

**THE ADMISSION POLICIES OF EX-MODEL C PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN CAPE TOWN DURING 1998**


A mini-thesis submitted to the University of the Western Cape
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters Degree
in Educational Management, Administration and Policy.

Researched and written by Shuaib Denyssen

November 1998

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.


.....
Shuaib Dénysse

..... NOVEMBER 1998 .
Date

Acknowledgements

The completion of this work depended on the patience, sacrifice and dedication of many people:

- the principals and parents of the selected ex-Model C primary schools who sacrificed their time to speak with me;
- all officials at the WCED who aided with the statistical data and who gave permission that schools may be visited;
- all lecturers, guest lecturers and fellow students in the 1996 masters group of the Comparative Education Department at UWC for their invaluable advice;
- my supervisor, Dr Yusuf Sayed, for his guidance;
- Dr Glenda Kruss who aided in putting the final touches to this work;
- my whole family, but especially my best friend, Zeenat, without whose support and love this work would have been impossible.

ABSTRACT

In the past all black learners were excluded from ex-Model C schools by Apartheid laws. In the context of transformation, the South African Schools Act (1996) aims to equalise opportunities for learners from all racial and social class backgrounds.

In spite of the popular trend to gloss over racial and class differences and rather celebrate freedom, opportunity, equality and black empowerment after the first democratic elections of 1994, the social context remains characterised by Apartheid remnants such as geographically separated living areas according to race and social class. The result is that in spite of claims that thousands of black learners are in fact presently enrolled at ex-Model C schools, hundreds of thousands of working class black children remain excluded.

In order to aid the process of transformation towards equal schooling opportunities, it is necessary to have an understanding of how national schooling policy is implemented at school level. This study therefore collects the views and understandings of selected ex-Model C school principals about their admission policies using qualitative methods.

From the admission trends implied in this study, suggestions and recommendations are made which may aid the democratisation of school governance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.	1
1.1. Race and class separation through schooling.	1
1.2. Admissions tests, access and educational standards.	1
1.3. Ex-Model C schools and current educational policy:	2
1.4. The focus of the study:	3
1.5. The relevance of this research.	5
1.6. Racial categories in this work.	5
1.7. Overview of the study.	6
CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUALISING SCHOOLING IN SOUTH AFRICA AND CAPE TOWN	 8
2.1. Introduction.	8
2.2. Apartheid: The evolution of racist and class oppression.	10
2.2.1. Apartheid laws ensured white privilege.	10
2.2.2. Setting the stage for educational reforms.	11
2.2.3. Resistance redefines educational aims.	12
2.3. Opening white schools to all races.	14
2.3.1. Model C schools and exclusivity.	15
2.4. The period since 1994:	17
2.4.1. Geographical and social class separation:	17
2.4.2. The South African Schools Act.	20
2.5. Conclusion.	23

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW	26
3.1. Introduction.	26
3.2. Race, class and schooling.	26
3.2.1. Race and class in education policies in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia:	29
3.2.2. 'Racial forms of education'.	30
3.2.3. The problem with multicultural policy.	33
3.2.4. Racialisation and deracialisation.	35
3.2.5. Antiracist policies.	39
3.2.6. Multiculturalism: Two extremes in one.	39
3.3. Schools as marketing commodities.	43
3.4. A theoretical framework:	46
3.4.1. Defining policy.	46
3.4.2. Policy implementation in a context of inequality:	48
3.4.3. The complexity of policy processes.	49
3.5. Conclusion.	53
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY	
4.1. Introduction.	55
4.2. Following a qualitative methodological approach.	55
4.3. Research techniques.	57
4.3.1. Enrolment statistics.	58
4.3.2. Identifying areas and selecting schools.	58
4.3.3. The semi-structured interview.	62
4.3.4. Selecting persons for interviews.	65
4.4. Data analysis.	66
4.4.1. Meaning construction and reconstructive analysis.	66
4.4.2. Meaning fields:	67

4.4.3. Strengthening constructed meanings: Analysing application forms.	69
4.5. Validity and reliability.	70
4.6. Limitations to the methodology.	71
4.7. The ethics of research.	74
4.7.1. Informed consent.	74
4.7.2. Confidentiality and anonymity.	75

CHAPTER 5: THE ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.1. Introduction.	76
5.2. Contextual data.	77
5.2.1. Deracialising enrolment statistics.	77
5.2.2. An analysis of the enrolment statistics.	78
5.2.3. Profiling schools.	81
5.2.4. Identifying topic domains and communication codes.	81
5.3. Dialogical data.	83
5.3.1 The respondents.	83
5.3.2. Principals' responses - possible meanings.	86
5.3.2.1. The tradition, culture and ethos of schools.	87
5.3.2.2. Deracialising schools.	90
5.3.2.3. Standards and quality.	94
5.3.2.4. Admission criteria.	99
5.3.2.5. High school fees defended.	102
5.3.2.6. Power in setting up school policy.	105
5.3.3. Analysing application forms.	110
5.3.3.1. The content of application forms.	111
5.3.3.2. The admission process: step-by-step.	112
5.4. Summarising the analysis.	115

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.	118
6.1. Social structure and the individual.	118
6.2. Individual interpretations and policy.	119
6.2.1. Policy aims.	119
6.2.2. The stereotyped beliefs and patronising attitudes.	121
6.3. The selection of admission criteria and socio-economic structure.	122
6.4. Recommendations.	123
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY	127
APPENDICES	139
Appendix A Map of Cape Town showing selected areas and schools	139
Appendix B Profiles of selected schools	140

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Race and class separation through schooling:

When discussing schooling in South Africa, racial difference and oppression is inevitably emphasised. The work of Althusser (1971), Bernstein (1971), Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) refers to the manner in which schools reproduce class divisions and entrenches middle class behaviour and values. It is thus accepted that "schools are middle class institutions with middle class values (which) function naturally to benefit those who are already privileged at the expense of those from lower social orders" (Van Den Berg:1980: 9). Schooling is accepted to be a key socio-political force in the process of reproducing social inequality. This work therefore emphasises social class as an integral part of the racial inequality that exists in the South African society.

1.2. Admissions tests, access and educational standards:

Ex-Model C schools are characterised as having the most advanced educational and extra-mural resources. Apartheid education policy which regulated white schooling to develop according to the Model C model allowed wealthy white parent communities to be involved in the redevelopment of schools through school councils or committees. Such councils (presently called governing bodies) were allowed to buy school land and property and rebuild, refurnish and redevelop schools to satisfy their educational needs according to their own values and beliefs (Pampallis: 1993: 2-3).

NB

Ex-Model C school councils were also allowed to adopt admission policies. White middle class parents gave input into the procedures controlling access of new learners to schools. At the time of the adoption of the Model C school plan, many schools included stringent tests as part of their admissions policies. These tests were designed to ensure that new learners fit the specific standard of the school as this could not be allowed to drop. It also aided schools in assessing the strength and weaknesses of learners so that their specific needs could be catered for.

An opposing view states that such tests form part of gatekeeping aimed at excluding learners with low potential so that ex-Model C schools cater for the 'cream of the crop'. The rest of the public schools thus have to provide education to the country's 'average' learners (The Cape Times: 16.09.96).

1.3. Ex-Model C schools and current educational policy:

Current school policy such as the South African Schools Act (1996) ✓ heralds the dawn of state policy aimed at restructuring schooling with redress towards equity as its stated goal. Model C schools were scrapped and so reverted back to the status of that of ordinary public schools. Schooling has been declared to be free so that children from families who cannot afford school fees cannot be refused entry into schools (SASA: 1996: Chapter 2: 5(2)). Those who are able to pay, are obligated to do so and governing bodies can collect school fees from them. Racially defined education authorities were disbanded and united under one National Education Department. The drive towards equity means that the high quality educational resources which ex-Model C schools provided to white

learners for so many years should be easily accessible to previously disadvantaged learners from the black sectors of the South African community. Access to former white schools is thus free to all learners.

A more challenging aim of schooling policy is to develop all previously disadvantaged public schools so that quality education can become available to all learners in all areas. The SASA allows for all public schools to be governed with the parental and community control that ex-Model C schools had since its inception. Schooling has been decentralised with provincial authorities regulating broadly set admissions criteria. Parents from all racial and class backgrounds can be represented on governing bodies in all public schools. In this way, they are empowered to give input on various aspects of school life. In spite of provincial 'control' over admission criteria, it remains in the hands of individual governing bodies to decide on admission steps. In a case like that of the Western Cape Provincial School Education Act (WCPSEA: 1997), the criteria are set out in such a manner that individual schools can set up policies and administer them according to their own interpretations.

1.4. The focus of the study:

This study is not aimed at gaining a picture of whether the SASA (1996) through its implementation, is going to lead to the development of public schools in manners similar to what ex- Model C schools developed into since 1991. The study in fact concurs with Sayed (1997) that the funding option endorsed by the Schools Act of 1996 may lead to a "class divided two tier system of public schools, namely well resourced predominantly white and middle class schools and then a tier of predominantly black and

poorly resourced schools" (Sayed: 1997: 20-22). It does not have the exclusive aim of further assessing whether the Act would have the desired outcome of equity and redress for public schools.

It is expected that the general features of past exclusionary practices such as gatekeeping through admission policy may be "... modified and transformed by the historical specificity of the contexts and environments in which they become active" (Troyna: 1993: 26). The opening of former white schools with middle class Christian Afrikaans and English traditions to black learners with different religious, language and working class backgrounds, may make the admission of such different groups a daunting task. The processes through which admission policies are set up and administered within school governing bodies are thus expected to be a contestation between different racial and class interest groups. Schools may need to change their ethos, traditions and curricula to accommodate learners from diverse social backgrounds into one school.

The specific aim of the study is to gain an understanding of how ex-Model C schools cope with the curricular and policy challenges involved in admitting lower class black learners into white middle class Christian schools. The focus is thus specifically on the way in which admission policies are set up and administered at schools. Given the fact that principals, teachers and parents from differing backgrounds are expected to work together to set such school policy up in school governing bodies, there is an interest in contestation as differing ideas, beliefs and values may come into conflict with the drawing up and implementation of policy and curricular changes.

1.5. The relevance of this research:

To date research about admission policies at primary schools in Cape Town has been limited. This study is initiating an exploration of admission policies and processes at schools. It can feed into a body of knowledge that is necessary to establish patterns of school governance and its outcomes for a society which has put legislation in place in attempts to transform a previously unjust and inequitable schooling system.

1.6. Racial categories in this work:

Throughout this work reference is made to general differences between black and white groups. Black refers to people who were, according to the Population Registration Act of 1953, classified as non-white; this includes Indians, Coloureds and all Africans. White refers to all those who are from European descent.

In spite of the homogeneous treatment of groups at some stages of the work, there is an awareness that there are differences of class, gender, religion and language within each of these groups. The homogeneous treatment is at times necessary as apartheid legislation purposefully neglected the socio-economic development of all those who were classified to be non-white while it catered for the exclusive development and advantage of whites. Due to the mentioned differences within especially the black group, they will at times be referred to as African, Coloured and Indian.

1.7. Overview of the study:

Chapter 2:

This chapter discusses the context within which the study is undertaken on three levels: (1) that of the historical and economical structure set up by apartheid legislation and the struggle against it, (2) that of the geographical space created between race and class groups because of such legislation and (3) the policy context as set up by the South African Schools Act of 1996.

Chapter 3:

A discussion of literature covering issues of inequality, race, power and class which relate to the admissions of new learners to ex-Model C primary schools. This chapter attempts to show how issues of inequality, race and class feature within policies such as admissions policies of schools. Here issues such as multicultural and antiracist policy as well as the deracialisation of school policy is discussed. The conceptual framework from which decisions about specific methods with which data is collected and analysed is derived from such discussions.

Chapter 4:

The research design and methodology is discussed in more detail in this chapter. The qualitative research approach and the usefulness thereof for this study are discussed. The research design and how the research was strategically planned and changed to deal with specific problems, is set out. It further shows how decisions with regard to samples, sites and target persons were reached.

Chapter 5:

This chapter reports on data collected and details trends revealed in the collected data. An analysis of interviews and application documents are used to give insight about school governing issues surrounding admission policies at ex-Model C schools.

Chapter 6:

This chapter accounts for general issues referring to policy changes during times of transformation at schools.

Recommendations with regard to policy issues are made which need to be considered in order to reach the goal of equalising education opportunities in an unequal socio-historical context.

CHAPTER 2
CONTEXTUALISING SCHOOLING IN SOUTH AFRICA
AND CAPE TOWN

2.1. Introduction:

The white Nationalist state had two goals with Apartheid: one was to preserve white privilege and the other was to strengthen capitalism. In pursuing these objectives racial identities were assigned to people which concurred with the development of class groups in a capitalist environment (Nkomo et al, 1991). In this study apartheid is viewed as “functional to capitalism” where “class alignments could eventually transcend race, and thus undermine the very basis of the racist society which is supportive of capitalism” (Smith: 1982: 25).

A feature of apartheid is the ways in which it evolved to adapt to the prevailing national and international contexts. While it remained an oppressive and discriminatory system of government, its proponents used different strategies in attempts to allow for its survival and the continued privileged status of whites over blacks. To its international allies, the government used linguistic constructions such as “separate development”, “cultural pluralism”, “plural democracy” and “own affairs” to credit the apartheid society they created for the sake of white supremacy (Nkomo et al.: 1991). South African officials continued to distance themselves from racism associated with the term ‘apartheid’. They presented their racist practices in more acceptable forms to the rest of the world. Their manipulation of language in various ways “points to one of the most central tools of racism in its attempts to persist” (Nkomo et al.: 1991: 263). To

create the facade that racism no longer existed, they simply used different, softer terms calling the same reality different names.

At one stage during the 1970s, allowing parts of the black population to develop into middle class citizens was important for the survival of the white dominated capitalist system. Smith (1979) reports that there was evidence of it becoming state policy to allow the development of such a trans racial bourgeoisie. Laurence (cited in Smith: 1979) states that P.W. Botha's government responded positively to black middle class aspirations "encouraging the growth of a black middle class with the clear motive of increasing the conservatism of the black bourgeoisie by making it a junior partner in the white establishment". Added to the apartheid policy of divide and rule by race was thus divide and rule by social class. Property ownership in the form of housing was a key to this development.

The Western Cape and specifically Cape Town, where this study is situated, have a particular history in which Coloureds were privileged above Africans in the development of a black middle class (Smith: 1979: 32). As it was a Coloured preferential area, African people were for a long time prevented from owning property while Coloureds were given that right. In this way, while racial and class segregation caused the oppression of all black people, aspects such as housing and schooling played a crucial role in separating and oppressing various parts of that black group in different ways. The fact that separated geographical living areas for whites, Africans, Coloureds and Indians presently remain largely intact testifies to the fact that the repeal of the above mentioned laws did not bring a sudden end to apartheid.

In order to understand the admission policies of ex-Model C primary schools it is necessary to point out the development and impact of apartheid on the lives of South Africans. This chapter thus aims to show how the structural remnants of apartheid caused the development of particular racial and class understandings to operate within the society. It shows how the removal of race as a discriminatory measure to school admission may not mean that schooling is less discriminatory as social class instead of race is becoming a key feature of social division.

2.2. Apartheid: The evolution of racist and class oppression:

2.2.1. Apartheid laws ensured white privilege:

Apartheid legislation in the form of restrictive land laws, the Group Areas Act, Separate Amenities Act and Population Registration Act and Pass Laws were effective because they covered all aspects of South African life. These laws acted in an integrated way to separate people and to protect white privilege. According to Wolpe (1988) citing Hall, "race (became)... the modality in which class is 'lived,' the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and 'fought through'" (52; my addition). Through the deliberate control of the movement and settlement of black people and restricting the use of social amenities to them, race was interiorised in class (Nkomo et al.: 1991: 265). The laws systematically established personal and interpersonal attitudes of racial difference and exclusivity based on the assumption that black people were inferior to whites and were thus entitled to less of society's resources and privileges.

Underlying the racist facade is an economic role assigned to each group. One of the basic aims of apartheid was to ensure that its capitalist economy could flourish using cheap black labour. Racially discriminatory land laws and laws controlling the movement and settlement of blacks ensured this. Restricting the movement and settlement of African people channelled them into areas where white employers needed cheap labour. Such laws were also used to ensure that black people were kept out of white areas (Smith: 1979).

Life in South Africa was thus explicitly fragmented along racial and social class lines. Not only did it cast people into racial moulds, but it also ensured that legally defined race groups lived different, separate and unequal lives according to social class.

2.2.2. Setting the stage for educational reforms:

In 1990 political and social 'transformation' in the form of the repeal of the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act and the Land Act was started. This gesture by the National Party government did not remove the racial and social class separation existing within South African society. Apartheid education laws remained in place. Discussing aspects of it provides a window through which to view how "racist practices are being maintained in mutated ways" (Nkomo et al: 1991:).

The education system remained segregated along racial lines: 19 different education departments could be identified in South Africa, including the independent states of Boputhatwsana, Transkei and Ciskei and the self governing territories of Kwazulu, KwaNdebele, KaNgwane, Qwa Qwa,

Venda and Lebowa. Each department catered for its own racial or ethnic group. The Bantu Education Act passed in 1953 and later replaced by the Education and Training Act of 1979 saw to the establishment and maintenance of these departments to continue realising the Verwoerdian maxim of separate and unequal education under apartheid.

As Minister of Native Affairs in 1953, Verwoerd's words reflected the core belief of apartheid education: "When I have control over native education, I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them" (Christie: 1985: 12). The aim was linked to ensuring a constant supply of cheap black labour for white owned businesses in the country. The idea that black people were inferior to white people was contained in school curricula regulated by an education system known as Christian National Education which implied that it was in fact instituted by Christ or God. Such ideas and values were continually reinforced by the state controlled mass media.

The state provided different levels of education to people depending on their racial classification. The experience under apartheid schooling was racially segregated as well as qualitatively different - separate and unequal. Bantu Education was deliberately inferior on the assumption that African children would largely remain unskilled manual labourers (Kallaway: 1986; Nkomo: 1991)

2.2.3. Resistance redefines educational aims:

The school boycotts and students' resistance during the 1980s was based on the belief that apartheid education was inferior. Hartzenberg, the

Minister of Education and Training at that time, stated that "Educational policies in South Africa must be dictated by the apartheid philosophy" (cited in Christie: 1985: 13). Students made the link between apartheid education and the capitalist economy in which South African schools merely trained them to perform low paying jobs and to remain in subordinate positions in society (Christie: 1985). The system of education which was "meant to keep the ... people apart from one another, to breed suspicion, hatred and violence, and to keep us backward" was rejected (Christie: 1985: 14).

The people's education movement which was made up of teachers, students and community organisations called for the eradication of apartheid education and the establishment of a single non-racial democratic education system for all South Africans, irrespective of race (Bundy: 1986a; NECC: 1990). These struggles indicate significant shifts. What started as a rejection of Bantu Education developed into a rejection of apartheid education in general and then into a rejection of the whole apartheid capitalist system. This led to the establishment of an alternative to the prevailing education system. From seeing the need to develop an education system for blacks which was qualitatively similar to that of the whites, to seeing the white education system as flawed despite its material privileges, Sisulu (1986) stated that

We are not demanding the same education as whites, since that is education for domination. People's education means education at the service of the people as a whole, education that liberates, education that puts the people in command of their lives, education

that prepares our people as responsible citizens of our country
(110).

2.3. Opening white schools to all races:

Under internal pressure from student, teacher, trade union and civic organisations as well as external pressure for economic sanctions by the banned ANC and its international allies, the National Party government was forced to announce the restructuring of various parts of its legislation; among it was white schooling (Pampallis: 1991: 277-287).

It was reorganised according to four models which would make it legally possible for black pupils to be admitted to historically white schools. Piet Clase, the then minister in charge of white education announced the following models:

Model A: This would be a private school under the control of an owner/board of governors/management body who employ the teaching staff and determine their salaries and conditions of service. The board can also dictate admission policies according to which pupils would be admitted. The state would provide a 45% subsidy for these schools providing they meet certain criteria relating to the curriculum and adequate facilities.

Model B: This type of school would remain a state school under day-to-day management of a management body working according to the regulations of the education department. The salaries of a selected number of staff members and operating costs would be paid by the state. School fees were not compulsory.

Model C: This would be a state-aided school run by a management body consisting of the principal and parents. A selected number of teachers' salaries would be paid by the state, with the management body paying for additional teachers, building maintenance, text books and extra-curricular activities. The management body was empowered to appoint teachers, decide on admission policies and change curricula beyond that of the national education department curriculum. School grounds and buildings were transferred to the school's management body free of charge provided it would only be used for educational purposes.

Model D: Model-D schools were in effect schools that contained mainly black students, but were staffed by teachers from ex-white schools. It was a fact that because of a low birth rate amongst whites, schools had to be closed. In this manner, white teachers could still have jobs if they were prepared to teach black learners. These were to be run and maintained by the government and aimed specifically at the previous disadvantaged pupils. Very few of these schools were implemented (Coutts:1992)

2.3.1. Model C schools and exclusivity :

These models afforded white parents the opportunity to vote for models A, B or C or retain their existing pattern of school governance. 98% of the white state schools' parent communities voted for the Model B option. In spite of this, in April 1992 it was unilaterally announced that because of 'economic pressures', all white state schools were to be converted to Model C (the semi-private - semi-state option) (Carrim: 1991; Metcalfe: 1991). This caused most governing bodies to dramatically increase their