

The aim of this chapter is to present the results of the research. It represents the fifth step of phase 2 of the research method. The chapter reports on and interprets the following themes as identified during the data analysis: crossing the boundary, engage the new world, the ties that bind, being imprisoned, the struggle, the road to reconciliation, integration and healing, back to the future and the crucible. After exploring these themes, the chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

6.1 CROSSING THE BOUNDARY

On 12 November, RIDE 2000 got under way when 24 delegates left the Cape Town Waterfront for the shores of Robben Island. The sea-crossing followed by the opening plenary symbolised the crossing of the boundary between the outside world and RIDE, where members of society temporarily - for one week - became RIDE delegates. This crossing of the boundary seemed to be difficult, if not traumatic for delegates. The difficulty that delegates experienced seemed to be linked to the (1) the task of RIDE (diversity and the difficult issues associated with diversity), and (2) the methodology of RIDE (experiential learning).

In terms of the task, diversity seemed to be a difficult phenomenon to address. R1 stated: "In general I experience diversity to be a very touchy subject. People are afraid to address the real issues. There was a lot of denial of diversity issues and it is only when it explodes that we will deal with it." The impression was thus that people would rather avoid diversity, than address it. There was also an indication that dealing and talking openly and freely about diversity could be especially difficult in the South African context. R2, for instance, experienced more difficulty addressing diversity-related issues in South Africa than during the course he had previously attended in the USA. R2 stated: "It is people in your own country with whom you have to communicate, but that you struggle to communicate ... with the course I did in America you can tell them exactly what you want to, in South Africa you know the people and where they work, etc. It is difficult to tell them what you think." In line with this R1 had the following to say: "I realised that it is difficult to be different, to think differently, and that makes it difficult

to link to people, especially in view of what happened in the past.” In this sense, Robben Island as a setting probably sensitised delegates to South African diversity. As R12 stated: “...Robben Island must definitely stay - Robben Island frames the whole experience.” The historical significance of Robben Island, as well as the tour of the island, directly and indirectly framed the experience against the struggle of past generations and the blustery voyage in which South African society crossed the boundary from an apartheid regime to a democratic society

The difficulty that South Africans have had in dealing with ‘difference’ (see sec 2.2) is still prevalent in society. This is indicated by the difficulty and resistance people experience in dealing with diversity. A working hypothesis might be that the socio-historical context of South Africa makes it difficult for people to link and deal with their differences. This seems to correspond to the notion that the socio-historical context has a major impact on the way a specific society deals with diversity (Bond & Pyle, 1998; Trickett, 1996).

With regard to the methodology, the delegates were immediately (in the opening plenary) confronted with the experiential methodology of RIDE. R5 reported as follows: “When we got there, there was a large group (opening plenary) - you (the consultants) started so serious, I thought ‘what was this about’. I asked ‘who died?’ - from all the excitement of arriving at Robben Island to this.” R7 had the following to say: “You just began with this is the RIDE, you may start, and left it there. It was funny strange but in the end I realized that it was done to get the group to look at diversity itself.” This approach seemed confusing and somewhat traumatic for the delegates. According to R2 : “It wasn’t something new to me ... but what actually was interesting was the approach you used in presenting the course ... the effect of this approach was so traumatic the first day. Although you know what has to happen.”

Another aspect of crossing of the boundary was that the delegates did not enter the system as clean slates, but brought their unique identities (such as race, gender, age, language, religion, company, type of work, marital status, number of wives, and number of children [R2, R3, R5, R7, R9, R10]), personal histories (past experiences, reference system and personal baggage [R1, R5, R6, R9, R11, R12, R13]), emotions (uncertain, fears, anxieties, anger and hate [R3, R6, R7, R11, R13]), needs (safety, acceptance, inclusion and being protected [R2, R9]) and expectations (regarding the environment, training method, roles of the consultants and delegates [R2, R4, R5, R9]) with them.

6.2 ENGAGE THE NEW WORLD

RIDE metaphorically created a 'new world' by bringing together a group of strangers from all over South Africa. Engaging this new world incited emotions and identified needs and reactions in the group that resembled the birth of a group (Wheelan, 1994). The paragraphs below explore the emotions, needs and reactions in more detail.

Engaging this world of strangers aroused a great deal of anxiety among the delegates and gave rise to a need for safety and containment. During RIDE, the delegates primarily sought safety and containment through linking with other delegates. The response of R4 described the desperate effort of delegates to cling to safety zones in an anxiety-filled new world. R4 stated: "If I go back to the intergroup - it was a matter of different groups that just formed, but they started an identity of their own. We clung onto those groups, it was a comfort zone. So what one can learn is the issue of grouping together, people find safety in a group whether it is on the bases of colour or being a woman or man." The notion seems to be that it was difficult, and possibly even overwhelming to 'face' the world by oneself. The delegates contained their anxiety and created a comfort zone by linking up with or attaching themselves to people with similar characteristics. The collective identity so formed, served as a container for the anxiety stirred up by the new world.

The above-mentioned dynamics illustrate Turquet's (1975, p. 94) opinion that "a person enters a society as a singleton, on his or her own, not yet part of a group but attempting to find him or herself and to make relations with the other singletons who are in a similar state." The quest was thus to find ways in which the 'singleton' could link up with and become part of a group. Within the RIDE society most of the delegates seemed to find their place by linking up with other members with similar characteristics. According to R2: "The large group (symbolising society) showed me that it is normal for people to group together according to certain characteristics." Finding a place within RIDE thus related to being included in groups on the base of certain characteristics. This resulted in various splits within the membership, with each split forging its own identity.

During RIDE, some delegates dealt with the anxiety in the opposite way by disassociating themselves

from the rest of their group. This behaviour which is typical of basic assumption me-ness (Lawrence et al, 2000) emphasises separateness and averts any link with the collective. In this regard, R7 (a white woman) stated: “You know I realized that I am not there to represent someone else. I am there for myself.” A possible working hypothesis could be that by propagating her individuality and denying the link with other white people, R7 detached herself from the culpability, guilt and shame that white people seem to be carrying about what happened in the past. This was also relevant if R7's symbolic role as the ‘white Afrikaner mother’ in the RIDE group, which gave birth to the white oppressors, was taken into consideration. Another working hypothesis is that this disassociation of the white mother has more to do with the system than the individual - it could thus indicate how the system at a covert level separated or pushed the ‘white mother’ out of itself. This could be even more relevant if one considers the notion that her company refused her application to attend, and she accordingly had to put in leave and pay the RIDE fee herself, while the other delegates were sponsored by their organisations.

The underlying theme of this section relates to the issue of inclusion and exclusion. The delegates created safety (a comfort zone) and offered containment through the act of linking or being included in groups. Ironically the very act of including also implies excluding (Patel et al, 2000). The anxiety in the system thus probably related to the need to be included and the fear of being excluded or rejected by the group.

The fear of being perceived as deviant by others and thus abandoned, excluded or abused was prevalent during RIDE. The experience of the delegates indicated how traumatic and emotionally depleting it can be if a person is excluded, rejected or denied according to what he/she represent. R9 whose identity was denied, and who was ‘attacked’ and excluded because of her claim to be ‘black’, related her traumatic experience as follows: “It has been traumatic to me ... I have never been exposed to such anger in my life ... on the conference from day one I was being told that I am not black. I lived my whole life knowing that I am black ... The only thing that kept me on the Island on the Tuesday was my dignity and the fact that I felt that I had to get I back.” R15 (a coloured female) also related her pain and anger at being rejected because of what she represented. She had the following to say: “RIDE once again made me aware of what I represent. It awakened a lot of feelings inside myself. The most important was that childhood rejection of being coloured. It made me so angry, probably the most

angry that I was in my entire life. The idea that people relate to you according to what you represent and the colour of your skin totally pissed me off.”

With regards to RIDE, it seemed as if the coloured, Asian and, to a lesser degree, the white females carried the burden of being excluded on behalf of the total membership. It thus indicates how, through the process of projective identification, the ‘exclusion’ of the RIDE group was carried by these subgroups (see sec 4.3.3.1). By locating ‘exclusion’ in these subgroups, the rest of the membership did not have the burden of carrying their own issues relating to exclusion.

The sensitive nature of the inclusion-exclusion issue prompted the need for containment, safety, support and protection. R9 stated: “I think in preparing participants for the experience there should have been more information ... Part of me feels that the facilitator had to come up for me ... maybe you guys should have an extra facilitator for when people break down. Someone to support you through the training,”

6.3 THE TIES THAT BIND

The delegates linked up or grouped together to create a safety zone to contain their anxiety. The following subsections explore the ties that were used to bind the RIDE delegates, as well as some of the dynamics related to these ties.

6.3.1 Primary and secondary dimensions

During RIDE, the focus was predominantly on the primary dimensions of diversity. R3, for instance, stated that he “symbolises a young black male” while R10 mentioned that RIDE gave her the opportunity to look at her different identities “... of being black, of being a woman, of being young and what that means.” R11 mentioned: “You sense and become aware of yourself and the fact that this is me, and I am proud of that. I am proud of being a white Afrikaner male.” R3 further stated: “We group

together to whites, blacks, males, females.” The focus was thus on race, gender, ethnicity and age.

In these dimensions, priority was given to race. Except for R8, all the respondents reported race-related themes. It seems as if South African society could not move beyond race. The focus only moved to gender after race-related issues had been extensively dealt with. In this regard R12 stated: “In the start the race issue was prominent but it seemed to be solved ... it is maybe that race was the most important issue for the group as a whole to address and it was addressed first, and then after that was sorted out to move on to other issues such as gender diversity.” It indicates that there might have been a covert ‘agenda’ during RIDE - first and foremost on the list was race.

South African society seems to be ‘stuck’ in race-related issues. This could probably be understood in different ways:

- It could indicate that South African society, because of the severity of the race-related incidents of the past, is fixated on this issue (see sec 4.3.9). Society may thus still be carrying a lot of unprocessed race-related issues. Consequently this become the frame through which situations are viewed and these issues will recur until they have been listened to and adequately addressed.
- One may also contend that race has become a comfort zone for South African society. It is as if South Africans need to hang on to race and race-related issues in order to survive. According to R3: “It was as if this colour thing was still important for people to survive in the new South Africa.” It could be argued that South Africans, by keeping the focus on race-related issues, skirt the responsibility of dealing with other differences such as gender, sexual preference and HIV status. In order to move forward, South African society will have to relinquish the race trump card which is so keenly played.

Gender seem to be second on the agenda of the RIDE society. In a way it could be contended that gender-related issues were actually ‘female related issues’. R12 (black male) stated: “What worried me (male) is that the gender issues, particularly the women have a lot of problems with it still.” The way the male (R12) disassociated himself from the gender issues is not surprising, considering the idea that

men have traditionally been the oppressor while women have been the oppressed. The above-mentioned comment as well as that of the white male (R14), “I couldn’t understand it and no one could tell me what I did wrong”, illustrated that it is normally the oppressed who have problems or issues with discriminatory behaviour while the oppressor has difficulty understanding what the fuss is all about. The result is that only the oppressed are motivated to address issues relating to discrimination. The notion that gender issues are women’s issues were further emphasised during the intergroup event when an exclusive women’s group formed. R7 mentioned: “The women’s group. The beginning was great, we were all women and it felt cosy. It was funny but that was once again apartheid.”

With the above in mind it could be contended that the male/female split was a result of basic assumption fight/flight behaviour. The need of the women was probably to mobilise and empower themselves to do something about the state of women’s (gender) affairs. This is further supported by the circumstance that the women’s group chose a room with a female consultant - symbolising female authority. The effort to deal with gender issues, however, seemed to be unsuccessful. R7 metaphorically reflected this by stating “that is why I also said in the big group that this baby that was being born, was an abortion. That is how it felt to me, everything that was being built was being broken down again.” The possible reasons for this abortion could be as follows:

- The females were working on gender issues on behalf of the total system. The men seemed indifferent to these issues. In this context it is highly unlikely that any progress could be made since to effectively deal with gender issues both males and females needed to work together. Through disowning gender-related issues and then projecting it onto women, the men did not have the burden to deal with these issues.
- The women’s group, instead of rallying together to argue their point, had so much internal conflict and power struggles that it derailed their functioning. Regarding the power struggle, R7 mentioned: “The whole thing of X (a coloured female consultant) and Y (a coloured female), people said that X pressured Y to take the power (control of the group), it was bad when the two (white women) said in front of Y that X pressed for this.” This may indicate that race related issues were predominant even in the exclusive women’s group, reiterating the view that it seemed difficult to move beyond race.

- A possible reason for the in-fighting between the women could be because they were not used to working alone as a group. They had to face their own 'brave new world' (finding their place, power struggles, roles and authority) before they could move forward as a collective.
- The in-fighting in the women's group could also indicate that the system projected the conflict or struggle into the women's group. The women's group then had to deal with the difficulty and pain of working through the conflict, while the rest of the group were spectators to the battle. The impression that men did not engage in the struggle about gender issues supported this notion - if the men were not there, the women could only fight amongst themselves!

Age, another primary dimension of diversity (see sec 2.1.4), was mentioned, but played a smaller role compared with race and gender. R10 mentioned: "It was astonishing to see how the differences influenced the group, like the age difference, because I look young, people often act in a patronising manner towards me." The authority of the group thus seemed to be located in the 'older' members. It resulted in a parent-child interaction style.

During RIDE, little attention was focussed on secondary dimensions of diversity. This could indicate that the group was prone to deal with people more on a surface level - those characteristics that can be easily seen (race, gender and age). Although issues regarding language (R11) and religion (R7, R5) were raised, little time was spent on these themes. The discussions about religion (1) led to extremely heated debates, and (2) was invariably brought back to race. With regard to the incident where religion was addressed, R7 (white female) stated "... if you take the religion incident where people interpreted what I said I also realised that you have to be careful with what you say. People can easily get hurt or interpret what you say differently. That day was very traumatic for me. If I had a ticket for the ferry I would have left. I even thought of swimming back to the mainland." With regard to the same incident, R5 (black female) stated: "I get excited (she reacted with extreme anger), like when X (white female) spoke - the way I interpreted it was that white people are Christians, black people can't use traditions of Christianity because they are not Christians. Also black people who do not call themselves Christians are heathens. Some people told me that it is not what she meant but that was how I understood it." The emotional impact of the above-mentioned discussion (religion-related) could be seen in the statements of the two delegates (R5 and R7). A possible interpretation regarding the anger and heat

linked to this debate could be that religion as a secondary dimension of diversity (see sec 2.1.4) is more personal or closer to a person than the primary dimensions. It could thus have been seen as a personal attack rather than simply a collective issue. Another possible explanation could be that because South African society has, for many years predominantly focussed on race-related and gender-related issues (as depicted in sec 2.2), issues relating to race and gender has been desensitised - society has the vocabulary and processes needed to deal with these issues. Contrary to this, secondary dimensions of diversity (such as religion) , are still relatively unknown - society has not yet had enough time and exposure to these dimensions to develop a vocabulary and process how to deal with them. As a result, the discussions on these dimensions, often lead to heated/emotional debate.

The way religion was brought back to race again indicated the delegates' stuckness with race. It can be contended that the race related baggage that people carry around, make them extremely sensitive (oversensitive) to any issue that in any way might be related to race. It also became the frame through which behaviour was viewed and interpreted - if a person is treated differently, the first interpretation would for instance be that the behaviour is race related. Because of the fixation on race, other issues (such as religion) would be used as a vehicle for addressing race related issues.

In theory there are multitudes of primary and secondary dimensions or ties that can be used to link people together. In this regard R4 stated that "diversity is not only about colour, or race, there is so much more." In practice, however this proved not to be the case. Although there might be countless primary and secondary characteristics of diversity, the emphasis seemed to be on the primary dimensions of race and gender. The absence of the other primary dimensions and most secondary dimensions of diversity leaves room to debate whether these issues were regarded as being unimportant or whether they were simply too 'hot' to handle. It could also be a case that people only deal with the dimensions that they are used to and know how to deal with.

6.3.2 Being tied

Ties both include and exclude people from specific groups. Through this, various in-groups and out-

groups are created. As mentioned above (sec 6.3.1) race and gender were the primary ties used to include and exclude delegates from the various groups.

These ties not only linked people to a specific group, but also brought with them certain unspoken responsibilities. Delegates were, for example, expected to be loyal to their groups and to protect co-members. Breaking this unspoken contract led to severe emotional reactions from other members of that group. R2 stated: “The large group showed me that it is normal for people to group together according to certain characteristics. The funny thing is that these group expect the rest of the group to back them up. At one stage the coloureds and Indians were extremely cross with me because I didn’t back them up when they wanted me to.”

This made for complex interactions between people since they might, because of their alliance to different groups, suddenly find themselves split and on opposing sides of the fence. R13 vividly illustrated this phenomenon by saying the following: “I (a white female) made a close connection with X (a black female) and I think that I became dependent on her. Then in the plenary she sided with the (black) group and that floored me and I reacted on behalf of my (white) group and she couldn’t understand that. It was only after in the e-group (RIDE electronic mail discussion group) that she acknowledged it, how difficult it is to be an individual but also to be part of a group, and then she made a sincere effort towards me so that we could rekindle what we had.” It again indicated the powerful unconscious impact that these ties might have on mobilising groups and spurring on fight/flight behaviour.

The above-mentioned section links to the survival instinct of individual and group alike (see sec 4.3.1.). In order to ensure their physical and emotional survival individuals link with specific groups (McNeely, 1997). The unspoken contract of groups is that the group will protect the individual, and that the individual will protect the group. Being part of a group thus implies certain unspoken responsibilities to that group.

This theme (being tied) as discussed above, also raised the issue of attachment-individuation (see sec 4.3.4 and sec 4.3.5). The two concepts are often viewed as opposites where (1) attachment implies being tied (consciously or unconsciously) to specific reference systems, attributes, responsibilities and

loyalties (Cashdan, 1988; Elliott, 1994); and (2) individuality refers to the process where a person accepts, develops and integrates his/her own reference systems, attributes and loyalties (Likierman, 2001). R13's comment cited above clearly illustrated this struggle "to be an individual but also to be part of a group". A working hypothesis regarding this issue is that life centres around the struggle to be attached to certain groups, but at the same time to be an individual. The issue is thus not being either a member of a group or being an individual, it is about being both.

6.3.3 Guarding own territory

The ties that differentiated between the in-groups and out-groups were often zealously guarded. During RIDE this was the case regarding the right to being called an 'African' or being called 'black'. The black delegates heavily opposed the notion of white people calling themselves Africans. There was also resistance to coloured or Indian people calling themselves black. In one case, an Indian woman was verbally attacked because she classified herself as black. R9 stated: "On the conference from day one I was being told that I am not black. I lived my whole life knowing that I am black." Both these examples displayed a defensive notion of black delegates to protect their identity. Possible explanations for this behaviour could be as follows:

- It can be contended that the need of white people to be called Africans indicated a need for inclusion in the new South Africa. It could also be a covert need to share the power with the 'real' Africans. It posed a challenge for the black delegates and set the scene for a fight about power and belonging. This could be fuelled by envy-dynamics (see sec 4.3.6). The white people could possibly feel envious towards black people, who are now in power and who have the ability to determine the future of the country. The envy-dynamics would then be aimed at breaking down the power base of the black people - in a sense taking away their uniqueness and trying to make them one and the same. Envy is a theme that has seldom been mentioned in diversity-related literature and warrants more attentions - as indicated by Stein (2000) it mobilises feelings of ill-will and an active desire to damage or do harm to the more fortunate (perceived) party.

- The need of coloured people and Indian people to be called 'black' also links to a need for inclusion (see sec 4.3.4), but probably more importantly it ties in with a need for acknowledgment and recognition that they were also part of the 'struggle' (see sec 4.3.8). R7 related "She (an Indian female) said that her grandfather was also on Robben Island but no one wanted to listen." It is as if the black delegates did not want to acknowledge that the coloured and Indian delegates were part of the struggle and also discriminated against. The attitude was one that black people and Indian/coloured people cannot be treated in the same way because black people were exposed to far greater discrimination. R9 (an Indian female) reacted with intense anger in relating the black delegates' opinion that she (as an Asian) has had it easy during the apartheid years. R9 reacted as follows: "Who the hell does he think he is, to tell me that I am privileged, that I had a soft life, how does he know these things."
- Historically, black people were segregated from other groups and suffered the worst discrimination (Beck, 2000; Thompson, 2001). It could be contended that being 'black' and 'African' was a label that was bought with blood and tears, and united them in 'oneness' (see sec 3.2.2.4). Now it was worn with pride and because of that there was a reluctance to share it with other groups.
- The black delegates' refusal to share these terms (being called African and black) could also reflect on a more general attitude of non-sharing. Hence the working hypothesis might be that black people would not be willing to share the power and authority in managing the country. This links to the core concept 'power' (see sec 4.4.3). The struggle for power and the social, political and economic control associated with power (Gould et al, 1999), seems to be part and parcel of diversity dynamics.
- Other interpretations could be that the way the black delegates protected the use of being called 'African' and 'black' reflect on the fragility of (1) their identity, and (2) their position. In terms of their identity the rigid and mechanistic way of owning and clinging to these terms might indicate a great deal of underlying anxiety about who they are. Being an African and being black serve as identity boundaries and thus contain the identity of black people. If the other racial groups also use these terms (African and black) to describe themselves, this could imply a loss of identity. This theme links to the core concept 'identity' (see sec 4.4.1) - and the need of a individual and group to establish its own unique identity (Ofori-Dankwa & Julian, 2002; Susser

& Patterson, 2001). In terms of their position, it is new for South African black people to be in power (Naude, 2001; Richards, 2001). The fear could thus be that the other groups (white, coloured, and Indian people) might want to take this newly found power away from them. By refusing the other groups the right to call themselves African and black, the black delegates are indirectly telling the other groups that they will neither share their identity nor their position of power. From the above-mentioned it seems as if identity (see sec 4.4.1) and power (4.4.3) are often closely linked to one another - identity could thus be the source of a person or group's power.

6.4 BEING IMPRISONED

Historically, Robben Island served as a container in which unwanted elements of the South African society were imprisoned. In analysing the data, the theme of 'being imprisoned' became apparent. RIDE delegates were imprisoned on various physical and emotional levels. This not only led to a loss of freedom, but also resulted in a diminished capacity to effectively establish relations within a diverse group. The subsections to follow explore the different ways in which members were imprisoned.

6.4.1 Imprisoned on the island

On a physical level, the RIDE delegates were imprisoned on the island for six days. The island setting increased the intensity of the event since the delegates could neither hide nor flee. They were confronted with their task for the whole duration of their stay. As R7 said: "the isle-mainland setting made it much more intense, we could not get away from it, we could not even get away if we were not happy ... because of this water between the island and the mainland. We, our minds were busy the whole time." R7 further related how the setting kept her from leaving after a traumatic day. She stated that "If I had a ticket for the ferry I would have left. I even thought of swimming back to the mainland." The island setting, as R15 pointed out, also made it emotionally more difficult by cutting the delegates off from their support systems or sounding boards. The island setting thus physically and psychologically isolated the

delegates from the outside world and compelled them to deal with their task on their own.

The theme of imprisonment brought to mind the idea that the RIDE delegates were not the first group to be detained on the Island. Linking the RIDE delegates to those who had been there before them could imply that the RIDE delegates had been found guilty by society and sentenced to do time (their own 'struggle') before they could be set free. The guilt of the delegates (symbolising 'those people' who deal with diversity in South African companies) probably related to the collective guilt of South African society and its inability to constructively deal with diversity. Society had thus projected the responsibility to understand and constructively deal with diversity onto the delegates. While the delegates contained diversity on Robben Island, South Africa slept peacefully. If South African society truly wishes to become a rainbow nation in which its difference is celebrated, this projection has to be re-owned. The responsibility to deal with diversity should thus be a collective task shared by all the citizens of this country.

6.4.2 Imprisoned by the past

People seemed to have difficulty letting go of the past - specifically those who had suffered and endured unjust practices. In a sense people live in the past through the act of carrying and passing on their baggage from one generation to the next. This process seemed to repeat itself since nothing was done with the baggage except for passing it on to the next generation. The effect of the baggage was that it served as a stumbling block for people to link across differences. R14 stated: "Important of the experience is that we are living in changing times, but we are carrying a lot of stuff from our history, and it makes it difficult to connect." R11 also emphasized this by stating: "Something that puzzled me is that we keep on living in the past. There is so much baggage that we are carrying from generation to generation and this baggage is actually nurtured by us, keeping us from working together. Why can't we leave the past in the past. What must happen before we can move on. Maybe that is the major issue with this country in that there has been a lot of things that were not just discrimination. How can we get rid of this baggage and move on." The ghost of the past that haunts the present, will thus probably be haunting the future. The unfinished business of the past keeps on sabotaging the relations

between the people of this country. As R1 stated: "... it is difficult to link to people, especially in view of what happened in the past."

This theme of being imprisoned by the past seem to link to the psychoanalytic postulate that unresolved/fixated issues from the past will keep on haunting or returning until it is addressed and adequately worked through (Brown & Pedder, 1991; Rutan & Stone, 1993). It is practically illustrated by a delegate (R9) who stated that she was so busy dealing with "fighting (her) own demons" that she could not see anything else. According to R1: "It was difficult for me to get out of myself. I was busy with the things that went on inside of myself. I was working with the things that has happened." It thus seemed important for people to first work through their personal issues or baggage before addressing interpersonal, group or intergroup relations.

The baggage that people carried seemed to be subgroup specific and relate to the past experiences of the subgroups. Most of the baggage was race and gender related. The baggage also indicated what these subgroups might be carrying on behalf of the system. The following discussion explores the baggage that the different subgroups were carrying.

Black delegates showed and verbalised a lot of anger, rage, hate, aggression, resentment, and mistrust and therefore may still have carried a lot of unprocessed pain from the past. R8 (a black woman) stated the following: "In general there was a lot of rage, aggression and resentment of what happened in the past." R10 (a black woman) also noted: "What also came out is the level of anger that still exists. That it is so powerful and overwhelming. RIDE provided an opportunity to go back to that anger and that was very astonishing." The perception of R6 (a white male) echoed this: "I think the thing that amazed me the most was how deep-seated the hate is amongst the blacks towards whites." The baggage that black delegates was carrying indicates that although black people are now in political control of the country, they still bare the emotional scars of oppression.

While the black delegates seemed to carry the 'violent' emotions (anger, aggression and hate) on behalf of the system, the white delegates seemed to carry the guilt of the past. R3 (a black male) stated: "Another thing that I learnt was guilt. Most of the whites were not really part of the oppression. They

are children to those, but what I learnt is that they feel very guilty of what were done.” The guilt was thus not caused by the things they had done - rather, it was a collective guilt that society projects into them because of the way their forebears treated people of colour.

The baggage of the coloured and Indian delegates centred around rejection, the feeling of not being good enough, and their struggle to find a place for themselves. R15 related: “It awakened a lot of feelings inside myself. The most important was that childhood rejection of being coloured. It made me so angry, probably the most angry that I was in my entire life.”

Another interesting dynamic was that the race groups seemed to relate to past experiences in different ways. The memories of the black, coloured, and Indian delegates were easily accessible and their emotions were still close to the surface, while the white delegates seemed to have problems remembering things of the past. It was as if the white delegates had disassociated the memories that brought them pain - it seemed easier not to recall than to deal with the past. R1 stated: “It is as if whites have a blind spot about the past. There is a resistance to look at what happened and to apologise for the past.” This also tied in with the theme of the ‘white mother’ who detached herself from being white and the accompanying guilt and shame. These dynamics can probably be best explained by using Klein’s (1997) paranoid-schizoid position. The white delegates seemed to have split off their memory of the past (since it is painful to work with the things that happened in the past) and projected it onto the black, coloured, and Indian delegates, who owned and internalised the projection. The result is that the black, coloured, and Indian delegates carried the pain of the past on behalf of the whole system. Klein (1997) referred to this dynamics as projective identification (see sec 4.3.3.1).

Delegates could relinquish the chain of the past through what Klein (1997) called movement to the depressive position. This shift happened when the projections were re-owned - thus when the white delegates re-owned their projections (memory), and started to deal with what had happened in the past (see sec 4.3.3.1). R14 practically illustrated this shift to the depressive position by stating: “A lot of emphasis was put on saying sorry. I could not understand it and no one could tell me what I did wrong. You know one session I sat and I realized that we were part of the system. We really discriminated against non-whites, and that was a big learning for me. The whole thing of saying sorry for what has

happened.” As R14 indicated, the movement to the depressive position also entailed making reparation for the wrongs of the past - in RIDE this manifested through the act of ‘saying sorry’.

6.4.3 Imprisoned by a reference system

From an early age, individuals, as a way of understanding and organising the world, adopt specific beliefs, assumptions and judgements about the world and everything in it (Cox, 1993). From the responses of the delegates it seemed as if these reference systems provided the blueprint for perceiving, interpreting and interacting with the world. It guided the way they thought, felt and acted. R12 noted “that people in South Africa especially from the different race groups have assumptions about one another, some of them are correct but some are not true”. According to R2, “we are accustomed to putting people in boxes; boxes where we expect people to behave in a certain way and to be a specific type of a person”. It could be hypothesised that people’s behaviour is influenced more by their conceptions and beliefs about other people than the people themselves. In support of this R10 stated: “It helped me with my awareness of myself and what I also represent to other people and that other people rather than react to you they react to what you represent to them.”

From this can be contended that the way South Africans interact with one another seems to be profoundly influenced by the beliefs and stereotypes that people have of one another (the different subgroups). A person’s reference system becomes the guideline according to which he/she views and judges the world (Wheelan & Michael, 1993). R7’s statement: “They were late. That is not how I was brought up”, for instance demonstrates how a person’s reference system leads to a judgmental attitude of what is regarded as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Interpersonal and intergroup problems could often be traced back to a lack of knowledge about how other people think and to what they attribute value. R6 stated: “I think the disrespect between diverse people has a lot to do with not knowing how other people operate. We become overcritical and judge other people according to our views.”

Once these reference systems had been grounded and internalised, it became difficult to function outside

of these acceptable way of thinking, feeling or acting (Leach et al, 1995). A person who attached himself/herself to a group was thus socialised within a specific reference system and often got stuck in the way he/she perceived, interpreted and acted only in accordance to his/her adopted frame of reference (Minsky, 1998). R12, for instance, stated: “I was brought up approaching people, the world from the collective. We are part of the collective trying to achieve certain objectives. What I learnt (during RIDE) is more the individual stance - to talk for myself. It was very difficult for me to see myself apart from the collective and it created a barrier for some time, as the days went by it became easier and I was surprised that sometimes my ideas and feelings differed from those in my reference group. But the tension remained between what I experienced and that of my reference group.”

These reference systems often influenced behaviour at an unconscious level without the person being aware of it (Newell, 2002). In this regard R13 mentioned: “But at the same time I didn’t understand the biases in myself and how that influences what transpires between myself and black people, me and coloured and Indian people.”

This above-mentioned section links directly to the core concept ‘reference systems’ (see sec 4.4.2). Reference systems provide a structure through which people view, interpret and structure their world (Newell, 2002). Well established reference systems seem to provide safety and containment, whilst challenging or changing these systems seem to be a daunting task. Challenging one’s reference system unavoidably entail uncertainty and anxiety, and seldom leads to lasting change (Sapir, 1994). As R11 indicated, to challenge and change reference systems demanded determination and hard work. R11 stated: “It is so easy to fall back into our old frame of reference. For instance, if a black supervisor says something to you, it is easily interpreted as a race or power issue instead of an objective observation from a senior”.

This tendency is better understood when taking the pleasure principle (see sec 4.3.2) into consideration. It is much less painful and anxiety provoking to perceiving the world through a fixed reference systems, than it is to challenge and change one’s reference systems. The tendency to opt for short term pleasure would thus inhibit a person’s ability to change his/her understanding of other people (Wachtel, 2001). The implication could thus be that the more rigid a person clings to his/her reference system, the more

he/she is likely to view people according to his/her beliefs regarding those people, rather than viewing the people as they actual are. A working hypothesis could thus be that people are guided as well as imprisoned by their own reference systems and that these systems both consciously and unconsciously influence the way they perceived, interpreted and acted towards diverse others.

6.4.4 Imprisoned by a culture of dependency

The delegates entered RIDE in a dependency mode. This was illustrated by their inability to understand or make sense of things, and their dependency on the consultants to direct everything and to tell them what to do and say. R12, for instance, mentioned: “I was not sure of what you wanted and what I had to say.” R2 also indicated the reluctance of the delegates to take responsibility for their task by stating: “None wanted to take responsibility of the here-and-now baby, to really address the issues.” This prevalent culture of dependency immobilised the delegates for some time and often prevented them from engaging in the task. They continuously pressured the consultants to move from a consultancy stance towards a teaching mode.

This indicated the difficulty the RIDE delegates experienced in accepting responsibility for their part in dealing with the diversity-related issues. They were trying to ‘shift’ the responsibility to the consultants. The fantasy might have been that these ‘gurus’ had to dazzle them and do diversity so that they could go back to their workplace with the answers. The members thus located the wisdom, knowledge and ability to deal with diversity in the consultants. While this projection burdened the consultants with the added responsibility of being the saviour, it left the group dependent, incompetent and disempowered.

The consultants’ refusal to be seduced into the role of the all powerful and wise diversity lecturers, led to frustration and anger in the delegates. R2 stated: “You (consultants) sat there and did nothing, just looked at the group and waited for the group to handle things themselves. The effect of this approach was so traumatic the first day. Although you know what has to happen.” Although the delegates thus knew what had to happen, they refrained from ‘doing it’. This could probably have been because of the pain involved in dealing with diversity issues. Instead of engaging with the task, they were shifting this

responsibility to the consultants to do it for them. It can be contended that the tendency to shift the responsibility of dealing with diversity-related issues is not only relevant to RIDE, but is probably also mirrored in the workplace. The pain associated with owning up and dealing with diversity-related issues explains the resistance that people/organisations have to accept responsibility for these issues. In the same way that the delegates expected the consultants to perform (to do diversity), organisations expect those entrusted with this function to deal with diversity on behalf of the organisation. Using the group-as-whole perspective (Wells, 1985), it would seem that the organisation locates diversity within a specific part of the system, thus leaving the rest of the system free from the obligation of ‘doing’ diversity.

The frustration and anger of the delegates, due to the consultants refusal to fulfil the roles they required, drove them into a state of counter-dependency in which they decided to do things for themselves. As R4 said: “The method that the consultants used was quite strange, they did not give direct assistance or tell us what to do, but it helped to get us more independent. At stages it made us angry that the consultants didn’t do anything, but it gave us a chance, the very people that were fighting gave us a chance to reconcile.” R5 also stated: “You know without you really doing anything people got to talk and to express how they felt and being very honest about it (doing it?).” Through the above-mentioned process, the group moved from a paranoid-schizoid position (where they projected away those aspects that were unbearable for them), to a depressive position where they could re-own their projections and thus re-own their wisdom, knowledge and ability to deal with diversity. The above-mentioned indicated how the delegates moved through the phases of dependency, counter-dependency and independency, towards inter-dependency (see sec 3.2.2.1). It indicates the difficulty and frustration associated with the taking up one’s responsibility to do what needs to be done.

6.5 THE STRUGGLE

The data indicated a struggle between the delegates and subgroups to define this ‘new world’. The focus was on the place, role and importance of the subgroups as well as how they would relate to one another. The scenario was one of conflict, in-fighting and power plays. R14 mentioned that “In the large group (symbol of society) there was kind of fighting for the control of the group”, while R1 also

noted that “There was a lot of milling around, a power struggle for the leadership and specific roles.”

The struggle for power and position was not so much between individuals but rather between subgroups or representatives of subgroups fighting on behalf of their own group. As R3 indicated, the delegates mobilised into subgroups and then battled for their place within this new world. The subgroups (as indicated in sec 6.3.1) primarily formed according to race and gender.

This struggle displayed typical characteristics of the fight/flight basic assumption (Bion, 1961). The tentative and polite mode of when the delegates first arrived was past and now it was down to the business of sorting out issues such as who belonged, what their roles would be, and the power relations in the group. Where the anxiety and fear at the start of RIDE caused an undifferentiated mass (need to link together), the underlying theme of the fight/flight assumption was differentiation (Wheelan, 1994). The conflict and power play associated with this phase provided the opportunity to clarify psychological boundaries between the members. The struggle was an attempt to tentatively outline the structure of this ‘new world’. This aptly mirrored what happened in post-1994 South African society. The country moved from an emphasis on unity (the rainbow nation) to a society in conflict with itself. The focus was on sorting out the power relations and negotiating the place, position, role and ways that the different groups would relate to one another.

The majority of delegates (R1, R2, R3, R5, R6, R7, R9, R13, R15) reported themes relating to conflict or struggle. The initial reaction of the delegates was to move to flight behaviour in an effort not to deal with the unpleasantness associated with conflict. R2 reported as follows: “I experience diversity to be a very touchy subject. RIDE really showed me that people don’t want to face up to what is happening ... everybody tried to avoid the here and the now, the real issues (conflict) but you brought us back to it each time. No one wanted to take responsibility of the here-and-now baby, to really address the issues.” R1 also stated: “People are afraid to address the real issues (conflict). There was a lot of denial of diversity issues and it is only when it explodes that we will deal with it.” The initial reaction of the delegates was thus more towards avoiding the conflict - it was as if they did not want to go through the pain associated with dealing with the conflict.

This resistance could probably be better understood in the light of the destructive power of diversity, and the incredible pain that it can put people through. R15 stated: “RIDE was very real, maybe too real. I think most people were in a state of shock at sometime or the other. I don’t think that I will ever implement this approach. It totally blows my mind. It brings you so close to the surface that you go into a survival mode, so much anxiety.” The conflict that resulted from the struggle between delegates could severely injure, harm or traumatise people. RIDE confronted the delegates with this real, harsh and volatile side of diversity. It provided both insight and understanding, as well as pain and shattered fantasies/naivety. R9 stated: “Maybe I looked at life through rose tinted glass. I don’t know, but what was done that morning changed my life drastically, to the extent that I went in to resign last week. I do employment equity and my work is such that I train people in diversity and I am very passionate about it, and it is as if the experience has taken that away from me and I have a lot of resentment about it.” R9 added: “I went in expecting to be respected by everyone and to be treated fairly and it wasn’t the case.” The experience seemed to indicate that diversity was not rose tinted, it was largely about survival, and that respect and human dignity were sometimes not found in the way that people treat each other. The traumatic impact of being exposed to these ‘realities’ could rock the foundation of a person and leave him/her extremely vulnerable. According to R9: “I have been at work for five weeks now and nothing makes sense anymore. I question everything, it may be part of my learning curve, but my passion should not be taken away from me because three people think something of Indian people ... now when I go in and meet new people I think to myself, my God I can be so vulnerable, a vulnerable individual and it feels like something has been taken away from me. It is not like me to think who is going to attack me.” The incredible pain of being discriminated against and the effect that it had on a person’s life gives a clear warning of the destructive power of diversity.

In light of the above-mentioned experience, the tendency to resist dealing with diversity can be understood by considering the pleasure-pain principle (see sec 4.3.2). Members would rather choose the pleasurable option of avoiding or not dealing with the difficulties resulting from diversity than engaging these problems and painfully working through them in search of solutions. It could be contended that the inclination to avoid working through the difficulties that diversity poses, would freeze delegates and they would not be able to integrate and work together effectively.

According to Wachtel (1999), in order to grow and develop, groups have to deal with their issues/conflict. Although it sounds paradoxical, conflict is helpful in the development of trust since it is easier to develop trust when members know that they can disagree, and will not be abandoned or hurt because of their differences. Working through the conflict that difference brings provides energy, a common shared experience, a sense of safety and authenticity, and allows for more intimacy and collaboration.

This leaves people in a double bind because dealing with their conflict and working through their issues are the only way to move forward to mature collaboration, but the very act of doing so results in so much anxiety that it often immobilises people from doing anything (Newell, 2002). Most groups prefer to bypass the conflict stage of group development and as a result of that remain dependent, insecure, and incapable of true collaboration, unitary action and productive work (Wheelan, 1994).

The following subsections explore the struggle to find a place in society as well as to be accepted in the society concerned.

6.5.1 The struggle to find a place

The struggle centred around the theme of finding a place in a new society with new rules and boundaries. Position, power and status were allocated according to subgroup membership, especially with regards to racial and gender subgroups. The primary positions in this society seemed to be reserved for black and white delegates, while coloured and Indian delegates were a distant second. In the past South African society was characterised by the phenomenon that some people were more equal than others. Whites males dominated the country, and were granted more rights, privileges and opportunities on the grounds of being white and male. The 1994 political transition was about sharing power between all the citizens - making all people equal. This notion of building an egalitarian society, however, still seems far away. Ironically the situation seems to be perpetuated in the new dispensation with the only difference being that black males are now on top. In this regard, R11 observed: “Things have changed but are still the same. They (Indians) only have a new boss (black people).” South African society is thus

still hierarchical - the only difference is that the black males are now on top, and the white males at the bottom. In essence, through sharing the power, white males have actually lost the power.

A possible working hypothesis could be that black people feel entitled to their position because of the pain and suffering they have experienced. They are reluctant to share this position on a conscious or unconscious level and will do whatever it takes to ensure that they stay in power. The dynamics of subgroups looking after themselves and ensuring their own survival, seems to be a theme that repeats throughout the history of the country. It thus once again reaffirms the impact that the survival instinct (see sec 4.3.2) has on the way diverse people relate to one another.

Whites males, once the dominant force, now seem disempowered and more on the sideline. A white woman (R1) expressed her anger at white males “who with their big mouths sat in the group and didn’t say a thing. Only afterwards they have a lot to say but when they are back in the group they are silent. It is as if they are afraid of the black males.” The power of white males seemed to be stripped away. Where they had once been the gladiators of the conference room, they were now reduced to mere spectators, quietly observing the new gladiators battle it out in the arena. It seems as if the white women were blaming ‘their’ men for not protecting them and fighting for their position. A working hypothesis could be that the white men will not fight for their (white people’s) position, the women will probably have to do it. This was evident in the conflict in the women’s group and the way that two white female members of that group challenged their coloured female consultant. As already mentioned, R7 stated: “The whole thing of X (coloured female consultant) and Y (coloured female), people (two white females) said that X pressured Y to take the power (control of the group); it was bad when the two (white women) said in front of Y that X pressed for this.”

Although all the subgroups seemed to be struggling to find a place for themselves in the new South Africa, this seems particularly relevant to the coloured and Indian delegates. From an Indian perspective, the struggle was about defining their identity and position in society. R7 (white woman) stated: “it was as if she (Indian woman) didn’t fit in anywhere . It was as if she was struggling to find a place for herself in South Africa. I don’t know but I can’t tell or invite her on behalf of the government to be part of the country. It felt that she went away from RIDE worse than when she came to RIDE. It was like she

didn't have a place in the country.”

The coloured delegates, as seen above, were struggling with similar issues relating to acceptance, rejection, acknowledgement and fitting in. The general experience was that of being caught in the middle - reflecting the biological ‘constitution’ of being both white and black. The emotional impact of being caught between these two worlds is aptly illustrated by the story (as related by R13) of Eva, a child of a Hottentot and a Dutch minister. R13 related that “Eva was a mix and finally lost her mind because it was so difficult for her to live in two worlds. I saw her everywhere, this struggle to live and cope in different worlds.”

The two worlds in which coloured people were caught could also be described as the world of impurity, and the world of integration.

- *Impurity.* Purity seems to lie in being either black or white. Coloured people thus carry impurity as denoted by the mixture. In symbolising a mixture, coloured people do not fit into either of the worlds (black or white), and because they are impure they are also rejected by both worlds. In this regard R11 stated “I think it is difficult for the coloureds and Indians to decide where they are going to affiliate, in a sense both the blacks and whites rejects them. I also see this in my work situation. They are still in a difficult position.”
- *Integration.* In being both black and white, coloured people symbolise the integration of the two polarities. Being both black and white they have the capacity to fit into either of the two worlds. This ability to fit into both worlds made them an object of envy of both the white and black delegates. R2's (coloured male) experience captures the complexities of being coloured. He stated: “I felt a bit uncomfortable being the only coloured male. It felt like I am in the middle. If I go to the one side, the other would ask. Okay, when are you coming to visit us. Precisely the same when I go to the other side. It was like a power struggle to see where I fit in.”

The competition for the attention of the coloured delegates was not because they really cared about the coloured delegates, but because they saw them as crucial in the power relations between black and white members. R15 (a coloured woman) also related her experience of being caught in the middle of

a power play. R15 had the following to say: “It was as if they used me as a pawn in their power play. I felt like a victim in the situation. They projected a lot of their stuff onto me, it wasn’t nice, but I learnt a lot through that experience.”

6.5.2 The struggle for acceptance and being ‘good enough’

The struggle of the Indian woman seemed to relate to not being ‘good enough’. In the past they had not been white enough to be accepted and now they are not black enough to be accepted. In this regard, R7 quoted an Indian lady saying: “I am too white to be black and too black to be white.” The assumption is thus that being ‘good enough’ is determined by the colour of one’s skin.

This created the image that in the South African society, white and black seem to be the only colours. It is as if being coloured in itself is not good enough. R15 (coloured female) further elaborated on the rejection theme by stating: “RIDE once again made me aware of what I represent. It awakened a lot of feelings inside myself. The most important was that childhood rejection of being coloured. It made me so angry, probably the most angry that I was in my entire life. The idea that people relate to you according to what you represent and the colour of your skin totally pissed me off.”

The need for acknowledgement, acceptance and being ‘good enough’ is vividly portrayed by R7’s account of an Indian delegate and her father: “It is like her father that does some kind of welding, he is the most qualified in this kind of welding in South Africa but he doesn’t get any recognition for this. It is as if she is carrying this on behalf of her father. She wants to be this super being that wants to achieve.” The coloured and Indian delegates seemed to carry the pain of not being good enough on behalf of the larger society. In the past the denigrated parts of society were projected onto and into blacks (see sec 4.3.3.1). In the new South Africa, with its hypersensitivity towards discrimination against blacks, this is no longer a viable option. It is as if society, in the form of the coloured and Indian delegates, found new scapegoats to carry the denigrated part with which it struggles. This tendency to function in a paranoid-schizoid way seem to be perpetuate itself. The more things change the more they stay the same - society seems to be caught in a vicious circle of not being able to carry its denigrated

parts, thus splitting them off and projecting them into a part of the system. The only aspect that changes seem to be the person or entity that has to carry these unwelcome parts (projections) on behalf of society.

The measure in which the different subgroups were accepted and acknowledged was based on their position and role in society. In RIDE, it seemed imperative to first focus on the pain of black people. It appeared difficult for black people to listen to the pain of others in RIDE. R7 related how the black delegates smothered the pain of other delegates as if it was irrelevant. She went on to say: “First we had to focus on the pain of the black.” It is as if our society is in a state of reparation, and the reparation is specifically directed towards black people.

The pain of Indian people were also treated differently. For instance, it appeared to be difficult for the group to listen to the pain of an Indian woman. The Indian woman’s pain was left hanging, while the pain of the black delegates was addressed. R7 stated: “She (Indian woman) said that her grandfather was also on Robben Island but no one wanted to listen. At one stage I asked her, but tell us about your pain and the things that you went through, but no one really listened.”

In concluding this section, it can be contended that the struggle for position as well as the struggle for acceptance and being ‘good enough’ seem to be connected to the core concepts of identity (see sec 4.4.1) and power (see sec 4.4.3). The struggle for position was linked to identity, specifically to the dimensions of race (primarily) and gender (secondary). In South African society a person’s place (position) is thus mainly determined on the grounds of these two dimensions. The power, acceptance and respect afforded to members or groups are further also based on these identity categories. A working hypothesis could thus be that South African society is still primarily a race-based society in which one’s race determines one’s position, power and acceptance. Gender is the second most important dimension in determining the above.

6.6 THE ROAD TO RECONCILIATION, INTEGRATION AND HEALING

Various comments made by the respondents could be linked to the theme of reconciliation, integration and healing. They metaphorically constructed a road towards integration and healing. According to the delegates, the following steps were important in constructing this road:

6.6.1 Dealing with the past

The notion was put forward that reconciliation, integration and healing will occur only once people acknowledge and deal with the baggage of the past. R6 stated: “We can’t just sweep the things of the past under the carpet. We have to deal with it and then go forward as a multicultural society.” This seemed to be problematic since not all people were willing to deal with these issues. According to R1: “... it is as if whites have a blind spot for the past. There is a resistance to look at what happened and to apologise for the past. It is an issue. There will be no reconciliation if there’s no apology. We need to acknowledge what has happened.”

Dealing with the past also implies addressing and working through the emotions related to past experiences. R10 stated: “The issue of diversity seems to be something that people always respond to with anger, and with hurt and pain. What was good is that although I was experiencing these emotions we could work through it and laugh about things. The more that we face, as a society faces these emotions, anger, the more we can work through it”. This theme links to the need to deal with unresolved issues (see sec 4.3.9). Painful or traumatic events are repressed, denied or pushed out of consciousness and will keep on reoccurring or resurfacing until it is worked through (Elliott, 1994; Rutan & Stone, 1993).

In the past, South African society chose a road in which differences were dealt with destructively, and were used to split the country. This theme emphasises the importance that past contextual influences play in shaping what and how things are perceived in a specific society (see sec 4.3.8). According to Trickett (1996) diversity-related behaviour can only be understood, if it is viewed within the context of the culture, socio-historical background, traditions, policies and practices that have shaped the way people perceive, interpret and act upon difference. This road had to be acknowledged because it brought South

African society to the place where it currently finds itself. A working hypothesis could be that in order for South African society to leave the past behind and create a new future, the traumatic experiences of the past must first be worked through.

6.6.2 Moving towards a new tomorrow

The country's historical context has profoundly influenced the way South Africans have perceived, interpreted and acted upon diversity. The vicious circles and self-perpetuating nature of diversity-related interactions have ensured that South Africans were and still are imprisoned in their past (see sec 4.3.7). To a certain extent South Africans can be described as creatures of their own past - a past that keeps people from interacting with one another. In this regard R6 stated: "It made me realize that we have been down a road that doesn't lead to anywhere. We have to go forward ... we have to move ahead. That is really the only option if we want to continue. In our diverse society we have to put the past behind us ..." R5 also warned: "One of the biggest things is that if we don't make a start, nothing will happen. And if we keep doing what we have done we will keep getting the same results."

The implication seems to be that South African society can only move towards a new tomorrow after it has dealt with the past. If action is not taken to deal with the past, these problems will probably be perpetuated and carried over from generation to generation. The only option thus seems to be to choose the 'road less travelled' by breaking current patterns and opting for new ways of relating to one another. As R4 indicated: "South Africa has got so much diversity that we don't have an option, we have to embrace each other in forgiveness." To arrive at the rainbow, a new path to inclusion and the celebration of difference must be taken.

The road under construction seems to be motivated by both a moving *away* from the past (the discrimination, hurt, prejudice, ...), and moving *towards* a new tomorrow. A vital process in moving towards this new tomorrow will be to vividly create the society that South Africans want to live in. Constructing the road without the end in mind, could once again lead South African to places to which they do not want to go.

This sections further propagates the notion that although South African society has to acknowledge past contextual influences (see sec 4.3.8), it does not have to stay in the past - with cognisance of the past South African society should construct a road to a new tomorrow.

6.6.3 Pathways to healing

The respondents mentioned various pathways that could be taken as part of the process of reconciling, integrating and healing of South African society. The first pathway alludes to compensating and remunerating previously disadvantaged groups. R3 stated: “Other blacks might ask the whites to give them something to show that they want to correct the mistakes of the past ... especially whites have the idea that if you hurt someone that you can make it right by just compensating them.” This pathway referred to mechanistically compensating people for the wrongs of the past. The question related to whether compensating the victims of apartheid (as per the remuneration offer to victims involved in the TRC hearings) would be enough to reconcile people and heal the emotional wounds of victims. In the same way questions can be asked whether affirmative action and employment equity policies are enough to “right” the “wrong” of the past. In this regard, R3 stated: “Healing is not only about giving me money because you killed my brother, it is about showing regret and understanding that what has happened is bad and at least in new culture something can be done to avoid it. It is not just about compensation because you can’t pay for a lot of the things that has happened. Money can’t solve everything.”

Although strategies such as affirmative action and employment equity can help to rectify the numerical imbalances of the past, it is not enough to lead to true reconciliation and healing. The process of reconciliation and healing is more complex than simply mechanistically compensating people for past wrongs. The notion was put forward that this can only come about by acknowledging and apologising for the past. R1 stated: “there will be no reconciliation if there’s no apology. We need to acknowledge what has happened.” Reconciliation and healing refer to a total approach that integrates both mechanistic and emotional processes.

The delegates also emphasised the importance of owning up to one’s responsibility (subgroup’s

responsibility) in for what has happened in the country. R5 stated: “I also realised that people must take your part for what happened and the other person must also take their part for what happened. It happened where people spoke but they didn’t own up to their point, but eventually it was a whole lot of debate but they also realised their role in what happened.” It seemed to be a case of ‘remembering’ and ‘re-owning’ their part in what happened in this country. Diversity can only be effectively managed if people accept responsibility for the past as well as for the present and the future.

Another pathway refers to the process of accepting one’s own diversity as well as the diversities that other people bring to the workplace. R15 alluded to the painful process of accepting one’s own difference by stating the following: “ ... it made me realise that being different is okay. Dealing with the situation and the things they threw at me because I am different, and having the courage to walk away from it made me stronger as a person. Although it was painful, learning it helped me to see things more clearly and to better understand why people treat each other in a certain way.”

From the comments there thus seemed to be two alternative roads that could be taken on the path to reconciliation and healing. The statutory road entails a mechanistic process that aims to correct imbalances and level the playing fields. The road paved with forgiveness and integration entails a dynamic and emotional process of owning up to the past, and accepting the challenge of dealing with one’s own as well as other people’s differences and similarities. It might be contended that to reach the rainbow, it is not a case of taking the one or the other road, but probably taking both.

6.6.4 Communication as a vehicle

The vehicle on the road to reconciliation and healing seems to be communication. It enables groups to openly and honestly discuss the issues that separate and alienate them from one another. R6 mentioned the following: “you have to go through a process where people start to talk to one another. The RIDE was really a process of sharing, sharing our perceptions ... ideas ... how we feel ... real dialogue with one another.” R11 was of opinion that anything is possible when people have the courage to talk and address their problems. R11 stated: “A major thing that dawned on me was that we have a lot of anxiety

about issues that threaten us. If we face these anxieties by sitting around a table and discussing our differences or seemingly our differences we can come to a compromise. No problem or difference is so big that it can't be solved. If we just sit down and talk about our differences everything can be solved."

Although communication was seen as a vehicle through which reconciliation, integration and healing could take place, the respondents identified various stumbling blocks that keep people from communicating effectively with one another. R5, for instance, stated: "You know it is hard to get someone to hear what you are saying" while R11 mentioned that in "really listening and trying to understand what the other party is trying to say, so much gets lost." It seems as if the loss in communication was mostly because of impatience (R5), jumping to conclusions (R12), and judging people before really understanding where they come from (R4).

6.6.5 The heart of the matter

Diversity ultimately seemed to touch the heart of the matter - the attitudes that people have towards difference. These attitudes influence people at a conscious and unconscious level. As R4 indicated: "I try to go down to the foundation, the unconscious to try to understand the why ... why am I doing this ... trying to understand the attitudes that I have. These answers help to unravel the attitude that I have about myself and other people." The attitudes that people hold either enable or disable, motivate or demotivate, encourage or discourage people to constructively deal with difference.

Irritation with difference, disrespect toward others and attitudes of superiority were cited as examples of attitudes that disable the process of dealing with diversity constructively. In this regard, R1 stated: "I am struggling with the dynamics of difference. Why do we treat people different. It is as if there is an irritation for people that are not the same. No real respect. We view other people as less worthy no matter if they are white, black, coloured or Indians". She (R1) also pointed out: "What puzzled me was

that it looks like we can't really reach each other. Maybe it's more a case that we don't want to reach each other."

On the positive side, tolerance, love and rejoicing in one's own as well as in other people's difference were seen as enabling forces for constructively dealing with diversity. R13 stated: "The joy is in being diverse and to trust other people to live out their differences. And the funny thing is that made me more tolerant towards my own group as well as to other groups." According to R5: "As a child we are born with this something but when we grow up something happens to it. I don't know what and I have forgotten about it. I realized it again and went back to it. That something is LOVE. If we could just love people ... just love people, but something happens to it."

There are thus conflicting affective dynamics among people or groups that work for and against healing and integration.

6.7 BACK TO THE FUTURE

Although the delegates reported on what a life-changing experience RIDE had been, concerns were raised about how this would be carried forward and implemented in society. The respondents' first reaction reflects a feeling of being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problems and challenges that diversity poses 'out there'. In this regard R4 stated the following: "Helpless, it is so big, what difference can I make." R5's uncertainty about the same issue is reflected in her statement: "I don't know how we were and how to start. When you get back, what do you do? How do you go back and make a difference, if it is only you and the 20 other people. Can you make a difference?"

The answers to the question 'What now?' seem fuzzy and uncertain. Strangely the anxiety associated with this uncertainty on how to deal with diversity 'back at home' seems to be contained by the notion that mechanistic answers are not necessarily what is needed. Rather than leaving RIDE with neatly contained answer about what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and who to do it to, the delegates left the experience with a deeper understanding of the complexities and dynamics involved in this process. The process also

seemed to be more of a personal journey in developing the self as the instrument of change. R10 placed this realisation in context by stating: “Life is so sophisticated, the challenges that I am confronted with everyday are not just challenges for me but are probably challenges for a lot of people. The sophistication of it is that there is no real solution to it. There are no recipes or guidelines, we have to create and recreate guidelines on how to handle these situations.” This was practically demonstrated by R13 comment: “When we came back, we heard a lot of racist remarks and I thought I will immediately react to that, tell everyone of the good friends that I have made, but it will not make sense to them, I can’t try to convert them because of the experience I had. It is okay, it is not necessary to like them, they don’t like you. The one thing is to try to see the individual. It is a personal journey for each of us but it gave me such a lot of strength that there’s no words for that.”

Regarding this journey, R5 stressed that RIDE should be seen as part of a continuous development process rather than an end in itself. R5 stated: “The last thing, if we go to other places we must not act as if we know everything just because we have been to Robben Island. We must have an attitude that we can still learn a lot about people, about our differences. We must keep on growing and developing.” The plea seems to be that South Africans must continuously search for ways to come together and celebrate their differences

6.8 THE CRUCIBLE

RIDE can best be described by extending Beck and Linscott’s (1996) metaphor of the South African crucible to that of RIDE as a crucible. RIDE brings together a diverse group of delegates, who under intense ‘heat’ and ‘pressure’ struggle with themselves, each other and the intricacies of diversity in order to gain a deeper understanding of this field. In biblical terms, it took six days to create the world and everything in it. The fantasy might be that delegates would, within the six days on Robben Island, emerge with cut-and-dried answers that would solve all diversity-related problems. The truth is that neither the delegates nor the consultants were sure what would surface from the crucible. The only thing that could be guaranteed was that the delegates would be involved in an intense experience exploring diversity dynamics - as the marketing letter stated “an experience that will stay with delegates for the rest of their lives”.

The above can also be seen as applicable to the South African scenario. Post-1994 South Africa became a crucible (and probably is still a crucible) which, under extreme pressure and conflict, tried to integrate

and bring the nation together. How long this process will take and what the end result will be is still not certain, but it is clear that the process of change and transformation has begun. Slowly, day by day, the script is being written about where the South African society will be tomorrow.

6.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the results of the research were presented. The chapter reported and interpreted the following themes as identified during the data analyses: crossing the boundary, the new world, the ties that bind, being imprisoned, the 'struggle', reconciliation and healing, back to the future and the crucible.

In chapter 7, the conclusions, hypotheses, limitations and recommendations of the research will be presented.