P4: I could easily have told her (the teacher) that because I am white. "You do not know that you sound like that"... and she was surprised when I told her that. She is unaware of how she speaks to the parents.

The teachers at School Four continued their exploration of the complexity of the residual manifestations of the unequal relationship between the oppressed and the dominant groups under apartheid. They found echoes of it in the attitudes of white teachers towards black parents as explained in the example above. According to them these attitudes from both black and white parents prevented a relationship between equals where the concerns of all the parties could be raised, understood and addressed. They also saw elements of the unequal relationship in the humility of parents from low socio-economic backgrounds and their uncritical acceptance of the status quo, which prevent them from participating in a human rights culture and claiming these rights, which schools are trying to establish.

P4: But what I want to say about justice is ... some parents will see a lot of things that they will think disadvantage them, others not. Sometimes

I see parents here and then I think you are so humble... you have a right to this thing ... some people just accept... they feel they have lost out and are prepared to settle for less. Another is over sensitive and do not want to be hurt.

T9: I think the same as she is saying. A lot of things shape us. Lots of people accept because of their background or culture, taking very little, being humble and also because of their economic status. People do not know they have rights. They do not have information.

In the same vein, but this time referring to learners, teachers at the other schools also mention examples of how a lack of learner 'voice' translates into a social injustice. In the focus group discussion teachers make reference to the most vulnerable learners who are marginalised and silenced both by fellow learners and teachers. The teachers observe that the learners who are poor are vulnerable and are often victimised and bullied at the school. They are teased by other learners for the state of their clothing and teachers often pick on them for incomplete tasks and untidy books.



School One

T1: There is this one boy everybody teases because he wears clothes that are too big for him. I saw them doing it and told them to stop ... it is not right. We have to care for each other. He can't help being poor.

The question of who is suffering the injustice is not clear in the example of School Three. They give an example of a learner with health problems and in their estimation the unfairness is suffered by his fellow learners who have to sit next to him in discomfort. The fact that the learner dropped out of school as a result of his health problems was not considered as an injustice, even after further probing questions were posed to the teachers. They also did not recognise their culpability in their role as custodians and duty bearers of the learner's right to education. Where blame could be accorded for the exclusion of the child to education, the parent was seen to have sole responsibility.

School Three

T8: There is a learner with a skin problem and no one wants to sit next to him because he has a smell. It is unfair to the rest of the class who has to sit next to him. Now he does not come to school any more.

T6: Ja, I know. I had him in Grade 1 and I think the parent is to blame. I told her so and she got angry with me.

School Four

The teachers at School Four related another example of injustice they saw practised at School Five, their neighbouring school. This followed on from the interview discussion where learners were refused access to the school on the basis of race and class.

T9: The social injustice I have seen of late is about the schools. We see the discrimination based on colour and what they cannot afford and that is a great social injustice for me. At the school our children have always gone to you can see that race is emphasised. The white children go there, the 'coloured' children there and the black children there. The children see it themselves when they go for the interview in grade three. They say I tried to go there, but I am not allowed because I am black or this colour. You can see the way they say it, they want to go there. But it is not because of their academics, that is not the criteria. I can say flatly, because of the colour, according to me and some other parents.

P4: Two colleagues took a test. The black colleague took her child to the school and they said the school was full. Then her white colleague took her child and there was a place. She said, 'I heard your school was full and you had no place for A'. Then she had evidence and went to the officials with it and nothing happened.

I: When you speak to the officials, what do they say?

P4: They say expand your curriculum. The director says expand your school. Then you take all the black ones and he takes the other children. The parents do not want to talk because they are scared their child will not be accepted. I had one such parent now. I said give me a letter then I will send a petition. Then she said no tomorrow my child will not be accepted. They eat all this up!

The same school had no representation of black parents on the School Governing Body (SGB). The teachers surmised that the discriminatory issues of access and exclusion were not addressed at the SGB meetings because the diversity of parents and their views were not represented on the SGB.

T9: Look at that school. People do not know that they have a right and they can do certain things and they can stop it. They need a forerunner. Someone who can say: 'Yo no, that is our right'.

T8: They have that but they do not want to be involved.

P4: They had people who wanted to overturn the Governing Body, a lawyer and a principal. They called a meeting and nobody pitched, because they do not really want to be involved. This is the thing that you get 'coloureds' and blacks have no confidence. People feel that they do not want to be first in line.

The non-representation of black parents on the SGB was a difficult issue to discuss. One view expressed was that they do not avail themselves of these positions; another view was that the institutionalised processes at the school were exclusionary. The disgruntled and affected parents who attended meetings also did not represent a sufficient majority to influence decisions which would result in transformation at the school.

5.3.2.1 Why 'Voice of the Marginalised is not Heard' is an Injustice and who Benefits



The rationale for including this category as a social injustice resonates with representation and recognition which Nancy Fraser (1997) includes as dimensions of social justice and 'voice' (Gerwitz, 1998). Teachers reason that if the voices of parents are not heard, and they do not hear what the schools are saying, they are unable to participate in the educational, social and cultural life of the school. The parents are not represented on the school structures and their needs and issues are unrecognised in the mainstream of school matters. Their children are also excluded and marginalised from the mainstream of what the school represents. The result is that schools do not represent the full spectrum of what the school community represent and learners do not belong and feel left out.

The humility of parents was seen as a virtue in the four schools. In the discussion concerning what would be an example of an injustice and who benefits the teachers saw the humility of parents as an injustice especially in cases where they were silenced by being humble and not able to speak out against injustice. The examples given were parents' perceived acceptance when their children were

denied access to neighbouring primary schools or secondary schools because of their race or language or when they were victimised and bullied by their peers for being poor and underprivileged.

5.3.2.2 The action Teachers Proposed to Promote Justice and Address Injustices

Gerwitz (1998) and Nussbaum (1997) state that social justice is promoted in a culture of care, support, empathy and recognition. The common action proposed by the teachers from the four schools to promote social justice was a greater emphasis on the creation of a culture of care at the schools. According to the teachers there are episodes of support and altruism at the schools, especially with fundraising drives at Schools Three and Four. Schools One and Two mention that they encourage learners to give and share even though they too are underprivileged. Teachers noticed that learners share informally across race and language divisions. In the interest of social justice, the teachers proposed to teach learners to care for each other across racial, language and class divisions.


In the discussion on the non-representation of black parents on the SGB of the neighbouring school was seen to be a barrier to an inclusive school. The non-representation also precludes the democratisation of the school as intended in the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Poverty indicators such as insufficient food, inadequate housing, learning opportunities and educational stimulation are obstacles and examples of distributive injustice and a social injustice. Teachers at School Four proposed the identification of a 'champion' in the school governing body who could represent disadvantaged parents and speak on behalf of parents who are silenced and marginalised and address institutionalised obstacles which perpetuate injustices.

5.4 MULTI-GRADE CLASSROOMS AND QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

In the individual interviews teachers from Schools One, Two and Three spoke about the difficulties they face in the multi-grade classrooms. In the focus group

interviews the teachers at these schools all refer to multi-grade teaching as an example of social injustice. According to them the social injustice of the multi-grade classroom is linked to a multiplicity of factors linked to the low socio-economic conditions of the rural communities their learners are drawn from, which they referred to in the individual interviews. The teachers link the combination of these factors in the context of multi-grade teaching as a major contributor to the low educational outcomes of these learners and schools which results in the enduringly low socio-economic status of learner families and their limited or non-existent access to secondary education and other societal resources. The injustice for them is that marginalised learners, in this instance those attending farm schools and the Xhosa learners in an Afrikaans medium school, who need more support and enriched educational interventions, are taught in multi-grade classrooms where the basic resources are shared and stretched across grades.

School Two



P2: ...I do not know how it is in other places, maybe it is the same .We have children for whom learning is not easy, it is really difficult. They have huge backlogs because many parents are illiterate ... maybe they have Grade 1, 2 or 3, but very few have high school education. You want to give the learners a chance but you cannot really give them the education they must have. You cannot do that.

T4: Grade 1 and 2 together is a nightmare ... and Grade 3 and 4 are worse because you teach across the phase. It's a bad one. It's really true, because we have so many children with learning problems who need lots of attention and interventions and the more children you have the less time you have.

Although the teachers received training to teach in a multi-grade classroom the same methodology for teaching in a mono-grade class was used, with additional tips on how to manage time and how to 'swop' content between grades. According to them the training did not expose them to real change in teaching methodologies; instead they identify multi-grade teaching with the colourful baubles and counting frames they received.

School One

T1: We went for training in multi-grade teaching ... but you know, it's not enough. It is so frustrating ...if you go in any multi-grade classroom you will see colourful baubles and counting frames, et cetera ... and they show you how to manage time and swop between grades but I feel we don't deal with the real thing. After that training I still struggle to work out how to give each learner what they need.

In School Three the Xhosa classes in the Foundation Phase (FP) are the only multi-grade classes. These classes are accommodated in prefabricated buildings which are spatially separated from the rest of the school. The Xhosa teacher mentioned the same set of circumstances as School One and Two in naming multi-grade teaching as a social injustice. In her case the challenges of the multi-grade classes are compounded with the complexity of the choice parents make between mother tongue instruction and parental language preference.

The teachers at School Three discussed in detail why there was a need at the school and in the community to offer Xhosa as a medium of instruction at an Afrikaans medium school. The Xhosa classes were started at the school after an increase in Xhosa speaking families in the area. The Xhosa classes are offered in the FP only. Since the school is Afrikaans medium, the learners who prefer English as the medium of instruction either have to go to the ex-Model C school and pay higher school fees or they have to commute to the nearest town which is 50 kilometres away. Either choice has cost implications for the parents. If learners remain at School Three they have to continue with Afrikaans as medium of instruction in the Intermediate Phase. The parental choice in this case is to enrol the Xhosa speaking learners in the Afrikaans classes in the FP. This means that the number of learners in the Xhosa classes remains low and the rationale for multi-grade teaching is reinforced. It also means that learners are not taught in their mother tongue in the FP, in accordance with government policy on mother tongue instruction.

In the focus group discussion at School Three, it transpired that the Xhosa teacher received very little, if any, support from her colleagues. In the discussion the Xhosa learners are seen as a problem by the Afrikaans-speaking teachers.

T6: We have to review the language policy and state that this is an Afrikaans medium school and apply mother tongue instructions ... all the Xhosa speaking children must be in the Xhosa classes.

T7: I had one of yours ... she was the cleverest there and then she came to my class. She did well but now she is not the cleverest any more ... she struggles.

T8: Yes, it is difficult for them ...

The role of the Xhosa speaking teacher in the focus group discussion is symptomatic of the status of Xhosa language, Xhosa learners and Xhosa teachers at the school. The voice of the Xhosa teacher was progressively silenced and she became marginalised in the focus group discussion. Her needs and her pedagogical and professional struggles were not recognised by the other teachers. In the focus group discussion the status of Xhosa, the learners and the teachers and the Xhosa classrooms were not considered as issues which affected the whole school. This dialogue in the focus group interview mirrored the way the Xhosa classes were seen as a separate and temporary arrangement at the school and everything it represented in the school was marginalised.

5.4.1 Why Multi-grade Teaching is an Injustice and who Benefits

For the teachers in the study who teach in multi-grade classes, multi-grade teaching is an injustice. They argue that the injustice of the multi-grade classrooms lies in the fact that the resources, such as teaching and learning material, tuition time and classroom space, are insufficient to deal with the educational and socio-economic backlogs of the learners. In these teachers' experience the learners, who endure multiple disadvantages, are more disadvantaged in the multi-grade classroom. The main reason they give for naming multi-grade teaching as an injustice is because the resources, such as teaching and learning material, tuition time and classroom space are unevenly distributed between mono-grade and multi-grade classes. Whereas the mono-grade teacher deals with teaching one grade, the multi-grade teacher has to share the same resources over two or more grades. According to them teaching one grade in a under-resourced rural community is a challenge. In a multi-grade classroom the challenge is multiplied.

When the teachers considered who benefits and who do not benefit from multi-grade teaching, they agreed that the learners benefitted the least.

5.4.2 The Action Teachers proposed to Promote Justice and Address Injustices

After naming multi-grade teaching as an injustice, the teachers at the three schools with multi-grade classes found it difficult to identify any action that could be taken on their part. In their opinion the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has a moral and political responsibility to provide quality education to learners in the rural areas. The moral responsibility of the DBE as a provider of basic services and the equitable distributor of public goods, e.g. education, would be to recognise the disadvantage and needs of the rural learner. The political responsibility of the DoE would be to provide more resources to the rural learners, especially those attending farm schools in order to eradicate injustices which follow historical patterns of ownership and subservience. According to them schools allocate teachers per grade according to the teacher-pupil ratio prescribed by the DBE. The school makes a further decision on multi-grade teaching if the number of grades exceeds the number of teachers and the teacher-pupil ration requires more than one grade per class. This decision according to the teachers is not based on pedagogical reasons but on logistical reasons. The action proposed by teachers is that the DBE conduct more research on what the needs and requirements are for rural schools and diverse communities and on the basis of that research make decisions of what kind of teaching would suit under-resourced rural communities.

School Two

T4: I see how money is wasted ...books are delivered at our school then we have it already. Then I wonder if they did not do research to find out if we really need it. We have these beautifully coloured workbooks which costs the department millions. They are nice workbooks but they are all extra, not essential.

They argue that the research will show that schools with multi-grade classes should not only receive more resources, but more teachers. For them the priority in rural

schools is more equitable provisioning which would see more teachers to deal with the differentiated needs of the learners.

T4: I have an idea but I do not know how practical it is ... this is the way I see it now. Now I feel could they not have spent that money they spent on those workbooks we do not really need or use on paying teachers' salaries.

P2: Another idea they have is to close the farm schools and provide transport to the town schools. The transport costs are so high! Won't it be better to appoint a teacher rather than pay the additional high transport costs?

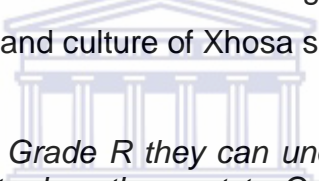
5.4.3 Language Preference, Power and the Medium of Instruction

The issue of language as a social justice issue sparked the most controversy and difference of opinion amongst teachers in all the focus group discussions. The teachers at the four schools all commented on the educational inequalities which language preference and the medium of instruction of the school pose to learners. They all discussed the relationship between language, inclusion and exclusion, power and powerlessness and its connections with social justice and injustice in the examples they offered. The focus of the discussions, although nuanced by the different contexts of the schools, was on the power of language to include and exclude learners. In instances where language and race were linked, as in Schools Three and Four, inclusion and exclusion were intensely debated.

In Schools One and Two, the farm schools where the communities are largely homogeneous and the majority of learners are Afrikaans speakers, the teachers positively comment that a single and common language amongst schools in the community assists with the transitions between schools, school and home and the social and economic life of the community. As the farming communities are becoming more diverse, more African language speaking learners are applying for admission to the two farm schools in the study. The teachers commented directly and indirectly on the historical links between whiteness, language, particularly Afrikaans, and power on the farms communities and how this combination lead to exclusions and marginalisations in the past. They explored the dominance of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in their schools in the present, without linking it to whiteness

and political power as in the past. They made reference to how language still has the power to result in the social exclusion and marginalisation of non-Afrikaans, specifically Xhosa-speaking learners in the schools, but they could not offer any actual examples of these exclusions in their schools.

In the discussion of whether language preference and the medium of instruction is a social justice or injustice they question the 'rightness' or fairness of the limited school choices Xhosa speaking parents have who prefer mother tongue instruction have. They also discussed the fairness of the extra costs parents incur when they to send their children to schools in the neighbouring towns. The teachers at School One specifically, mention the inclusionary nature of language. In this regard they mention examples of how conversant in Afrikaans Xhosa speaking learners who live on farms are and the ease at which they 'fit in' with the more formal Afrikaans used in the classroom. They do not comment on the non-recognition of Xhosa in their schools and the silencing of the history and culture of Xhosa speaking learners.



T3: When they start in Grade R they can understand Afrikaans a little bit, a very little bit. But when they get to Grade Two and Three, you can hardly notice the difference between them and our children.

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I asked the teachers at both farm schools if they offered Xhosa classes at all at the school. Both school replied that the DBE does not provide Xhosa teachers and none of them are conversant in Xhosa. They are adamant that parents are aware of the schools language policy and have a choice to take their learners elsewhere. The two schools in the town are more exposed to the challenges of multi-lingualism in the classroom and broader school environment. Both town schools, Schools Three and Four, draw learners from predominantly Afrikaans speaking communities. More Xhosa speaking families have moved into the community and enrolled their children at School Three, an Afrikaans medium school, over recent years. With the result that more learners who are not Afrikaans home language speakers are choosing Afrikaans as medium of instruction. In the past School Four was an Afrikaans medium school and now offers both English and Afrikaans as medium of instruction, in response to the declining enrolment of white Afrikaans speaking learners and the increase in the demands for access of a more multi-lingual community. In the case of School Four, more learners who

are not English first language speakers, i.e. Afrikaans and Xhosa first language speakers, choose English as the medium of instruction rather than Afrikaans.

Compared to the other schools, the teachers at School Three were the most vocal about the language issue. The language issue was difficult for teachers to make sense of, especially the choice of Afrikaans as medium of instruction for Xhosa speaking learners. The Xhosa speaking teacher could identify with the parents' rationale for choosing Afrikaans as medium of instruction. She admits that learners struggle to adjust in the Afrikaans classes. She can also identify with the reasons parents have for choosing Afrikaans as the medium of instruction. The Xhosa teacher sees the functionality of the choice within the broader Afrikaans speaking community while the Afrikaans speaking teachers view the parental choice as a lack of educational and legal information.

T8: Learners in Afrikaans classes find it difficult, but they are Xhosa children. Sometimes they do not go to crèche they come direct from home to grade one.

T6: They come to grade one and then the parents insist they do Afrikaans. But the law says mother tongue instruction in the Foundation Phase. They do not know the law.

T8: No, it is not that. One parent told me last year she wants her child in the Afrikaans class because the child must help in the mobile shop. If there comes (sic) Afrikaans people then the child can help and this area is mostly Afrikaans....it is functional

The teachers' perception of language choice as a social injustice is different too. For the Afrikaans speaking teachers the Afrikaans teachers and learners suffer the injustice because they have to make adjustments to accommodate Xhosa speaking learners. For them justice would prevail if the law is applied and Xhosa speaking learners are placed in separate classes with a Xhosa teacher.

P3: We have to review the language policy and that is that this is an Afrikaans medium school and that the Xhosa children should be in a Xhosa class. It is a big problem for the Grade 1 Afrikaans teacher. All of us have the problem because she cannot deal with it in Grade 1.

The Xhosa speaking teacher understood the plight of the Xhosa parent in a predominantly Afrikaans town. By enrolling the child in an Afrikaans class that child, and that family by extension, would be able to participate in the social and economic life of the community. Whereas in the past Afrikaans was viewed as the language of the oppressor, at present and as an example of social justice the Xhosa teacher saw it as the language which could give access to education and the economic and social life of the community, especially in rural communities.

School Four

In School Four the learners are more diverse and therefore the teachers, learners and parents are exposed to a diversity of languages. The teachers in the focus group discussion were more aware of the links between language and power. The school offers English and Afrikaans as a first language and alternatively as a first additional language to white and black learners. Many learners who are in the English first language class are not English first language speakers. Although the school recognises the need for mother tongue instruction, especially in the FP, parental choice determines whether the learner receives mother tongue instruction or not. This causes conflict for the teachers who would choose mother tongue instruction.

P4: I am very sensitive about this. Earlier we had a small English class for only English speaking learners. Now we have children in the English class who are not English first language speakers.

T8: This is a curriculum case – the social injustice is written in the policy documents where they say mother tongue instruction. This is also an injustice. Before (sic) black parents could not choose. Now you can't say no to parents who want to choose English. Now they have the choice and it is not for their mother tongue. This is contradictory. The policy says mother tongue (sic) in Foundation Phase and then you cannot turn a child away because the language they choose is not their mother tongue.

T9: If they say every child has right to education and schools should provide access and then they should provide the resources to do that. At this school there is access to everyone but not the teachers who can provide the mother tongue instruction.

The principal at the school recognises the interplay between language, culture, race, power, privilege and disadvantage. In support of this recognition, she

acknowledged that even though the school has a diverse learner enrolment, the white teachers particularly have not understood the implications of the inequalities in education in the past and its persistence in the present and find the adjustments they have to make difficult. She mentioned that this would require an understanding and knowledge of past inequalities and a 'mind-shift'.

P4: Some teachers cannot make the switch and I think this is the thing for us as white people. You know now white was at the top, then brown and then black and we had to make changes after 1994. And now black education is still far below and this is still a mind-shift we have to make and this is something we still have to talk about in the staff room. Our English teachers struggle. It is difficult to adjust. In Ms Thomas' class there are 3 out of 35 who speak English as a home language.

According to the principal this lack of knowledge of the patterns of privilege and disadvantage reflects the attitude of most members of the white community in the town. So too are the preconceived ideas of the achievements of the school and the drop in standards when black learners were admitted to the school a reflection of the racist and superior attitude of the white community in the town. The principal recalled an incident where their learners were exposed to this white superiority attitude:

P4: I may be a bit 'too much' about this but I have a thing about papers that lie around. The children are also aware. So one day we went to a school sports day and I told the children: We leave no papers, only footsteps. Next to us there was a grand white school (sic) and when they left, our children went to pick up the papers and the parents said: It's ok. Let the 'klonkies' pick it up. I said: I hope there is a heaven and that you don't make it.

5.4.3.1 Why 'Language Preference' is an Injustice and who Benefits

This theme, language preference and power, is not mentioned as a social justice or injustice for Schools One and Two. The teachers acknowledge the growing diversity in the farming community, especially amongst the farm labourers. They recognise the increasing diversity of languages in the community and how this could contribute to a more multi-lingual schooling community. However, being mono-lingual Afrikaans medium schools, they are unable to articulate or imagine the injustices from the non-Afrikaans speaking communities' perspective. Neither were

they able, at the time, to propose a new or different language for their schools in the light of the growing diverse community. Afrikaans as medium of instruction would benefit the current learner population. When learners from other language groups are enrolled at the school, they are required to adapt to Afrikaans as medium of instruction.

The multi-lingual learner community at School Three gave teachers a glimpse of the challenges and complexities of teaching and learning in a multi-lingual classroom. At School Three the majority of teachers and learners are Afrikaans speaking and Xhosa as language of instruction is offered to Xhosa learners, who are in the minority. The teachers have more empathy with the learners and teachers they identify with linguistically and culturally than learners and teachers they consider as different. As a consequence, any injustice is seen from the perspective of the learners they identify with linguistically and culturally. In effect this means that the Afrikaans teachers saw the injustice from the perspective of the Afrikaans speaking learners and the Xhosa teachers from the Xhosa speaking learners' perspective. Both groups of teachers see the benefit to themselves: the Afrikaans teachers see a multi-lingual classroom as a disadvantage to the Afrikaans speaking learners and the Xhosa teachers sees the multi-lingual classroom as a benefit to the isiXhosa speaking learners.

School Four

School Four prides itself on being a multi-lingual school, which offers Afrikaans and English medium classes and has language support for Xhosa learners. The teachers are aware of the complexities and challenges of teaching the multi-lingual learner community. The teachers debate the advantages of mother–tongue instruction versus parental choice, especially when English is chosen as medium of instruction for non-English speaking learners. Although the participating teachers favour mother-tongue instruction, they have empathy with the reasons parents choose English as medium of instruction. This sentiment is not widely shared by the wider teaching staff at the school; they respond to learners who are not proficient in the language of instruction in racially stereotypical ways. The principal recognises the importance of dialogue about language, privilege and power amongst teachers to bring about greater awareness of the ways in which teaching and learning can be improved. The teachers perceive the

present practices at the school as unsatisfactory, because learners are not given the opportunity to develop optimally.

5.4.3.2 Action Proposed

The teachers at Schools One and Two saw no injustices and therefore no action was proposed.

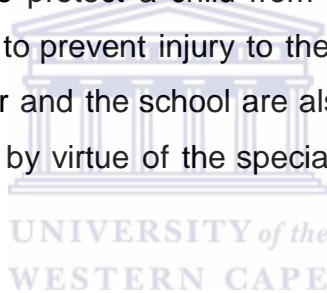
The teachers at School Three were divided with regard to the action needed at the school in the interest of social justice. The Xhosa speaking teacher identified with the economic, social and political needs of the Xhosa community to be conversant in Afrikaans in that community and advocated for a more inclusive approach to language at the school. She proposed that the school recognise the multi-lingualism of the community and request more support for teachers and learners from the district office. The Afrikaans-speaking teachers claim that it was the school's right to set its own language policy and advocated for an exclusively Afrikaans medium school. In their view it was the responsibility of the education department to either establish a school for isiXhosa language speakers or arrange transport for learners to isiXhosa medium schools in the nearest town.

At School Four there was sensitivity to the links between language, power and privilege in their school community and in the greater town. There was also an awareness of the links between language and patterns of privilege and stereotyping between teachers and parents. They proposed to approach the language issues at school with great sensitivity. The actions they proposed were aimed at encouraging greater understanding of the social justice issues linked to language, privilege and power. A suggestion was made for staff development sessions to highlight the social justice and language issues spoken about in the focus group discussion. The staff development sessions should foster a greater understanding of past and present challenges and inequalities and look at ways to address present injustices at school level. A starting point suggested was to encourage teachers to set the tone for a 'just' dialogue amongst teachers and parents as equals.

5.4.4 Breach of sanctity of life and bodily integrity

Activities which breach, or attempt to breach, the sanctity of life and/or the bodily integrity of learners made for a heated and emotive discussion in all the focus group discussions. Teachers felt strongly that this theme was not only an indication of a lack of care and/or knowledge on the part of parents, guardians and other care givers. They concurred that it was an injustice when vulnerable learners were exploited and when those with an obligation to care, neglected their duties and put learners' lives at risk.

Two examples which teachers mentioned in this regard which put learners at risk are the sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of learners and the unsafe transportation of learners. The source of the injustice stems from the legal and moral duty which parents and guardians have to protect a child from danger 'by taking precautionary measures and adequate care to prevent injury to the child' (Oosthuizen et al. 2009). In the same vein, the educator and the school are also legally and morally obliged to protect the learner from harm by virtue of the special educative relationship between the teacher and the learner.



The recurring themes from both sets of interview data with regard to sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, is the exposure of young children to sexual practices, engagement of young children in sexual play and image-making, i.e. drawings and graffiti, sexual grooming and sexual abuse. In the Pre-Reflective interviews teachers mention sexual abuse and the invasion of the sexual integrity of learners merely as a deep concern. During the focus group interviews the teachers from all the participating schools name the different levels of sexual abuse and early introduction to sexually exploitative behaviours and compromising the bodily integrity of learners as examples of social injustices.

An example mentioned merely as a concern by the teachers at School One and School Two during the Pre-Reflective Phase which put learners at risk, are the long unsecured paths learners have to take to and from school or to and from their transport drop off point. During the focus group interviews, the Reflective Phase, teachers name the vulnerability of learners and their exposure to sexual exploitation

and abuse to actual incidents and rumours of sexual harassment and abuse on these unattended long walks. In these discussions teachers were much more explicit than in the Pre-Reflective, individual interviews, in naming the sexual exploitation of young vulnerable learners as a social injustice. Even though most of the incidents are unreported and veiled in secrecy, learners would talk about it to teachers and teachers would notice differences in learner behaviour. Teachers mentioned that learners are traumatised when there are rumours or incidents of a sexually abuse nature. Very often these rumours or incidents are followed by learner absenteeism and eventually learners drop out from school. For these teachers the actual exploitation of learners and the negative effects it had on their schooling were example of social injustice. Teachers also mention that their reports to the education district and social workers are not followed up on and very little is done to ensure the safety and security of learners walking to and from school. The low response rate of district authorities and the continued insecurity of learners were mentioned as a further social injustice.

All the schools mention examples of social injustices related to the overcrowded living conditions on the farms and the informal settlements where very young learners share small sleeping spaces with adults. In these conditions there is a lack of privacy and learners are exposed to sexual acts or are groomed to engage in sexual acts. These were specifically mentioned as social injustices because learners who find themselves in these situations are often powerless and too young to make their own choices in this regard when compared to learners who live more protected lives. The following extract from School Three is an example of the vulnerability of learners in unsafe living spaces which drew out lengthy discussions in all the focus group interviews:

School Three

The adults and children all sleep together in one room in those small homes. This makes children sexually aware from an early age. They know a lot because they see it happening at home and they do not understand much. And they can't say no!

Further examples were made by School Three and Four and in these examples the injustice were also linked to the lack of follow up by authorities and parents with the legal duty to protect learners from harm.

School Four

T9: This five-year old made sexual drawings, in Grade R, and the social worker investigated it. She found more learners involved. We have to report it, I know. The social worker says nothing will happen after this (the reporting). So what's the use?

P4: I once had an example of a girl who was penetrated by a 25 year old male. They sent a male social worker! The parent couldn't do anything because lots of red tape prevents the case from being followed up. With this little girl the abuse has stopped, but she is still left unsupervised.

School Three

T 8: I had a girl in Grade 3 who told me about an older boy in Grade 4 who slept with her in her mother's bed. I told the principal who said he was going to report it to the Social Worker. I do not know if he forgets, but he did not follow-up.

Another recurring theme which compromised the bodily integrity of learners was the unsafe transportation of learners which again was mentioned as a social injustice. In the individual interviews the teachers at School One mentioned the unsafe and unreliable transportation of learners from the neighboring farms which put learners' lives at risk. The teachers at School One and School Two also mentioned the long unaccompanied walks learners made to and from schools which put them at risk. At School Four teachers mentioned that the transportation of learners to and from the townships put learners' lives at risk when there is overloading and when vehicles are not roadworthy. In cases where parents leave home early they are often unaware of these practices and if they are, they are unaware of the dangers learners are exposed to.

School Four

P4: The transport is overloaded or unsafe. With some of them the music is so loud that when the taxi stops the windows rattle. Overloading is a big problem. We once stopped one of these taxis and there were forty or forty-five children.

T9: One bakkie is really unsafe and what they do when we complain? They come very early. What they do is they come at six thirty and school starts at twenty to eight. They just drop them off. Then these young children between six and nine must sit here unattended for all that time.

P4: The WCED says in a letter if the principal is aware of learners who come to school in an unsafe way, I must report it. But when I reported it they said it is a case for the municipality and then they say it is a case for the provincial administration. They pass the buck. We asked one traffic officer to be visible, but then the taxis came earlier.

T7: The parents should do something. Not only the teachers. You get to the taxi driver, but he is just a pawn, he works for a person who nothing happens to (sic).

5.4.4.1 Why 'Breach of Sanctity of Life and Bodily Integrity is an Injustice and who Benefits

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The teachers in the study see the sexual exploitation and abuse of learners as a form of social injustice. In these instances children who are young and vulnerable are sexually, groomed, exploited and harassed. The reason given for naming this an injustice is that learners who are left unsupervised are in the position where they could be, and in some cases are, exploited by older children or adults. In these acts of exploitation and abuse the innocence of childhood is taken away at an early age and learners are confronted with activities they are not mentally or psychologically able to deal with. Teachers concurred that the question of who benefits is irrelevant in this example of social injustice. Learners are the victims in this case because in most cases the result of the exploitation and abuse is that learners drop out of school because they are traumatised or stigmatised and further or continued access to education is denied.

5.4.4.2 Action Proposed

Teachers felt that their silence in this form of social injustice contributes to the continuation of the problem. The actions they proposed were for information sessions at the school to inform for staff and parents/guardians/caregivers about the nature and spectrum of sexual offences against learners and their duties and obligations as care givers. A further proposed action was for the school to develop a school based procedure whereby incidents could be recorded and reported to the district office for referrals to the school psychologist, the social worker, the police in the case of an offence, and/or any other health professional. One of the teachers at School Three felt strongly about this and concluded by saying their silence contributes to the problem.

T8: If we do not do anything, then we are saying it is okay. Then learners will be traumatised and they drop out of school – because the adults did nothing.



5.5 RELATING THE DATA TO THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this section I attempt to answer the main question of the study and the subsidiary questions drawing on the data collected. The main question of the study, as discussed in Chapter Three, is:

What are rural teachers' understandings of social justice and injustice in a rural school setting?

The discussion of the subsidiary questions, starting at the Pre-reflective individual interview phase through to the Dialogical focus group interview phase centred around and attempted to answer the main question of the study. The subsidiary questions are:

What are rural teachers' understandings of social injustice?

What meanings do rural teachers have of social justice?

What are rural teachers' understandings of just pedagogical practices?

To answer the research questions, I firstly present a summary of the main themes emerging from teachers' responses to the interview questions across the phases. From their responses, I then draw out the organising frameworks teachers used in the discussions about social justice. This is followed by a summary of how teachers' understandings relate to the theoretical frameworks for social justice in education.

5.5.1 Rural Teachers' Understandings of Social Justice

During this study teachers' understanding of social justice and injustice were explored using a multi-phased approach as represented in the following diagram:

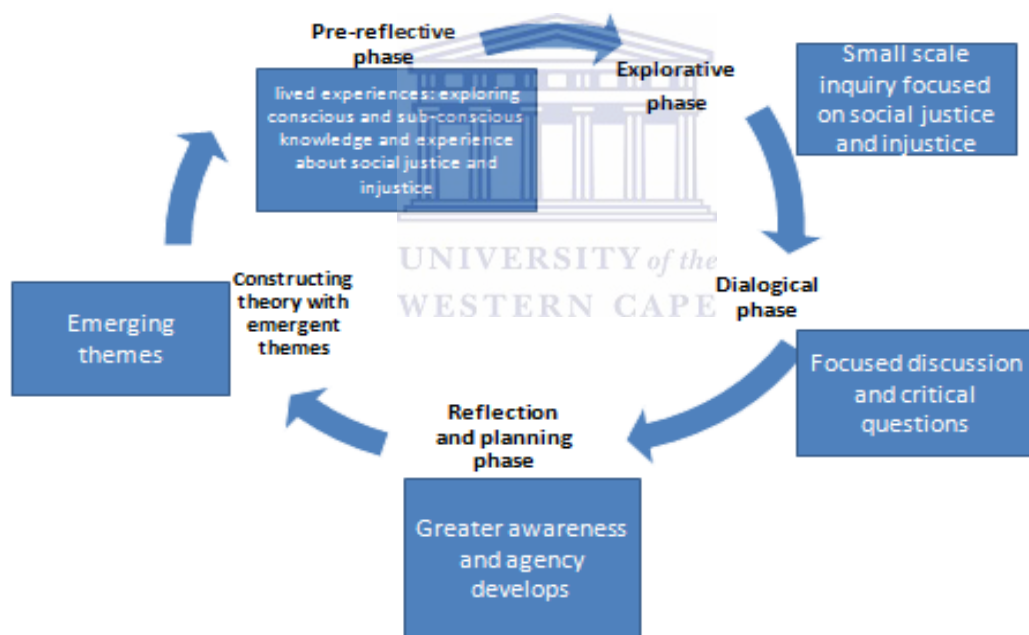


Diagramme 1: Multi-phased research process

In the analysis of the data across the data collection phases, cross cutting themes were identified. In this section the themes related to the research questions are identified. The focus of the discussion here is the subsidiary research questions for the study.

5.5.2 Rural Teachers' Understandings of Social Injustice

In both the individual interviews and the focus group interviews teachers found it easier to speak about past and present injustices than about social justices. In both interview sets race, class and past experience seemed to be strong determinants for how teachers understood past injustices. The teachers who were disadvantaged under apartheid were more articulate about past and present injustices than those who were privileged. When black teachers related their stories of injustices under apartheid, they concurred about the suffering, distress and dehumanising effects of the personal, group, institutionalised, spatial and epistemic injustices. The white teachers were less affected by the injustices and less aware of how the enduring patterns of privilege and disadvantage of apartheid contribute to present inequalities.

In the focus group discussions teachers brought examples of the social experiences and educational practices they observed and considered as injustices in the rural school setting. They mentioned similar, or expanded on the same examples, as those they brought to the individual interviews. The focus group discussions were more complex and focused on injustice and the realisation of social justice, rather than the idealisation of social justice (Sen, 2009).

Teachers' judgement as to whether they considered a social experience or educational practice as socially just or unjust depended on comparisons such as: whether the distribution of educational outcomes, opportunities or benefits for the rural child was spatially just, i.e. whether the educational outcomes obtained by the rural child can be favourably compared to these achieved by the urban child, or the farm school child to the town child, the black child to the white child, their referent group being the group they perceived as more privileged. The examples used by all the schools as unjust were multi-grade teaching, a curriculum which does not acknowledge the experience of and knowledge in the rural context, inadequate learning materials and limited or no access to resources such as computers, libraries, education support services, such as health, learning support and psychological services and inadequate care to vulnerable children. The teachers judged the experience or practice as unjust when rural children were comparatively disadvantaged because of their geographical space, the rural location; when there

were fewer or no discernible alternatives to bring about greater equity in the situation, and where they perceived reasonable alternatives with more political will from educational authorities or parents, such as the removal of biased and exclusionary access to primary schools and greater access to secondary schooling. In addition to the judgements regarding structural and organisational injustices, teachers engaged in personal narratives based on past patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Personal narratives such as, 'it is not for us', 'we do not belong there', 'white teachers are better than black teachers' and 'our children won't fit in' limit inclusion and set 'rules' for exclusionary practices. Exclusionary practices based on language and race, geographical location and spatial proximity persist despite policy to the contrary.

5.5.3 The Meanings Rural Teachers Attach to Social Justice

The position taken in this study, as stated in Chapter Two, that social justice is an abstract and complex concept with no universal definition which teachers could readily access, was affirmed during the interviews (North, 2006). During the individual interviews and focus group discussions teachers were unable to articulate clearly the meanings they attach to social justice. With this in mind, the focus in the focus group interviews was for teachers to engage in dialogue to 'wrestle with the issues and dilemmas that result in their constructing new knowledge about the issue or dilemma' (Reitzug and O'Hair, 2002:137). The focus of the analysis of the data was to find the underlying meanings, frameworks and references teachers used in their deliberations about social justice, rather than absolute definitions.

In order to make meaning of social justice in the rural education setting, teachers needed to discuss instances of injustice before they could begin to articulate what social justice meant for them. The term social justice and the examples they brought to the discussion was more fathomable and readily available to recall than social justice. In the focus group discussions, they mentioned examples of injustices in descriptive term and normative terms such as 'not right' or unfair. In this regard, drawing on injustice as a 'felt', conscious experience at cognitive, experiential and emotional levels was more readily accessible to teachers. Furthermore, the examples of social experiences and education practices gathered during the

observations combined with the dialogical nature of the focus group discussions assisted in the formulation of what injustices in the rural education setting could be. The questions related to who benefits and what actions can be proposed to address the injustice, facilitated teachers' understanding of social justice. Teachers' responses to the actions which could be taken to address the injustice gave insight as to what socially just practices in their schools and communities could be. Making meaning of social injustice in this manner served as an entry point into what social justice in the rural education setting might mean.

Due to the complexity of the concept, teachers attached multiple, ambiguous, dual and conflicting meanings to social justice. An example of conflicting views existed in School Three about the social justice in determining a language of instruction which would benefit all the learners, Afrikaans and Xhosa, at the school. Afrikaans and Xhosa teachers each saw the disadvantage from their language group perspective. The Afrikaans teachers, who were in the majority, could not offer a mutually beneficial approach, which would benefit all learners at the school.

An example of dual meanings of social justice in similar situation is the views of the teachers at the two farm schools regarding the low literacy and numeracy outcomes at the schools. One school, where the majority of teachers were Black, the majority view was that low outcomes are a result of systemic inequalities, alluding to structural reasons. At the other school, where teachers were mainly White, the low outcomes were seen as a lack of parental support, placing the responsibility at a personal level. Similarly, the same sentiments were expressed regarding progression of learners to secondary school. At the one school teachers perceived the achievements of individual learners who progress and succeed at secondary school as an example of social justice while at the other school teachers were of the opinion that the obstacles which prevent *all* learners from progressing and succeeding at secondary school should be removed in the interest of social justice.

The principle of equality as it is contained in the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights was mentioned by teachers as an exemplar of a socially just society. The equality principle, which is entrenched in the South African Constitution, was related to the eradication of structural inequalities: for instance,

equal before the law and equality in access to education. Equality as understood by the teachers were translated into phrases like 'we are all the same', 'we are all treated the same', 'there is no difference between us now'. Equality in this sense was another example of the ambiguity of social justice; it opened up previously exclusionary opportunities and disguised the structural inequalities with regard to culture, race, language and social position and blindfolded teachers in their perceptions of social justice and the eradication of inequalities. Despite some teachers' belief that society is more equal now, they concurred that equality in access to schools has not been achieved. Their experience is that access is still prescribed by race, language and class.

The same sentiment was expressed when teachers reflected on the equality principle and the living conditions of the learners. In the communities where the learners from the participating schools reside, there are high levels of unemployment and predominantly unskilled and semi-skilled labour. On the farms and in the townships the employed perform marginalised and/or seasonal employment, which sustains the comfortable lifestyles of the middle and upper classes, and barely sustains the employees. The schools in the communities reflect the unequal distribution of resources and employment opportunities available. Poor learners attend the farm schools and 'township' schools, while equality in access is reserved for the most deserving from poorer schools.

Distributive justice, as fair and equitable distribution of educational outcomes, opportunities and benefits, resources, respect, knowledge and information, was an underlying theme of the focus group interviews. More pointedly, they argued for the distribution of duties and obligations as a fundamental aspect of social justice in rural education. They argued that a more equitable distribution of duties and obligations to where it is needed would protect vulnerable children in vulnerable communities from harm and exploitation, specifically sexual exploitation and child abuse. They argued for a fair and equitable distribution of duties and obligation amongst the school community and the state in the creation of culture of care for the most vulnerable children in rural communities.

5.5.4 Rural Teachers' Understanding of Socially Just Pedagogical Practices

There is no universally accepted definition of what socially just pedagogical practices are (Zeichner and Flessner, 2009; Bartell, 2011), as in the case of social justice. There are, however, documented examples of educators who attempt to teach in socially just ways (Wager and Stinson, 2012). Broadly speaking, the core purpose of socially just pedagogical practices is to develop the potential of all learners irrespective of race, gender, class, ability, geographical location, origin, status and other differentials and to value the knowledge learners bring to the classroom. Socially just pedagogical practices thus entails an examination of how systems of domination and oppression permeate and structure of the education system (McDonald and Zeichner, 2009) and how teaching for social justice undo and re-imagine oppressive pedagogies in order to transform teachers, their students and the knowledge with which they work (Knowles, 2014). My position taken in the interviews and in the analysis of teachers' understandings of socially just practices was to be open-minded about teachers' understandings and to intentionally ask probing questions to provoke and stimulate new discussions about the meanings of and teaching for social justice (Wager and Stinson, 2012).

In the focus group interviews, where the discussion focused on socially just pedagogical practices, teachers were ambivalent about their understanding of socially just pedagogical practices. They initiated the discussions by offering examples of what they individually and collectively agreed upon as evidence of unjust pedagogical practices. The dialogue about what constitutes unjust pedagogical practices opened up the discussion on what socially just pedagogical practices in the rural education setting could or should be. The dialogue about socially just pedagogical practices contained indicators of social justice which allowed me to develop an organising framework which teachers used for socially just practices (See Table 5 below).

When teachers made reference to the necessity of a socially just pedagogy, they referred to the challenges and opportunities of teaching in multilingual and multicultural classrooms. With the exception of School Four, the classrooms in the other schools are minimally linguistically and culturally diverse and the challenges of

a diverse classroom and school are not part of the reality of the other three schools. While teachers at School Four are able to recognise the need to adapt their teaching for a more diverse classroom and school, they do not have the necessary knowledge, skills and training to make the connections between the curriculum content, their teaching and the diversity in the classroom.

The position taken in this study is that socially just pedagogical practices are more than teaching for linguistic and cultural diversity. Through the dialogue in the focus group discussions we attempted to reach an understanding of the oppressive pedagogical practices which prevent learners from reaching their full potential. An important realisation for teachers was that although social justice is clearly mentioned as intent in the present curriculum documents, teachers are not prepared well enough to incorporate socially just pedagogical practices in their classrooms. The rural teachers' in this study experience the curriculum as an urban, middle class referenced curriculum which disadvantages rural learners. The content and context of the curriculum do not relate to the rural context and the inequalities of a poor, under-resourced and under-serviced rural community. At a micro level, i.e. delivery at the school and classroom level, they refer to the socio-economic inequalities amongst learners and the assumptions made by teachers and in the curriculum about the availability of supportive or additional resources, such as libraries, computers, parental support for learners doing homework or project work.

Teachers who aspire to be socially just teachers spoke about the need for different forms of assessments, different teaching methodologies and different forms of homework tasks given the socio-economic inequalities in the classroom. A socially just curriculum would be one that is equally accessible to all learners and takes their realities into consideration i.e. the curriculum content, teaching resources and teaching methodologies and approaches to teaching and learning. In its design and delivery it would take the unequal realities of the rural context into account, and afford teachers, through curriculum development training sessions, with the authority to make the necessary and required curricular adjustments.

As far as the inequalities in the curriculum are concerned, teaching a multi-grade classroom was seen as an unjust pedagogical practice. In the first place, teaching

multiple grades in an under resourced environment was seen as an unfair and unequal distribution of resources, compared to the mono-grade classroom. Secondly, the official curriculum was a mono-grade rather than multi-grade curriculum and an urban-focused rather than a curriculum inclusive of the realities of the rural context. Thirdly, the organisation of time and space in the multi- grade classroom requires careful planning. Factoring in learning and psychosocial support for struggling learners, the teaching of the curriculum to its full extent to all the learners is compromised. Given these conditions, important sections of the curriculum are not covered, putting learners at a disadvantage compared to their counterparts in the mono-grade classroom. A reasonable alternative suggested by teachers to bring about greater equity would be the appointment of more teachers, the allocation of more resources and more training for teachers in teaching a socially just multi-grade classroom.

5.6. ORGANISING FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

From the focus group interview and the individual interviews cross cutting data from teachers' understanding of social justice and injustice emerged. The cross cutting data was analysed and categorised into a framework which indicated how teachers made decisions about whether social experience or educational practice could be considered as a social justice or injustice. The organising framework consists of the questions teachers asked directly or indirectly to make decisions whether a social experience or educational practice was just or unjust, the criteria they used to make that decision and the related examples brought to the discussion. Their questions, criteria and examples extracted from the data were arranged into an organising framework and represented in the following table:

Discerning question	Criteria	Examples of social justice
Is it fair or unfair?	This includes who benefits and does not benefit; the degrees of advantage and disadvantage – whether something is acceptable or unacceptable because it has disadvantage attached to it to more advanced levels which include suffering and exclusion. Is the advantage at the cost or benefit of the disadvantaged?	Equal treatment, opportunities and resources are available and given to all learners irrespective of race, gender, language and geographical location.
Does it promote equity?	Are more resources and opportunities offered to the least advantaged to promote equality of opportunity? Is the maximisation of the advantage to the benefit of the disadvantaged?	More resources and opportunities offered to the least advantaged schools and learners to eradicate past and present patterns of disadvantage. Acknowledgement given to entrenched patterns of privilege and disadvantage and adjustments made in provisioning and access to opportunities.
Does it promote equality of opportunity?	Do all schools offer the same opportunities for all learners, without prejudicial patterns of exclusions such as race, language and geographical location? Are the past and present disadvantages of race, gender, geographical location and socio-economic conditions taken into consideration when considering access to all levels of education?	Equal access to resources irrespective of geographical location. Equal and equitable access to secondary and tertiary education.
Does it take the spatial factors of the whole community into consideration?	Are the obstacles and hindrances which prevent people from attaining that which they are entitled to considered and addressed in all educational matters?	All poverty related factors, including proximity of education related resources coupled with the lack of public transport. Due consideration given to the dynamics of power and powerlessness especially related to language.
Does it take the context, rural context in this case, into consideration and make provision for differences and peculiarities of the context?	Can the learners relate to the curriculum? Does the curriculum offer opportunities both to expand their horizons globally and locate themselves locally? Are the education resources equitable and does it take the limitations of the rural context into consideration?	Equitable curriculum; locally relevant curriculum and curriculum materials and resources. Equitable resource provision. Curriculum tasks and projects designed with the opportunities and limitations of the local context in mind.
Are the voices of the vulnerable and/or marginalised heard?	Are there equitable opportunities, structures and procedures to give parents the opportunities to voice their opinions in matters which concern them? Is there epistemic justice- are they given credibility and are their opinions respected?	All members of the school community are represented and given opportunity to voice their opinions in institutional structures such as SGB, formal gatherings and at events such as sports and cultural events and at parent evenings and in informal discussions.

Are learners protected from harm by duty bearers in the public and private sector?	Are learners intentionally or unintentionally placed in situations where they are at risk of bodily harm and their vulnerabilities exploited? Are learners protected from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse?	The sanctity of learners' lives are valued and protected from harm when commuting to and from school. Systems and resources are put in place to protect learners from sexual exploitation and abuse and to expose perpetrators.
Does it protect the rights of the most vulnerable in the community?	Are the rights of the child protected and promoted as stated in the South African Constitution?	Promotion and protection of rights as stipulated in the Bill of Rights.

Table 5: Organising framework for social justice

5.7 RELATING THE DATA TO THE MAIN THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In summary, the meanings teachers attached to social justice in relation to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two were as follows:

Distributive Justice

The equal distribution of resources, opportunities and benefit was an important indicator of social justice for teachers in the study. Teachers equated equality, as it is enshrined in the South African Constitution, as an example of social justice. In this regard they felt strongly that education, as it is holistically understood, is a right and a resource which should be equally distributed across all communities and all sectors of the community. So too should the opportunities and benefits embedded in education, be equally distributed to all South Africans. All other resources such as other services which support education, e.g. health, safety and security, social services, non-governmental organisations and community institutions such as religious institutions should be evenly distributed, irrespective of the geographical location and socio-economic status of the community.

During the focus group discussions it became clear to teachers that equality and inequality exist alongside each other in their school and community settings. Teachers came to understand that equality in society does not only mean the equal distribution of resources, opportunities and benefits but should also address unjust socio-economic inequalities, deprivation and exploitation of communities. For the teachers

in the study, unjust socio-economic inequalities, deprivation and exploitation in the rural communities create unequal access to opportunities and benefits, deprivation and the continued cycle of poverty.

In addition to examples given of economic exploitation and the inequalities in the rural communities, teachers emphasised the bodily exploitation of learners as an injustice. Bodily exploitation refers to instances, circumstances and conditions where vulnerable learners are put into positions where they are sexually groomed and or sexually abused. The distributive justice in this instance refers not only to the equal distribution of resources to protect learners from harm but also the equal distribution of duties and obligations to those in whose care vulnerable learners are placed.

Redistributive Justice

The examples teachers brought to the focus group discussion of social justice and injustice in their school settings highlighted the inequalities in the rural education and community settings, particularly. Teachers in the study agreed that there is a need for a redistribution of resources, benefits and opportunities at classroom, school and community levels to bring about justice and increased equality and equity in the rural communities. In their school settings, they anticipated that the maximisation of the redistribution of resources could result in equal opportunities and benefits to the least advantaged and marginalised in their communities. For instance, in three out of the four schools where multi-grade teaching was practiced, this practice in a poor rural context was experienced as an unfair and inadequate distribution of resources. In the teachers' experience, multi-grade teaching effectively resulted in the availability of fewer resources in terms of teaching time, physical resources, learning and psycho-social support in an under-resourced context. The teachers felt that more, instead of fewer, human and physical resources should be distributed to poorer and disadvantaged schools to address past and present inequalities. Another example of the equitable redistribution of resources in the interest of justice mentioned by all the schools was for additional and improved transportation of learners to and from schools. The improved transportation would increase access and enrolment at primary and secondary schools, improve ease of access to schools

from which communities were previously excluded and attain higher learner retention rates in primary and secondary schools.

In rural, as in urban spaces, schooling is systemic and does not occur in isolation of supportive and contributory social systems. Supportive and contributory systems such as the economy, health, social services, and environmental factors are interlinked to schooling in rural (and urban) spaces. In the focus group discussions, teachers took a systemic understanding of schooling to formulate their understandings of social justice in education. Within this understanding, teachers discussed redistributive justice to address social issues interlinked to education such as health, safety and security, and social services which affect learners' lives and their education. In tandem with this, unemployment and security of tenure on the farms and in disadvantaged communities were discussed in relation to the perceived effects on learners' lives. In the interest of redistributive justice, teachers advocated for the spatial restructuring of communities in a general sense, especially for communities designed according to apartheid spatial design and those communities on the margins and interstices of society. In particular, they advocated for spatial restructuring of farming communities and marginalised rural communities. Teachers were clear that greater proximity of social services, businesses, employment opportunities and educational support services to these communities would maximise the educational experience for learners and for themselves.

Teachers considered multi-grade schooling as an injustice because it was their experience that a mono-grade schooling context was superimposed on a multi grade schooling context. In their estimation this was an injustice and an undeserved inequality. They argued that the multi-grade teaching in under-resourced farm schools resulted in fewer resources to the learners who were the worst off in that community. Teachers felt that more resources, in a redistributive sense, were needed in poorer communities to bring about equality of opportunities for learners.

Recognitive Justice

Nancy Fraser (1997) argues that redistributive justice and recognitive justice are interlinked themes in social justice: both are demands in the struggle against injustices

and both are equally important in the analysis of social justice. While redistributive justice is concerned with the redistribution of resources, benefits and opportunities, recognitive justice is concerned with the recognition of the inequalities of power, privilege and advantage embedded in social structures which marginalises and subjugates some and privileges others. Recognitive justice is equally concerned with the misrecognition of social and cultural groups. Misrecognition is an injustice as it results in practices which marginalise and oppress. As such the demand for recognitive justice includes the recognition of patterns of privilege and disadvantage and a re-cognition of these patterns.

An example given by the schools related to recognitive justice, specifically teachers at Schools Four and to a lesser extent School Three, was the non-recognition of privilege and marginalisation embedded in language usage generally in the communities and in the medium of instruction in schools. Another example in the interest of recognitive justice was for the recognition of learners' lives and livelihoods and inclusion of these realities in the curriculum. Teachers also advocated for the inclusion of curriculum materials which reflect and acknowledge the diversity of learner context, their histories, stories, the environment and the resourcefulness in the communities.

In addition to redistributive and recognitive justice, Fraser (1997) identifies representation as a form of social justice (Fraser, 2008; 282). This form of social justice would lead to the parents in decisions which affect their lives through the participation on decision-making structures such as SGBs. Fraser's (2008) phrasing of representative justice connects with teachers' examples of injustices where the voice of marginalised parents and learners, excluded by patterns of privilege at ex-Model C schools at township schools, in the case of isiXhosa speaking community, is not heard. Representative justice would include the cultivation of a sense of belonging for all in the school community and inclusion in decision-making processes e.g. the SGB and School Management Team (SMT) structures, which affect people's lives.

Spatial Justice

Spatial justice is the recognition of the historical, social and economic spatial differences in and between communities and the recognition of the patterns of

privilege and advantage embedded in these differences which prevent the attainment of social justice. For teachers in the rural education context, spatial justice means that the patterns of privilege, advantage and disadvantage are recognised in the organisation of rural schooling. An example given by teachers at farm schools was that the historical patterns of privilege and disadvantage were perpetuated in the institutional and social arrangements of the farm school. For the teachers, the issue was that despite greater equality in, and access to, schooling, the achievements and outcomes for their learners reflected apartheid system outcomes. They also observed that in the present system, which promoted greater equality for learners, the learner outcomes in their schools were significantly worse than learners in the ex-Model C schools. The spatial injustice was that the social and economic patterns of ownership and serfdom persist due to the inequalities of opportunities which the lower achievements represent for farm labourers' children.

The spatial justice issues highlighted by the School Three and School Four emphasised the disparities and inequities of living in different social spaces in the same community. The injustices highlighted were related to past racial and class inequities which manifest in the classroom and in learner achievement.

In the interest of social justice teachers recognised that the parents in rural communities need the means to acquire some of the requisites for social and educational change: money through the payment of a living wage; skills and professional expertise to organise themselves as pressure groups for social change and access to information and to decision makers in the education and other supportive social sectors.

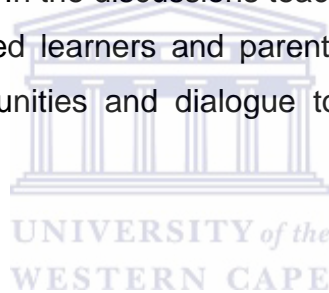
Epistemic Injustice

Epistemic injustice relates to unequal access to, and participation in, knowledge practices, hermeneutical marginalisation and misrecognition of the testimonies and stories of marginalised groups in social interaction and social institutions which result in oppression (Medina, 2013). In the rural education context epistemic justice speaks to the inclusion in the curriculum of the diversity of knowledges which learners from different communities bring. For teachers this means that the knowledge of the farm

child and the township child is included in the curriculum and in the teaching and learning materials. Epistemic justice also means access to information and knowledge for teachers, learners and parents and to enable everyone in the school community to reach their full potential.

Teachers from School Three and School Four related examples of epistemic injustice where the African language learners and parents were devalued because of their accent. Exclusionary practices such as non-recognition of learners and their contributions in the classroom, lesser credibility to parents in parent-teacher meetings and racial profiling of parents and learners result in the marginalisation of learners in diverse communities.

In the examples of social justice and injustice there were links between epistemic justice and recognitive justice. In the discussions teachers often lapsed into a narrative which blamed the marginalised learners and parents for low levels of achievement instead of looking for opportunities and dialogue to enhance learner development (Fricker, 2007).



5.8 CONCLUSION

Social justice is a complex and abstract term with multiple meanings and interpretations. It has diverse, equivocal and ambiguous meanings. In dialogue 'between people who hold profoundly different perspectives that are born of locations in radically uneven social, material and symbolic circumstances' (Wood, 2004: xix) new discussions and insight as to the meanings of social justice and implications for action, is possible.

Through the three-phased data collection process teachers became more articulate about social justice and injustice. In the analysis of the data connections were made with the main categories of social justice in the literature. From teachers understandings of social justice an organising framework was drawn and presented. An overarching theme from the analysis was the interrelatedness of social justice, spatial justice and epistemic justice, a socio-spatial-epistemic justice framework.

In the concluding chapter I present a synthesis of the study which includes a presentation of a socially just research methodology and the socio-spatial-epistemic framework which emerged from rural teachers' understanding of social justice. The chapter concludes with a few recommendations for social justice in rural schooling contexts.



CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present the summary and conclusions of the study. The summary section contains a brief overview of the most pertinent aspects and findings of the study. The concluding section comprises a synthesis of the findings, the contributions the study could make and recommendations for future research. The chapter ends with my reflections on my research journey and the importance of the study personally, professionally and politically.

6.2 BACKGROUND

This study was designed to explore rural teachers' understandings of social justice and injustice drawing on their biographies and their experiences of living and teaching in rural primary schools. In addition, it sought to investigate teachers' understanding of just pedagogical practices in the classroom.

I chose to conduct this study to explore teachers' understandings of social justice in communities characterised by poverty and affluence, i.e. in contexts in a democratic South Africa distinctively reminiscent of the race and class stratifications of the apartheid political and spatial architecture. My rationale for choosing this context was to gain insights into teachers' understandings of social justice in unequal community settings. My aim was to highlight the social justice and injustice aspects pertinent to rural schooling and to contribute to literature on social justice in education.

This study used a constructivist grounded theory methodology to gain insights into social justice and injustice in rural education settings. A constructivist grounded theory methodology supports the view that knowledge is constructed from peoples' lived experiences and the theoretical constructs they have formulated or have been exposed to. This means that findings and conclusions have been drawn from the ground up and sought to investigate the nuances in understandings and frames of

references teachers use for social justice and injustice within diversified school and community settings.

The literature reviewed in this study supports the position that social justice is depicted as a complex, contested, and evolving term. Within this position differences in understandings are linked to social, historical, political, economic and spatial factors. The iterative process of data collection, analysis and theory construction within constructivist grounded theory allowed for deeper meanings and insights to emerge and for the co-construction of knowledge. Methodologically an action learning process was designed to enable the development of deeper meaning. The action learning process consisted of the following phases: pre-reflective, exploratory phase, dialogical, reflective and planning phase and theory construction with emergent themes.

This study is important because it provides insights into social justice and injustice in education using social justice, spatial justice and epistemic justice as theoretical and analytical frameworks. The study was highly exploratory and the findings reflect the contested nature of social justice in an unequal society. Further research to build on the insights and findings is recommended in the concluding sections.

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of the study are both iterative and specific to the phases of the research process, as outlined in the Chapter Three. Detailed findings and analyses of each phase were presented and discussed in Chapters Four and Five. The main research question guiding the study was:

What are rural teachers' understandings of social justice and injustice in a rural school setting?

The subsidiary questions were:

What are rural teachers' understandings of social injustice?

What meanings do rural teachers have of social justice?

What are rural teachers' understandings of just pedagogical practices?

This section summarises the pertinent research findings related to the research questions.

6.3.1 Teachers' Initial Understandings of Social Justice and Injustice are Based on their Differential Experiences and Knowledge of Social Justice and Injustice

The analysis of teachers' understandings of social justice confirms the views expressed in the literature that social justice is not a universal, nomothetic concept with a single, static quality. The findings in this study confirm that there are multiple understandings of social justice and that these understandings are situated in socio-spatial-temporal contexts. Moreover, understandings of social justice are understood and applied differently depending on race and class differentials.

Teachers' initial understandings of social justice were based on their differential experiences in rural towns and schools and examples were drawn from their unequal life circumstances and their contemporaneous life stories. In this regard, the study shows that teachers from historically, culturally, politically, spatially and economically different communities have experienced social justice and injustice differently. These differential experiences are indicative of the insulatory and exclusionary nature and narrative of apartheid South Africa.

The situatedness and spatial dimensions of privilege and disadvantage embedded in the historical and persistent structural inequalities in society have affected teachers' experiences and understandings of social justice and injustice differentially. An example of the differential understandings based on experience in the study was that teachers from privileged, white communities experienced apartheid and separate development as a just and fair system with equal benefits for all, while black teachers from disadvantaged communities experienced the same system as unfair and unjust. The bipolarity of experiences and contexts informed teachers' initial variable understandings of social justice and injustice.

Furthermore, positions of inequality and privilege contributed to unequal access to knowledge and to misinformation about social justice and injustice. In this study this

meant that teachers, irrespective of race and class and positions of privilege and disadvantage, could not clearly articulate their understandings of social justice. In the pre-reflective phase of the data gathering process, teachers had no clear understanding of social justice. Their initial, exploratory understandings of social justice and injustice ranged from admissions of ignorance, denial and idealisation to appeasement, acceptance and reconciliatory statements. The reflective and dialogical phases of the research process allowed teachers to deepen their initial understandings of social justice through the evidence of social justice and injustice they brought to the reflective phase. Their initial understandings of social justice were further deepened and while they engaged with this evidence in the dialogical phase.

6.3.2 Understandings of Social Injustice Facilitate Understandings of Social Justice

Findings in this study confirm the notion that deliberations on social justice in its idealised state preclude the complexities, interpretations, sufferings and struggles of justice in a realised sense. The position taken in this study is that the inclusion of injustice, as nested in complexity, suffering and struggle, forms an integral component of social justice in a realised sense. Furthermore, understandings and interpretations of injustice as a felt, conscious experience facilitated teachers' understanding of social justice. Teachers found it easier to formulate understandings of what social justice is, by basing it on their understandings of social injustices. For instance, in cases where teachers were able to articulate their understandings of social justice, both past and present references to injustice facilitated the formulations of their understandings of social justice.

Race, class and past experience seemed to be strong determinants for how teachers understood past and present injustices. Black teachers were more articulate about injustices than white teachers who were less affected by past injustices and less aware of how the enduring patterns of privilege and disadvantage of apartheid contribute to present inequalities.

In the rural schooling context, teachers judged an experience or practice as unjust when rural children were comparatively disadvantaged because of their

geographical space vis-à-vis the urban child and/or because of stereotypes based on race and class, in which case the injustice described as 'unfair' and 'not right'. As a consequence of the comparative disadvantage, the injustice was compounded when there were few or no discernible alternatives to bring about greater equity in the situation, and where the foreseeable attainment of reasonable alternatives could be obtained with more political will from educational authorities or parents. Examples of reasonable alternatives which could lead to social justice were the removal of biased and exclusionary access to primary schools and greater access to secondary schooling.

6.3.3 Equality is not Equal to Justice

In the initial phases of the research teachers readily equated the concept 'equality', as contained in the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights, with social justice. Equality, as understood by the teachers, was translated into phrases like 'we are all the same now', 'we are all treated the same', 'there is no difference between us now'. Equality in this sense was another example of the teachers' ambiguity towards social justice: in an aspirational sense it indicated a departure from exclusionary practices towards greater inclusivity, and in a real sense it disguised the structural inequalities with regard to culture, race, language and social position.

Teachers' initial uncritical equation of equality with social justice obscured teachers' perceptions of social justice and precluded discussion linked to the eradication of inequalities. Deepened dialogue and discussion highlighted the ambiguities. Despite some teachers' belief that society is more equal now than in the past, they concurred that equality in access to schools has not been achieved. Their experience is that access is still prescribed by race, language and class. The same sentiment was expressed when teachers reflected on the equality principle and the living conditions of the learners. In the communities where the learners from the participating schools reside, there are high levels of unemployment and predominantly unskilled and semi-skilled labour. On the farms and in the townships the employed perform marginalised and/or seasonal employment, which sustains the comfortable lifestyles of the owners, and barely sustains the employees.

The comparative circumstances of learners in the different schools in the communities reflect the unequal distribution of resources and employment opportunities available. Poor learners attend the farm schools and 'township' schools, while equality in access to ex-model C schools is selectively applied and reserved for the most deserving learners from poorer schools.

6.3.4 Geographical Location Reflects Past Patterns of Advantage and Disadvantage

Despite greater equality in and access to schooling, the inequalities of the past are reproduced in the present system. Patterns of privilege, advantage and disadvantage in the spatial arrangements of rural communities are reflected in the organisation of rural schooling. Historical patterns of privilege and disadvantage are perpetuated in the institutional and social arrangements of farm schools in particular, but also in the township schools and the ex-Model C schools. Major patterns of enrolments in public schools show racial and cultural isolation reminiscent of apartheid segregation, simply because schools are located in geographical spaces reflective of apartheid spatial planning. These patterns do not reflect the diverse community and living spaces envisioned by the democratic South African government. Although these segregationist spatial patterns are features of both urban and rural geographies, the rural landscape is stark and demarcations are clearly related to race and class differentials. For instances, references are still made to the 'location' in reference to black residential areas. Employment and major businesses are located in the predominantly white economic hub of the town. Towns and schools are diverse and integrated by day and segregated by night as communities are transported in and out of town.

As a result of the stark geographical demarcations in rural towns and the low mobility across and between communities, farm schools and township schools serve the same communities and families across generations, with few or no attempt at inclusion. These families have lived and worked on the farm over generations. The socio-economic status of the farm labourer has not changed significantly over generations. A combination of factors such as a lack of educational opportunities, the limitations to access secondary school, little or no access to educational resources and support

services might restrict the employment opportunities of the farm labourers child to a continued existence on the farm and the socio-spatial identity of the farming community.

6.3.5 Socially Just Pedagogical Practices are Linked to Socially Just Curricula

The position taken in this study is that socially just pedagogical practices are more than teaching for linguistic and cultural diversity. The rural teachers' in this study experience the curriculum as an urban, middle class referenced curriculum which disadvantages rural learners. The content and context of the curriculum does not relate to the rural context and the inequalities of a poor, under-resourced and under-serviced rural community.

An important realisation for teachers was that although social justice is clearly mentioned as intent in the present curriculum documents, teachers are not prepared well enough to incorporate socially just pedagogical practices in their classrooms. At a micro level, i.e. delivery at the school and classroom level, they refer to the socio-economic inequalities amongst learners and the assumptions made by teachers and in the curriculum about the availability of supportive or additional resources, such as libraries, computers, parental support for learners doing homework or project work. Teachers who aspire to be socially just teachers argue for fundamental changes in assessments, teaching methodologies, homework tasks given the socio-economic inequalities in the classroom.

A socially just curriculum would be one that is equally accessible to all learners and takes their realities into consideration i.e. the curriculum content, teaching resources and teaching methodologies and approaches to teaching and learning. In its design and delivery it would take the unequal realities of the rural context into account, and afford teachers, through curriculum development training sessions, with the authority to make the necessary and required curriculum changes.

6.3.6 Equitable Redistribution of Resources, Benefits and Duties and Obligations to Create a Culture of Care

Redistributive justice, as fair and equitable distribution of educational outcomes, opportunities and benefits, resources, respect, knowledge and information, was an underlying theme of the focus group interviews. More pointedly, they argued for the distribution of duties and obligations as a fundamental aspect of social justice in rural education. The safety of learners when commuting to and from schools and their protection against sexual abuse and other forms of violence were seen as important in the creation of culture of care for the most vulnerable children in rural community. A creation and maintenance of a culture of care and responsibility was a central theme for teachers throughout the research process. They argued that a more equitable distribution of duties and obligations to where it is needed would protect vulnerable children in vulnerable communities from harm and exploitation, specifically sexual exploitation and child abuse. A culture of care and responsibility would diminish the injustices and increase social justice in rural communities.

6.4 MY CONTRIBUTIONS

My contributions to knowledge gained from this study are on three levels which are presented and discussed in the following section. Firstly, I discuss and present the conceptual framework for social justice as applied and analysed in this study. Thereafter, I present an organising framework for social justice as arrived at with teachers in the study and thirdly, I propose a framework for socially just research.

6.4.1 Towards a Conceptual Framework for Social Justice in Education: Social-Spatial-Epistemic Justice for Education

Social justice is a complex term which is not easily understood. Definitions of social justice in abstract, virtuous and idealised ways preclude insights of the complexity of the issues and experiences of social justice. In this study a proposal is made for the conceptualisation of social justice which links notions of social justice, such as redistributive justice, recognition, representation and participation with spatial justice

and epistemic justice. The argument is made that the inter-linkages between social justice, spatial justice and epistemic justice bring issues of marginalisations, racism, classism and racism into sharper focus with instances of exclusions and disadvantage based on space and place and access to knowledge. A further argument is made that the dialogue in the interstices might broaden our understandings of social justice and injustice in a realised sense. It might also open up gaps and deepen our understandings during which new meanings and shared understandings of social justice might emerge. Using a socio-spatial-epistemic framework, participants might engage in the kind of dialogue which establishes power and knowledge to understand and transform reality.



Diagramme 2: Conceptual Framework for Social Justice in Education: social-spatial-epistemic justice for education.

Social justice through a social-spatial-epistemic cannot assume a universal, idealised understanding. It takes into account the structural and relational inequalities which, combined with the spatiality of contexts, brings forth an understanding of the inequalities in the spatial architecture and histories of towns, especially rural towns South Africa. Socio-spatial epistemic justice recognises the effects of history, ideology and place on the lives of individuals. Furthermore, it recognises the patterns of privilege, advantage and disadvantage and marginalisation in and between communities through continuing race and class segregation. Epistemically, it highlights the unequal distribution of knowledge in different communities and differences in understandings of social justice linked to the embeddedness of apartheid ideology in

the psyche of South African society. Socio-spatial-epistemic justice provides a lens to understand different understandings and experience and lack of information and misinformation in different communities and it provides opportunities for dialogue.

6.4.2 An Organising Framework for Social Justice Dialogues in Educational Contexts

This study shows that dialogue creates greater understanding of social justice and injustice. Although the study had its own limitations, (see section 6.5 on limitations of the study below) a few guidelines for the organisation of dialogical spaces for social justice can be extrapolated.

6.4.2.1 Setting Socially Just Terms for Engagement

A culture for a socially just dialogue can be set by determining socially just terms for engagement in the discussion. A few pertinent terms for engagement gleaned from this study are namely, 'just listening', willingness to acknowledge privilege and disadvantage, awareness and acknowledgement of personal narratives based on world views which limits and excludes and a willingness to look critically at past and present understandings of social justice and injustice.

6.4.2.2 Sharing Understandings of Social Justice and Injustice

Since there is no universally accepted understanding of social justice, socially just dialogical spaces should offer opportunities to share different understandings and meanings of social justice, what informed those meanings and should for new informed meanings to emerge. Examples of questions to arrive at shared and emergent understandings are:

- What are our understandings and experiences of social justice and injustice?
- How are our understandings and experiences different or similar?
- What informs/informed our understandings?
- What does the literature say about socially just/unjust practices?
- What new understandings can we take into our educational contexts?

The process in dialogical spaces should be socially just. In the discussions to arrive at shared understandings the voices of the marginalised should be heard and their experiences of social justice and injustice acknowledged.

6.4.2.3 Making Decisions on Socially Just Educational Events or Practices

Sharing understandings of social justice in dialogical spaces should also be linked to what would constitute socially just practices or events. Questions to frame discussions whether an event or practice is socially just or unjust:

- Is it fair or unfair?
- Does it promote equity?
- Does it take the spatial factors of the whole community into consideration?
- Does it take the context, rural context in this case, into consideration and make provision for differences and peculiarities of the context?
- Are the voices of the vulnerable and/or marginalised heard?
- Are learners protected from harm by duty bearers in the public and private sector?

6.4.3 Socially Just Research for Social Justice

Reflecting on my experience as this study understand that the researcher in the socially just research process does not try to understand the social realities by simply recording participants' immediate perceptions. There is an appreciation that understanding inescapably involves reflection and reasoning. Socially just researchers open up discursive spaces for critical reflection and discussion and help develop socially responsible thought, a social identity and a framework to reflect on socially just practices. In discursive spaces where there is authentic dialogue dialogic opportunities may be offered where the social world is described from lived experiences, disadvantage is challenged by posing questions such as 'Who benefits?' 'Who is marginalised?' 'How could things be done differently?' and 'Whose interests are being

served? These discursive spaces offer opportunities for increased access to knowledge and the creation of a vision for socially just processes and outcomes.

Five guidelines for practice in socially just research to inform a framework for socially just research were gleaned from the study and discussed in the following order:

- Acknowledge the dialectic between social justice and injustice;
- Engage in “Just” listening;
- Establish “Just” relationships;
- Increase access to knowledge; and
- Co-create a vision for ‘just’ actions.

6.4.3.1 Acknowledge the Dialectic Between Social Justice and Injustice

Social justice research acknowledges the dialectic between justice and injustice. According to Sen (2007), in the promotion of a just society, the meaning of justice in an ideal, abstract sense is not as important as the pursuit of justice in a realised sense. Justice in a realised sense attempts to derive understandings of social justice from people’s lived experiences of injustice. The starting point for socially just research in a justice as realised sense would include participants’ life stories and contain a multiplicity of voices and experiences of injustice.

6.4.3.2 Engage in ‘Just’ Listening

Socially just research includes a multiplicity of voices and experiences of justice and injustice from a diversity of people in both marginalised and privileged positions in society. In the engagement with communities, the social justice researcher recognises that there are multiple interpretations of events and engages in ‘just’ listening to value and include different world views and perspectives.

In the role of researcher as inquirer of knowledge, the social justice researcher has to critically reflect on her/his role as a listener in the research process. The social justice researcher has to critically reflect on how much credibility is given to a knower, the participant, in retelling their stories and the ways in which the knower might lack

intelligibility due to a gap in hermeneutical resources, i.e. the speaker might not have the language to convey meanings.

In group processes the 'just' listener has to be aware of the group dynamics and how individuals are excluded on the bases of language, race and gender and structure methodological processes to minimize exclusions and marginalisations.

6.4.3.3 Establish "Just" Relationships

Social justice researchers acknowledge that research is a social and political process which impacts on the participants and the researcher. The social justice researcher is not neutral, but brings to the research process subjectivities which include a history, certain assumptions, epistemologies, methodologies and theoretical frameworks. The researcher conveys different aspects of self, either consciously and unconsciously, throughout the research process.

In establishing socially just relationships socially just researchers acknowledge the subjectivities of the researcher and participants. The reality, views and influences of social justice researcher are thus as integrally part of research process as the participants and manifests overtly and covertly in dialogue with the participants and the research process. The meanings of these subjectivities are mediated through the researcher's own perceptions and in dialogue with the participants. In establishing a 'just' relationship the meanings generated in the research process reflect an inter-subjective interpretation of the research process.

In establishing a 'just' relationship social justice researchers are aware of their own subjectivities, and aware of the power imbalances between the researcher and the participants. These power differentials are acknowledged by valuing the knowledge which participants bring and acknowledging that inequalities in the distribution on knowledge and structural marginalisations in society could cause gaps of knowledge. The socially just researcher thus allows for opportunities in the research process for greater access to knowledge about social justice and injustice.

6.4.3.4 Increase Access to Knowledge

The concept of social justice has been applied differently in South Africa in the pre- and post-apartheid state. Different communities have experienced injustices differently and have conflicting understandings of what constitutes a just society. The historical and persistent structural inequalities in society have contributed to unequal access to knowledge and misinformation about social justice and injustice.

6.4.3.5 Co-create a Vision for ‘Just’ Actions

Socially just research is research based on the belief of people’s ability to be agents of change. The aim of social justice researcher is not only to interpret and describe social justice as a social construct but to co-create a vision for a just society. This requires a belief in peoples’ ability to be active agents of change and to promote agency in the research process

Socially just researchers work toward understanding the meanings and actions ascribed to social justice and injustice in the research process and how processes of power, privilege, oppression, inequalities and inequities differentially affected and affect people in the micro research process and the macro societal level. From the insights gained from these understandings theory is constructed which speaks to action.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has offered rural teachers’ understandings of social justice in three rural communities in the Western Cape Province. As a result of the delimitations of context and the situatedness of the study, certain limitations connected to the study should be mentioned. In the first instance, the teacher participants in the study are not representatives of all South African educators or of rural teachers, for that matter. Despite my efforts to build trustworthiness in the study through a multi-phased methodological process and by listening to different voices, the findings cannot be generalised to other educators in other rural communities. Secondly, the process of nominating rural school communities and teacher participants in the Western Cape Province specifically, was time and context limited due to my location in the Western

Cape in the mid-2000s and my position as a doctoral student at a university in this province. While, these spatial-temporal constraints could limit the findings of the study, the conclusions and suggestions may indicate similar patterns and trends in similarly located schools and communities. Consequently, the findings may serve to guide further research in social justice in South African schools.

A further limitation linked to the spatial-temporal constraints and practical considerations of the study, meant that I was not able to follow up on action plans or observe whether the heightened awareness of social justice lead to greater awareness of just pedagogical practices in the school and classroom. However, further research may give greater insight into these limitations of this study.

6.6 HOW THE RESEARCH COULD HAVE BEEN DONE DIFFERENTLY

I chose a grounded theory as a method for social justice research. The grounded theory method allowed for an iterative research process where participants were given the opportunity to deepen their understanding of social justice. A multi-phased process for data collection was chosen over a single or dual phased process of life stories interviews and/or focus group interviews. A multi-phased process was deemed to be a socially just process because it allowed participants to deepen their understandings of social justice. A single or dual phased process of data collection might have recorded teachers' understandings of social justice at an uninformed level, which could have resulted in an under-theorised view of social justice.

The study could have been done differently, through using different research methodologies. An ethnographic research methodology, inclusive of classroom observations, which was not part of the present study, could have provided more evidence of teachers' pedagogical practices. Another methodology could have been to use a discourse analysis methodology to get a more nuanced understanding of the interactions in the dialogues across race, language and class lines. Lastly, the construction of a longitudinal study to follow action plans and gain further insight into the complexities in the implementation of social justice in school contexts could have been used.

6.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study focused on rural teachers understanding of social justice within the above-mentioned limitations. These delimitations of the study raise a few questions for further research. Since the study was conducted within a specific context over a specific period of time, it would be interesting to explore what a similar study would reveal in different contexts, such a different rural context or an urban context. The question framing the research might be: What might a similar study reveal if different rural or urban contexts were used? In addition, this study could be extended, given more time and resources to explore what could be learned by doing a longitudinal study of social justice in rural schools.

The study revealed that teachers were not adequately prepared for socially just pedagogies. Even though the study did not investigate teacher development programmes, teachers acknowledged that they were not prepared to be socially just teachers either in pre-service or in-service programmes. A further research question could be to explore the preparation teachers receive for socially just pedagogies through teacher development programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Another question which the study touched on and which could be further explored is whether there is a correlation between teachers' understandings of social justice and just pedagogical practices.

In my involvement as a researcher in this study I explored what it means to be a socially just researcher. In my reflections the intricacies of being situated in the research and the complexities of race, class and gender in the process were raised. Further questions which could be explored in this vein are related to the nature and complexities of socially just research and whether and the extent to which social justice could be advanced through socially just research,

The study was conducted in South Africa which was and still is characterised by racial tensions and conflicts. At the time of the study developed and developing countries

are being challenged to extend and explore what social justice means as familiar boundaries and understandings are about difference are confronted. A further question for further research could be a comparative study which could inform us of social justice in societies in conflict and transition.

6.8 CONCLUSION

This study provides insight into how teachers in rural schools and communities understand social justice. It focused on schools in the Overberg region in the Western Cape and highlights the social justice and injustice aspects pertinent to rural schooling and contributes to discussions and debates on social justice in education. The study highlighted the dialectic nature of social justice and injustice and proposes a purposive integration, in this regard, of theories of social justice with spatial and epistemic justice. The study recognises that dialogue across diverse and unequal communities has the potential to create greater understanding of social justice and injustice in schools and communities. In this regard, an organising framework to facilitate social justice and injustice dialogue is proposed to create socially just community practices and to serve as a spur for the socially just pedagogies and practices.

Finally, the study proposes a socially just methodology for social justice.

6.9 MY REFLECTIONS

As I draw closer to the end of writing up my research on social justice, it is time to reflect on what the research meant to personally, professionally and politically. In as much as it is at all possible to delink these three aspects, i.e. the personal, professional and political, I will attempt to do so in this section.

On a personal level it has been a long and interesting journey, often slow and burdensome, but mostly enlightening and fulfilling. Participating in this study has essentially been about achieving a qualification but more than that it has broadened my understanding of social justice and the challenges facing those who work with a social justice agenda. No longer can I glibly speak about social justice as an ideal concept but always in relation to social injustice, as a starting point. When I started the

research, my perception was that South Africans, coming out of an oppressive and violent regime, would be able to articulate, if not entirely clearly, at least in somewhat unambiguous ways what social justice entails. It was not the case. At the end of this research process, my awareness of the complexity of social justice has grown, especially the ways in which our individual and collective stories influence how we understand social justice- and how vastly different these understandings are! Through listening to teachers life stories, recording and analysing them, I have become more aware of how my own and others' life histories are situated in social, political, historical and cultural contexts and how this affects are day-to-day activities. I have come to appreciate what we have become as a result of this interplay and to understand, albeit in part, the reasons for how we have become differently constituted socially, politically, historically and culturally. More important for my personal journey, I have had to interrogate my interpretations and understandings of social justice and my own stereotypes and prejudices.

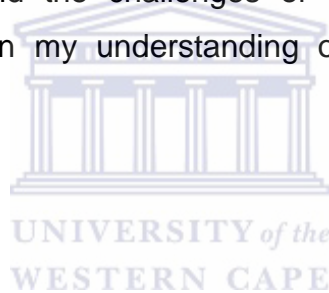
The nature of the research methodology, social constructivist grounded theory for social justice, required of me to be reflexive about what I did and how I did it. I came to appreciate the value of reflexivity in making taken-for-granted assumptions about myself and others visible. Some of the assumptions about my own practice I have become aware of are the dual role of the social justice researcher i.e. to listen, appreciate and acknowledge participants' stories and opinions and to challenge participants or spur them to action. I am aware of the danger of imposing my views on participants in the research process and the role of the social justice researcher to transform and 'disrupt' biased and unjust belief systems and to find ways to plant the seeds for action for social justice. Understanding and applying this aspect of my research journey as a socially just researcher will be the focus of my future endeavours as an academic.

Professionally this research has benefitted me in my teaching and research roles. In my teaching role, social justice has become a framework for teacher development courses at undergraduate and post graduate levels. At post-graduate levels, particularly, my practice has been to work with social justice as both a product and a process, an ennobling but equally daunting task. More daunting and challenging,

personally, is immersing and integrating social justice principles in large undergraduate classes where the principles and practices of social justice are really put to the test.

Politically, I am more aware of spatial justice and epistemic justice (socio-spatial-epistemic justice) and their manifestations in my life and that of others. Moreover, the more my awareness of the complex nature of socio-spatial-epistemic justice grows, the greater my curiosity and interest becomes. Of interest to me is the changing political landscape of education in South Africa – especially the contribution which socio-spatial-epistemic justice could make to the transformation agenda.

Finally, when I started this research study, my intention was to study social justice in education. I never thought that I would have to reflect on my role as a socially just researcher. As a result of these reflections, I am beginning to understand the politics of social justice research and the challenges of dealing with power relations in research. I hope to grow in my understanding of socially just research and to contribute to the debate.



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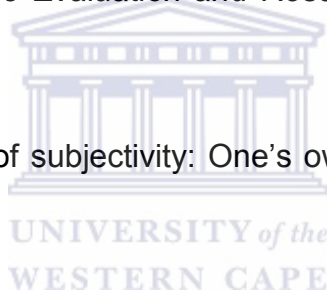
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Instrument One: School Information Questionnaire

School code:

School Quintile:

Learner-teacher ratio:

No of girls enrolled:

No of boys enrolled:

No of teaching staff including gender:

No of non-teaching staff including gender:

No of mono-grade and/or multi-grade classrooms:

Education district:

Municipal area:

Ward no:

School on farm/church/state property:

Historical data of school:

Socio-economic status of the learner population:

Access to services e.g. education, social services, health, transport:

Nearest secondary school and access to secondary school:

Infrastructure of school: classrooms, staffroom, library, running water, ablution facilities, first aid, after care, Grade R, sports and athletics, play ground area.

NGO Projects at the school over the last 3 years:

No of learners who receive learner support services from the education department:

Teaching and learning resources in the classroom:

Throughput: no of learners who enroll in Grade R or Grade 1 and no of learner who complete programme at the school over the last three years:

No of learners enrolled at your schools who have entered secondary school over the last 3 years:

Researcher: Brenda Sonn

Instrument Two: Biographical data of the teachers and principals

Age: _____ Male/female: _____ What grade do you teach?
 No of years teaching: _____ No of years teaching at this school: _____
 No of years teaching in rural schools: _____ What is your position at the school?

Questions	Rationale for the questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What inspired you to become a teacher? • Who are/were your role models? • Why are you teaching in a rural school? • Why are you teaching at this school? • Describe a typical 'good' day at school • Describe a typical 'bad' day at school • What makes you want to go on teaching? Why? • Have you ever thought of leaving teaching and why? • What are the typical challenges learners face in your school? • What are the typical challenges teachers face in your school? • What is done at the school to help learners and teachers face these challenges? • What is your understanding of social justice in the school context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To find out what motivated/inspired the teacher. • To find out what persons and qualities the teacher identifies in inspirational persons • To find out what the situational reasons are for teaching. • To get a picture of the teacher's understanding of a 'good' day • To get a picture of the teacher's understanding of a 'bad' day • To find out what continues to motivate the teacher and why these are motivating. • To find out what demotivates the teacher and why. • To find out what the teacher perceives as hardships or challenges in the rural school. • To find out what teachers' sense of agency/possibility is at the school.

Researcher: Brenda Sonn

Participant's Code:

Instrument three: Teachers' Journal: Observations of school context

The participating teachers from each school will record events, structures and procedures which contribute to social justice and injustice in the school context, according to their own understanding. The teachers will record the events in a journal over two weeks. The following questions will guide the journal entries

6. Give a short description of the event, structure and/or procedure.

Guiding questions to describe the event: What is happening and when? Who is involved? What preceded the event? What were the outcomes, if any?

Structure and/or procedure: Describe and name the structure and/or procedure. Why is it there? What purpose does it serve? Who benefits from it? Who does not benefit from it?

7. What is really happening? Give an account of other contributing factors related to the event or to the structure and/or procedure which might be invisible.
8. How does it relate to social justice or injustice?
9. How does it affect the learners?
10. How does it affect your life?
11. How does it affect the school?
12. What could be done about it?
13. Any other comments you would like to make?

Researcher: Brenda Sonn

Instrument four: Focus group discussion

The participating teachers from each school will bring their journals and any examples they have to a focus group discussion.

The first part of the process will be designed as an open-ended group reflection session informed by the findings of the previous processes, the individual interviews and the observations.

This will be followed by the following structured questions to the teachers at the participating schools.

- What new insights do you have about yourself as a teacher in a rural school?
- What has changed for you and why?
- What is your understanding of social justice in your context?
- What does it mean for your teaching?

Researcher: Brenda Sonn



APPENDIX TWO: CONSENT FORMS

GENERAL CONSENT FORM

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and all information given will be treated as confidential. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and this will not affect me negatively in any way.

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....

School Code:

Researcher: Brenda Sonn



CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that all information disclosed in this session will be treated as confidential by myself, the researcher and other participants in the focus group interview. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and this will not affect me negatively in any way.

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....



School Code:

Researcher: Brenda Sonn

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER JOURNALS

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed in the journal I will be keeping. I agree that the information in this journal can be used for the purposes of the study. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and this will not affect me negatively in any way.

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....

School Code:

Researcher: Brenda Sonn



APPENDIX THREE: INFORMATION SHEET

INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: Teachers' Understandings of Social Justice in Rural Schools in the Overberg rural education district region in the Western Cape

What is this study about?

This is a doctoral research project being conducted by Ms Brenda Sonn at the University of the Western Cape. The purpose of this research project is to understand how primary school teachers in the rural Overberg district understand social justice and social injustice and what this means for them in the school, classroom and the school community. You are being asked to participate in the study because you are an educator in the primary school or you are an official in the education department and involved with education in the rural districts.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, I will conduct individual or group interviews with you. I will contact you beforehand to make an appointment for the interviews at a time that suits you. You will be informed about the interview process beforehand. You will also receive a copy of the interview questions and will receive the interview notes for you to check after the interview.

In addition to this, if you are a teacher participating in the study, I will also ask you to keep a journal over two weeks to record any observations you make about social justice or injustice in your school or classroom.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

All personal information will be kept confidential. You will not be required to submit your name on any of the interview and observation sheets. All the records about you

and your school will be given an identity number and only the researcher will have access to the information linking the identity numbers to participants' or school names.

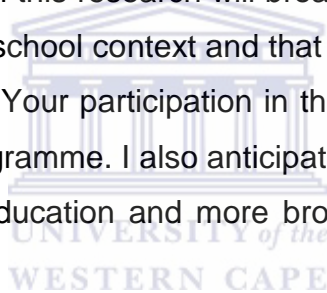
You are assured of your anonymity in this research. Your name and that of your school will not be given in the doctoral thesis or in any article which may be published as a result of this research.

What are the risks of this research?

There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.

What are the benefits of this research?

I hope that your involvement in this research will broaden your understanding of social justice or injustice in the rural school context and that you will be able to apply some of the insights in your school(s). Your participation in this research will benefit me in the completion of my doctoral programme. I also anticipate that the research will contribute to current debates on rural education and more broadly the influence of poverty on education



Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, it will not be held against you.

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by **Brenda Sonn** at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself and your rights as a research participant, please contact my research supervisor, Prof Juliana Smith at the University of the Western Cape.

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.

