

**INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AT THE ELIJAH
MANGO COLLEGE: A SOCIOLOGICAL
ANALYSIS**

BY

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SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN THE SUBJECT

SOCIOLOGY

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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November 1996

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This study undertakes to explore the extent to which students at the Elijah Mango College are involved in college decision making structures.

The whole process of “carrying” of major subjects was selected to crystallise the extent of this involvement. The varying patterns of meanings attributed by the students to this phenomena were explored.

By way of a theoretical contribution, the researcher synthesised features of interpretive and resistance theories in education to further explain this involvement.

The empirical component which is attendant on the theoretical elaboration undertakes to explore and capture the patterns of meanings that the students used as a rationale for their reflexive responses to the college decision making structures.

The epistemology underlying this investigation also enabled the researcher to gain a sensitivity towards the meanings formulated by the students.

KEY TERMS:

Resistance theory, relative autonomy, voluntarism, human volition, patterns of meaning, meaning creation, meaning attribution, interpretive view, direct reproduction, positivist epistemology, content analysis.

371.810968296 RESH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed in a variety of ways to the completion of this study. I am extremely grateful to each and every one. It is not possible to mention them all, but the following people do deserve special mention:

- Firstly, to my colleague and promoter, Prof Veronica McKay whose total dedication, commitment, patience and understanding were a source of support and strength to me throughout the project. Veronica, you have infused a notion in me that whatever a person sets out to do, it can be done. You were always at hand and willing to give me with a powerful shot in the arm to fuel my sometimes flagging enthusiasm. A million times thanks, Veronica - for, if you were not a true humanist I would not have completed this study.
- Secondly, a sincere word of gratitude to my co-promoter Doctor Martin Mendelsohn whose advice and guidance was invaluable. Your incisive expertise towards shaping up the theoretical orientation and the empirical stage of this study is much appreciated.
- Dr Norma Romm who assisted in the early stages and also in the final stages of this study has also been a great source of help and inspiration. Your help is greatly appreciated.
- To Michelle Ducci for preparing this text for examination.
- A cordial thanks to the 1993 Student Representative Council (SRC) of Elijah Mango College of Education (EMCHE) who were willing to supply the information required to complete this study. I am most grateful to you all.
- To the selected students of EMCHE whose invaluable and detailed contributions are highly prized

- To my friends and colleagues at EMCHE who have been so supportive and positive.
- To my son Wazukiseni. I am fully aware that you sorely missed my undivided attention during my studies. Now it is all yours - enjoy.
- To my wife and best friend - Nhlanhla, who combines the qualities already mentioned. It is such a strength to have someone so understanding and supportive. I could comfortably breathe in the space you afforded me when I was writing my thesis. Thanks love.
- To my twin brother Mvuyo whose words of support and encouragement were inspirational. Also my younger brother Lunga for his invaluable support which I appreciate so much.
- To my sisters, Nosipho, Lindiwe and Neliswa who were also very inquisitive to know when I would finish.
- To my parents, Nkosiyakhe and Noziganeko, for their support and constant nagging to finish the project so that we could enjoy the sheep braai I promised them.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This study explores student resistance at the Elijah Mango College of Education (EMCHE). Its aim is to uncover the meaning patterns underlying student resistance, both through empirical investigation and theoretically locating student resistance in a particular historical phase. Accordingly, the study is organised as follows:

Chapter 1 entails a general exploration of the sociohistorical background of black education in South Africa. It deals with the inception of Bantu education which was essentially an ideological version of an education system befitting blacks in South Africa. In a general sense, the chapter explores various forms of oppositional struggles, waged by black organisations against the Bantu education system. Against this background, the chapter attempts to show the variety of forms of resistance struggles against Bantu education. It argues that the history of black education has been accompanied by a conflict discourse, essentially occasioned by the exclusion of students from the (intersubjective) discourse of decision making.

The first chapter concludes by indicating that the course of conflict diminished as the discourse of "people's education for people's power" paid tribute to the significance of intersubjective meaning making. This era ushered in the realisation that students were an essential component of joint meaning formulation.

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical foundations of this study. It begins with a discussion of the resistance theory of education and the interpretive perception of educational theory. The chapter also attempts to locate the points of convergence of the two theories. An attempt is made to distinguish the theories selected for the purpose of this study from the Marxist and functionalist views of education. This chapter also endeavours to highlight areas of parallel between the theories of direct reproduction and the positivist epistemological approach, and rejects these theories as offering adequate theoretical explanation for the type of resistance being explored.

Chapter 3 offers a detailed history of EMCHE wherein this investigation is undertaken. The history of EMCHE displays the characteristic hallmarks of the national students' oppositional struggles, more especially of the period of people's education for people's power. The chapter purports that the struggles that

EMCHE students embarked upon provided definite indicators that they were only prepared to use the boycott strategy as a last resort.

Chapter 4 deals with the research design, the statement of the problem and the elucidation of the hypothesis. It is hypothesised that the changing meaning patterns the students formulated in an atmosphere characterised by the absence of dialogue constitute the basis for ongoing oppositional struggles at EMCHE. Based on this hypothesis, the research design aims at exploring the different patterns of meanings the sampled students formulated with regard to the various conflict situations (resistance) at EMCHE.

In an endeavour to capture these different meaning patterns, the research component undertakes a content analysis of the data obtained through a series of unstructured interviews and a batch of written accounts of the resistance by students.

In **Chapter 5** the findings, (patterns of meanings) acquired from the students submissions either written or verbal, are analysed and presented.

Finally, **chapter 6** deals with the general conclusions of the research findings.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

AEM	African Education Movement
ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
ATASA	African Teachers' Association
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
AZASO	Azanian Students' Organisation
BC	Black Consciousness
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
CATA	Cape African Teachers' Association
CNE	Christian National Education
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
DET	Department of Education and Training
EMCHE	Elijah Mango College of Higher Education
NCC	National Crisis Conference
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NP	National Party
SACP	South African Communist Party
SASO	South African Student Organisation
SAYCO	South African Youth Congress
SPCC	Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee
SRC	Student Representative Council
TATA	Transvaal African Teachers' Association
TLSA	Teachers' League of South Africa

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1:

THE EMERGENCE OF BANTU EDUCATION

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CHAPTER 1

THE EMERGENCE OF BANTU EDUCATION

1 INTRODUCTION

The conscious or unconscious exclusion of the students from the decision-making machinations in their schools has been one of the hallmarks of the South African education system. One of the outcomes of this is that the educational authorities were deprived of the opportunity to gain a richer understanding of the diversified process of meaning creation and attribution by students.

As early as the 1880s John Tengo Jabavu spoke of a "people's oriented education" (cf Mabogoane 1990:23) which, he argued, should encapsulate the process of engaging students in the problems and challenges affecting their education. According to McKay (1990:12) this people-oriented ideal for education emerged at various periods in the history of South African education, and re-emerged at the National Consultative Conferences (NCC) on the crisis in education in December 1985 and March 1986. It is against the background of the importance of students engagement in the design and understandings of their learning process that "resistance" at EMCHE is to be comprehended.

However, in order to contextualise the student struggles at EMCHE, it is necessary for this chapter to explore the broader historical context of education in general and education resistance in particular. As will be shown later in this study, resistance as inspired by the students at EMCHE assumes variety of "shapes" and "forms". This can be attributed to the human capacity for consciousness and the human ability to question, interpret and act.

However, as will be discussed, action and resistance do not speak with one voice. The chapter will highlight some of the multivariate responses, and forms of resistance to Bantu education. This will form the context against which the analysis of student resistance at EMCHE can be counterpositioned.

The chapter begins by looking into the emergence of Bantu education. This form of education became official state policy after it had been formulated in a more scientific and systematic manner by the Eiselen Commission in 1953. Its enactment had particular consequences regarding how Black education was run, ordered and directed.

The chapter also examines the earlier resistance struggles to Bantu education as orchestrated by the ANC and its allied teacher associations, and also by parents. It is indicated that these struggles were an attempt to thwart the inferior tenets of Bantu education.

In the light of the above it was imperative that the chapter consider some views on the rationale for and consequences of the 1976 student upheavals. The chapter argues that the riots constituted a turning point in the history of the education system in South Africa. This was occasioned by the fact that students, for the first time in history, occupied the vanguard position in the struggle for a better education system. This was in contrast to the anti-Bantu education struggles of the 1950s which were under the strong influence of the adults in the ANC as well as teachers and parents.

The chapter further elucidates various views of the historical phases of resistance in education. However, whilst not purporting to offer a detailed historical account of resistance against black education, this chapter does purport to offer an account of how resistance against black education in the period preceding the emergence of the people's education initiative (in the latter part of the 1980s) as a period underlining the essence of how the attribution of meanings devoid of intersubjective considerations might lead to conflict situations. (This will be fully explained in ch 3.)

As this chapter argues, the period of "people's education for people's power" provided a forum in which the different and often conflicting patterns of meaning could be intersubjectively and reflexively resolved. This era, as will be explained in this chapter, attempted to confine the oppositional struggles while negotiations for constructive meaning making between all stakeholders continued with relative calm.

It is in terms of this characteristic, that the chapter suggests that the struggle for a people's education differed from earlier resistance strategies against Bantu

education. The call for people's education was a call for more than "negative opposition" -- it was also a call that proposed a vision of what education "ought to be". As Wolpe (1988:210) points out, it proposed a "positive creative alternative" - an alternative where meanings can be intersubjectively formulated on a continuous basis.

It is against this background that the following section aims to outline the historical-political occurrences that brought about resistance to education in general and to education at EMCHE more specifically.

2 THE PROMULGATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF BANTU EDUCATION

An unprecedented historical event unfolded in South Africa when the National Party (NP) swooped to victory ahead of the United Party in 1948 under the leadership of Dr Nico Malan. This era introduced a watershed in South African history as the apartheid policies of the NP were put into operation with devastating effect and precision. These policies entailed the separation of the South African people into ethnic entities which had, in the end, assumed autonomous development in their separate homelands for the bulk of black South Africans in an area which, in total, constituted only 13 percent of the land in South Africa.

2.1 The Eiselen Commission's proposals on education

As an instance of these separatist policies, the National Party government appointed the Eiselen Commission in January 1949 to make plans for the education of the Natives as an independent race. During this time, the education of the Natives was mostly under the jurisdiction of the missionaries. In spite of many criticisms against the missionaries with regard to their contribution towards the emasculation of the Black cultural heritage, the education they provided was most welcome to Blacks. This view is crystallised by some of the views quoted by Christie (1985:61) who indicates:

... without these mission schools, Blacks would have received no education. [Also] ... the missionaries provided education for Blacks at a time when there were few government schools. ... most of the really prominent Black people went to mission schools. The missionaries deserve praise for what they did.

Christie (1986) attests to the view that the missionaries came to South Africa to spread the Gospel and teach Christianity. In the process of "Christianising" blacks in South Africa, these missionaries deemed it their "sacred task" to introduce formal education among the Natives since this was in tandem with Christian value systems. However, their endeavours were hampered by the appointment of the Eiselen commission. In this regard, Christie (1985:78) contends that the appointment of this Commission "spelt the end of mission control over African education. This is consequential to one of the stipulations of the Bantu Education Act (as indicated by Kallaway 1984:171), namely that "all Black schools would have to be registered with the government, and that the registration would be at the discretion of the Minister". According to Kallaway (1984), this measure empowered and actuated the government to discontinue any educational programmes fostering aims and objectives contrary to its own. For instance, the admission procedures in the mission schools did not take cognisance of ethnic affiliations, for African students in particular. To further substantiate this view, Christie (1986:74) cites Horrel (1963:54) who says that where student admission was not influenced by race, it was described by Lovedale, the Inspector-General of the Cape, as "probably the greatest educational establishment in South Africa". After the Eiselen Commission had made known its findings, the government was forced to close down these schools because their operations were against its policies of keeping blacks and whites separate and at the same time keeping black ethnic groups apart. Quoting one of the Commission's recommendations, Rose and Turner (1975:251) report the following:

The schools must give due regard to the fact that out of school hours the young Bantu child develops and lives in a Bantu community, and when he reaches maturity he will be concerned with sharing and developing the life and culture of that community.

This quotation is elucidated by Behr and Macmillan (1966:314) who are forthright in their explanation of the effect of Bantu Education in the schools. They contend that schools were as far as possible, reorganised on fragmented sectionalist or tribal lines. According to them, this was designed to meet the development plans of apartheid.

2.2 The Bantu Education Act of 1953

In this regard, Christie (1985:81-82) points out that the Bantu Education Act drew a strong condemnation from the churches across the board with the exception of the Dutch Reformed Church. The churches generally believed that Commission's recommendations on education denied blacks the right to participate in areas outside the homelands. Providing a succinct example of this widespread anger, The Church of Scotland (quoted in *SA Outlook* 1955) stated the following:

We believe that Christian education must seek to prepare members of every social group to assume their full share of adult responsibility in the service of the country.

It is therefore apparent that the Bantu Education Act of 1953 empowered the NP government to create conditions that made it difficult for the missionaries to control and/or participate in African education. Faced with these circumstances, some churches steadfastly refused to register their schools with the Department of Bantu Education. Many opted for the most extreme option of closing down their schools as a matter of principle. For example, according to Christie (1985:83) some churches strongly argued that:

If the Minister of Bantu education cannot entrust the training of African teachers to Christian missions, we ... cannot and will not entrust our land or our buildings to him or his department for educational purposes. We believe that the true welfare of the African people is being denied by a political theory.

Endeavouring to explain the sombre but angry mood of the missionaries and other stakeholders in African education, Majeke (1952:28) argues that the this Act was effected without prior consultation. He points out that it shows that the NP government was determined to go ahead with its vision of the future and of separate education for blacks based on the emerging vision of Christian National Education (CNE). Molteno (in Kallaway 1984:88) also argues that the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was an attempt to present the policy of Native education in a systematic and integrated fashion "with as little opposition as possible."

According to Kallaway (1984:89), the Act, coupled with the recommendations of the Eiselen Commission, systematically prevented African education from being placed under the aegis of the missionaries who were portrayed as eroding the diversified rich and substantive African culture, and thereby lessening the functional contribution of an African in his or her environs and society. The implication of this was that the African child should have confidence to defend and perceive his or her ethnic-oriented culture as superior to other ethnic cultures. This, Kallaway (1984) argues, was a powerful argument designed to persuade and cajole the stakeholders (especially the Africans) to acquiesce that they are a separate entity and at the same time to agree to their exclusion from the mainstreams of life in South Africa. In this regard Christie (1985:78) quotes the National Party politicians as saying:

... Bantu education should be brought under the direct control of the government and should be used to rebuild and extend Bantu culture, also, on the basis of cultural differences, people should be separated in education and other spheres of life.

She further refers to the way in which the Act was justified by indicating that:

... the schools must give due regard to the fact that out of school hours the young Bantu child develops and lives in a Bantu community and as he reaches maturity he will be concerned with sharing and developing the life and culture of that community ...

It could therefore be discerned from the systematic and uncompromising manner in which the Act was applied that a particular child with a certain sociomental disposition is required in order to nourish the particular and specific purposes of the "system". The system's educational expectations of a black child are articulated by Kallaway (1984:86) who says that:

... the primary school syllabuses, which were enforced in 1956 stressed obedience, communal locality, ethnic, national diversity, piety and the identification with rural culture ...

In terms of this it was further suggested that Native education should be grounded in the life and world view of the whites, particularly the Boer nation as the senior trustees of the Natives (see Institute for Christian National Education 1948).

It is quite patent at this point that the rationale for the inception of the Eiselen Commission was primarily to maintain and sustain the NP hegemony but that it could only be achieved through the balkanisation of Africans along tribal/ethnic lines as far as possible. This could best be started and perfected at school where it would be optimal for the child, through this process, to identify himself or herself with his or her ethnic/tribal environs. In this way, the dream of socially stratifying race and ethnic groups in South Africa was finally realised.

It is therefore apparent that ideologically, Bantu education clearly envisaged the separation of Whites and Blacks in political and economic structures, and promoted this ideology through schooling.

In the following section, the period subsequent to the Act of 1953 is considered.

3 THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE BANTU EDUCATION ACT OF 1953

While this chapter highlights the historical phases of resistance regarded here as being important in black education, it is necessary to start with a disclaimer. The resistance discussed here should be seen as being indicative of the theoretical argument which will be developed in chapter 2. It is argued that the various forms of resistance as discussed below bear witness to the importance of human volition and to the importance of dialogue in the enactment of history.

The various stages of history are presented both as a social context for the resistance of students at EMCHE but also as a foreground emphasising that humans, as social actors, co-construct their life worlds and their history in ways that are not predetermined. While the context of history and social exigencies influence people as actors, they by no means confine them to act in predetermined ways.

The enactment of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 brought about the expansion of the elementary schooling (primary schools). This was made possible through

the institution of double sessions and the "platoon systems" as a way of accommodating the increasing numbers of black pupils. A number of adverse implications were associated with the use of schooling facilities by two groups in the two sessions of each school day. For example, Kallaway (1984:89) argues that:

... this form of stratification necessitated the employment of more under qualified teachers, paying of meagre salaries to Black teachers, and discriminating even further against women teachers and making students responsible for cleaning

However, the increasing numbers of scholars in the homelands had wider ramifications than the platoon system. One of the policy realities of the Act meant that "all the post-primary educational institutions were as far as possible allocated away from the so called White areas" (Verwoerd 1954:51). This line of action was expressly designed to encourage all those African children yearning for education to flock to the reserves. However, the distant location of higher institutions of learning from the so-called "African townships" had a dampening effect on the majority of those needing further education because this condition had ruinous financial implications, embodied in removing the child from his or her home and establishing a home for him or her in the "reserves". As a result, parents chose to utilise the "choice" offered by noncompulsory education, and children were not sent to school.

In this regard, Verwoerd who was Minister of Native affairs and thus responsible for the implementation of Bantu education in 1954, pointed to a clear relationship between schooling and the so-called "reserves", namely that:

... More institutions for advanced education in urban areas are not desired. Deliberate attempts will be made to keep institutions for advanced education away from the urban environment and to establish them as far as possible in the Native reserves. It is the policy of my department that education would have its roots entirely in the Native areas and the Native environment and Native community. The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects.

However, with families in the so-called "townships" and with the policy of the government to not build sufficient hostel accommodation, scholars found themselves having to look for their own accommodation. Lalendle (1975:3) pointed out in this regard that the impressionability of these hapless pupils made them more susceptible to a variety of social ills such as drug abuse, unwanted pregnancies, cohabitation, and so forth. He further indicated that these were a direct result of the apartheid policies. This, according to him, was evidenced by the fact that these children found themselves away from the guidance of their parents at the time they needed it most. Again, the nonavailability of schools in the so-called "townships" created an enormous burden for these children more especially during and after the aftermath of the student uprisings in 1976.

The problem of children enrolling at schools in the homelands was compounded by the homeland administration. The Bantustan administrations would, through the principals' labelling of the students as "urbanites" and as the architects and instigators of student uprisings, deny them admission as a consequence. This is corroborated by the researcher's experience at the University of Fort Hare where, after "independence" in 1981, students from outside the borders of Ciskei were officially required to apply for study permits. This was seen as an overt move to stem the tide of the so-called "intruders" from entering the Ciskei. This move was also designed to preclude students taking up leadership positions during periods of resistance. It can thus be argued that this practice constituted one of the latent functions of apartheid-inspired education system.

The foregoing discussion accentuates the condition that education available to the Black sector of the populace had to be perceived against a backdrop of conditions and attitudes that were not immediately educational because this was fundamentally part of the broader state reaction to the potential danger of *swart gevaar* (Bantu danger). The *swart gevaar* theory was encapsulated in the apartheid system and it is basically a fear that Africans, by virtue of their numerical superiority would swamp the Afrikaners as an independent race and also bring their culture to a state of oblivion. This is further countenanced by Kallaway (1984:89) who points out the *swart gevaar* fear was pre-eminently triggered by "the political consequences of the development of a massively oppressed and ultra-exploited Black proletariat concentrated around the cities [and who] were resultantly recognised and feared by the National Party."

This fear was exacerbated by the large scale organisation of Africans into political and trade union movements around the litany of the segregationist apartheid laws. This induced further consolidation of the protectionist apartheid laws as a matter of urgency. In this regard, Molteno (in Kallaway 1984:92) indicates the following:

The entire process of the withdrawal of such fundamental political rights was completed by the formulation of the Bantu Self Governing Act of 1959.

He points out that the motivation behind this was to entirely strip blacks of their South African birth right so that their political claims to a greater "white" South Africa was diminished. He argues (in Kallaway 1984:92) that the process of Bantuisation and retribalisation would effectively obstruct the further development of Black nationalisation but that these fears as perceived by the NP ideologues would be effectively addressed by the form of schooling system, that is, Bantu education. Feit (1967:151) points out in this regard that this form of education would make the Bantu child identify wholeheartedly with his or her homeland and would also be prepared to assert the superiority of his or her own tribe over other tribes.

In the sections which follow, the metamorphosis of Bantu Education will be considered. However, it is contended that in spite of this metamorphosis, the essential philosophy of Bantu education remained.

4 ANC CAMPAIGNS AGAINST BANTU EDUCATION

4.1 Background information

Resistance in education both precedes and follows the Bantu Education Act of 1953. In the following section, by way of background information, the period of resistance prior to the Act will be discussed. For the most part, the resistance outlined, will be ANC-inspired resistance.

Resistance as a volitional activity has been prevalent in South African education. For instance, African school boycotts can be traced as far back as the 1920s when grievances centred around poor facilities and food. The organisation responsible for spearheading such issues was, the ANC-inclined National Union of African Youth, was founded in 1939. However, facilities and food were not the only issues

that were a source of concern to African students. Bot (1988:15), for instance, indicates that in 1944 parents were involved in the persuasion of pupils of Brakpan mission school to boycott classes as a means of protesting against the education department's dismissal of a politically-active school teacher. Bot points out in this regard that in the same year the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) was formed with the sole purpose of establishing and heightening a sense of nationalism among Africans. It was for this reason, *inter alia*, that in 1949, the ANCYL established a shanty school in Newclare for children who had been refused admission to local schools due to a lack of classroom accommodation. In the same year, ANCYL launched both the night school and literacy campaigns. The establishment of the school can be regarded as one way of acting and can be seen as a form of resistance against the system of education. This can be used to support the view that people resist (respond) in a variety of ways.

4.2 The ANC's plan of action

As far as Bantu education was concerned, there was implacable opposition from the outset. For instance, Mathonsi (1984:8) argues that the ANC, with political foresight and historical hindsight, was the main vehicle that propelled a massive campaign against Bantu education in the schools. On 8 May 1954, the ANC, as the chief functionary with its associated organisations of the congress alliance (the South African Indian Congress, The South African People's Organisation and the White Congress of democrats) launched a campaign dubbed **Resist Apartheid Campaign Against Bantu Education**. This crusade against Bantu education precipitated the establishment of alternative schools in and around Witwatersrand. This is further argued by Lodge (1984:43) who indicates that in Alexandria an independent primary school, Haile Selassie School, which was founded in 1954 played; a pivotal role in the 1955 boycott.

Molteno (1984:14) suggests that the rationale behind these implacable campaigns was that the people construed them as part and parcel of the imposition of passes, Bantustans and the whole litany of the repressive apartheid laws. What is discernible in these ANC-inspired campaigns is the holistic approach in which all sections of the African oppressed masses were sensitised and galvanised to resist apartheid laws and practices of which Bantu education was the main target.

4.3 Ways in which the state's repression of the ANC-inspired campaigns for alternative education were received

These crusading campaigns were not without mishaps. For instance, Molteno argues that the enthusiastic response by the ANC to set up independent schools was derailed by the police with the powers vested upon them by the Bantu Education Act. In an attempt to circumvent the Act, the ANC launched the cultural clubs on a massive scale. However, these were also crushed by the state. Notwithstanding this, Christie (1985:231) argues that the clubs, during their short existence, provided an opportunity for teachers to move away from the restrictive and parochial syllabus content and classroom to try and teach subject content that was in direct contrast to the prescriptions of the Bantu Education Act. This provided an opportunity for the teachers to explore the language of possibility with the pupils.

However, Christie points out that the state intervention made it extremely difficult for these clubs to make any meaningful impact on the destined communities. One of the reasons she advances for this negligible impact is that the alternative programmes were infrastructurally underdeveloped compared with the infrastructure offered by government-controlled schools. Her argument concurs with that of Hirson (1979:48) who indicates that the African Education Movement (AEM), formed under the aegis of the ANC, survived government harassment until 1960 when its leaders were impelled to impart informal education because the state had a monopoly over formal education and a formally distributed infrastructure.

In its attempt to sustain the lifeline of the resistance against Bantu education, the South African Communist Party (SACP) launched a nationwide campaign for the institution of night schools. *Work in Progress* (1980:5) argues that this campaign was aided and abetted by the similar night school ventures of the ANCYL. In this regard, Christie (1985:227) points out that the national executive of the ANC decided in December 1954 to spearhead an indefinite school boycott from the beginning of April 1955.

It is necessary at this point to reiterate the disclaimer with which this chapter began: Resistance is an outcome of the fact that human beings have the capacity to assign different interpretations to the meaning patterns they encounter in their social milieu. This capacity manifests in a variety of ways - as has already been indicated.

4.4 Large-scale school boycotts

Therefore, the main argument in support of an indefinite boycott rested on the understanding that "Bantu education was first and foremost part of the ruler's strategy to countenance the rise of the African nationalist consciousness" (Molteno 1984:16).

By targeting school-going children, Bantu education had a better chance of destroying the entire future generation through the incapacitation of its thinking abilities. The different campaigns of resistance were designed to arrest and reverse the destruction of this process. They were based on the belief that, in the long run, they would guarantee a better education.

These struggles between the people and the state took the fiercest form of conflict. However, the state's response to the conflict is aptly described in *Work in progress* (1980:6) which indicates the following:

Dr H.F. Verwoerd's response was the mass expulsion of approximately 7 000 students who persistently refused to return to the schools controlled by the department of Bantu education ...

The call for the large-scale boycotting of education did not manifest in a single act. Christie (1985:227) stresses that the impact of the boycotts varied from region to region. This variety in response can be clarified by Wolpe's (1988:201) indication that "although many students observed the boycott at the behest of their parents, support for it was by no means unanimous."¹

One of the reasons for this diversity of response is offered by Troup (1977:220) who argues that in acknowledgement of the ANC's problematic task some parents were faced with no choice but to expose their children to Bantu education.

She explains that:

¹ While it is clear that the ANC inspired campaigns had a moral appeal to the consciousness of the people, they had very little success in terms of concrete implementation because they were putting themselves against the financially viable, and infrastructurally strong South African government.

... since - only one African child in every two of school going age was actually attending school, it was understandable that parents were unwilling to give up an opportunity to get even some inferior education for those lucky enough to have the opportunity ...

This introduced a new dimension in the resistance against Bantu education. It meant that although condemning Bantu education, many parents refused to participate in the ANC school boycotts on the grounds that they did not believe their children should be used as pawns in the struggle against Bantu education - that even Bantu Education was better than no education at all. While this stand had the potential to undercut gains made as a result of the resistance struggles against Bantu education, it once again reveals the power of human volition.

Nevertheless, it is argued by Molteno (1984:97) that the resistance against Bantu education continued after the collapse of the ANC-sponsored campaigns. He points out that students sustained a simmering rebellion which kept on emerging at different times and in different places. This state of affairs was triggered by the different experiences and circumstances that students encountered at different times in history. As a consequence, this heralded a marked shift away from the idea of permanent school boycotts which meant that any proposed strategy would be implemented in the schools, but that the teachers would continue to refuse to cooperate with the Bantu education systems, methods and objectives. This was in apparent response to Dr HF Verwoerd's call that "all children who were still absent from school by April 25, 1955 would receive no further education" (Christie 1985:228). Because of the parents' inconclusive stance, the ANC was compelled to abruptly terminate the boycott.

It is clear that the government was progressively becoming intolerant of the ANC sponsored campaigns against Bantu education. Hirson (1979:48) indicates that the campaigns spearheaded by the ANC survived severe government harassment until 1960 when the ANC, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the SACP were summarily banned because of their resilient opposition to Bantu education.

Nevertheless, resistance against Bantu education continued in spite of strong state repression. In relation to this Molteno (1984:96) indicates that the African people were from the outset stringently opposed to Bantu education because they construed it as inextricably enmeshed with other apartheid-based legislation such as the Bantustans, pass laws, et cetera.

5 TEACHER-PARENT PROTESTS AGAINST BANTU EDUCATION

Resistance to Bantu education was by no means limited to the participation of school children. Teachers and parents who regarded themselves as being of strategic importance to the Africanist community felt obliged to also feature in the programme of action against Bantu education. One of the reasons for the emergent participation of teachers was embodied in the explicit aims and objectives of Bantu education, namely that Bantu education was designed to transform the whole black nation into a state of permanent servitude.

While the schools were seen by the government as the obvious targets because they were the conduit through which generations of African children would pass, the resistance of teachers was of crucial importance. Molteno (1984:96) argues that in response to this wide-scale application of Bantu education by the state, teachers mounted the sternest opposition, mainly, through four organisations: the Cape African Teachers' Association (CATA), the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA), the Transvaal African Teachers' Association (TATA) and Teachers' League of South African Convention (TLSA).

The entry of teachers to the "struggle" was significant in shifting the site of struggle. Molteno (1984:14) points out that in 1952, CATA and TLSA joined forces to form a new body known as the Cape Teachers' Federal Council (CTFC). The objective was to consolidate the campaigns against tribalised schools and to prosecute the struggle for equal education in a democratic South Africa.

The crisis that now confronted teachers was that the "new" education system made their once noble services as teachers in the community somewhat worthless and futile. In an endeavour to restore a sense of purpose and dignity in the black education system, teachers demanded a single and nonracial education department. This call was in stark contrast to the government's educational master plan for the country which was ethnically devised to serve the interests of each ethnic group.

The increase in teacher involvement gave them tremendous leverage. For example, they were able to successfully boycott the ostentatiously organised celebrations for the Bantu Authority Act in the Cape and to simultaneously refuse to participate in the so-called "apartheid structures" such as school boards and school committees. Such participation would have been conceived as collaborationist in stature. In

1952, CATA convened a national conference to specifically look into Bantu education and its implications. The outcome of this conference was a call to "all teachers and parents to do every thing in their power to oppose the Herren volk's schemes for their enslavement" (Lodge 1984:46). While teachers had begun articulating the ideal of community participation and involvement in the struggle to bring about a single nonracial education system in South Africa, their crusades did not go unnoticed by the government.

McKay (1990:18) points out in this regard that CATA's active political profile attracted state attention and the Superintendent General of Education in the Cape and Dr Eiseien himself publicly threatened to deal accordingly with those teachers who participated in politics. The implication of this apparent threat by the state was that education as a "sacred" entity and politics should not be fused. In carrying out this threat, the state (according to Christie 1985:226) immediately reversed its recognition agreement with CATA and instead bestowed this recognition on a newly established Cape African Teachers' Union. She goes on to say that this vacillating state response was simultaneous with the dismissal of politically militant teachers. According to *Africa in perspective*, in an attempt to thwart the determined state response, a people's school for boycotts was launched. According to Christie (1985:226), this occurred in the context in which TATA, in concert with other teacher associations, convened parent-teacher associations' meetings to mobilie against Bantu education. However, she points out that their activities had less impact than those of CATA - hence only a few of them were dismissed.

The government got a firmer grip on black education when TATA, while condemning Bantu education in 1955, objected to having anything to do with the ANC's school boycott calls, on the premise that children should not be used in the struggles against Bantu education because "even Bantu education is even better than no education at all" (Hyslop 1988:17).

With regard to the perception of the noninclusion of students in politics, it is argued by Feit (1967:163) that the ANCYL leadership called for the rejection of:

... this non-political nonsense that talks of the poor children as if they were separate from their parents and the system. The African children have no separate destiny from the African nation. If Verwoerd is oppressing the

African people with pass laws, low wages, etc he cannot be an oppressor of the parents and the benefactor to the children.

In this regard, concern was also voiced about the fact that the TATA strategy was and is still being constantly employed by the government to constantly divide the forces of resistance against Bantu education and related apartheid policies. Nevertheless it is reported in the *Teacher Unity In South Africa* (2) "that the powerful presence of student organisations worked effectively against this divisionist perception".

In spite of dissension on the part of TATA to the question of student involvement in the broad-based resistance against Bantu education, there was principled unanimity against the introduction of Bantu education. As Christie (1985:227) puts it, the teachers' campaign was an essential part of the communities' stratagems to cripple Bantu education. She bases this observation on the premise that Bantu education was one of the six issues encapsulated in the Resist Apartheid Campaign. The other issues mentioned by Christie (1985:227) are the pass laws, the Group Areas Act, the Native Resettlement Act, the Suppression of Communism Act and the various antitrade union measures. This is basically the reason why some teachers refused to infuse in their students the ideology of their rulers, and parents boycotted the Bantu School Boards and Committees as an expression of their conviction to refuse to collaborate voluntarily in helping to run an oppressive school system.

In this regard, Bot (1985:15) also argues that in 1952, parents organised a boycott at Orlando High School in Soweto, as a sequel to the expulsion of three teachers opposed to the Eiselen recommendations. This is an indication of the severity of the resistance. Molteno (1987:14) indicates that many of the parents initially refused to send their children to Bantu education schools. Molteno goes on to say that in certain instances, the parents went so far as to burn the schools down. This is symbolic of the sacrifices the parents were willing to make to enable their children to have a decent education. According to him, this culminated in the establishment of a people's school for boycotters. Kallaway (1984:26) states that this was accompanied by the establishment of the protest committee that was under the leadership of the chairman of the local ANC branch, IM Maseko (see also *The torch* [1952] and *The spark* [1952]).

6 THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT AND RESISTANCE TO BANTU EDUCATION

The banishment of the ANC, PAC and SACP (referred to above) limited resistance to Bantu Education and other related apartheid policies. Bot (1985:15) indicates in this regard that the 1960s were dominated by relative political quiescence following the silencing of all political formations and dissent after the Sharpville Massacre in 1960. However, she argues that tension built up beneath the surface. Maree (in Kallaway 1984:19) also draws attention to the fermenting dissatisfaction by the various political formations. She cautions against the assumption that an absence of large-scale conflict in the intervening period might indicate an acceptance of the policies being implemented.

As a result of this long and simmering tension, a new formation which centred on Black Consciousness (BC) came into existence in 1969. Its area of emphasis was black **pride** and **self-reliance**. At the same time, the vacuum created by the banning of the ANC, PAC and SACP provided an opportunity in the 1970s for the newly emergent BC to have its political influence deeply felt in the urban secondary schools thereby increasing the political awareness of scholars to unprecedented proportions.

The launching of BC organisations, notably the South African Student Organisation (SASO), gave birth to a myriad of campaigns targeting Bantu education and the entire system of apartheid. SASO focused its mobilisation endeavours on university students. Molteno (1987:20) points out in this regard that it was basically through the initiatives of SASO that BC was born. In 1972, the South African Students Movement followed suit by organising high school pupils. Bot (1985:15) points out that the BC philosophy was mainly targeted at the black youth, students and high school pupils. According to Bundy (in Hyslop 1988:185), this contributed to the growth of militancy among the youth in the schools.

Wolpe (1988:203) indicates that one of the consequences of this unrelenting mobilisation was that the schools seethed with activity. Hyslop (quoted in McKay 1990:22) suggests that this would also have provided the foundation for the remarkable shift in the balance of power within the urban black family which meant that respect and the disciplinary power of the parents became drastically curtailed. McKay (1990:22) argues that this is a far cry from the black cultural patterns

where the dominant position of the adults would proceed uncontested and behaviour to the contrary would receive widespread societal condemnation. This era had catapulted the students to the vanguard against sociopolitical and economic oppression of the black nation. In corroboration, McKay (1990:23) indicates that the structural reorganisation of the education system combined with the mutations within the black urban youth's political culture gave impetus to the occurrence of the most cardinal of students' oppositional struggles: these shook the South African state.

However, the BC mobilisation activities did not go without state attention. The BC organisations also suffered the same fate as their predecessors: they received specialised government attention via the South African police, and this culminated in their banning in October 1977.

7 BANTU EDUCATION: "SUCCESSSES" AND "FAILURES"

All of the resistance struggles discussed thus far regarded Bantu education as the state's ideological instrument intended to enfeeble the minds of the black nation. Wolpe (1988:203) concurs with this view and points to the success of Bantu education when he points out that: "Undoubtedly, Bantu Education has generally succeeded only too well in limiting the educational advancement of Black people and in blocking the acquisition of basic skills, numeracy, literacy."

The actual limitations in the educational attainments of black South Africans fundamentally corroborate Wolpe's arguments about the apparent limited success of Bantu education.²

According to him, Bantu education also triggered a dire shortage of skilled labour. Current (post-1994) increases of black students in formally "white" schools and the

² Acknowledging this fact, the (post-1994) Mpumalanga government has instituted a vigorous campaign for a technological and science oriented education system. It is often argued that Black South Africans who had their formal education prior to the inception of Bantu Education are better equipped to deal with their life-circumstances than the majority of their 'Bantu Education counterparts.' (This of course is not intended to take away anything from those who 'rose from the ashes' of Bantu education and made a name for themselves and their community).

urgent call for teacher upgrading programmes are a direct attempt to obviate the backlog.

As evidenced by the BC's oppositional struggles, Bantu education failed in its overt assignment, namely to create an apolitically docile, subservient black population.

This again attests to the resistance of students and other social actors to the overtly "reproductionist" position of the state. In spite of its intention to produce a docile workforce, human volition was expressed in the many ways of resisting the reproductionist forces, often to the extent, of subverting the system. Wolpe argues in this regard that it latently contributed to the unbridled radicalisation of Africans among the youth in particular. In corroboration, John Kane-Berman quotes the statement made in the course of the 1976 uprisings by a Soweto student leader that "the type of education we receive is like a poison destroying our minds."

John Kane-Berman (*Cape Times* 1990) comments as follows:

Whatever all black education might have wrought, destroy the minds of the students is one thing it did not do. Time and again in their statements and their actions they revealed an intelligence, a clear sightedness, a reasonableness, an awareness of responsibility to the community, a morality, and an integrity that is a little short of astonishing in view of the social, educational and economic deprivations under which Black South Africans live. ... they are a tribute to the capacity of the human spirit to survive intact in circumstances which would one expect to destroy it.

Here Kane-Berman draws attention to the ability of people to resist attempts at stifling their ability for consciousness. It is this form of resistance which expresses the human volition for participating in the discourses about social issues. Theoretical provision is made for this kind of action in the following chapter.

In the following section, the kinds of contextual features which informed the 1976 student upheavals are examined.

8 UNDERLYING FACTORS THAT TRIGGERED THE 1976 STUDENT UPHEAVALS

In this section, the social circumstances which prevailed at the time of the 1976 student upheavals are discussed. While the consequences of these actions were often devastating, they nevertheless draw attention to the mode of resistance which the students found expression in. Wolpe (1988:202) highlights many factors that contributed to the 1976 upheavals, namely that the 1976 student revolutionary era was preceded by the population explosion of students in African secondary schools and that the number of school-going youth increased from about 25 000 in the 1950s to approximately 318 000 in 1975. Also in support of the idea of the phenomenal "bulge" in the black student population, McKay (1090:21) points out the following:

... the phenomenal increase in student numbers was prompted by the state's (earlier) changed budgetary policy in relation to urban schooling and by the fact that private capital was appealed to contribute generously towards black education.

She argues that this "bulge" was a significant factor in what happened in 1976.

In corroboration, Hyslop (1986:37) attests that the explosion of the student population in the schools is of vital importance in understanding the vanguard position of black students in the South African political terrain. He pointed out that:

... by stacking older pupils in overcrowded and under resourced schools the state was structurally inducing an explosive situation.

The implication was that immediately prior to 1976, the schools were like a "powder keg", but lacking a detonator. In an apparent half-attempt to circumvent the simmering effects of student anger, Hyslop (1986:38) indicates that there was a slow-up in the development of the material infrastructure of the schools precisely at the time when the greatest demands were being made. He points out that another precipitative factor in this near-explosion was that the pupil explosion went hand in hand with the economic downturn which resulted in the ever-increasing unemployment, especially among black South Africans.

Several educational theorists have drawn attention to the impact of socioeconomic environs on what happens in classrooms. Giroux (1988:35) in fact argues that it is foolish to engage students in debates on political and social inequality 'in the classroom' and in the larger political world and then to ignore the realities and pernicious effects of economic and income inequality.

The point that Giroux makes is that democratic practices in the classroom are necessary but in no way sufficient conditions for addressing the inequalities in the social domain. It was in terms of these kinds of social exigencies that the resistance of 1976 was predicated.

8.1 Student upheavals: 1976

The "powder keg" referred to above erupted in Soweto on the 16 June 1976 when approximately 20 000 students assembled at Orlando stadium. This was a sequel to the Ministerial decree that Afrikaans would be a compulsory medium of instruction in secondary schools. As a result, SASM convened to discuss the issue. In this regard, Bot (1985:16) points out that an action committee was established comprising a SASM regional committee and two representatives from every secondary school in Soweto. The coming together of these various entities was later named the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC). Bot again emphasises that the SSRC selected 16 June as the suitable date for a peaceful protest against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. As indicated in Hyslop (1988:38), the confrontational reaction from the students was evoked by the language policy, not necessarily because of the symbolic role of Afrikaans as the *lingua franca* of the government, but because the policy cut across the need for students to prepare to sell their labour power in the labour market of urban centres which were dominated by English-speaking concerns.

Christie (1985) portrays the uncompromising attitude of the government towards black resistance against apartheid-inspired legislation. She (1985:238) argues that it is a well-known fact that the peaceful demonstrations against the enforcement of Afrikaans on unwilling students was followed by extreme state violence. This argument was further elucidated in the Agenda programme on CCV (29 November 1995) in which former students involved in the 1976 resistance indicate that Afrikaans as a medium of instruction only constituted a secondary factor with regard to the occurrence of the 1976 Soweto student upheavals. Their point of

contention was that these upheavals were actions based on the standing past oppression that blacks endured under the previous successive apartheid regimes. In this regard, Christie indicates that the extreme state reaction that followed was consequential to Prime Minister Mr BJ Vorster's instruction in parliament that the police must maintain law and order at all costs. The costs proved to be very high indeed because according to her, the uprising claimed more than 1 000 student lives. The first student victim to die was Hector Peterson.

As the conflict between (mainly) the students and the state reached alarming proportions, many students were arrested or forced into exile. According to Bundy (1986:13) the intensity of this conflict was sustained because young black South Africans showed extraordinary tenacity and courage in their protests. With regard to the cardinal role played by students during these resistance actions, he points out that despite the worker's stayaways organised in 1976, and despite the widespread anger throughout black communities at police tactics, it was predominantly school and college students and unemployed school leavers who swelled the marches and rallies, pressed their demands and proved their courage.

Molteno (1987:21) concedes that, from that localised, nonviolent demonstration developed an uprising of the oppressed people of South Africa that was unparalleled in the history of their struggle for full citizenship in a free, democratic and united country. He points out (1987:21) that tens of thousands of men, women and children, students, parents and workers throughout the country including the 'Bantustans' participated in the uprising with a level of militancy unprecedented in depth and scale. Bot (1985:16) adds that as a result of this, in less than 10 days 140 people lost their lives and well above 1 000 sustained a variety of injuries. It is further argued in Bot that these protests transcended the periphery of education to encapsulate the entire system of apartheid. The SSRC, for example, also involved itself in other issues of substance such as rent boycotts and the boycott of the Bantu Council systems.

In an attempt to dampen the conflict between the students and the apartheid state, Bot indicates that the Black Parents' Association was formed specifically to act a conduit to transmit student grievances to the authorities. This is indicative of the fact that the problems surrounding the schools were not only the sole preserve of the students but a community problem which needed the concerted efforts of the community as a whole to resolve.

According to Christie (1985:239) it was only in 1978 that the rebellion evinced signs of tapering off.

8.2 Student upheavals: the aftermath

Looking at this phenomenon, Christie (1985:239) highlights the fact that these upheavals were catastrophic in terms of human lives. In addition to this, she points out that this aftermath also involved the blanket banning of the entire BC formations including the SSRC. Hirson (1979:278) points out that this totalled 17 organisations. The extraordinary manner in which the state conducted itself through the bannings actuated Kane-Berman (quoted in Christie 1985:239) to indicate that these bannings constituted the severest act of political suppression by the state since the outlawing of the ANC, PAC and the SACP in 1960. This form of political suppression precipitated the mass exodus of black youth to Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland to join the liberation movements.

It is, however, apparent that this upheaval was not in vain. Significant gains emanated from the system, some of which are summed up by Hyslop (1988:187). He suggests that the Language Policy Act of 1979 accorded decision-making powers to various black communities to decide on the medium of instruction from standard 3 onwards. Hyslop also mentions the intensification of teacher-upgrading programmes as a windfall of the uprising. Since most of the schools were either damaged or destroyed during the unrest, Hyslop points out that the government went into the major revamping and rebuilding exercise. According to him this period was also accompanied by the announcement by the government of the future plan to introduce compulsory education for blacks up to primary school level. However, this undertaking never materialised.

In looking at the gains made through student struggles, McKay (1990:25) mentions inter alia that the Department of Bantu Education also changed its name to the less offensive title of the "Department of Education and Training". She further indicates that the De Lange Commission was also instituted by the government as an endeavour to resolve the crisis in black education. However, she (1990:25-26) argues the outcome of this commission was that it recommended **equal quality** of education as opposed to "**equality** of education" for all. She indicates that the commission proposed a single Ministry of Education to replace the ethnically divided Ministries, but like Buckland (in Kallaway 1984:374) she is critical of this Commission for having partially endeavoured to deracialise

education. Christie (1985:270) too suggests that the Commission was attempting to "whitewash" apartheid education and argues that the proposals of the Commission underlined that class, race and gender variations would be intact.

As a result of the recommendations, Hyslop (1988:190) indicates that there was a noticeable increase in black budgetary allocations, and according to him, this was accompanied by the massive pupil enrolment figures. He also indicates that the statutory racially discriminatory entrance requirements to private schools and universities were allowed to lapse. Hyslop suggests that although some of the recommendations of the Commission were reflected in the government policy on education, others were rejected in 1983 by the government - notably the one on the establishment of a single Ministry. It is as a result of the minimal changes that Hyslop (1988:188) dubs the post- 1976 educational transformations as being too cosmetic to resolve the crisis in the education system in South Africa.

9 THE 1977-1979 ORGANISATIONAL VACUUM IS CLOSED

In a bid to meaningfully occupy the vacuum created by the banning of the BCM-oriented organisations in 1977, the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), an organisation with BCM inclinations, was founded at a conference in Roodeport in April 1978. The Azanian Student Organisation (AZASO) was formed in 1979 its aim being to mobilise and organise students at universities and colleges. However, in the course of its organisational activities, AZASO became alienated and later defected from the BCM'S philosophical ambit and followed the Africanist Freedom Charter.

The charter is the ANC alliance conspired document outlining its vision of the future democratic, nonracial and nonsexist South African society. The Freedom Charter is diametrically opposed to the BCM philosophy for it sees a positive role for whites in the struggle for social justice and democracy.

The Congress of South African Students (COSAS), a sister student organisation to AZASO, and an adherent to the Freedom Charter was formed in 1979 with the sole aim of conscientising and organising high school pupils. Subsequently, AZASO became the South African National Student Congress (SANSCO). SANSCO's target group was still university and college students. It was this student organisation that dominated the student resistance struggles at EMCHE.

The following section will show that in keeping with the argument that resistance assumes many "shapes and forms", the oppositional struggles to apartheid and Bantu education underwent various changes which were governed by a different set of circumstances. Bot (1985:47) attests to this by indicating that the shifts were from a determined objection to Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and Bantu education to a concerted demand for free compulsory education. Subsequently, there were shifts in slogans, the most well-known shift being from the slogan "Liberation now and education later" to the slogan for a "People's education for people's power".

10 LIBERATION NOW AND EDUCATION LATER (EARLY 1980S)

At the beginning of 1984, a renewed wave of class boycotts began in the Pretoria area. Hyslop (1988:193) points out that initially, these were precipitated by the discovery (in an Atteridgeville High School in Pretoria) of unmarked matriculation examination scripts from the previous year, after the marks had been released. The matter was taken up by the newly-formed COSAS as a rallying point around other aspects impacting on them as pupils at school. They agitated for an end to corporal punishment and sexual harassment of female students by male teachers.

In their list of demands they included appeals for free textbooks, properly qualified teachers and democratically elected SRCs as opposed to appointed prefects. They were in opposition to the age restrictions that were in force in the schools. These grievances and many more, according to Bot (1985:17) and Hyslop (1988:193), attested to the phenomenal increase in the number of COSAS branches, especially during the years 1983 and 1984. In this regard, the *Daily Dispatch* indicated that this multiplication of branches manifested itself through countrywide school boycotts. This newspaper further argues that these boycotts contributed to the gagging of COSAS in the homelands of Ciskei and KwaZulu. This had very little impact in the continued structural proliferation of COSAS, since Bot (1985:17) attests that by 1984, COSAS had 44 branches in the Eastern and Western Cape, the Orange Free State, Transvaal and Natal. According to McKay (1990:27), this proliferation was indicative of the fact that COSAS had moved from being an activist group to a mass movement. COSAS's rallying point was "United action for democratic education", and the main purpose of the slogan was the establishment of the democratic control at the schools as a prelude to the creation of the non racial democracy in South Africa.

This objective was corroborated by the then COSAS president, Lulu Johnson who stated that "the demand for democratic SRC's is part of the process of preparing ourselves and building a future South Africa where representation will be genuine and democratic" (*Saspu Focus*, November 1984). The main thrust of COSAS operations in schools was based mainly on the boycott strategy. Wolpe (1988:206) for instance, argues that by way of its boycott strategy, support for COSAS had gained momentum and "at one point some 650 000 students and hundreds of schools were involved" and between 300 000 and 800 000 workers. Hyslop (1988:194) points out the following:

These developments heralded a qualitatively new level of resistance to state policy and a rapid politicisation of youth on a mass scale. Moreover, [he points out] the united action between students and workers on an organised basis was a major step forward for the student movement.

The school boycotts thus transformed the national political crisis in the second half of 1984. The struggle, as already explicated, tended to shift from demands for radical reform of the existing system to a contestation with the state over control of the schools - as it were, as Wolpe (1988:206) indicates, "for a people's power in education". This alliance became so formidable that on 5 and 6 November 1984 both industry and schooling ground to a halt.

Hyslop (1988:195) argues that a new political culture, centered on expressions of allegiance to the ANC and its political strategies, emerged. It was clear that the student movement had shifted its focus from educational demands to broadly political ones. Hyslop (1988:195) indicates that that there were:

... study groups which poured over underground ANC and SACP publications, the use of mock guerilla uniforms and toy guns at funerals and demonstrations: all of these formed part of a new dominant political culture among youth which reflected the hegemony of ANC politics and ideology.

These activities centred around the popular slogan of the early 1980s that was a battle cry of the student activists who were on the vanguard of the liberation struggle. This slogan was "Liberation first, education later". Epitomising this scenario, Zille (1987:16) argues that some students even demanded "liberation before the next school term". As pointed out in Zille, this optimism was so

imminent among the youth that victory over apartheid was seen to be just around the corner. According to Zille, this mood was so pervasive that many students strongly believed that the apartheid regime was collapsing and that the revolution was pending - hence their tenacious clinging to a boycott strategy.

This resolute and defiant stance of the students in 1985 was also characterised by their willingness to confront the police and to attack anyone perceived to be a collaborator. Again the impatience of the youth saw them composing a political song with the following lyrics - "Ekuseni ngo 4 o'clock - Sikhulul' uMandela" (At 4 am - we release Mandela). Moreover, the students declared the year of 1986 as "**the year of no schooling**". This was motivated by a widely-held perception that to sacrifice schooling would in the long term yield long-cherished ideals of freedom. It was against this background that the students devoted most of their time enforcing work stayaways and consumer boycotts. According to Bundy (1986:55), this euphoric, volatile and hostile climate of 'immediatism' was promoted through the media.

This atmosphere became conducive to the state unleashing severe reprisals on both student activists and teachers who showed sympathy to the broad vision of the national liberation struggle. The leadership of COSAS, for example, was severely hampered in carrying out their day-to-day activities to organise and represent the students' interests. However, according to Wolpe (1988:206), the class boycott showed no signs of abating. The state of ungovernability in the country provided the PW Botha government with no other option but to declare a countrywide state of emergency. In trying to reassert its authority, the government gagged COSAS together with many other organisations. However, in 1986 the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) was launched in Cape Town under the veil of secrecy in an endeavour to occupy the vacuum left by the banning of COSAS.

In this regard, Wolpe (1988:207) indicates that the slogan - "liberation first, education later" had a positive effect in mobilising and harnessing the students behind a particular cause, but adds that it was both educationally and strategically unsound. In substantiating this, he further indicates that the newly-emergent perceptions against the boycott strategy are corroborated by the observations of the December 1985 National Consultative Conference (NCC) on the education crisis, namely that while the boycott had a positive mobilising effect, it was predominantly offset by the following debilitating factors:

- The beneficiaries of the boycott strategy needed immediate satisfaction. However, if the boycott continued ad infinitum, the students would through frustration and boredom trickle back to school and thereby defeat the aims of the boycott.
- The major portion of the student population would be deprived of any further schooling.
- The apartheid state was far from crumbling.

Supporting this view, Hyslop (1988:197) argues that the boycott strategy contributed to the growing rift between students and the older generation, particularly their teachers. He elaborates thus:

Students often regarded teachers as working for "the system" and thus subjected them to humiliating treatment or even violent attacks.

It was in this context that in 1985 some parents, teachers and educationists advocated the need to reappraise the prevailing situation and at the same time attempted to find a constructive strategy to meet students' educational and political demands. This apparent concern contributed to the convening of a mass meeting by the Soweto Civic Association in October 1986 at which the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee (SPCC) was formed. It is therefore argued by McKay (1990:29) that the (SPCC) was intended to provide a broader forum for both teacher and parent involvement. According to McKay this forum was also assigned the task to "mobilize teachers who were affiliated to ATASA, hitherto quiescent and moderate in its stance towards politicization of schooling". This was ostensibly intended to restore peace and harmony within the school parameters. Moreover, with the limited answers, the students were able to extract from the boycott strategy, the NCC was later (1986) transformed into the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). Sharing the dilemma, the boycotting students were faced with, the NECC felt obliged to formulate and advance coherent recommendations aimed at redirecting and refocusing the strategies employed by the students so that maximum benefits could be achieved while schooling was in progress.

In the following section, the author will indicate how, under the rubric of "people's education for people's power", the contentious issues raised by the boycotting

students are incorporated into an alternative educational strategy which would challenge the state control of education whilst remaining an integral part of the structures of popular organisation and an organised component of the national struggle.

11 THE "PEOPLE'S EDUCATION, FOR PEOPLE'S POWER" ERA (OCTOBER 1985-JUNE 1986)

The all-inclusive strategy of the SPCC to involve parents and students in the latter's "problems" and to overcome the communication breakdown between students and teachers dramatically improved student-community relations in Soweto. According to McKay (1990:29-30), points on which the SPCC focused included the necessity to negotiate with the DET in connection with the postponement of the end-of-the-year examinations and a request to withdraw the troops from the townships. It was in this context that the National Education Crisis Conference (NECC) was convened because the unrest was of a national nature.

This was a determined effort to provide the students with a programmatic alternative to what Hyslop (1988:200) regarded as the "suicidal 'liberation before education' line". The most serious flaw in the slogan and the activities associated with it was its failure to move beyond the language of critique and domination. He further amplifies his contention by indicating that "the perpetrators of the slogan were still mired in the protracted struggle against Bantu education with no perceptible alternatives at all". Giroux (1988:xxxix) focuses on education as a site of struggle. He in fact refers to protracted struggles and a deadlock situation. In such cases, Giroux advocates the development of a progressive, political educational strategy. This, he argues, will go a long way towards satisfying the political and educational needs of the stakeholders in the endemic conflict.

On the ground, the necessity of questioning this slogan was patently expressed by Mohajane (in Van den Bos 1986:25), a founder member of the SPCC, who in referring to the "liberation before education" slogan indicated that:

... the call for "liberation now, education later" remains loud among Black pupils. I understand how these children feel, but I cannot agree. My wish is for liberation with education - it has to be possible.

McKay (1990:30) states that it was in this context, that the National Crisis Conference was convened on the 29 December 1986. According to her, at this conference, it was emphasised that the ANC did **not** support the notion of education being suspended until such time that liberation was achieved. She indicates that the slogan "liberation now, education later" and the activities associated with it were merely a spontaneous reaction by the oppressed student constituency. Zille (1987:4-5) concurs in saying that the ANC had also endorsed the essentiality for the "roaring lions", as they were called, to return to school.

It was at the NECC conference that the new perspective of "people's education for people's power" developed, and for its effective implementation, the National Education Crisis Committee was established. It was apparent at this conference that the delegates aimed at eliminating the actions and practices associated with this slogan. McKay (1990:30) points out that in his keynote address at the second National Crisis in Education Conference, Sisulu addressed himself to the earlier counterproductive attempts at social change which were centred on violence and intimidation rather than on informed and organised democratic action. Sisulu draws a clear distinction between power and ungovernability. He (in MacKay 1990:30) states the following in this regard:

We must stress that there is an important distinction between ungovernability and people's power. In a situation of ungovernability, the government does not have control, but nor do the people. While they have broken the shackles of direct government rule, the people have not yet managed to control and direct the situation. There is a power vacuum. In a situation of people's power, the people are starting to exercise control. An important difference between ungovernability and power is that, no matter how ungovernable a township is, unless the people are organized, the gains made through ungovernability can be rolled back by state repression.

According to Hyslop (1988:1190), the formation of the NECC and the strategy of people's education were the "turn of events which saved the student movement from devouring itself and gave it a renewed role in the political conflict". The implication here is that people's education as an emancipatory concept managed to open a new reflexive horizon for the student movement where students would be

part of the creative restructuring of the new vision in the education system. This new direction in terms of thinking is in direct contrast to the reified Bantu education system which historically excluded students from all forms of decision-making forums at school and national level.

McKay (1990:31) indicates that "people's education for people's power" embodied(s) the intention to move beyond protest and boycotts towards the pioneering of a mass based and popular attempt to address the national crisis in education". Also examining the concept, Kruss (1988:3) suggests that "people's education is pre-eminently the response to education crisis and it offers a scenario for the establishment of the future post Apartheid education system in South Africa". This is also clearly encapsulated by Sisulu who in his keynote address at the second National Conference pointed out that the NECC "has taken us from opposing Bantu education to organizing the people's alternative". In addition, Sisulu stressed the essential linkage of the NECC with all anti-apartheid structures by adding the the following:

We know that our greatest strength lies in the power of the people, in our mass-based committees in the schools, streets and factories, in our co-ordinated strength in our national organizations such as the NECC.

Here Sisulu stresses the crucial role of people participating in the coordination of new visions for education. The need for co-constructing a new vision was paramount to the NECC's position. It is therefore apparent that the NECC was at odds with any negative opposition to Bantu education that had no programmatic agenda in terms of offering substantive alternatives to Bantu education and other accompanying Apartheid structures. Moreover, the notion of people's education which began to be defined at the Education Crisis Conference advanced the need for greater impetus from all sectors of the community as well as the importance of challenging state control over education. Epitomising this mass-based challenge of the state's control over education through the more disciplined people's education, Randall (1987:86) points out that "the state is determined to maintain its strong hold on Black education, employing the security forces and the Black communities are equally determined to wrest that control". However, Chisholm (1986:19) points out that the call in education for the implementation of "people's education for people's power" raises concrete questions pertaining to the nature of a transformative educational system.

In terms of this, people's education envisages a mass-based struggle that treats both the societal and educational transformation as two sides of the same coin. The student organisations were instrumental in articulating this simultaneous approach. According to MacKay (1990:32), this notion of interrelatedness of education and social transformation was restated by the NECC. She indicates that "as part of the education struggle the NECC urged all communities and democratic organisations to launch mass action campaigns by considering all forms of rent, consumer and other boycotts". Voicing the same sentiment, Wolpe (1988:214) argues that:

... such a broad view of the education struggle carries with it a conception of social forces and organizations outside education with which the struggle for people's education must jointly be waged. Thus the allies of the students are defined as workers, parents, teachers and the community and political leaders.

As already indicated, the distinctive feature of people's education was that its realisation would be achieved on the school premises. In terms of this feature, all students were expected to return to their respective schools by 28 January 1986. This ideal was accomplished when a record attendance of 94 percent was recorded at the start of the new school year on 28 January 1986.

The return of the students to the school premises brought the government and the community-based organisations closer together. In this regard, Zille (1987:17) indicates that at a time when the gulf between the government and the resistance movements seemed to have become entirely unbridgeable, an area of "agreement" emerged. Amplifying this view, she indicates that both the government and its most important political antagonists had agreed that not only should education continue but that it should proceed within the institutional base of the schools. She further points out that this was a golden "opportunity" for the government to begin serious negotiations around major student grievances and to arrive at terms which could secure the withdrawal of troops from the schools in the townships. This state of affairs had the potential to secure lasting peace and stability in education.

This almost historical breakthrough was undone as a result of the government's intolerance. Explaining this phenomenon Zille (1987:17) argues that:

... the government re-declared the state of emergency, detained as many NECC leaders as it could find ... and immobilised the rest by forcing them into hiding. It was now impossible for the NECC to meet its educational mandate or to pursue the grassroots consultation so essential to keeping the students on board and holding the coalition together. At one stroke, the precarious equilibrium - that could so easily have provided a turning point - was destroyed.

12 AN ATTEMPT TO LOCATE STUDENT RESISTANCE AT EMCHE IN A PARTICULAR PERIOD IN THE HISTORY OF STUDENT STRUGGLES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The student resistance at EMCHE cannot be understood in isolation from the general historical students' struggle against the continued existence of the inferior Bantu education system in South Africa. Their oppositional struggles, as already enunciated, took various forms under different sets of social circumstances. Fundamentally, this is also the trend that the EMCHE student resistance struggles followed. This basically means that the EMCHE students, as was the case with the students nationally, were in a position to exercise their reflexive human volition, to attribute meanings to particular situations and then behave accordingly.

Both in terms of the time in which their resistance activities occurred, and because of the nature of these activities, one may locate the resistance of the students at the EMCHE to the period coinciding with the era of "people's education for people's power". This period stretched from October 1985 to June 1986, and was hallmarked by the students' eagerness to play an active role in the discourse of decision making in their schools.

It is an undeniable fact that the students had accumulated significant power since the commencement of their stern resistance campaigns against Bantu education in 1976. The loaded power lines in favour of the students were still clearly marked even during the period of "peoples education for people's power".

It is against this background that the student resistance at EMCHE has to be comprehended. The students at EMCHE also demanded that they participate in the formulation of policies which affected them in the college. Hence people's education as an emancipatory concept opened a new reflexive horizon for EMCHE

students who were eager to engage in the creative restructuring and transformation of EMCHE.

The new direction ushered in by the people's education ethos, introduced the EMCHE students to the importance of intersubjective and symbolic orientations of social reality through meaning making. As was the case at EMCHE, this new notion occurred while the students generally enjoyed the full benefit of continuing with their schooling activities. In this way, the activities of students at EMCHE can be seen to be informed by and hence be located within the "people's education" framework.

13 CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO A DIFFERENT STRUGGLE AT EMCHE

While the struggles at EMCHE could be located within the parameters of people's education framework, they did not totally fit the people's education struggles that occurred nationally. Once again, in terms of the theory employed here, and as discussed in detail in chapter 2, people attribute meanings to social circumstances and these give rise to different sets of actions. One of the differences was based on the fact that EMCHE students could afford to boycott classes by virtue of the hostel accommodation available to them at EMCHE. This provided them with a vantage position to influence and direct events whilst they were away from the classrooms. This was basically not the case with other students, in that for them a boycott of classes would mean that they would have to loiter in the streets of the townships or be sent away home from boarding school to face the wrath of their parents at home.

In addition, SANSKO (which commanded a majority support at EMCHE) used its interstructural relationships with other community-based structures to persuade these structures to oppose and put pressure on the administration in the event of any protracted problem that would seriously impact on the education of the students.

As a member of the EMCHE academic staff, the researcher was also in a better position to observe that the administration was wary of antagonising and alienating the community and other political structures in the area by failing to reach an agreement with the students. In spite of the above factors, the upshot of the problem of the "carrying/noncarrying" of major subjects was that EMCHE was in

fact closed in 1993 and the students were sent home. This 'historical' event led to the political spotlight falling on the rector and his "fiercest" supporters, and as a result they were overtly or covertly forced to leave the College.

14 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on various forms of resistance struggles waged by the black masses against the inferior Bantu education foisted upon them by the NP-led government. It traces the historical features of resistance up to the resistance which characterised the movement for people's education.

The historical overview was intended to show firstly how human volition manifested itself in many 'forms' of resistance to particular phenomena and secondly, to provide a back-drop for the historical and theoretical location of the struggles at the EMCHE.

In the following chapter, the theoretical underpinnings will be explored. An endeavour will be made to show how - theoretically - resistance can be accommodated and explained.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the theoretical foundations underlying this study. The chapter begins with a review of the literature on the sociology of education but focuses more specifically on the theory of resistance and the interpretive theory as applicable to education.

In exploring the applicability of these theories to the forms of student resistance at EMCHE, the chapter undertakes to locate points of convergence between the two theories. An attempt is also made to distinguish these theories from other sociological theories such as the Marxist (reproduction) and functionalist theories of education.

The researcher has also endeavoured to justify the marriage of the interpretive and resistance theories on which the study is based. The chapter attempts to identify similarities between the Marxist theories of direct reproduction, the functionalist theoretical tradition and the positivist epistemological approach.

2 THE THEORETICAL THRUST OF THE STUDY

In order to explore **student resistance** (with specific reference to resistance at the Elijah Mango College of Education) this chapter highlights the importance of the theories of resistance and voluntarism as theoretical tools of analysis.

The suitability of this theoretical orientation is predicated on the basis of its preoccupation with resistance, which as it is argued here, provides parameters for understanding the resistance patterns at EMCHE. The justification for exploring this theoretical tradition is contained in its explanation that human action (in this case resistance) involves the exploration of the underlying meanings that inform human behaviour.

In the light of this theoretical position, student resistance has to be comprehended in terms of the patterns of meanings that students attribute to what they perceive to be unilateral decision making, racism, lecturer authoritarianism in the classroom, excessive administrative authority and academic processes. The understanding of resistance through the expressed focus of meanings attributed to perceived problems provides the theoretical rationale for marrying the resistance theory of education with the **interpretive** view of education theory.

The **interpretive** view realises the significance of the ability of students to actively and creatively assign meaning patterns to the variety of social phenomena referred to above. The interpretive tradition offers a rich way of understanding human behaviour. McKay (1990:112) argues that "this new direction [ie the interpretive approach] stresses the precarious nature of, or the symbolic character of (social) reality because of the ongoing interpretive activities of the social actors". This synthesis of the interpretive and resistance approaches is here used to explain the various forms of student resistance in education. The theories are synthesised in order to couple the voluntarism and resistance embodied in resistance theory with the symbolic and changeable structure of meanings inherent in the interpretive approach. Subsequently, it is imperative to briefly outline the major tenets of both theoretical orientations.

2.1 The theories of resistance, relative autonomy and voluntarism

The ideas of *resistance* and the *relative autonomy* of education have been combined with an analysis which is more *voluntarist* in nature (Blackledge & Hunt 1985:179)

Central to the theories of resistance is the claim that education institutions are not influenced only by the logic of the workplace or the dominant society. These accounts (see Willis 1977; Apple 1982a) argue that education is a relatively autonomous institution which harbours space for oppositional behaviour and teaching. They argue that they contain contradictions that sometimes make them dysfunctional for the material and ideological interests of the dominant classes in society.

In his critique of the correspondence theories (which postulate a correspondence between school ideologies and workplace patterns), Apple (1982a:14) suggests that schools are not institutions at which students are passively moulded and eager

to fit into an unequal society. In attempting to formulate a more voluntarist form of analysis, he argues that pupils mediate the culture of the school. Their consequent resistance and opposition to authority provides them with a means of challenging (and transforming) the system of control in their schools, albeit often in self-defeating ways. However, the outcome of student resistance is unpredictable - its very presence is evidence that pupils are *not* the bearers of the ideology which the school attempts to transmit (Apple 1982b:95).

2.1.1 Basic assumptions of the theories of resistance, relative autonomy and voluntarism

- Resistance is seen as a relative autonomous response (in this case on the part of the students).
- Student resistance is not impelled by external features in the economy.
- Recognition is given to the notion that students may resist the education system as part of their voluntaristic faculties.
- Resistance theory underscores the importance of human freedom and self-determination in the education system.
- Educational institutions are perceived to be relatively autonomous institutions, which harbour space for oppositional behaviour and teaching.
- Educational institutions as sites of oppositional behaviour represent a source of contradictions that sometimes make them dysfunctional to the material and ideological interests of the dominant society.
- Student resistance embodies the students' refusal to embrace the orderly and ossified character of the educational institutions and a refusal to further acknowledge its status as a reified reality (Apple in McKay & Romm 1992:40).

With regard to the above-mentioned assumptions, McKay (1990:116) stresses the theoretical weaknesses of structuralist theories. She argues that structuralist theories fail to see that when belief in the objective reality of institutions is abandoned patterns can change. The organisational (patterns) "which are seen as

operative in schools can be seen as a result of their continual affirmation through the everyday activities of the social actors".

2.2 The interpretive approach

In reaction to what was seen to be a dearth of accounts of the everyday activities taking place in classroom situations, certain educational theorists began to direct their attention towards the process of meaning construction in the classroom context. They focused specifically on the way in which school knowledge is cognitively produced and appropriated in the classroom.

Michael Young is often regarded as having set the new direction in educational sociology. This new direction argued that society is not an independent system maintained through the imposition of factors external to its members (see Wexler 1987:35). Advocating an *interpretive* approach to education, the new approach stressed the *precarious* nature of social reality. It argued that, as a *meaning structure*, the symbolic character of reality is constituted and sustained through the ongoing interpretive activities of the social actors.

Educational theorists such as Mead (1974:192-200) argue that a person's self develops in relation to the reactions of other people. They argue that the way in which a person tends to react to himself or herself depends on how he or she perceives other people reacting to him or her. However, the self is also able to *inject new thoughts and ideas into the social matrix* and is consequently not determined by that social matrix.

For theorists in the "interpretive" tradition social reality is not seen as a "given" entity, independent of human mediation, but rather as a socially constructed and contested symbolic "structure" of meanings.

2.2.1 Basic assumptions of the interpretive approach

- The everyday activities of humans are the building block of society.

- Everyday activities are never totally imposed by outside factors, external to individuals.
- In order to understand everyday activities, one must grasp the meanings that people give to their life worlds.
- Society is a precarious and symbolic structure of socially constructed and contested symbols - the symbols constituting primary vehicles of communication for the continuing dialogue.

2.3 Voluntarism as the point of confluence of the two theoretical orientations

This study intends to combine the features of resistance and voluntarism espoused by the resistance theories with the social constructivist and meaning-making characteristics of the interpretive approach.

The following points of convergence have been located as providing opportunities for theoretical compatibility:

- Both theoretical orientations intended for the purpose of this study converge on the point of voluntarism.
- Both theories recognise resistance as a response made possible by the leeway permitted by the relative autonomy of education.
- Both theories reject in one way or another the objective and external existence of social reality.
- Both recognise the importance of human freedom and self-determination in the education system.
- Both recognise that the undialectical nature of social interaction (when attempts are made to freeze the dialectic) has precipitative resistance ramifications.
- Both are at variance with the permanent institutionalisation of social phenomena.

- Both recognise the fact that society is a precarious and symbolic structure of socially accomplished and contested symbols and that the symbols constitute the primary vehicles of communication for ongoing dialogue.

Therefore the recognition of the importance of human voluntarism underlines the rationale of this study specifically because of the emphasis it lays on the ethos of discursiveness within institutions of learning.

3 THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

It is necessary to justify the adoption of the aforementioned theories which inform this study. The justification leans heavily on the juxtapositioning of the combined resistance-interpretive position with more structurally-oriented theories. The following section provides an analysis of the structuralist theories - embracing both the structural functionalist approaches and the Marxist reproduction theories.

3.1 The theories of direct reproduction

This theoretical argument explores the terrain of social patterning by focusing on the forces of reproduction within social institutions. According to Marxist theory, social institutions such as education are designed to reproduce the capitalist social relations of production and in South Africa, are seen to be inextricably coupled with the perpetuation of apartheid.

This paradigmatic exposition is encompassed by South African theorists like Christie and Collins (1984:175) who point to the relationship between reproductive forces and Bantu education. This collateral is critically analysed in a twofold process involving, the reproduction of attitudes and values appropriate to the social relations of production and willingness to participate in capitalist exchange relationships, on the one hand, the reproduction of appropriate skills, on the other. This view is further amplified by Mathonsi (1984:14) who argues that "Bantu Education should be comprehended as a subtle emerging ideological state apparatus deliberately effected to indoctrinate the Africans from the cradle to the grave to accept and acquiesce to inferior stations."

This reproductionist type argument is further developed by Bowles and Gintis (1976:125) who focus on the way in which the education system is an "integral element in the reproduction of the prevailing class structure of society" and they

argue that the class and power relations of economic life are perpetuated or reproduced in capitalist society. They conclude that the social dynamics of the schools foster types of personal development compatible with the relationship of dominance and subordination in the economic sphere, and that traits which are incompatible with conformity to the hierarchical division of labour are penalised by the schools. The above authors (1976:42) argue that capitalism demands workers who will obey and submit to control from above and take orders rather than question them.

In terms of this Bowles and Gintis (1976) indicate that schooling produces students with attitudes and dispositions that make them docile and receptive to the social and economic imperatives of a capitalist economy. This implies that the curricula (both overt and hidden) stress a shift away from active student participation in codetermining the direction of their education.

Althusser (1971) also emphasises this shift and argues that schools constitute an important social site for reproducing capitalist relations of production. Whilst Althusser (1971:148-158) pays "lip service" to the notion of relative autonomy, his analysis of education points to a reproductive function. He (1971:148-158) points out that the reproductive function of education manifests itself through the reproduction of skills, rules of labour and the reproduction of attitudes necessary for the continued survival of capitalism. According to Althusser (1971:132), the contribution that education makes to the reproduction of the capitalist relations of domination is:

... secured by the exercise of state power in the state apparatuses, on the one hand the (Repressive) state apparatus, on the other the ideological state apparatus.

It should be noted that according to Althusser the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) becomes functional only through the acts of coercion and force, while the educational Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) plays a cardinal role in disseminating the ruling class ideology. Althusser (1971:132) argues that education functions to sustain the maintenance of the capitalist system. It conceals the class inequalities and the nature of capitalism from public view by "universally reigning ideology of the school". He reinforces this view by indicating that:

First, it teaches the skills and techniques appropriate for the children's future job. Second, it imparts the rules of good behaviour or the attitudes suitable for the children's later economic role. For future wage-labourers, Althusser reasons, it fosters modesty, resignation and submissiveness; for future capitalists and managers it instills cynicism, contempt, arrogance, self-importance, even smooth-talk and cunning; third, it teaches children the ruling ideology in its pure state (ethics, civic instruction, philosophy).

Enslin (1984) in fact indicates that Althusser's concept of ISA can be used to explain the earlier South African policy of Christian National Education (CNE) and the doctrine of Fundamental Pedagogics as instrumental in reproducing the ruling ideology and the capitalist social relations. Christie and Collins (1984) too argue that Bantu education is geared to the reproduction of labour as demanded by capitalism. They further contend that education plays an important role in the formation of the black working class and argue that the inequalities in Bantu education would perpetuate the ideology of inferiority and the social relations of domination and subordination. In reinforcing this view, they point out the following:

Not only would blacks learn the skills necessary for the participation in the capitalist mode of production; they would also acquire, through the particular form of schooling provided for blacks, an ideological orientation geared towards appropriate work attitudes such as diligence and punctuality, the operation of the colour-caste system, and their subordinate position in the social relations of dominance and subordination in south Africa (Christie & Collins 1984:169).

As a result, these theories are unable to give credence to:

- the relative autonomous nature of education sites for the ongoing student struggles
- the importance of education institutions in creating citizens who might develop capacities for critical thinking

- the voluntaristic nature of the pupils who constantly mediate the culture of the schools through meaning attribution

In the light of the limitations of the Marxist theories of reproduction and their failure to accord humans with the ability to organise their lives in ways which differ from the dominant culture, this study opts for a theoretical approach which addresses these possibilities. The section below will outline the arguments of theorists who take cognisance of these theoretical features.

3.2 The supersession of the direct reproduction theories by the resistance theories

Various theorists are critical of the theoretical premises underlying direct reproduction argumentation that education as an instrument of social reproduction functions directly and without contradiction to reproduce the structures of domination, subordination and exploitation. Wolpe (1988:3), for example (in keeping with a more resistance theoretical orientation), indicates that in terms of the reproduction thesis, the education system is deprived of all autonomy and is conceived as being entirely functional to the reproduction of the existing system of domination. In this regard, he (1988:3) argues that:

... no room is thought to exist for contradictory relationship to arise between the educational system and the social system and not is there ... any space in which to mount demands and struggles within the educational system which will have any bearing whatsoever on the radical transformation of education and/or society (Wolpe 1988:3).

Apple also projects a more voluntarist orientation. His later work leans towards a nonstructuralist and more interpretively-oriented theory of resistance in the schools. This becomes evident when he (1982a:24) criticises the theoretical view of a correspondence between what schools teach and the needs of an unequal society. This paradigmatic shift is evidenced in his later work where he indicates that "it is too simplistic to think only in terms of schools reproducing the social relations of production". Though emphasising that social relations of production do occur, Apple (1982a:8) points out that "the concept [of correspondence and reproduction] does not do justice to the complexity of school life which is overrun by perpetual struggles and contradictions".

The complexity of the school embodying struggles and resistance, rather than being only an agent for reproduction is also highlighted by Willis (1977:18) who argues that "the school is relatively autonomous from the requirements of reproducing capitalist social relations". He illustrates this argument by pointing out that "pupils exhibit a powerful rejection of labels, meanings and values of the official and hidden curricula of the school". Here Willis stresses the complex nature of contestation and struggle within schools. Apple (1982a:14) makes the same point when he further enhances his paradigmatic position by indicating that, "schools are not institutions where what is taught inexorably moulds students into passive beings who are able and eager to dovetail into an unequal society". When applied to South Africa, Apple's more recent line of thinking suggests a way in which schools as sites of the struggle negate the dictates of Bantu education - that is, a dialectical interplay between subordination and superordination between the students and school authorities and teachers. This involves inter alia that the students engage in a struggle against school authorities. This can be used to illustrate a variation of resistance to the system (of apartheid) which requires only passive beings who are eager to be absorbed into a (racially) unequal society.

The sustained nature of the oppositional struggles and resistance by the student body at EMCHE may be viewed in this context because they portray a continued reaction to the unjust and unequal sociopolitical system within which the college is situated¹

As stressed by resistance theorists, the curriculum (both official and hidden) as presented by Bantu education is not absorbed directly, but instead is subjected to an intense form of mediation by students. For instance, the student's oppositional upheavals, most notably during 1976 and the early 1980s, attest to this mediation by the students. These protests were an impetus which led to the call for people's education and people's power in 1985/1986. This unequivocally indicates that there are no blueprints for alternatives. It means that people's education and people's power were, among other things, advocating that temporary solutions to problems should be the product of dialogue for all those involved in the community of the schools, that is, parents, teachers and students. This move goes a long way

¹ The Elijah Mango students wanted to participate fully in the decisions the college was taking about them. They wanted to be full participants in the teaching-learning situation and they also wanted to be codeterminants of the policies pertaining to student admissions. These are some of the broad areas from which the students were excluded by the apartheid relations of domination and subordination.

in enhancing a culture of negotiation and responsible citizenry for all involved. It supports the view that social reality is not imposed but negotiated.

Christie (1985:271) elaborates further by pointing out that "the issue of alternatives in education is a contested one" and that education is not reproductionist, but should rather be seen as a site of struggle and change". This constitutes the basis for the creation of patterns of changing by students. Christie's view is in congruence with McKay's (1990:112) argument that the meanings which inform human action are defined, developed and interpreted in human interaction and in this way, the symbolic social world is intersubjective or co-constructed. A similar form of argument is advanced by Wilson (1983:132) who indicates that:

the symbolic interactionist assumes that social structures continually change. It is impossible to define what structure is without taking into consideration the temporal dimension and the kinds of objects and activities for which a given structure is a structure.

The three phases of student resistance detailed in chapter 1 outline the historical tensions which plagued the education system in South Africa, and, it is against this backdrop that one should view the resistance of the student body at EMCHE in general as well as their resistance to the "unilateralism" of the college authorities. This resistance also underpins the fact that as human beings, the students were able to attribute various meanings that constituted the basis for their sustained resistance to the EMCHE administration and lecturers.

In attempting to offer a theoretical explanation of the accounts of resistance at the EMCHE, this study draws on the interpretive tradition which emphasises the discursive nature of social reality. It also draws on the theories of resistance, relative autonomy and voluntarism which focus on the way in which students are able to manipulate the systems in which they are active. It is against the background of these two traditions that this study argues that students perceive themselves as important parties in the process of shaping and reshaping their social environs in the institutions of learning.

Giroux (1981:92), arguing from within the resistance paradigm, points out in this regard that "the schools are significant sites for ideological struggle and for competition between competing class cultures". Giroux thus suggests that humans are informed by, as well as being contributors to the changing patterns of the

meanings they hold in the social matrix. Similarly, Wexler (1987:35), arguing within the broad interpretative framework, indicates that society is not an independent system maintained through the imposition of factors external to its members - it is rather "an arena in which people construct their social world".

This form of argumentation is corroborated by Apple (in Blackledge & Hunt 1985:179) who, in opposition to the deterministic economic theories of direct reproduction, contends that students display a culture of norms and values that are at variance with those of the dominant culture. This means that students have acquired the necessary confidence and theoretical space to articulate their aspirations in their schools. At EMCHE, the active participation of the students challenged the traditional authoritative top-down approach prevalent at the College. Accordingly, these students assumed different positions in a totally different terrain, because they engaged in the process of meaning construction. In so doing, they challenged the perceived unilateralism and arbitrariness of decision making by administration. Giroux (in Blackledge & Hunt 1985:181) elaborates on the recognition of student resistance, and indicates that "the existence of the pupils in schools is not totally dominated by the 'ossified and objectivated' wider economic and social system as the theorists of direct reproduction would have us believe, they have some autonomy". In this regard Apple (1982a:15) indicates that "schools are relatively autonomous institutions which harbour space for oppositional behaviour and teaching. Mathonsi applies resistance theory to the need to transform the system of education in South Africa". Mathonsi (1984:12) draws attention to the importance of resistance when he states the following:

... the very forces which will transform the patterns of production in this country are very much on the offensive in the education arena at this point, and we must not slip into the Althusserian² trap of underplaying this resistance.

Here Mathonsi argues that in considering changes in education, one should not overlook the importance of human action and resistance. He in fact cautions against reproductionist theories of education which rely on changes in the economy to influence changes in societal institutions.

² Althusser's theory emphasised the structural reproduction of society and thus tends to underemphasise the forces of resistance that work against reproduction.

Giroux (1981:95) too is critical of theories of direct reproduction. He argues that the notion of consciousness within these theories loses the capacity to act as a force and is seen merely as a "reflection" of the forces of production. He (1981:97) argues that through its failure to extend the notion of political struggle beyond the economic realm, the correspondence theories as a radical pedagogy:

[Has] less to do with "emancipatory" action in the schools than with the sterile precepts of functionalism. ... [and that] the correspondence theory fails to show how the school as an active cultural sphere functions to sustain and resist the values and beliefs of the dominant society. One reason for this is that a dialectical notion of ideology is almost completely missing from this perspective.

According to this view the correspondence theory fails as a theory of educational change because of its overly determined anthropology. This view coincides with the argument presented in this study which adopts a humanistic line of argumentation and encompasses the theory of resistance in so far as it recognises that human beings are endowed with voluntaristic capacities. Apple (in Blackledge & Hunt 1985:179) argues that students are not merely directed into opposing the capitalist mode. Instead, their recognition of any context empowers them with the means to change the system. He goes on to say that:

... the pupils do not only see through the capitalist ideological facade to the reality of inequality at its base; it also empowers the students with a means of challenging the system of control in their school.

Willis (1977) who refers to the human capacity for making choices also argues that schools represent a source of contradictions that sometimes makes them dysfunctional to the material and ideological interests of the dominant society. The focal points of the theories of resistance, relative authority and voluntarism are as follows:

- Education institutions are relatively autonomous and therefore partially independent.

- Humans have voluntarist capacities which enable them to make choices. As active appropriators, humans have the ability for self-determination.
- Resistance behaviour offers ways of opposing the dominant discourse, making education a contested terrain which is collectively informed by student resistance.

When applied to the forms of resistance discussed in chapter 1, it is clear that students and other players in the field of education have contested the dominant discourse in a variety of ways. Hence instead of the students at EMCHE accepting autocratic administration and domineering lecturers, they expressed their disapproval through various forms of resistance as indicated in chapter 3.

3.3 Supersession of reproduction theories by the interpretive approach

Having explored the way in which the theories of resistance perceive education and are critical of the reproduction theories, it is necessary to examine the interpretive approach to education. This is particularly necessary because here the interpretive approach is employed as the second component of the combined "resistance-interpretive" orientation that informs this study.

The interactionist approach has been gaining ground since the 1970s. This approach in sociology focuses on individuals in interaction with each other. In contrast to the deterministic orientation of the Marxist and functionalist approaches, educational sociologists in using the interpretative approach tend to focus more on the interactions between the social actors in a school or classroom setting.

Michael Young is often regarded as having provided the impetus for this "new direction" which emerged in educational sociology. Although Young directs a somewhat rigorous critique against the functionalist tradition, the interpretive alternative may also be counterpositioned against the Marxist arguments outlined above. Young (1973) argues that traditional functionalist educational theory offers no real basis for understanding the dynamics of the relationship between

knowledge and power. He is critical of the functionalist pretence that school knowledge and culture are (relatively) objective and illuminates traditional educational theory's "silence" about the link between power and knowledge.

In order to overcome what he perceives to be a deficiency in functionalist sociology of education, Young provided the programmatic statement for the new direction which emerged in educational sociology and which argued that society is not an independent system maintained through the imposition of factors external to its members (see Wexler 1987:35). Endorsing its preference for an **interpretive** approach to education, this new direction stressed **the precarious** nature of social reality. It argued that as a **meaning structure**, the precarious or symbolic character of reality is constituted and sustained through the ongoing interpretive activities of the social actors.

Drawing on the **social phenomenological approach** of Schutz, the **sociology of knowledge approach** developed by Berger and Luckmann, and the **symbolic interactionist** approach of Mead, the interpretive approach perceives humans as active constructors of social reality. Human actions are not seen as being simply shaped by social forces, but are informed by meanings. Meanings are constructed by actors in the process of interaction rather than imposed by an "external social structure". From an interpretive perspective, people are the authors of their own action. Meanings that inform human action are defined, developed and interpreted in human interaction and in this way the symbolic social world is intersubjectively constructed or co-constructed.

It follows from this that the interpretive approach regards any feature of society which is proffered as "given" as a **reification** and therefore **alienating**. Thus the interpretive tradition in education concerns itself with an understanding of the social processes through which an educational reality is produced and confronts "taken for granted" traditions. This is the import of Young's focus on the way in which reality as a symbolic construction may become contested. Theorists working in this tradition focus on the way knowledge is socially organised, transmitted and assessed in the schools (see Carr & Kemmis 1986:85).

It is important to note that while there are differences in emphasis within the interpretive sociological tradition, common to the various "brands" is the refusal to accept the character of the educational institution as an independent order and a refusal to acknowledge its status as an "objective reality". Once a belief in the objective reality of institutions is abandoned, the organisational "patterns" which are seen to be operative in schools can be regarded as the result of their continual interaction and redefinition through the everyday activities of the social actors. In the light of this, interactionist theorists hold that the conception of social reality can be investigated by observing the social activities through which it is produced. This implies the following:

- The everyday activities of humans are the building blocks of society.
- Everyday activities are never totally imposed.
- In order to understand everyday activities, one must grasp the meanings that people give to their behaviour.
- Everyday activities occur intersubjectively and are interpreted.
- An analysis of any activity must include a study of the actors' meanings (which do not remain static).
- Society is a precarious and symbolic structure of socially constructed and contested symbols. The symbols constitute the primary vehicles of communication for the continuing dialogue about classroom interaction and for the way in which students and teachers perceive each other.
- Knowledge is constructed through the participation of both teachers and pupils. This implies that both teachers and pupils allow for input in knowledge construction and classroom interaction.

This discussion highlights the importance of the interpretive argument that "reality as a symbolic construction is contested".

The contestation around meanings is evident in South Africa where the rigidified and ossified authority relations immanent in the Department of Education and Training schools were challenged by students.

This questions Althusser's assertion of the effectiveness of ideological state apparatuses as superstructural elements in the society in winning over the "hearts and the minds of the populace". In accordance with the interpretive approach to social reality, clinging to ideologies is alienatory because one does not consider the "bad news" that an ideology may contain. The interpretive approach focuses on the attribution of meanings to ossified (ideological) thinking. It champions the penetration of and contestation surrounding alienated or ossified thinking patterns.

In congruence Mphahlele (1992:9) points out that contestation must be encouraged because education is a social phenomenon and all such phenomena are socially contested. This perception is further endorsed by Apple (1982a:97) that the school and the culture of the pupils are relatively autonomous, thus giving leeway for such contestation. This line of argument is also countenanced by Arnowitz and Giroux (1985:9) that "schools should be a community, in effect a small society in which intercourse, communication and co-operation take place". The aforementioned discussion of contestation clearly highlights the failure of the Marxist reproductionist theories to accord sufficient importance to human volition and the possibility of the school being a site for contestation.

It is therefore clear that the theories of direct reproduction adhere to the positivist orientation of social reality which views social and natural realities in the same light and which seeks to uncover laws that enable the prediction of human behaviour. This argument makes it necessary to look into the relationship between positivism as an epistemological approach and the Marxist theory of direct reproduction.

3.4 The relationship between positivism and reproduction theories

Positivism, by analogy with the natural sciences stresses the independent status of social reality - that is, it treats society as if it were an objective reality existing apart from the individual. This posits a view that human behaviour should be a mirror image of the society and its structures. It also stresses the primacy of the law-like regularities that should be employed to understand human behaviour. Therefore it can be inferred that human behaviour is predictable in the same way as the behaviour of objects and events are in the natural world. For instance, Comte (quoted by Hughes 1980:19) attests to this view of reality by indicating that "society can be studied using the same logic of inquiry as that employed by the natural sciences". Again his espousal of a unity of method between the natural and

the human world is based on the notion that both realities are subject to "invariant laws". Hughes corroborates this view of reality by indicating that "human social life was simply the result of a coalescence of forces interacting so as to produce a particular sequence of behaviour". The same sentiment is expressed by Lazarsfeld (1965:43) that "human action is not random but conforms to certain predictable patterns". This can be understood in terms of the consequence of the reification of social reality by the reproductive theories. If we can take education as an instance of this reification process, the reproductive theorists posit that its task is to reproduce individuals with a behavioural approach that dovetails with the basic needs of the society. In this regard, Blackledge and Hunt (1985:134) point out that "education cannot be understood independent of the society of which it is a part". To further consolidate this view, Bowles and Gintis (1976:20) point out that "education ... [is] relatively powerless to rectify social problems within the framework of a capitalist economy". This naturally means that education within the capitalist relations of production can never be a force of social transformation - instead, it is tasked to produce individuals with "correct" attitudes and habits. They (1976:127) further point out that "the reproduction of the social relations of production depend on the reproduction of consciousness". According to them (1976:42) this "correct" consciousness is reinforced by the fact that "schools reward docility, passivity and obedience ... [and] penalise creativity and spontaneity". On the strength of this discussion, it can be postulated that a direct relationship does indeed exist between an independent variable which is a school curriculum and a dependent one such as various aspects of consciousness required by the capitalist society. This means that education within the capitalist framework does render human behaviour predictable in terms of the laws generated by the positivist epistemological approach. In further consolidating the monolithic stature of social reality, for example, education, Giddens (1977:28-29) implies that education through the deterministic laws produces a structure or a pattern that gives the society its characteristic morphology.

Therefore the "law-like" findings generated through a positivist-oriented social research do give credence to the theories of direct reproduction which predict the fact that human behaviour is a direct product of the rigidified external world.³

³ Marxist reproduction theories align themselves with what is called a realist epistemology which aims to uncover structures responsible for generating laws. However it is shown here how this links with the positivist view of people as determined by law-like patterns in the world.

Positivism consequently fails to understand the autonomous and voluntaristic nature of human behaviour. These limitations impel the researcher to provide a critique of the positivist anthropology.

4 THE CRITICISM OF POSITIVISM

The ontological and epistemological bases of positivism have been the focus of sustained criticism by some theorists. Essentially, this has been a reaction against the world picture projected by positivism which, it is contended, denigrates life and mind. Cohen & Manion (1987:23) explain that the precise target of the anti-positivists' attack has been "science" on which positivism is modelled. The positivists' mechanistic and reductionist view of nature which by definition, excludes notion of choice, freedom, individuality, and moral responsibility. One of the most sustained and consistent attack in this respect came from the poet William Blake who also argues as follows:

All (that positivists) can do is to define life in terms of biochemistry, biophysics, vibrations, wavelengths, and so on; they reduce "life" to conceivable measurement, but such a conception of life does not embrace the most evident element of all: that life can only be known by a living being, by "inner" experience. No matter how exact measurement can be, it can never give us an experience of life, for life cannot be weighed and measured on a physical scale.

Blake stresses that social and natural reality do not converge at all and therefore cannot be studied and understood in the same way. This argument is further advanced by Haralambos (1984:498) that "there is a fundamental difference of subject matter between the natural and social sciences. The subject matter of the natural sciences consists of physical things or substances, that is with the material world, the subject matter of the social world consists of conscious things or human meanings." Weber (1958:13) also shares a similar sentiment, namely: "Sociological explanations of action should begin with the observation and theoretical interpretation of the subjective states of minds of actors." These arguments highlight the importance of the fact that human actions which are a product of a person's consciousness cannot be reduced to the level of the behaviour of nonliving things in nature.

Another challenge to the claims of positivism came from Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher. He was concerned with the individual and his or her needs to fulfil himself or herself to the highest level of development. Of course, this realisation of a person's potential was for him the meaning of existence which he saw as "concrete and individual, unique and irreducible". Writing of its belittling effect on human endeavour, he (in Kierkegaard 1974:30) argues as follows:

... democracy's trust in the crowd mentality, the ascendancy of scientific and technological progress all militate against the achievement of this end and contribute to the dehumanisation of the individual.

Instead he argued for the reacquisition of subjectivity. Putting across with vehemence his antipositivist stance, Kierkegaard points out that, "subjectivity is the light and anyone who is committed to [positivism] or to rule governed morality, is benighted, and needs to be rescued from his state of darkness."

Also concerned with the dehumanising effects of positivism is Ions (1977). While acknowledging that positivism can take much credit for throwing light in dark corners, he expresses serious concern at the way in which quantification and computation, assisted by statistical theory and method, are used. On this point Ions (1977:82) writes as follows:

The argument begins when we quantify the process and interpret the human act. However, high minded the intention, the result is "depersonalization", the effects of which can be felt at the level of the individual human being, not simply at the level of culture.

Arguing in support of this claim, Roszak (1970:18) says that we estrange ourselves from more and more of what we experience, until the reality about which positivism tells us so much finally becomes a universe of concealed alienation.

The justification for any intellectual activity lies in the effect it has on increasing our awareness and degree of consciousness. This increase, some claim, has been retarded in our time by the excessive influence the positivist paradigm has been allowed to exert on areas of our intellectual life. This has reference to the ossification and the popularisation of the external reality (facts) through positivist epistemological endeavours to the detriment of the marginalisation of meanings that seem to guide human actions. Holbrook (1977:48), for instance, affording

consciousness a central position in human existence and deeply concerned with what happens to it, has written:

Our approaches today to the study of man have yielded little, and are essentially dead, because they cling to positivism - that is, to an approach which demands that nothing must be regarded as real which cannot be found by empirical science and rational methods, by "objectivity". Since the whole problem ... belongs to "psychic reality", to man's "inner world", to his moral being, and to the subjective life, there can be no debate unless we are prepared to recognize the bankruptcy of positivism and the failure of "objectivity" to give an adequate account of existence ...

Other writers question the perspective adopted by positivist social science because it presents a misleading picture of the human being. Hamden and Turner (1970:20) for example, conclude that:

The positivist view of man is based in that it is conservative and must inevitably lead to the social scientist taking an equal conservative view of human being and having to ignore other important qualities. This restricted view of man, they contend, come about because the "social scientist" concentrates on the repetitive, predictable and invariant aspects of the person; on "visible externalities" to the exclusion of the subjective world.

Some sociologists are also uncomfortable about the pervasive influence of positivism in social sciences. In this regard, Habermas (in Adorno et al 1976:209) calls for "an expressed commitment towards generating human emancipation". He sees this as the only route towards becoming conscious of the goals and values which are directing our inquiries. The implication is that there should be a clear preference for approaches that ontologically and epistemologically consign meaning attribution and interpretation as the nucleus of sociological enquiry. This will therefore go a long way in meaningfully contributing to the transformation of man from being a passive responder to external stimuli (according to the positivists) to an active creator of his own meaningful experiences in society.

Following Habermas, Carr and Kemmis (1986) indicate, for instance, that the positivist researcher operates as a "social engineer" who recommends institutional and practical changes on the basis of knowledge pursued through scientific inquiry

(Carr & Kemmis 1986:70). In this regard, McKay and Romm (1992:82) agree with Carr and Kemmis that, on discovering the sets of general causal laws which regulate the behaviour of individuals, the positivist educational researcher is in a position to manipulate the education situation in terms of predefined interests. These interests, they argue, involve operating within the framework of discovered "laws" which are seen as analogous with natural laws in the sense that they are held to be beyond control. This means, as Carr and Kemmis (1986:79) put it, that:

... any research recommendations [which] the [positivist] research supports will [thus] have to accept that certain basic features of education are in fact unalterable.

Positivists' research thus translates into the practice of regarding discovered "laws" as unchangeable. Seen in these terms, McKay and Romm (1982:82) indicate that "educational research can be shown to be an interested enterprise and is not as innocent a doctrine as it appears. It becomes a potent form of ideology that is grounded in the politics of surreptitiously incorporated values, and as such represents an assault on critical thinking". They further amplify this by arguing that, "teachers become pedagogically deskilled: they are reduced to the limited function of carrying out instrumental recommendations without being given a mandate for creative participation ... Therefore the knowledge attained by the positivist researcher effectively reinforces the situation of suppressed communication where teachers themselves forget their capacity to engage with the 'products' which they are expected to teach."

Reason & Rowan (1981:141) elaborates in this regard that most models of educational research are barred on the principle of "one-sided" control which presupposes that the researcher knows what significant aspects to be studied and then applies his or her knowledge to control the research situation. Torbert further argues that educational research has so far been "uneducational" because the subjects (in this case both teachers and students) cannot enter into dialogue with the researcher, or discuss the problem area defined in the research enterprise itself, and therefore the subjects cannot contribute to or learn from the process of research. He (1981:143) suggests that scientific (positivist) educational research is able to generate findings about what education currently does not do but that it offers no clues as to what education ought to do, how education might do what it ought to do, nor indeed which educational aims, strategies or behaviours would

need to be addressed in order to educate more successfully. Holbrook (1977:80) reinforces this stand by levelling another criticism, namely that:

the findings of positivistic social science are often said to be so banal and trivial that they are of little consequence to those for whom they are intended, namely, teachers, [students] and the like. The more effort, it seems, that the researcher puts into his scientific experimentation in the laboratory by restricting, simplifying and controlling variables, the more likely he is to end up with a pruned, synthetic version of the whole, a constructed play of puppets in a restricted environment.

McKay and Romm (1982:83) concur with Holbrook by pointing out that "traditional educational research focuses on what it believes to be 'real'". This means that what is possible is overlooked. Or rather, notions concerning what is possible become reduced to technical recommendations for further controlling education.

In similar vein, Heron (in Reason & Rowan 1988:19) criticises traditional scientific sociological research for its failure to allow the subjects to participate in the research process. He contends that positivist research methods fail to provide conditions under which subjects may acquire the status of coresearchers in exploring, refining and elaborating hypothesised categories. He further contends that traditional scientific methods keep the subjects naïve by not allowing them to make any contribution to the formulation at the stage of hypothesis making, at the stage of final conclusions, or anywhere in between. He is of the opinion, that "the subjects should be thoroughly informed, invited or assent or dissent and thus:

not only will the subject be a fully fledged co-researcher, but the researcher will also be co-subject, participating fully in the action and experience to be researched.

Giddens (1976:26) levels another criticism at positivistic social science. The first is that it fails to take account of man's unique ability to interpret his experiences and represent them to himself. He argues as follows:

Man can and does, construct theories about himself and his world. In failing to recognise this, positivistic social science is said to ignore the profound differences between itself and the natural sciences. Social

science, unlike natural science, stands in a subject-subject relation to its field study; not a subject-object relation; it deals with a pre-interpreted world in which the meaning developed by active subjects actually enter the actual constitution or production of the world.

This view of knowledge and research will inform the methodology and research design as discussed in chapter 4, where further explorations of this methodology in relation to positivism are undertaken. Before proceeding with subsequent discussions it should be noted that Marxist reproduction theories, while not seeing "law-like" patterns as immutable, still emphasise that people are determined by structures (and patterns) which exist in society. Therefore similar criticisms apply to their epistemology as to those levelled against positivism.

5 CONCLUSION

The theoretical material employed in this study starkly typifies the social discourse gripping EMCHE. The subsequent chapter outlines an axiom that EMCHE students no longer subscribe to the "jug and mug" principle where a lecturer [jug] as a possessor of knowledge unquestioningly and authoritatively fills the empty mugs [students] with knowledge. As a result, the students agitate to be part of the teaching and learning scenario. They also resist the unilateral decision making approach of the administration. These dynamics could only be explained by the researcher by synthesising both the resistance theory of education with the interpretative view of educational theory. As explained, these two paradigmatic orientations are inextricably enmeshed.

The chapter argues for the recognition of human volition. This underscores the belief that human beings are always instrumental in shaping the social environment. A clear attempt is also made to provide a critique of the positivist epistemology which understands social reality in terms of the immutable "law-like" patterns that are successfully used to explain relationships between objects and events in the natural world. This critique is included because of its failure to recognise the autonomous and voluntaristic nature of humans which is a view of knowledge that informs this study.

CHAPTER 3

EXAMINING STUDENT RESISTANCE AT EMCHE

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails an in-depth discussion of student resistance at EMCHE. The structuring of this historical outline revolves around various thematic issues which are characterised by a dramatic resurgence in student resistance to the issues affecting their life situations at EMCHE.

The data required for this discussion are derived from archival documents and newspapers dealing with resistance issues. The various kinds of student resistance and the various rationales for resistance are examined. It is acknowledged that the “sample” of resistance issues and the interpretation of the resistance are influenced by the observer. However, in the subsequent chapters, the interpretations of the forms of resistance are provided by students who themselves were involved.

These themes are presented with a clear view of the important influences of the stages of student resistance struggles identified by Wolpe and discussed in chapter 1.

In addition, each of these themes is evaluated in terms of the interpretive-resistance theoretical argument on which this study is based. The themes referred to are the following:

- unilateral decision making
- racism
- the challenging of teacher authority in the classroom
- student resistance to administration
- telephones
- bribery
- student resistance to academic rulings

2 UNILATERAL DECISION MAKING

2.1 Background

The promised end-of-the year function in 1988 triggered the battery of conflict situations that punctuated the history of EMCHE. According to Mthombothi and Resha (1989:2), the College administration apparently miscalculated the costs involved. They soon realised that there were insufficient funds to cover the needs of the function in its entirety, and as a result, the administration decided that the costs of the function should be augmented by refunds from students' bursaries.

The students pointed out that they felt that the decision to use their bursary refunds had been made unilaterally, and that they would not be bound by the decision. This opposition highlights the fact that the students have an innate capacity to resist the imposed definitions. The exposition below highlights this innate capacity.

2.2 Student resistance

According to Mthombothi and Resha (1989:3), after the apparent lack of receptiveness of administration to negotiations, the students called for a boycott of classes, at the same time deciding to go on teaching each other in the evenings. The weapon of class boycotts was extensively used in the early 1980s because of its situational existence within the sloganeering hype of "liberation now and education later". However, the creative twisting of this slogan in the late 1980s was crystallised (at EMCHE) when, according to Mthombothi and Resha (1989), the students further threatened to boycott the year-end examinations that were due to commence within the next few weeks. The threatened examination boycott, was expediently designed to exclude the 1988 final-year students. This allowed the meaning of "boycott" to be reconstructed.

Using the strategy of remaining on the college grounds whilst pursuing their struggle, according to Mthombothi and Resha (1989:3), the students eventually succeeded in persuading the rector to finally give in to their demand of a fully-sponsored end-of-the-year function.

2.3 Theoretical location of the discussion

These oppositional struggles by the students provide a clear amplification of Hartshorne's (1992) view concerning the authorities' loss of control in education. He argues that the aftermath of the 1976 protests set the tone for students' rejection of the authority of their teachers.

In this regard, student resistance to rigid authority relations reflect the idea that dialogue is an important tool in joint meaning formulation. Giroux (1981:11) highlights the importance of negotiating meanings. He states that:

Meaning is seen in its most crucial form as something which is constantly negotiated and renegotiated by human beings as they mutually produce and define the constitutive roles which shape their interactions.

As Giroux further points out, student resistance is an important indication that students are not merely the byproducts of capital, compliantly submitting to the dictates of authoritarian teachers and schools. Rather, schools represent contested terrains marked not only by structural and ideological contradictions, but also by collectively informed student resistance.

Embodied in Giroux's argument is a perception that the human world is a world of meanings that are contested in nature.

McKay and Romm (1992:2) make the same point when they argue that "the interpretive approach to education stresses the precarious nature of social reality". They indicate that as a meaning structure, the symbolic character of social reality is constituted and sustained through the ongoing interpretive activities of social actors.

Against the background of these arguments, Morrow (1989:120) and Nkondo appeal for educational leaders and the principals to change their bureaucratic and intransigent nature. This implies the unfreezing of meanings in schools so that dialogue becomes part of their culture. According to Morrow, dialogue which is responsible for meaning creation goes a long way in rendering "disruptive" resistance obsolete. The appeals for the unfreezing of meanings provide a context in which an explanation can be given for student resistance against unilateral decision making at EMCHE.

3 RACISM AND THE LABELLING OF STUDENTS

3.1 Background

The conflict revolving around this theme involves the third-year Secondary Teachers' Diploma (STD) students (who were taking Afrikaans either as a major subject or as a special course) and their Afrikaans lecturer. The underlying problem was an alleged racist utterance by this lecturer in class (See appendix B, page 159), on the one hand, and a memorandum written by this lecturer to the rector, on the other.¹ It was pointed out in this memorandum that it would not be possible for some students to pass Afrikaans because of their poor or lack of proper background to the language. According to Gobodo (1989), this triggered stern resistance from the students who attached racist connotations to the memorandum.

3.2 Student resistance

Against the alleged racist comment made by the lecturer, the students perceived the contents of the memorandum to have been informed by the lecturer's racist biases. According to Gobodo (1989:2) these instances incurred the ire of the students. He also (1989:3) points out that these incidences were a prelude to lecturers' unceremonious ejection from the college by the students. The militancy of the students underlies the "newly" acquired power of the students and typifies the student oppositional struggles of 1976 and early 1980s as discussed in chapter 1.²

3.3 Theoretical location of the discussion

Haralambos (1984:208) points out (from an interactionist perspective which emphasises the importance of the phenomenon of meaning creation) that "man in his interaction with others interprets and defines situations, develops meanings which directs his action and so constructs his social world". In contrast, this lecturer did not succeed in coming to grips with the world view of the students.

¹ this memorandum was read by the rector in the academic staff meeting.

² It is neither within the scope of this study to adjudicate whose meanings (lecturer or students) should be given prevalence, nor indeed to explore the possible nuances of meaning which may emerge through a dialogical encounter of meanings. The study aims rather to identify forms of resistance at EMCHE and to locate them within the phases of resistance isolated in chapter 1.

One of the reasons for the lecturer failing to recognise the students' meanings was because of the apartheid context in which the lecturers were operating.

Interpretive sociology whose conceptual analysis falls under the broad umbrella of the humanist paradigm, laments this kind of undialectical behaviour, and urges (as Alant 1990:65 argues) for what is referred to as a bringing into the consciousness of their own biases and prejudices and recognising how they may impact on one's interactions.

3.4 Self-fulfilling labelling theory

The allegedly "racist" statement can further be explained in terms of the self-fulfilling prophecy and labelling theories (which fall within the same rubric of interpretive sociology) that have been used to explain some of the possible effects of teachers' definition of students in the classroom situation.

In terms of the self-fulfilling theory, Haralambos (1984:212) indicates the following:

the teacher defines the pupil in a particular way, such as, the pupil is "bright or dull" [as was probably the case with the lecturer in question].

It is further argued that :

based on this definition [of the situation by the teacher] the teacher makes predictions or prophecises about the behaviour of the pupil.

It is again pointed out that :

the teacher's interaction with the pupil will be influenced by his [fixed] definition of the pupil.

He further contends that :

the label defines the pupil as a particular kind of person and from then on there is a tendency to interpret his/her action in terms of the label.

It can therefore be argued that this lecturer was impelled to understand the performances of his students in terms of the limitations of his imposed labels.

Becker (1974:92) states in this regard that simply by perceiving certain students in this way, teachers experience problems in working with them. Becker (1974:92) concludes that "the meanings in terms of which students are assessed and evaluated can have significant effect on interaction in the classroom and the attainment level of the students in general". In addition, Kitsuse (in Haralambos 1984:20) argues that "to understand and explain success and failure it is therefore necessary to discover the meaning directing the interaction which produces these results".

However, the attitudes based on this theory are therefore bound to be unchanging and long lasting. Contrary to this, Haralambos (1984:18) points out that meanings and definitions of the situation cannot be treated as fixed and unchangeable.

In similar vein, Groenewald and McKay (1990:137) contend that "it is precisely in terms of this argument that humanists suggest that we must not reify (or treat as a fixed thing) the particular position that participants may have at any point in time in the development process". While recognising the importance of students questioning and challenging racist labelling, one must also focus on the historical context in which the "racist labelling" occurred. The incident occurred at a time when very little dialogue (if at all any) was taking place between educational authorities and students. While the students found the "space" to "deal" with the situation, they were not accorded the space to challenge or "resist" the label. In this sense it is debatable whether the outcome of the student resistance could be regarded as being successful or not.

Therefore student resistance against this lecturer's remarks should be comprehended in the context of the students understanding of their own meanings (pertaining to the undialogical atmosphere) and also to both the self-fulfilling and labelling theories which are akin to this lecturer's classroom behaviour.

3.5 Attempt to establish order and stability at EMCHE

This attempt according to the *KaNgwane News*, involved the curtailment of the so-called "unbounded powers" of the SRC and the redrafting of the SRC constitution by the academic staff. In the opinion of the academic staff, the SRC was not representative (Gobodo 1989:6). In reaction, the students, through the SRC,

warned both the administration and lecturers to refrain from interfering with their democratically elected structure (Gobodo 1989:6).

The decision to dissolve the SRC and to redraft its constitution was probably taken in apparent oblivion of what Morrow (1989:118) [arguing from within the interpretive tradition] perceives as lying at the root of democracy, namely that "the students have the right to be represented by whomever they choose ...". This would therefore mean that the SRCs are employed by the students as vehicles to participate in the decision-making processes affecting their life situations in the schools.

It can therefore be argued that the dominant culture at the EMCHE is mediated by the students' generation of patterns of meaning at variance with the dominant culture. As a consequence, these patterns of meaning actualise themselves in terms of resistance. It is in this regard that Apple (1982a:19) and Willis (1977:73) stress that educational institutions are relatively autonomous and that the voluntaristic capacities of students enable them to resist the entrenchment of the dominant culture and the system of control.

This argument directs us to a question raised by Wexler (1987:35), namely: "What constitutes the social matrix?" Advocating an interpretive approach to the question, he stresses that "as a meaning structure, the symbolic character of reality is constituted and sustained through the ongoing interpretive activities of social-actors". This view presupposes the importance of dialogue that was missing at EMCHE during the crisis triggered by "racism". This condition is described by Holscher and Romm (1987:111) as a "stasis". Stressing the overriding importance of dialogue, Gouldner (1972:221) advocates the intervention of a reflexive theoretician in the way people make sense of their social environs by helping to locate contradictions and anomalies within the meanings they construct. However, it was unlikely under the then administration that any mediation would occur. Employing a reflexive theoretician would have gone a long way in inculcating the reflexive consciousness to both the student and the lecturers.

4 THE CHALLENGING OF LECTURER AUTHORITY IN THE CLASSROOM

4.1 Background

The aura and reverence surrounding teacher authority is a thing of the past.

Student resistance to teacher authority at EMCHE manifested itself when the 1987 first-years and the third-year 1988 students failed their final year examinations in English Method. (vol 2, 1992, exhibit "G1"). In addressing the academic staff meeting on the issue, the rector indicated that "the substantial majority of the students in the English department had objected to being taught by a particular lecturer in favour of another lecturer". (For the purposes of this study these lecturers will be denoted as lecturer "A" and lecturer "B" respectively) (See Commission of Enquiry Report, vol 1, 1992:20).

4.2 Student resistance

The students' argument in preference for lecturer "B" is outlined in (vol 2, exhibit G6) of the report. In exhibit G6, the students argue as follows:

We do not have any problem with [lecturer "B"] we are used to his method of teaching. We strongly feel that it is too late to adapt to a new lecturer. The June examination question paper has already been set by [lecturer "B"]. We therefore recommend that [lecturer "B"] should teach Methods of English in the second year and third year respectively.

However, the students indictments against lecturer "A" (as articulated by the SRC to lecturer "A") are contained in exhibit "H1" of volume 2 of the Commission's report. They are as follows:

- It is stated that you come to class ill prepared.
- You threaten students who have failed and then carried your subject from the first year to the second year that they are going to fail.

- You are incompetent because students fail your section in the exams in large numbers.
- You have a tendency of being impolite.

This submission by the SRC further indicates that "the students have therefore decided not to honour your classes and would like to have [lecturer "B"] to replace you". On the strength of this submission, only six students decided to remain with lecturer "A". As a result, the majority of the students accused lecturer "A" of dividing the class in defiance of the students' resolution taken with the full knowledge of both the rectorate and the SRC (exhibit "H3"). Entailed in this submission, is the request of the students for a meeting with both the rectorate and the SRC in order to resolve this impasse. However, as indicated in exhibit "H4", dated 29 October 1991, the requested meeting was preceded by a Senate meeting that would also look into the problem. Exhibit "H4" is a memorandum from the vice rector (administration) to all second-year methodology students. It indicates the following:

The College Senate has resolved the problem that has been existing in your class group as follows:

- The six students who were taking lecturers separately should rejoin the rest of the class, which is the majority.
- The final examination paper should be reset by the lecturer for the majority group and submitted directly to the Rectors' office. Administration should get the paper moderated by a well-versed person in the subject [an external moderator].
- The above matter is closed and no further discussions should be conducted.

In spite of the Senate ruling, the separate tuition of the six students continued until the end of the year. The continued separation of this class was a clear indication that students are not always homogenous in terms of meaning attribution and in terms of acting on it. The heterogeneous nature of the students in terms of meaning attribution explains why they adopted different patterns of resistance to register the different meanings they held about lecturer "A" and lecturer "B".

4.3 Theoretical location of the discussion

Meighan (1986:256) refers to this axiomatic situation where the definitions of the situation are in conflict and in serious competition. He recommends certain techniques which the social actors should use to resolve those problems which occur when definitions of the situation are in serious competition. Both recommended techniques - that is, negotiation or the imposition by the dominant partner of their viewpoints regarding the problem in the English Department - could not work because of the failure of both sides (groups) to realise the significance of the symbolic nature of social reality where strong views and opinions about the functioning of social reality were not to be finally legitimated. This undialogical atmosphere may have been averted through intervention which, according to Hölcher and Romm (1987:112) normally helps the protagonist to reflect on debates and discussions of their own meanings with a view of modifying or changing them. It is therefore apt to argue that the students falling within the three historical phases itemised by Wolpe in chapter 1 are a totally different "breed" from the students belonging to the era prior to 1976. Mathonsi (1984:6), for instance, argues that the students belonging to the era prior 1976 were in some way tolerant of the rigid systems of authority in the schools. However, the post-1976 era students of which EMCHE students are part of have shown a great deal of determination to be part of or to be in control of the college processes shaping their lives.

While it is important to recognise the importance of students in the decision-making processes of that which affects them directly, Aronowitz and Giroux (1986:37) draw attention to the role of the teacher. In this regard they point out that "teachers as transformative intellectuals should take seriously the need to give students an active voice in their learning experience". In consolidating the view of a teacher as a transformative intellectual, Blackledge and Hunt (1985:1987) contend that "everyday activity [which is represented by meaningful relationship between lecturers and students] rarely involves a person acting in isolation rather it consists of interaction with other people". This implies that lecturers as transformative intellectuals should be in possession of the skills to level the "interaction field" by inculcating the culture of critique. McKay and Romm (1992:88) advance the same argument when they point out that symbols are indeed social constructions which are relative and hence contestable. On the basis of this argument, it can be pointed out that teaching and learning are mutually inclusive activities, and it is within the ambit of this terrain that perceptions of reality are

continually being structured and restructured by both the lecturers and students. According to Hargreaves (1972:61), this process empowers both teacher [lecturers] and student to realise the importance of the contested nature of knowledge and the strategies of developing this knowledge.

Carr and Kemmis (1986:85) argue that "what counts as knowledge should be treated as problematic". Here Carr and Kemmis draw attention to the discursive and provisional nature of all conceptions of reality. McKay and Romm (1992:106) share the same view of reality in their argument that [there should be] "a recognition of the need to subject all conceptions of reality to continuing dialogue". This argument brings forth the importance of the position of the teacher [lecturer] in the classroom in introducing the language of critique among students in schools.

This would enable students (if their discourse were unrestrained) to challenge the ossified meaning patterns of lecturer "A" and of their own. In this sense, a dialogue would have contributed to an unfreezing of meanings and may indeed have averted the need for resistance. Instead, the generation of students referred to in this section attached profound meanings to the processes designed to exclude them from participating in decision making in a teacher-learning activity - thereby suggesting that ossified meaning patterns more especially among teachers actuate resistance patterns among the students. The ossified meaning patterns held by lecturer "A" involved an almost finite suggestion that those students who have failed English method and have to carry the subject to their second year are certainly going to fail.

In this regard, Groenewald and McKay (1990:137) remind us that "people always have the potential to be more than what they are at the moment". This is an indication that human beings, by virtue of the fact that they are endowed with consciousness, have the capacity to overcome their limitations.

5 STUDENT RESISTANCE TO THE ADMINISTRATOR

5.1 Bribery

5.1.1 Background

In the 1991/1992 academic years, EMCHE saw students making a sustained effort to be part of the student admissions process. As discussed at the academic staff meeting addressed by the Rector, this determination was a sequel to the acceptance of bribes by the student affair's officer from prospective students desperate to gain admission to EMCHE (exhibits "J2", "J3", "J4" and "J5"). Exhibit "J2" is a letter of regret sent by this officer to an unsuccessful applicant for the 1991 academic year. The letter is signed by the Rector. However, at the foot of this letter there is a handwritten inscription in which this officer explicitly encourages the applicant to telephone him urgently. Exhibit "J3" is the minutes of a meeting held at the office of the Minister of Public Works attended by the Rector, the bribery victims and a few department officials. These minutes confirm that each of the "victims" offered the officer the sum of R300. This indictment is also confirmed in exhibit "J5" written by the Rector to the secretary of the Department of Education and Culture in KaNgwane.

In this memorandum, the victims confirm that the officer gave them the unmitigated assurance that "although there was no space, he was going to do everything at his disposal to admit them". This exhibit also contains the argument by the victims that "the assurance given to them by the officer was sufficient to convince them to pay the required amount". As a result of the seriousness of this indictment, the secretary of the Department of Education and Culture in KaNgwane issued a memorandum dated 08.01.1991 effectively suspending this officer from duty (exhibit "J1"). The content of this exhibit is as follows:

.... with approval of the public service commission I have to inform you that you are hereby suspended from duty with immediate effect pending the outcome of investigations into certain irregularities.

It is clear from the documents that both the student and the officer were prepared to go to extremes because of the desperate lack of higher education in KaNgwane. This is confirmed by Buckland (1992:3) who indicates that "the scramble for space

at Elijah Mango College and its 'sister college' is compounded by the fact that they are the only institutions of higher learning in KaNgwane".

This may be the meaning also shared by the prospective students - hence their orientation EMCHE, on the one hand, and their "vulnerability" to financial exploitation, on the other. This emerging dimension of exploitation also necessitated the involvement of the SRC.

5.1.2 Student resistance

The complex nature of this problem necessitated the involvement of the SRC. Addressing the student body in front of the administration building, the SRC president hinted that the bribery problem constituted the first step towards the students' direct involvement in the process of admissions. He also indicated that the "the laissez-faire administration provides them with the sufficient basis to press ahead for the unconditional admission of the 'exploited prospective students'." Prompted by the stand adopted by the SRC, the Rector told the academic staff at a meeting held on 28 February 1991 that "this is the time to stop yielding to the students demands" and that as far as he was concerned "the matter is closed". He cited two reasons for this stand and these reasons are also contained in exhibit "J6". They are the following:

- The college is full.
- The prospective students used illicit means as a mechanism to gain admission at the College.

5.1.3 Theoretical location of the discussion

It has therefore become explicit that the experiences the students had with the administration with regard to student admissions had left them with an indelible meaning that they were not conducted as they should - hence the resistance stance they took against the administration. This is an indication of the fact that the students (through the SRC) wished to have a say in policy decision making on admissions, and to be part of the interview panels involved in the selection of prospective students.

The students' desire to be part of the decision-making structures is indicative of the appeal for greater participation in constituting their life world. Several writers, following a more nonstructuralist approach refer to the symbolic structure of reality which is constituted through the ongoing participation of social actors.

Freire (1976:60) points out that participation is an effective means used by people to transform the world. Further elucidating the significance of participation, Gouldner likens the constituting of the social structure to a musical performance in which "the melody is dependent on the activities of all the players". In terms of this analogy, he (1980:140) indicates the following:

[structure is]...an ongoing, continuing performance which, like a musical performance, ceases once the action and doings constituting it stop.

When applied to the actions of the EMCHE students, the above arguments draw attention to the belief of the students that they had a right to creatively participate in defining the meanings underlying the impermanent rules and regulations governing their lives at EMCHE. The same applies to their challenging practices which they regarded as immoral.

As already indicated, the type of participation the students wanted was not allowed at the College because the Rector and the Senate had their ideas of how the problem could be solved. The denial of the viewpoints of the students with regard to the matter of bribery, silenced voices essential to the democratisation of the college system.

Embodied in this request for participation is the shift away from the teacher as the sole possessor of knowledge to an understanding process of knowing as a meaning-constructing activity involving both students and teachers.

It was clear from the lack of interaction between the administration and the students, that the admission policy and the implementation thereof was a site of contestation. Kooiman (1993:2) refers to the importance of interaction as the essence of governance. This implies that the administrative processes at EMCHE should be driven through participation of the various actors. Concretising the importance of this democratic interactive situation, Hartshorne (1988a:31) points out that "there is no secretiveness in education" and that "the full, free flow of information is a basic prerequisite of a democratic society".

Hence Hartshorne's (1988a:31) appeal for the democratisation of education to be predicated on (in Habermas's terms) "unrestrained discourse".

While the above incident resulted in yet another bout of student resistance, it is clear (as with the earlier incidents outlined above) that the student resistance followed appeals for student participation in the debates around issues affecting them.

5.2 Telephones

5.2.1 Background

According to the *KaNgwane News* of April 1993, this long-standing problem was occasioned by the absence of telephone lines in the student residences. The Commission of Inquiry Report (1992:XVii) also cited the absence of telephones as a direct actuating factor of one of many student resistance situation at EMCHE. The Commission's report (1992:3) states that the administration had not heeded the many requests of students for the installation of telephone cables and lines. After many years of requests, there was another bout of student resistance.

5.2.2 Student resistance

The students challenged the College administration for the following reasons:

- The administration is insensitive to the suffering endured by the students having to walk two kilometres to the nearest telephone booth.
- The students are also in constant danger of being run over by fast moving vehicles on dangerous and dusty roads.

Thus (according to the Commissions's Report [1992:5]), the students' response to this problem was to take over the campus. Students dubbed the day "the day of mass phoning". In expressions of resistance, they also impounded the switchboard machine and the telephone receivers from the administration offices "for safe keeping" They subsequently decided to discontinue classes. Most importantly, the *KaNgwane News* (1993:4) reported that the mass action by the students was sufficient to spur the College authorities into swift action by urging both the

KaNgwane Department of Public Works and Post and Telecommunications to expedite the telephone installation process. The *KaNgwane News* also emphasised that: "intervention by the college contributed to the satisfaction of the demand by the students for the installation of the telephones in their residences".

5.2.3 *Theoretical location of the discussion*

Once again, the resistance followed a "deadlock", this time on the issue of telephones. The resistance can be seen to concur with Hartshorne's (1992:110) argument that in students' struggles against the system of education, smaller issues, supported by the proximity of teachers, principals or school property, receive the most fatal blows of resistance. Once again, in this incident, the deadlock could be averted through dialogue between students and administrators - a dialogue in which each party recognised the situation of the other. This kind of intersubjective understanding underlies the quest for democracy in education.

Sharing similar sentiments, Apple (1982b:29) underlines the fact that schools are autonomous institutions providing a conducive terrain for voluntaristic agents (eg EMCHE students) to make appropriate the choice to act this way or in another way. It is clear therefore that the behaviour of the EMCHE students is characterised by the emancipated consciousness that can be traced back to the three phases that characterise student resistance in South Africa.

6 STUDENT RESISTANCE TO ACADEMIC PROCESSES

6.1 Background

The EMCHE students as voluntary agents were also prepared to challenge policy regulations determining the circumstances under which they failed and repeated or "carried" their major subjects to the following year of study. The Department of Education and Training circulars of 1984 and 1991 stipulated that any two subjects could be carried by a student to the following year of study (See appendix C, page 160). This state of affairs has been a tradition since the inception of EMCHE. However, the College Senate had been toying with the idea of possibly stopping the "carrying" process because "it represents the legacy of inferior Bantu education" (Council minutes). (The Council minute secretary merely read these minutes out to the researcher.) Included in this ruling was a decision that education as a subject should be treated as a major subject because it was externally examined like

all other major subjects. Prior to this, this subject (Education) had been regarded as an ancillary and could therefore be "carried".

However, according to an academic staff meeting addressed by the Rector on 26 February 1993, the "noncarrying decision" was rejected by the students who had failed their major subjects. This sentiment was also shared by most of the student body at EMCHE.

6.2 Student resistance to the Senate ruling

This support manifested itself into a march that the students staged against the senate ruling. Underpinning this march was the argument that the SRC was not consulted. (*KaNgwane News*, March 1993). According to this news paper, the student body subsequently charged the SRC with the responsibility of negotiating with the Senate on behalf of the students affected by the senate ruling concerning the noncarrying of major subjects that had been failed. As indicated in the *KaNgwane News* and in the memorandum written by the Rector to the academic staff (23 April 1993), this dialogical encounter yielded a major concession from the Senate to the effect that Education could after all be carried to the next year of study. This memorandum, however emphasised, that this concession excluded other major subjects that had been failed. The implication was that the SRC delegation comprehended the validity of an argument by the Senate that the "carrying" of majors was not educationally sound.

However, it appears that this so-called "major concession" was unacceptable to the represented students and SANSCO, which, according to the *KaNgwane News*, had a huge following on campus. It was also pointed out in this newspaper, that the students, under the broad leadership of SANSCO, branded the joint decision of the senate and the SRC as "discriminatory and divisive". In practical terms, the decision was to the advantage of those students who had failed Education, on the one hand, and to the disadvantage of those who had failed their majors, on the other. As a result, SANSCO labelled the incumbent SRC as "sell-outs because it acted outside the mandate to specifically negotiate for the carrying of failed major subjects".

According to the newspaper, this conflict of ideas actuated the dethronement of this SRC. The upshot was that this SRC was replaced by the interim SRC (*KaNgwane News*). It is clear once again that the students attributed different and

changing patterns of meanings to the issue. In this instance there appeared to be a convergence of ideas between a majority of the students and the senate. However, this does not mean that there was a convergence of ideas among all students on this issue. For instance, the newspaper hinted that a group of students tried in vain to agitate for the reinstatement of this SRC into office. Chapter 5 also elaborates further on the issue of heterogeneity in terms of meaning making and attribution. Meighan (1981b:248) also attests to this view by indicating that the differentiated meaning attributions to the same reality highlight the significance of the "subjective dimension of reality". In addition, Meighan sees the importance of the need "to account for the idiosyncratic and situationally specific features of human behaviour". I think the different meaning attribution to both these realities (ie carrying and dethronement) by the students should be understood in terms of the unique and situationally specific features Meighan is referring to.

It is therefore evident in this discussion that meaning attribution, which is a product of an interaction situation and a context in which this human interaction is taking place, was a prerequisite for subsequent acts of resistance manifested by students at EMCHE.

6.3 The results of resistance

According to the *KaNgwane News*, the first major hurdle to confront the interim SRC was its nonrecognition by the administration. According to Christie (1985:23), this is the same fact that had befallen the militant SRCs in the early 1980s. As indicated in the *KaNgwane News*, the reason given for not recognising the interim SRC was that the old SRC was unconstitutionally removed from office. In support of this stance, the Rector argued in a Senate meeting that "a coup is a coup - therefore as custodians of democracy we cannot allow it to occur at this college. If we allow the interim SRC to operate, how can we prevent future coups from occurring?". This meant that the interim SRC had a diminished capacity to effectively enter into negotiations with the Senate. Taking into consideration a premise by Apple that students are voluntary agents endowed with the capacity to make choices, the interim SRC was quoted in the *KaNgwane News* (May 1993) as having pointed out that the Rector and the Senate were interfering with an inalienable right of the students to elect the SRC they wanted. As far as this newspaper is concerned, this so-called "interference" contributed to an indefinite boycott of classes by the students which in turn led to an indefinite closure of the College on 9 March 1993 (*KaNgwane News*).

6.4 Theoretical location of student resistance

The resistance of the students against the Senate/administration decision on the "noncarrying" and nonrecognition of their interim structure (SRC) typifies their determination to be part of the decision-making machinery at the College. This highlights the realisation by the students of the importance of the intersubjective nature of social reality as propounded by the humanist sociologists. This is in keeping with the argument by Hughes (1980:117) that the world is a world experienced and made meaningful by the coparticipation of those involved. In tandem with this, the students, through the process of interaction which is characterised by different experiences, formulated provisional patterns of meanings which, in turn, shaped their resistance and nonresistance action against or in support of the Senate and the administration. These meanings translated themselves in the form of resistance in favour of "carrying/noncarrying" and against the notion of the nonrecognition of their interim structure. The notion of nonrecognition is taken up further by Hartshorne (1988b:38). In particular, he is arguing in favour of the establishment and the continuing retention of SRC structures at colleges of education. He points out the following in this regard:

It is critical to the life of the colleges and to the advantage of every one concerned that every attempt be made to establish and maintain effective SRCs. They will never be perfect nor will they always act responsibly, but they are an important learning experience for young student teachers, and should be dealt with patiently and sympathetically.

In tandem with this argument, Nkambule (1993:2) argues in favour of the notion of the noninterference of college authority structures in the day-to-day running of the SRCs by the students. (This paper was written in the context of the objection by the administration to talk to the interim SRC with regard to the issues of carrying and nonrecognition.) He further indicated that "it will be incorrect for the administration to think that it has a solemn duty to determine student leadership". This he argues "will quickly erode the indispensable legitimacy that any SRC require to lead the student body meaningfully". Giroux (1981:11) shares the same sentiments when he argues in favour of the recognition and implementation of the concept of "choice making". This concept recognises the fact that students have an ability to consider options in terms of the meanings they attribute in the process of interaction.

Therefore the unreflexive attitude (ie the unpreparedness to consider the opposing views of the students with regard to "carrying/noncarrying" and nonrecognition) of the administration can be understood in terms of what Giroux (1981:11) regards as a "consequence of a fossilized notion of objectivity" that inevitably contributes to student resistance. This means that according to the administration, the task of the students is to follow and implement the authority's decisions without questioning. McKay and Romm (1992:52) also caution against this attitude. They argue for the dereification of these hardened views and that these views should be subjected to human mediation. This further explains the rationale of student resistance and lack of resistance at EMCHE which was caused by their exclusion from the machinations of decision making. These students knew full well that they constituted an important sector at EMCHE - hence it is a mistake to sideline them from the mainstream of decision making. This realisation is also shared by Wilson (1983:112). He argued that "man is a free, active, purposeful and creative being." However, a sizeable number of the students, as indicated in chapter 5, was not perturbed by being sidelined because as they argued, people in authority positions need not be questioned.

6.5 The involvement of the College Chancellor, Thabo Mbeki, SADTU local branch, ANC education desk and the NECC

6.5.1 Background

The closure of the College provisionally hindered the pursuance of dialogue between the students and the administration. Nkambule (1993:4) argued, for instance, that it became quite clear in the lecturers' meetings addressed by the Rector, that the administration, supported by the majority of lecturers, was not eager to open negotiations with the interim SRC because according to him, it had catapulted itself into office illicitly. It is against this background that the interim SRC decided to solicit the intervention of the College Chancellor and other community-based structures.

According to the *KaNgwane News*, the intervention of the Chancellor and other structures provided the interim SRC with an opportunity to present its side of the story anew to a broader forum. This broad intersubjective forum was constituted to provide a symbolic dimension in the perception of the problem of "carrying/noncarrying". This is reinforced by Nkambule's analysis of this problem.

He (1993:4) points out that the pointers were that the structures were going to usher in a new climate of dialogue that had been absent between the administration and the students at EMCHE. He based his argument on the "progressive" political background of these structures. A brief version of the events by the Chancellor was contained in Nkambule's (1993:3) assessment of the events. According to him, the Chancellor pointed out that the College should consider itself fortunate in having an entirely black administration at its disposal. However, what he found distressful was the propensity of the administration to evoke anachronistic apartheid tendencies to close the College as a "panacea" to permanently solve the problems students had with the administration. Nkambule also pointed out that the Chancellor referred to the indelible contributions the students had made in shaping the present sociohistorical epoch in the Republic of South Africa. According to him, the Chancellor said that "the loud and distinctively clear voice of the students can under no circumstances be ignored". Also essential in his paper is an argument that the Chancellor's involvement played a crucial role in both the recognition of the interim SRC, the reopening of the College and the resolution of the problem of "carrying/noncarrying".

6.5.2 Theoretical location of the discussion

It is apparent that the Chancellor's exhortations were geared to dissuading the College administration against what Giroux (1981:11) refers to as a "fossilized notion of objectivity". For instance, the College administration felt content to rely on and apply a traditional solution by refusing to talk to the students and at the same time by closing the College. According to Christie (1985:239), this strategy was used as a remedy to deal with student resistance during and after 1976. She argues, for instance, that student resistance during and after this period in particular, was inevitably occasioning the closure of schools. This point of view is taken further by Hartshorne (1992:106) to the effect that the strategy of closing down schools in order to break student resistance did, in fact, nothing to reduce its levels.

Therefore the explanation for the continuation of student resistance despite the intimidating closure of the College which was societally prescribed by the pervasive apartheid relations of domination can be found in the meanings underlying the action of the students. Schulz (1973:12) also emphasises the primacy of the meaning patterns that people formulate in an interactive situation. He argues that "human actions are not seen as being simply shaped by social

forces, but are informed by meanings". He further argues that "these meanings inform human action". Hence this substantiates the fact that student resistance at EMCHE was informed by the situationally changing meanings that the students formed in the process of interaction. Blumer (1962:60) shares the same perspective. He believes that the meanings that prompt human action are produced and interpreted in the process of interaction. The resistance patterns at EMCHE therefore also continued because the administration failed to interpret fairly, the student meaning attributions on both consultation and student representation. In relation to this, Wilson (1983:12) also emphasises the purposeful nature of human activity. This in turn makes it imperative that social relations at colleges be explored against the background of the notion of meaningfully intersubjective democratic governance which recognises the students as voluntaristic agents capable of acting in this way or in another way. Resonating the significance of the value of collaboration in the construction of knowledge, Touraine et al (1989:161) therefore argue that "its aim is to challenge those who take decisions in the society in the name of knowledge, information...". It is against this background that the students at EMCHE seem prepared to utilise their human facility to challenge the authority relations at the College.

Consequently, this explains the theories of resistance, relative autonomy and voluntarism that are based on meaning formulation and interpretation as pointed out in chapter 2. These theories as exemplified by student resistance at EMCHE do not see students as passively internalising the attitudes required by capitalism but rather as voluntary agents capable of resisting and challenging the so-called "system of control" at EMCHE.

7 CONCLUSION

As already indicated, the purpose of this study is to attempt to locate the meeting point between the theories of resistance in education and interpretive theory. The interpretive theory proceeds from a simple observation that human behaviour can be better understood by attempting to capture and simultaneously interpret the changing meanings that individuals attribute to their situations.

Therefore the different thematic representations discussed in this chapter do indicate that there is indeed a linkage between the meanings the students attribute to their situations and their consequent actions. The indication is that meaning attribution is a bedrock on which human behaviour is based.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide an outline of the research methodology underpinning this study. This involves justifying the choice of the research methods used and indicating how these are informed by the theoretical orientation discussed in chapter 2. The research enterprise is guided by the intention to capture patterns of meanings held by the students who embarked on various acts of resistance. The study therefore focuses on meaning-making activities rather than on quantified facts. Also underpinning the choice of the methodology is the notion that the events can be understood adequately only if they are seen in context. This chapter thus provides a rationale for the methodological choice, outlines the statement of the problem and explains the research design.

2 METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

Since this research aims at exploring the creative nature of social reality construed by the students at EMCHE, it is imperative that a methodological approach should be adopted that will allow findings to develop from this starting point. This approach will allow findings to develop from an exploration of students' varied meanings, and is used in preference to techniques that employ preconceived, rigidly structured and highly quantified methods that pigeonhole the empirical social world into the "empirical definitions" constructed by the researcher. As Romanyshyn (1971:6) puts it: "... it is the unique demands of the problem which indicate the method rather than the method which limits the problem". The problem in this study involves uncovering the resistance experiences of students at EMCHE. This requires that, as a meaning structure, the symbolic character of reality is studied through an exploration of the ongoing interpretive activities of the social actors - in this case, the students. The patterns of resistance by EMCHE students as explicated in chapter 3 clearly highlight the importance of discursive participation by the students who are involved in the formulation, modification and restructuring the patterns of meanings. According to an interactive approach, these discursive patterns, are a cornerstone of "orderly relationship" in society. In this regard, Haralambos (1984:553) points out that in terms of an interactive approach, the symbolic nature of social reality

... results from the interpretive procedures employed by actors in interactions. It is a negotiated order in that it derives from meanings which are negotiated in the process of interaction and involves the mutual adjustment of the actors concerned.

It was also noted in chapter 3 how breakdowns in negotiations (eg through undemocratic processes) led to certain student resistances. The interpretive approach will thus enable the researcher to grasp and keep abreast of the discourse of students' meaning making through their attempt to understand and interpret their expressed meanings with regard to their resistance at EMCHE. This argument also highlights the importance of the reflexive position of the researcher, and his or her ability to reconsider his or her interpretations by listening to others' points of view. In the empirical component of the study, as seen in chapter 5, detailed attention is paid to the students' different views on the contention surrounding "noncarrying versus carrying" of subjects. The researcher had to be prepared to revise any preconceptions that he might have had, in order to pay proper attention to the arguments offered by different students. An attempt was made to show sensitivity to all of these arguments, before offering an overall interpretation that took cognisance of the variations.

2.1 Rationale for the research approach

In this section it is the intention of the researcher to justify the use of this methodological orientation. Following the tenets of this methodological orientation as explicated in chapter 2, it is important that the methods employed to explore student resistance at EMCHE take into account the negotiated meaning underlying the students' social fabric. This will help one to gain insight into the meanings formulated or held by others and to promote an understanding of their constituted reality. Flowing from this understanding, the researcher decided to use an **interpretive-resistance** approach which would enable him to enter into active discourse with the students' meaning patterns that underpin their different resistance patterns. This implies that the interpretive activity of the researcher will impact both on the investigation and the findings of the study.

This view of exploring reality can be counterpositioned to methods deriving from a natural scientific orientation. According to Euvrard (1994) the natural scientific method with its positivistic emphasis on quantification makes such research more susceptible to (statistical) manipulation. Such an approach would mean that the phenomena under investigation are presented to the subjects as "givens" and that they have to respond in some predetermined way (Euvrard 1994:71). The point that Euvrard is making is that

quantification usually reduces the findings to precategorised responses on the part of research subjects. In this regard he further states that:

This is considered by many researchers to be unacceptable, for it tends to reduce the dimensions of human experience by coercing it to conform to pre-specified categories.

Similarly, Stones (1985) argues that the scientific research approaches are problematic in that they impose prepacked categories. He (1985:52) argues as follows:

A scientifically prefabricated model of *a priori* assumptions and artificial theoretical constructs is superimposed upon the dimensions of experiential reality.

Lather (in Goodman 1992:123) also issues a warning against "a particular framework from becoming the container into which the data must be poured". This disapproval is succinctly stressed by Rausch (1974). He states the following:

We have all been sold a parochial definition of science, and those of us who are teachers continue to foist it on students. ... but once they have to get their degrees ... they are rarely return customers. Traditional research procedures serve only an academic clientele.

Hughes (1980) elucidates further demerits of scientific methodologies and criticises the scientific role of the researcher and the participation by the research subjects in defining meaningful arguments. He (1980:115) indicates the following:

Once doubts are cast on what here has been called a "neutral observation language" in which to describe the world external to whatever subjective experiences we might have of it, scientific objectivity and detachment seem illusory goals. The social sciences, however they may ape the natural sciences, have forever to face the difficulties posed by the fact that their subject also has a voice.

Here Hughes (1980) highlights the importance of researchers taking cognisance of the role of human volition and its defiance of simple categorisation. In terms of the methodological approach adopted here, it is crucial that the phenomenon as it exists should reveal itself through meaning formulation. This view is underlined by Mouton

and Marais (1988:163) who stress that "the qualitative researcher's point of view is that the phenomenon should speak for itself." They are also of the opinion that the qualitative researcher is prepared to be part of that which is being studied by recognising his or her reflexive position.

In view of the above, the researcher wanted to discover how students define the situations they are in and how they construct their actions (resistance) accordingly. In addition, this methodology helped the researcher to absorb and interrogate the programmatic language used by the students in the text, thereby offering further interpretations which take further and place in (theoretical) context some of the student arguments.

3 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER IN THE INVESTIGATION

The role of the researcher in the exploration is imperative and impacts directly on the research subjects and the findings. Thus Hughes (1980:119) indicates that "a neutral language of observation [if it is possible] creates significant tensions between actors concepts and those of social scientists". This so-called "neutrality", he argues, forgets that the social scientist is also a member of a society and a culture and has a position within the collectivity of colleagues.

Continuing this in this vein, Hughes (1980:116) contends that "there is, in other words, no neutral, no Archimedean point, from which to stand back and perceive the social world objectively". Euvrad (1994:71) argues that these demerits are evidenced, despite claims by positivist researchers of adhering to the rigours of statistical reliability and the so-called "neutrality" of the researcher. In view of this, the primary goal in this study is to understand social realities as meaningful human constructions and to acknowledge the role of the researcher in the subsequent understanding (eg through interpretation and further exploration of student meaning making). Based on this understanding, the researcher aims to explore the variety of meanings that students intersubjectively attribute to their different perceptions with regard to (in this case) "carrying/noncarrying" of major subjects. According to Hughes (1980:118), such subjectively constructed meanings form the basis of social reality. This qualitative exploration of social reality is undertaken, bearing in mind Euvrad's (1994:71-72) warning about the position of the researcher:

... for researchers seeking to understand the situation is to be aware of the power they have to impose their definition of the situation upon the participants.

In this study, the researcher will take cognisance of this "power" in the actual research process and in the subsequent interpretation of the data findings. An effort is made not to abuse this power, namely by making sure that sensitivity to arguments presented by the subjects is cultivated.

4 THE SOCIAL ACTORS' VERSUS THE RESEARCHERS' VIEW OF REALITY

This study regards the views, opinions, meanings and the students' definition of the situation as being of utmost importance. Since the study investigates resistance as it is subjectively experienced by students at EMCHE, their definition of the situation and how they construct their actions should emanate from them [the students].

Giorgi (1976:330) draws attention to the importance of this by indicating that "that which belongs to the situation [should be understood] according to the subject rather than what is merely perceptually presented to the researcher". Therefore the temptation for the researcher to impose his or her view of reality in interpreting the student responses is warded off by his choice of the methodology that recognises an interpretation without being overshadowed by the researcher's own meanings. However, the researcher's theoretical account should at least be based on data derived from the lives of the social actors being studied. Hughes (1980:73) concludes by indicating that unlike physical phenomena, "social actors give meaning to their social environments in richly varied and exotic ways - that is they can describe what they do, explain and justify it, give reasons and motives, declare goals, decide upon appropriate courses of action, try to fit means to ends, and so on". Thus, realising that there is no neutral pedestal from which to stand back and observe the social world "objectively", the researcher as constituting an integral part of social reality in which the EMCHE students find themselves, will attempt to interact, understand and then interpret the meaning patterns projected by the students. This interaction with the meaning patterns of the students will in some way impact on the findings of the study.

In addition, Braise and Mohair (1986:137) state that "qualitative analysis involves inferring meaning from more holistic chunks of information such as the meanings of whole sentences or whole discourse". Such inferences as seen in chapter 5 are generated by the researcher (in conjunction with textual information derived from content analysis).

The methodological choice of this study does not in any way attempt to debase the voices of the research subjects because they are important in their own right. This serves to emphasise that the subjects' voices are laden with a huge and rich variety of the pattern of meanings that the researcher has to come into interaction through the process of interpretation. Underlying the importance of these voices, Sherman and Webb (in Ely 1991:4) indicate that "qualitative researchers want those who are studied to speak for themselves, to provide the perspective in words and other actions". Therefore, the researcher's choice of the research methods such as unstructured questionnaires and unstructured interviews attests the importance of the words and voice of the students.

According to Sherman and Webb (in Ely 1991), qualitative research methods enable the research subjects being studied to inform the researcher about their lives and experiences. Explaining this, they are of the opinion that the experiences of the social actors should be understood from the vantage point of their subjective station which is often richly varied depending on the context they find themselves in. In this study, the researcher recognised that by exploring the resistance experiences of the students, that the students wanted to be coparticipants in decision-making processes that affected their lives and experiences at EMCHE (as discussed in chapter 3). For this reason, qualitative methods have the capacity to attend to the students' experiences and to attempt to understand their experience as acts of consciousness. It is by acknowledging the "voices" of the research subjects that such an exploration of the world is presented to the qualitative researcher. However, this is not a value-free process. One value that emerges is the value of highlighting many voices as a prerequisite for democratic decision making. The research discussion of the need for this is already value laden.

5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND THE RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 Introduction

As argued in chapter 3, the literature on education in general can be categorised into structuralist and nonstructuralist approaches. The structuralist approaches typify the education system as being determined by the needs of the society which are extraneous to the individuals and groups of individuals in the society. This means that these forces are external to human beings, created by others and constrain our thinking. It is against this background that the structuralist approaches to education have adopted a view that the major task of the school is that of socialising people to accept and identify with the values and the normative patterns of society through the process of internalisation. Durkheim (1956:71) consolidates this view by arguing that a school or a classroom is a

society in miniature. It is therefore evident in this view that the student is not ready for social life - he or she needs to be slotted into the restrictive structures of society through socialisation. Meighan (1986:220) points out that teachers are usually defined as adults, superior, authoritative and relatively permanent members of the school whereas pupils (students) are defined as children or adolescents, inferior, ignorant and relatively temporary members of the school. The above view also has a structuralist reproductive slant in that behaviours are reproduced via the socialisation of the school (eg as discussed by the correspondence theory and other reproductive theories).

However, the discursive behaviour of the EMCHE students (as outlined in ch 3) contradicts strictly structuralist accounts. The behaviour of these students indicates that the actions of human beings cannot be understood in terms of the preprogrammed requirements of wider institutions of society as propounded by the structuralist theories. In essence, these students symbolised their inclination to be part of the decision-making machinery by challenging the following tendencies: administrative autocracy, lecturer autocracy in the classroom and certain aspects of racism. Criticising the structuralist reproductive thesis, McKay (1990:26) points out that "the product of the [structuralist] educational process [ie the student] is portrayed both as a determined, passive entity in the learning process - and the teacher - the unwitting functionary of the system". It is against this anthropologically limiting backdrop of the structuralist approaches that an attempt was made to synthesise the resistance theory of education with the interpretive view of educational theory in chapter 2. In order to ensure the reflexive latitude of this synthesis, the discourse of resistance theory is tempered with the ontology and epistemology of reflexive interpretism. This, of course suggests that this reflexivity is always the basis for subsequent choices and human actions in the interactive situation. The nonstructuralist position opted for in this study is intended to highlight the important contributions that the students as part of an intersubjective milieu, can make in the construction and the reconstruction of the symbolically manifested social reality. The emphasis here is not only on students' understanding the world but also on their ability to change it dialogically with other role players.

5.2 Statement of the problem

The synthesis of the interpretive view of education theory with the rigours of resistance theory in education underlies the nonstructuralist emphasis on the precarious nature of social reality. This synthesis stresses that, as a meaning structure, the symbolic character of reality is constituted and sustained through the ongoing interpretive activities of the social actors. This denotes that students are to be involved in the ongoing participation

of institutionalisation and deinstitutionalisation of social reality at EMCHE. However, recognition of student involvement is not common. Meighan (1986:27) in fact indicates a dearth of initiatives which stress the importance of consulting students in connection with their experiences of education. He indicates that research which focuses on students' experiences is neglected. He attributes this neglect to the elevated status the structural-functionalist view enjoys in education. This highlights the natural inclination of the structural-functionalist theories to stress the continued maintenance of unbending authority structures that tend to regard students as insignificant components in the power lines in the schools. According to Meighan (1986), this perception underscores the "absolute" contribution of the schools in training and "sorting" students so that they dovetail into the "sacred expectations" of the social system. This view according to them contributes directly to the neglect of the student representation. This is the modus operandi that the senate and the administration followed in systematically excluding student representation in decision-making processes. In keeping with the structuralist thesis (shown in ch 2 which includes reproductive arguments), the students are portrayed both as determined, passive entities in the learning process and the lecturers and other authorities are portrayed as unwitting functionaries in the system.

In terms of this view, students have few rights and are rarely consulted by educational researchers. Meighan (1986) uses an apt analogy to illustrate the indolence and docility often expected of pupils. He asks the following question:

Why should you consult the clay about what kind of pot it is to be made into?

It is against this background that the current educational system's opposition to student participation in the construction of the teaching situation and the acceptance of SRCs should be viewed.

While those adhering to the structural-functionalist position will be unlikely to consult students in a way in which the students may explore meanings beyond the limitations of the status quo, the adherence of the structuralist-Marxist position - although opposing the "the system" - also does not emphasise consultation with students as a means of engendering its objectively posited alternative. In contrast to these traditions, the interpretive approach pays detailed attention to the meaning patterns that underpin student resistance in particular and social action in general. This approach is based on a view of social reality as being composed of the meanings that underlie social action.

5.3 Research studies that explore students' conceptions

Very few researchers have conducted studies on how students interpret their experience of schooling. These studies attempt to crystallise the views, opinions and meanings students hold with regard to their experiences of schooling. Blishen (1971), for example, points out in his study that "the students assessment of their experience of schooling was wide ranging and covered, among other things, the limiting effect of time tables and bells, the role of the prefect as peer group policeman, the triviality of school rules and the distorting effect of the examination".

Maree (1984) employs a methodological approach which, she says, is the "lived experiences of the classroom ... [and] the shared constructions of reality" of a sample of students attending school in Soweto. She argues that these students are aware of the manipulative effect of the school in terms of its teaching strategies, syllabi, et cetera, which encourages cynicism in their behaviour in general. She also contends that black students, especially in urban areas, are aware of their exploited position and the education system, which she indicates, does not succeed in legitimising the inequalities in education. However, Maree's analysis of students does not treat the views of the students as a springboard for discourse. This has echoes of a structuralist-Marxist orientation that does not recognise the views of the students as a launching pad for further dialectical interplay.

These studies attempt in some ways to unravel the hidden subjective element that makes sense of what the litany of the school rules means to the students with regard to meaningful learning experiences. This research project stresses the idea that the individual's personality and self-identity are not static and that they cannot be understood wholly in terms of narrow and rigid school rules. However, the studies do not go far enough to recognise the continued reflexive position of the students in meaning making in the school. This research study will attempt to look beyond this limitation by looking into the students' capacity to be part and parcel of the ongoing discourse in the schools. This scenario is amplified by the study conducted by Maizels (1970). His study also examines students' perceptions of schools and teachers. Maizel's study shows that only a minority of the pupils felt that their teachers had encouraged or listened to them, had been kind or sincere or had kept their promises. Only a small number of the students had "felt their teachers had treated them like human beings" (Maizels 1970:47). He agitates for a dialogical interplay as a part of the lived experiences in the schools. As will be shown later, this was also one of the contentions of the students at EMCHE.

On the basis of this background, this study attempts to explore the pattern of meanings its theoretical component argues as being cardinal to various patterns of student resistance at EMCHE.

5.4 The research design

According to Seltiz et al (1976:50) the research design involves the organisation of the collection and analysis of data in such a way that a healthy balance is maintained between the completeness of the relevant data and economy of procedure. This means that the social scientist needs to collect the data required in the most economical manner. In this study, an economical manner of developing an understanding of meanings accompanying student resistance was developed by means of the content analysis of questionnaire responses and in-depth interviewing.

5.5 The "sample"

The first phase to be undertaken in this study concerns the identification of the units of analysis which Babbie (1989:82) regards "as those units or things that we observe ...".

The unit of analysis comprises the following:

A reasonable sample of the members of the student body doing third year during the occurrence of the specific episode selected.

This unit of analysis constitutes a circumscribed grouping. It is a circumscribed grouping because, according to Babbie (1982:82), a circumscribed grouping has a sense of belonging to the group. In relation to this, EMCHE students constitute a circumscribed grouping because they share a number of similar characteristics and experiences as a group of students. Although the subjects of this study belong to a circumscribed grouping of students they would be units of analysis at individual level. It means that the data would be elicited from them as individual members of the student body.

The second phase will deal with the execution of the research design, and will comprise the following:

1. The rationalisation of the sample, and execution of the study (by collecting data using unstructured questionnaires and unstructured interviews).

2. Content analysis (location of themes and arguments).

3. Further interpretation.

5.5.1 The rationalisation of the sample

Since this study is not contingent on quantitative validation, the structures employed by "scientific" (realist) approaches were not considered necessary in the selection of the first sample stage. Using his own judgment, (which cannot be divorced from the research exercise) the researcher consequently decided to select the purposive or judgmental sampling method for the specific purposes of this study.

Singleton (1988:154) point out that such a method requires the researcher to use his or her own judgment about which respondents to choose, and to pick only those who best meet the purposes of the study. They further indicate that this sampling method demands considerable knowledge of the population before the sample is drawn.

Bailey (1987:94) corroborates with the judgmental sampling procedure by emphasising the need to include only those who best meet the purposes of the study. In view of the fact that the researcher is a lecturer at EMCHE and has an in-depth knowledge of the student population, this sampling method became an attractive option. The purposive and judgmental sampling selected for the purposes of this study was followed by a simple random sampling for the final selection of the research sample. Simple random sampling is referred to by Bailey (1987:87) as sampling without replacement. It means that all the students will have an equal probability of being selected for the final sample. These sampling procedures are ostensibly used in this nonrealist-oriented study for the purpose of demarcating the population to be as manageable as possible.

It is for this reason that this group of students constituted the population from which the sample could be drawn for the purposes of this study.

5.5.2 The sampling procedure

The researcher decided to group the population according to their major subjects, namely Geography, History, Biblical Studies, Agricultural Science, Economics, Accounting, Mathematics and Physics. The language groupings were deliberately omitted because those members of the population who take them would also be taking the subjects that have already been mentioned. The simple random sampling was used to

select only two subject groupings that finally constituted the sample. The obvious advantage of this sampling method is that each element in the universe (population) has an equal chance of being included in the sample. This was in fact the case with the population from which the sample of this study was drawn.

From the list of the pertinent subjects compiled from this list, two subject groupings were randomly selected for the purposes of this investigation. These were Geography and Agricultural Science. In practical terms, it meant that students taking these subjects comprised the actual sample of the study. One should, however, bear in mind that these students would be documenting the problem as individuals. Since the average number of students per class was 45, it would have been a mammoth exercise to include more in the sample. The researcher therefore selected 56 students from both subject groupings using the same random sampling method as a final sample for the purposes of this study. Bailey (1987:83) also underlines the importance of the manageability of the responses by choosing a sample. However, this study does not pretend in any way to be representative of the "larger universe" (population). This sampling procedure was undertaken only to draw a manageable sample from which data could be obtained for the purpose of this qualitative investigation. Following Rudner (1973:83), the researcher agrees that "it is generally accepted that there is no such thing as an exhaustive description". This further indicates that the generalisation of the findings which is the main component of the realist epistemologies can neither be assumed nor considered possible for the purpose of this nonrealist qualitative study. Contrary to the realist epistemologies, the nonrealist epistemology does not therefore attempt to generalise its findings. It emphasises instead that all findings are negotiable and revisable. Nevertheless, certain insights arising from the study can be offered. For example, certain theoretical arguments are developed, and these may also be relevant in other circumstances. For instance, one insight which calls for student participation may generally be seen as part of the development of more democratic decision making in schools.

5.5.3 *Adequacy of the "sample"*

The student resistance trends at EMCHE underline the notion that students are not homogenous and do not respond in the same way to various situations at EMCHE. The argument of divergent responses to situations is highlighted in critiques of the structuralist-functionalist arguments which point out that the structural functionalist tradition tends either to overlook or to treat as constant the unique actions of the individual. If we view humans as being predominantly determined in their conduct, it is difficult to account for idiosyncratic and situationally specific features of human

behaviour. Also emphasising the importance of the private and subjective meaning that the pupils attribute to their experiences, Meighan (1986:248) concurs that "in our daily lives we notice [that] these very features, these mundane and everyday occurrences in which individual social actors display and act upon private and subjective understandings, choices and intentions". According to McKay and Romm (1992:46) this symbolises a notion of voluntarism, that is, the human capacity to make choices and exercise self-determination.

It was in view of the tendency towards heterogeneous responses that this sample method was used to decide on the various components of the sample. Using the purposive and judgmental sampling methods, the researcher was guided by his background knowledge of the entire student body of EMCHE to nonrandomly choose the third years as the population of this study. This selection was based on their long-standing experience at EMCHE. Moreover, this group was the most affected by the phenomenon of "carrying/noncarrying" at EMCHE. For example, this is the last group of students who experienced the "carrying" of major subjects in their second year of study. The problem occurred when a great number of these students failed one or both of their second-year majors. These students had already started their third year of study when the administration/senate ruling annulling the phenomenon of "carrying" was effected. The implication of this decision was that those students "carrying" their major subjects in their third year of study had to repeat them at second-year level before proceeding to third year. Therefore, as a lecturer at EMCHE, the researcher was suitably placed to observe at first hand the struggle and debate that the 1993 third years waged for or against the "carrying" of major subjects. This further justifies the decision to include them in the final population from which the sample could be drawn. However, as already pointed out, this circumscribed group of students, although faced with the same set of circumstances, was not homogenous in terms of meaning making and attribution with regard to carrying because some were for and some against "carrying". This divergence in terms of meaning formulation and attribution is explicated in chapter 5 of this study. For this reason this group of students was regarded as constituting the best group from which a sample could be drawn for the purposes of this study.

6 THE VARIOUS MOMENTS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This study embodies various "moments". The term "moment" is used here in preference to other terms such as "steps", "phases", and so forth. The use of these terms may give the impression that there is no direct relationship between research and theory, that is, where theory feeds on research and research on theory. In this regard, McKay

(1990:268) points out that research should not be seen as a "linear" process. It may be seen also as a series of cycles which, in Reason and Rowan's (1988:491) terms, "all knit together", and are intended to reflect the ongoing nature of the project.

6.1 Cycles involving content analysis and interpretation (through selection of themes and discussion)

The first cycle (or moment) of this study explores and discerns the patterns of meanings that the subjects of the study attributed to the phenomenon of the "carrying/noncarrying" of major subjects through the use of the method of content analysis. By using this method, the researcher was able to explore and discern the meaning attribution by the research subjects from the themes drawn out from the respondent's responses and the interviews. It was therefore possible to use content analysis because the highly unstructured nature of the questions posed in the questionnaires which were analysed allowed various themes to emerge. In the subsequent cycles, the meaning patterns could be further investigated by the researcher, so that interpretations of these could be further developed. The justification for the rationale for the choice of content analysis is discussed in section 7.1 below.

6.2 The use of unstructured questionnaires and unstructured interviews

The empirical component of the research to a large extent involves the use of the unstructured questionnaires. The same format of questioning will be used as an unstructured interview in certain cases. This interview will sometimes be used as a contingency measure in the event that some research subjects might not have had time or may be unwilling to be respondents to the unstructured questionnaires. This decision was undertaken because some research subjects indicated to the researcher that they had no qualms about verbally articulating their views on the aspects of "carrying/noncarrying" of major subjects at EMCHE but objected to putting their views in writing. Rather than excluding these from the sample, the researcher chose to include them by interviewing them.

7 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE USE OF UNSTRUCTURED QUESTIONS AND UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

As already stated, the researcher decided to use both unstructured questionnaires and unstructured interview schedules - the latter are normally used in cases where the respondents for a variety of reasons indicate their unwillingness to document their

responses. Bailey (1987:174), for instance, observed that "many people simply feel more confident of their speaking ability than their writing ability". In many cases, students are unwilling to document their thoughts because they lack confidence in the confidential nature of their written responses.

The methods employed in this study are welded together because of their propensity to give the qualitative researcher insight into the views of the subjects on "social reality". In this regard, Mouton and Marais (1988:204) point out that "an important assumption of the qualitative paradigm is understanding a situation from the perspective of participants in the situation". They go on to say that "the qualitative approach is subjective and that the focus is on the experiential states of actors and their perceptions of situation". The broad manner in which the questions have been phrased ensures that the liberty of the participants remains unfettered at all times - hence, as indicated earlier, the need to resort to verbal responses. Countenancing this view, Cohen and Marion (1987:27) indicate that "this serves the purpose of revealing the subject's attitude towards the situation". Adversaries of positivism within social science would agree that the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated. Thus "... understanding of the individual's interpretation of the world around him has to come from the inside not the outside" (Cohen & Marion 1987:27). In terms of this, it is necessary for the researcher to explore the individual's "inside" view of the world.

In this regard, Mouton and Marais (1988:212-213) suggest that "the aim in qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework for a subject to speak freely and in his or her own terms about a set of concerns which the researcher brings to the interaction and whatever else the subject may introduce". According to Ary et al (1972:91) this applies equally to unstructured questionnaires. This argument is also reinforced by Vockel (1983:82) in his amplification of the differences between open-ended and structured questionnaires. He indicates that "the major advantage of the open-ended format over the structured format is that in the open-ended format it is the respondent himself or herself who takes the initiative in deciding what answer to supply - whereas in structured formats the respondents merely selects from among answers supplied by the writer of the questionnaires. The unlimited exposition of both the unstructured questionnaires and unstructured interview enables the researcher to capture the salient meanings that both the respondents and interviewees attribute to social reality. The selection of these two qualitative research techniques was based on the premise that human beings are in possession of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness makes human beings (in terms of their perception and action) heterogenous instead of monolithic. Stressing this

argument, Vockel (1983) again argues that "with the open-ended format it is hardly accurate to view their responses as replies to the same question."

The researcher does not in any way attempt to achieve objectivity through complete "neutrality" as required by the positivist researchers. The use of these two data-gathering techniques will enable the researcher, having set the parameters by questions, to interpret the different patterns of meanings the subjects attribute to certain aspects of their social reality, in this case, to the "carrying" and "noncarrying" of major subjects. As shown in chapter 5, the researcher does not shy from offering interpretations, to make sense of the arguments and also to place the arguments offered in theoretical context. Furthermore, some of the commitments of the researcher, for example the commitment to democracy, also enters the interpretive process of the research.

In an endeavour to make the respondents and the interviewees write and say more about their perceptions concerning the "carrying" or "noncarrying" of major subjects, the researcher decided to ask questions as "openly" as possible so as not to frame the responses given by the respondents. The openness of the questions can be justified in that respondents seldom interpret the questions in the way the designer intends them to.

Nisbet and Entwistle (1974:53) contend with regard to question design that "it must be borne in mind that in all research ... the virtual impossibility of posing a completely neutral question must bias the results. Any form of question implies a certain frame of reference and thereby influences the answer given". Thus the researcher does not claim that the questions posed are completely free of bias. However, the exposition of the phenomenon is left entirely to the volition of the respondents and the interviewees. Bolstering this argument, Mouton and Marais (1988:213) contend that "questions are formulated because the researcher has an idea of what basic issues she or he wishes to cover in interviews". During the interview, however, the researcher endeavoured to assume a largely nondirective approach, thus allowing students' arguments to come to the fore in their own terms. This helped to give the interviewees self-confidence enabling them to say more about the problem. In Weber's (1949) formal and empathetic understanding, the procedure was to first establish rapport with the subject and create a warm and accepting atmosphere. In tandem with this approach, the researcher also explained the purpose of the interview to the subjects. The confidentiality of the entire exercise of the interview was also emphasised. The unstructured questionnaires and unstructured interviews were intended to uncover the meanings pertaining to the following two main questions.

- Can you provide an argument about why you wanted to "carry" your major subjects to the next year of study?
- Can you provide an argument about why you disagreed with the "carrying" of major subjects to the following year of study?

7.1 Justification for the utilisation of the method of content analysis

To begin with, this method is supposed to achieve exactly what its name implies - namely, the analysis of highly unstructured questionnaires and, to a lesser extent, unstructured interviews which have been used in this study as data-collection techniques.

However, the researcher first needs to explain the method of content analysis as perceived by this study. Since this study is heavily steeped in a nonrealist paradigm, it may seem odd to utilise the method of content analysis for data analysis purposes. The method of content analysis is widely recognised as a technique belonging to the realms of the "scientific" positivist approach. Bailey (1987:300), for instance, alludes to content analysis as "a marvellous social alchemy that can turn words into numbers". He thus suggests that the goal of content analysis is to "take a verbal, non-quantitative document and transform it into quantitative data". In further elucidating his perception of content analysis he argues as follows:

The results of content analysis can generally be presented in tables containing frequencies or percentages, in the same manner as the survey data.

It is clear that Groenewald (1986) construes both the location and utilisation of content analysis within the realm of positivist epistemology. His argument is backed by the following definition of content analysis by Berelson (1954:489):

Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.

In this study, however, no attempt is made to strive for "objectivity". The researcher engages with the text and admits that categories and findings are impacted by his own interpretation. Furthermore, the researcher agrees with Kidder's (1981) contention that "the inclination of content analysis to stress the quantification of data is not always feasible". Kidder argues that both quantified and unquantified data have their rightful

place in contemporary social science. He pursues his argument by pointing out the following:

It is indeed difficult to see why quantification should be regarded in content analysis when it is not so regarded in the analysis of data obtained by interviews or observation.

One can therefore infer from Kidder's concern that the method of content analysis should be equally applicable in nonrealist studies as is in quantitative studies. The application of the method of content analysis is discussed in section 7.1.2 below.

In spite of perceptions that content analysis may best fit "realist" studies, the content analysis approach employed in this study will attempt to a minimal degree "quantify", whilst fully recognising that the answers to both unstructured questionnaires and interviews would definitely allow the researcher to ask questions arising from his attempts to understand the texts and then, subjectively interpret them. The attempt at quantification would in no way sacrifice the nonrealist orientation of this study. This basically indicates that, after the analysis and interpretation exercise, the researcher would be able to use percentages (in a limited way) to ostensibly depict the course of the patterns of meanings the research subjects attributed to the "carrying" and "noncarrying" exercise, at the same time recognising his own role in "discerning" the data from a more qualitative angle, requires a different approach. This is important because it will illuminate the idea that the research subjects do not see, think and interpret things in the same way. This would further highlight the importance of the social context in which the research subjects operate with regard to the process of interpretation. Euvrad (1994:75) also recognises the significance of the researcher's engagement with the text through the use of content analysis. He states that this approach is possible when the concept of the phenomenon is shared by both the respondents and the researcher. This point is also made by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918:311) in their analysis of the personal letters written by Polish immigrants in America and their relatives in Poland. They stress the importance of the researcher's empathic mediation with the text of the document.

The method of content analysis will therefore be employed in this study to translate the students' concepts into frames of reference accessible to the researcher - and also as a method that will induce reflection on student arguments about their education in respect of some of their experiences at EMCHE. This technique was also employed by McKay (1987:105) in a reflexive methodological study of gender orientation. She points out that such techniques can successfully be employed by nonrealist researchers. She points

out that the nonrealist (reflexive) utilisation of the method of content analysis entails that the researcher:

... takes the [responses] produced by the students and asks particular questions to order material provided in the [responses]- in other words, the researcher enters into dialogue with the text.

This sentiment is also discernible in Gouldner's (1980:9) writings that "the meaning of any text is never limited to its author's self understanding [but that it] ... must be interpreted [and] never merely resited". This basically means that the researcher must get into active dialogue with the meaning patterns as presented by the author so that he or she can understand them contextually. Therefore, with regard to the issue of reflexively reading the text, McKay (1990:280) is of the opinion that "the process of content analysis can be employed as a 'non-objectivist' enterprise". The reason for this is that it gives the researcher leeway to get into dialogue with the text.

7.1.1 Justification of content analysis

Several researchers spell out the valuable role that content analysis can play in the area of research. Groenewald (1986:63), for example, indicates that

... a considerable time, content analysis did not receive serious attention in research books, and it is probably as a reaction to this neglect that some authors now describe content analysis as a basic sociological research design.

Stohl (1976:4) contends in this regard that "there is no justification for the neglect of this data collection technique". In further looking at the virtues of content analysis, Groenewald(1986:63) contends that "because of the specific procedures of the content analysis, the opportunity for repetition or re-examination of the content is always there". He goes on to say that "almost all text books on content analysis mention this fact". Reinforcing the above argument, Babbie (1979:225-253), for example, indicates that "a content analyst may, at relatively little cost, start afresh at almost any stage of the study if a defect or error is discovered in his system of analysis". Strengthening his argument, he points out in addition that [making an example with a survey based on interviews] "the high costs involved make it almost impossible for the same researcher to repeat his

study if a defect or error is discovered". Also dwelling on the merits of content analysis, Baker (1988:265) indicates that "working on the content may refine the research topic as it develops". The aforementioned arguments with regard to content analysis suit the qualitative approach pursued in this study.

Taking these merits into consideration, this research study reflects the meanings the sampled students attributed to the "carrying" and "noncarrying" exercises in greater depth and in context (which would take into account the researcher's involvement in the interpretation process) because of the fact that the researcher maintains constant engagement with the text by getting into dialogue with it.

7.1.2 The application of content analysis

The responses of respondents and interviewees were subjected to content analysis, following the stages suggested by Bailey (1987:314). They are the following:

- A sample of documents must be drawn.
- The content of the categories must be defined.
- The recording unit must be defined.
- The system of enumeration must be defined.

It should, however, be noted that Bailey handles these stages within the positivist-oriented tradition in order to subject content analysis to the rigours of scientific discipline as he comprehends it. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to endeavour to show how these aspects can be treated in terms of a "nonrealist tradition".

7.1.2.1 Sampling with regard to the responses of the respondents

All the unstructured questionnaires and unstructured interviews were used as data. However, the "sample" (as already indicated) does not pretend to be representative of all EMCHE students - nor does it imply that a generalisation of all the findings to the large "population" is possible. The sample is intended to show that the meaning patterns the research subjects displayed with regard to the "carrying" and "noncarrying" exercise are rich and varied and that they may be interpreted to provide insight into arguments on this issue. A number of interpretations of how this relates to theoretical discussion was developed in chapters 2 and 3.

7.1.2.2 Defining the content categories

In order to define the categories, the documents were examined to determine what common elements could be discerned. Ely (1991:87) shares a similar understanding with regard to the establishment of categories. She suggests the following: " ... start by acquainting yourself deeply with what you are about to begin to categorise ...".

In this study, all 45 documents were read and reread until the researcher felt that he was familiar with the style and manner of expression of these students, and had the general gist of what they had written. As a result of this exercise, certain themes began to emerge spontaneously from the data. It should also be noted that, in terms of the respect which the researcher had to show for the text, no categories could be imposed on the data. The respect that the researcher should evince for the data is also acknowledged by Euvrard (1994:86) - the themes should be allowed to emerge from the data.

After careful consideration, various ideas (discussed in chapter 5) were discerned as being relevant to the students' underlying perceptions of the conflict situations at EMCHE with regard to the carrying of major subjects.

7.1.2.3 Students' perception of "carrying" and "noncarrying"

This category provides answers to the major questions in both the unstructured questionnaires and unstructured interview schedules. Further on, the researcher compiled a coding sheet as suggested by Budd et al (1971:34). This made it easier for the researcher to record the heterogenous patterns of meanings that the research subjects attributed to the phenomenon of "carrying" and "noncarrying".

7.1.2.4 The recording unit

For the purposes of this study, the entire unit (ie each unstructured questionnaire and unstructured interview schedules) was used as coding units. Budd et al (1971) point out that this method is "acceptable when the project goals and the category system employed are of a general nature". This coding unit was relevant for the purposes of this study because this study aims to illuminate the importance of meaning making and meaning attribution in determining the subjects' perception of and behaviour towards the "carrying" and "noncarrying" of major subjects. However, the above authors do have reservations about the validity of endeavours that utilise the entire unit, but since they are

not working within the realms of a qualitative study, their reservations would not be relevant to this study.

7.1.2.5 *The system of enumeration*

After establishing the main category and at the same time selecting the recording unit, the researcher endeavoured to enumerate the questionnaires and interviews. As already indicated in section 7.1 above, the decision to "quantify" the data was made in spite of Reason and Rowan's (1988) words of caution about quantification. In an endeavour to provide more substance to the decision to quantify data (in a nonrealist study) the researcher drew upon the argument of Alant (1990). He (1990:43) intimates that quantification is always a subjective enterprise and further contends that counting only happens after a (subjective and intersubjective) decision has been made about what elements to include. In addition, it should be mentioned that the process of quantification plays a secondary role to the main qualitative form of data analysis which is a hallmark of this study, whilst cognisance is taken of the fact that the "quantification" involves a subjective dimension.

In enumerating the questionnaires and interview schedules, the researcher employed the system of binary coding. Binary coding entails noting of whether or not a category occurs in a particular unit. Bailey (1987:230) points out in this regard that binary coding is "nothing more than nominal level classification, or what we have been calling quantitative as opposed to qualitative analysis". The categories identified by the researcher are outlined in chapter 5, where details are provided of what was achieved in the empirical component of this study.

8 CONCLUSION

The chapter outlines the research methodology used in the study, especially with regard to its empirical component and how the data were dealt with and interpreted. The researcher showed why a content analysis of the *questionnaire* and *interview* data was regarded as a justifiable way to proceed, and also how the research approach of content analysis was treated in the study. The chapter outlines how the role of the researcher was perceived - particularly insofar as it was intended both to allow varied voices to express themselves and to explore and interpret the meaning(s) in a way that still respects these meanings. This chapter shows how the researcher tried to interpret open-ended data by lending some structure to it, that is, by defining categories and themes to create a discussion of the data. In this way the researcher enters into a dialogue with the data.

The chapter also outlines how the sampling (in this case *purposive* followed by *simple random sampling*) was achieved and how this could be justified. The insights gained from the case study and their possible relevance beyond the specific sample, were explored in the light of the issue of how to develop findings that may be relevant in other circumstances. This was done by relating the findings to a more general approach, namely the interpretive-resistance approach and extending the approach to include insights gained from the case.

The next chapter, chapter 5, carries these ideas further and shows how the researcher dealt with the findings.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to elucidate the "findings" pertaining to the formulation of meanings and the subsequent attribution of these different meanings to episodes that ultimately triggered conflict situations at EMCHE. In undertaking this aim, this chapter also attempts to highlight, by showing the variation of meanings attributed by students at EMCHE, that the students were not homogenous in terms of thinking and acting.

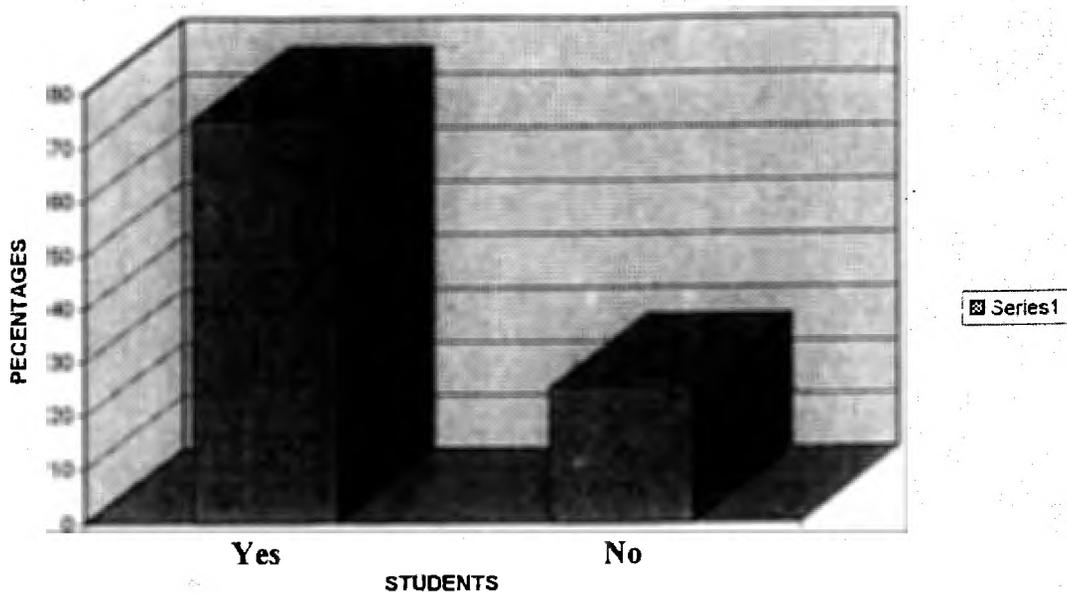
Chapter 3 focuses on several problems which resulted in resistance by the students. This chapter draws on and elucidates in detail one problem which contributed to continued dissatisfaction and which appeared to be unresolvable - that is, the problem of carrying or noncarrying. Because of the long-term nature of this problem, the researcher undertook to explore the situation by means of several methods (primarily content analysis and interviewing) in an effort to uncover the dimensions of meanings which the students attributed to this practice at the College. In uncovering the students' responses, this section reports on a number of diverse responses to the major theme of carrying or noncarrying.

The theme is explored in detail and utilised as an example to show how the theoretical argument concerning confluence between resistance and interpretive theories can be applied to specific issues.

2 EMPIRICAL COMPONENT : ANALYSING THE FINDINGS

The following graph reflects the students opinions regarding the carrying and non-carrying of major subjects. The "yes" refers to those who are in favour, and the "no" to those who are not.

THE THEME OF CARRYING AS REFLECTED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS



A substantial 75 percent of the students are of the opinion that the "carrying" of major subjects should proceed undeterred for an unspecified period of time. Flowing from this opinion are a variety of reasons for continuing to permit the phenomenon of the "carrying" of major subjects.

2.1 The DET circular as a source of justification for the continuation of "carrying"

As pointed out by the substantial percentage margin, this circular provided the subjects of this research project with the sufficient basis to formulate their different patterns of meanings in justifying their desire to continue carrying the major subjects. In invoking the authority of the DET, the students were quite aware that the information is documented for everybody to see. The invocation of the DET authority also provided some of them with the confidence to question the efficacy of the College authorities to govern the College. One student projected this sentiment by succinctly indicating the following:

I do not know what the administration wanted to achieve by saying that we must not carry. ... the D.E.T. circular tells us that not more than three subjects can be carried to the next year of study. Therefore, the administration has no right to impose on us as to which subjects are carriable and which are not.

The researcher believes that this contention arose as a result of a loophole in this circular where there is no direct reference to the subject to be carried. In addition, with regard to the student's challenge to the efficacy of the College administration to overturn the DET ruling, one student pointed out the following:

EMCHE as a matter of fact falls under the jurisdiction of the D.E.T. .

Some students were even prepared to advance legalistic arguments in support of their demand to carry. For example, one female student indicated that "we are even prepared to take the college and the senate to court to prove that their action was illegal". Over and above the argument with regard to the circular, one student made reference to the demotivating nature of the College administration and education in general. This was an endeavour to justify his lack of seriousness and dedication to his work. He indicated that the education system provided by DET was of a low standard because it did not guarantee the students' work. As he put it:

What is the use of wasting one's time studying the syllabus that is a poison to a black child of Azania? We drink this poison and at the end of the day we cannot be employed. This Verwoedian education must go and only then will I support the idea that carrying must stop. [He ends by saying] Viva black consciousness viva and down with gutter education down.

The apparent contradiction between the student's invocation of the DET authority, on the one hand, and a perception that the DET standards were low, on the other, is an indication of the fact that students do not necessarily think in terms of fixed

and obvious patterns. They can creatively arrive at their own meaning constructions.

As already indicated in chapter 3 of this study, the administration and the Senate also added Education to the list of major subjects not to be carried. However, as a gesture of compromise, this new addition was annulled by the administration and Senate. As a consequence, the general tone of the responses made reference to the fact that this compromise fell far too short of the students' expectations. Thus, justifying his demand to carry, one student cynically argues:

If the administration can remove education from the list of major subjects that cannot be carried, why does it not do the same with other major subjects as well? Administration has violated its word by allowing those who failed education to carry it.

This student continued by asking the following question:

How can one profess to uphold academic standards while at the same time lowering them as in the case of [the subject] education?

As indicated above, the decision by the administration and Senate to relent on their insistence that Education as an externally examined subject should be carried after all, evoked a number of diverse responses from some students. Dominant among these allusions is an allegation purported to have been perpetuated by the administration to conceal the inadequacies of certain lecturers. It is clear, for instance, that some students attributed a specific meaning to the compromise by the administration and Senate. This is exemplified by one student who identified himself as a SANSKO member. He said that the reason behind the softened stand of the administration with regard to the carrying of the subject education was that "there was a high failure rate of the second years" [in education], while another student indicated that "the senate decision was in essence protecting the lecturer concerned". According to some of the subjects of this study, this allusion reveals

that some lecturers were equally culpable with regard to the student demand to carry. This form of assessment can be attributed to the students' continued interaction with their lecturers in the classroom situation. This argument is further consolidated by one student who indicated that "some lecturers are incompetent and lazy - they were not supposed to act like that". (This comment is thought to refer to the lecturer's support for the "noncarrying" decision.) The implication is that the lecturers were not supporting the "noncarrying" decision because of their said inadequacies. The seriousness of this indictment to the lecturers is succinctly portrayed by one student who was even prepared to itemise these indictments. According to him these indictments had a negative impact on the very professionalism that these lecturers were expected to uphold. He mentions the following, *inter alia*:

Some lecturers are not fit to be lecturers - they always come late for classes
- they do not announce their absence in good time - they come to class
smelling something like yesterday's liquor.

Another dimension of this so-called "unprofessional conduct" was referred to by a female student who identified herself as a member of the SCM. According to her, this aberration by these lecturers was the reason for the demand to carry. She also referred to the phenomenon of love relationships between certain male lecturers and female students. She indicated in this regard that:

... these people give question papers to their girl friends or just unfairly pass them. This is unfair. A favour to one must be a favour to all. ... This must not be allowed to continue.

She concluded with the following statement:

This cannot happen to me and I cannot violate my religious principles against my will.

This refers to a situation where some female students became the victims of circumstances by yielding to these overtures simply because they wanted to pass. The above-mentioned student is open-minded enough to realise that some female students tempt the lecturers knowing full well that when they manage to catch them, they will find it very difficult to fail them. In expressing this view, she indicated the following: "I understand that some girls do ask some lecturers to take them out with the hope that they will be approached". She mentioned one of her friends who had expressed interest in her History lecturer. This friend eventually had an affair with him. As far as she was concerned, her friend had only managed to pass History at the end of the year, but had fared badly in her other subjects. This, according to her, became the "joke" of the College.

One male student hinted at an element of victimisation in class. According to him this was occasioned by the fact that some of the male students ended up sharing or competing for the same ladies with some male lecturers. Referring to his own experience this student pointed out the following:

He took my girl friend and I am suffering for that. But we are exposing them for everybody to see.

This student ended by asking:

How does this lecturer expect to be respected if he treats his students unequally?

Here we see the call by students to be treated as adults and as equals. Their discussions about passing courses is linked to a conception of better teacher-student relations.

2.2 The fear of losing bursaries as a source of justification

The responses to both the unstructured questionnaires (which were analysed by content analysis as explained in ch 4) in essence reveal that some students appear

to be exploiting the benevolence of the former KaNgwane policy on student bursaries. Several of the respondents referred to the necessity of "carrying", which by implication meant that every student was guaranteed a bursary as long as she or he progressed from one year of study to the next. Thus the implication of "carrying" (as already argued in ch 3) was that a student carries the failed subject(s) to the next year of study and these subjects are studied concurrently with the new subjects for that current year. In terms of this, their bursaries were continued. However, if students failed or repeated a year, their bursaries were automatically discontinued. The fear of losing a bursary as a result of "noncarrying" is patently portrayed in some of the following responses.

I want to carry and if I don't my bursary would be stopped.

Our bursaries would be at stake if we don't carry.

I am from a poverty stricken family and if I do not carry any more the bursary would be terminated. My mother is not working and she cannot afford my education.

Our new democratic Government promised us with free education - it must pay to keep us at school whether we fail or not.

Other students supported carrying by virtue of the fact that failing should not be regarded as a true reflection of one's potential. In the minds of these students there are other variables at play that are equally important in influencing one's performance at school. One variable that seemed to dominate those mentioned was stress-related problems. According to their responses this phenomenon is actuated by a variety of factors. One female student, for instance, pointed out the following:

... to fail does not mean that I cannot teach the subject. I know my ability.

I failed because my father passed away and my mother was very ill.

Another student said:

Just during exams, I experienced problems with my marriage and that affected me very bad.

These serve to indicate the multiplicity of factors that can influence one's performance.

Another student mentioned climatic conditions as an influencing factor. This student indicated that she was from the Highveld (Johannesburg) and found it difficult to cope with the heat of the Lowveld which affected her preparation for the examinations. She further pointed out that her level of participation in class was sufficient to pass her. This response questions the validity of examinations as a determining factor to pass or fail. She concluded by indicating that the administration should consider other factors that could contribute to an individual's poor performance.

Another student took into consideration his social standing at home and among his friends as an overriding substantiating factor to want to "carry". This implies that his overwhelming fear of the waning status among his friends far outweighed everything else at EMCHE, including industrious study. However, it is interesting to note that this student was cognisant of the fact that "carrying" major subjects was not a good idea, but in satisfying his inclination to "carry" indicates that:

Although carrying is bad, I want to carry because when I fail I will become a laughing stock to other students.

I have experienced it, I know what I am talking about and I have seen other students who have failed test and examinations been laughed at.

As indicated above, this fear was not only confined to his social friendship groupings, but also had an impact at home. The researcher could discern from his argument that he found it extremely difficult to explain to his uneducated parents that he had failed. His parents had apparently built up a sound reputation among

their friends on the strength of their son's achievements at school. This student was apparently aware of his exalted image among his parent's friends. In expressing his deep and excruciating feelings, he indicated the following:

I am (a source) of pride to parents and to their friends - it is very difficult to reveal that I have failed to them.

I am even tempted to lie to them and tell them that I have passed when I have actually failed - they cannot check or understand my report because they are illiterate.

Although not mentioned, it can be assumed that his fear of disappointing his parents' friends and his own friends can only be offset by hard work and dedication to his school work. However, some students also felt that to penalise them for a full year for not passing one or two subjects, could be seen as unreasonable. They felt that at least the matter could be discussed as shown in the next section.

2.3 Lack of consultation regarding "carrying/noncarrying" as a source of justification

Those students who were part of this research exercise put a high premium on consultation and continued dialogue with the Senate/administration, as an important means of resolving misunderstandings and problems. This perception shows a clear diversion from the scenario before 1976 when school authorities had exclusive rights and powers in the decision-making processes.

The emphasis on consultation and dialogue indicates that these students operate at a higher level of development compared to their counterparts in the period prior to 1976 when the principal and prefects (appointed by the teachers) reigned supreme. However, this pattern changed in the early 1980s when the students started to

demand the recognition of their democratically elected SRCs as a move to replace the prefect system. This indicates that the students firmly believed that they were an important element in the school power lines and that they should be part of the decision-making machinery in schools. EMCHE students were therefore affected by this influence. Highlighting their newly acquired conviction on debates and ongoing negotiations, one SANSCO member said the following:

I supported the notion of carrying of major subjects for one reason that the administration did not provide our new SRC that was democratically elected an opportunity to debate the issue of "carrying/non-carrying". Whether carrying is good or bad is not the issue - what is bad is that the decision that major subjects cannot be carried cannot be imposed on us. We are not kids. We were supposed to be part of the decision through our representatives.

Most of the students also wrote and talked at length about the unilateral and undemocratic nature of decision-making processes at EMCHE. For instance, a substantial 80 percent of the students mentioned a lack of consultation with regard to the noncarrying decision of major subjects. It is along this line that the SRC president indicated that the historical student struggles against victimisation in schools/colleges/universities had shown that a lack of transparency in decision making had to be resisted at all cost. Emphasising her view, she wrote that during her stay at EMCHE she would fight for the culture of talking and consultation so that everyone could respect and be accountable for the decisions they took.

She took her resolve further in advocating a "pass one pass all" slogan simply because of her firm belief in the culture of consultation. The president was not alone in her convictions. A few male and female students were critical of the fact that the administration was indeed treating them like children. They were of the opinion that it is their basic right to be part and parcel of the decision making process. One of them pointed out in fact that " I have not come to EMCHE to

swallow only book knowledge I have come also to know more about other life survival skills such as democracy and leadership". She went on to say:

The administration and some lecturers think that they are knowledgeable in everything and that students are just cups that have to be filled with information. This crisis ("carrying") has shown them that students are capable of rational thinking.

This student further commented on the students' capacity for rational thinking by alluding to the fact that as adults they can differentiate between right and wrong and that they can choose to do this or that. Also apparent was the allusion to the habit of not talking at EMCHE because the Rector would simply absent himself or just refuse to talk to the students' representatives. This was summed up as a lack of sincerity on the part of the Rector to negotiate in good faith. The SANSCO chairman indicated the following:

The problem of carrying was a simple one. ... the Rector spoiled it by absenting himself from the College when the interim SRC wanted to negotiate with him - he was trying to deny our new SRC recognition. This led to the closure of the College and the sending away of the students on 09-03-93.

This lack of sincerity to negotiate in good faith was mentioned by another SANSCO member when he said:

He [the rector] was running away from solving the problem - [instead] he concentrated his arguments on the illegitimacy of the new SRC.

He consolidated this argument by indicating in his own words that:

Some people in high positions do not know the meaning of negotiations, fairness, listening to the other side of the story and perhaps reaching some

form of understanding and this is what is best for administrators and students.

It could be discerned from the responses of this and other students that there is a strong feeling that students have a right to become involved in collective bargaining with the administration on issues that affect their lives at EMCHE. In trying to portray the deteriorating climate at EMCHE a few SRC members made reference to the fact that the refusal of the majority of the lecturers and the rectorate to negotiate on academic issues with students also brought about the stigmatisation of the few lecturers who were of the opinion that the problems of carrying and recognition should be discussed directly with the students. In the words of one SRC member, these lecturers were "unprofessional and student friends".

The reasoning displayed here (section 2.3) is strongly in line with the theoretical argument developed in this dissertation, namely that resistance can be seen as a form of expression in an undemocratic climate - a form of expression appealing for more democracy. Especially significant is the student's comment that "whether carrying is good or bad is not the issue - what is bad is that major subjects cannot be carried [should not] be imposed on us". This succinctly shows that the student does not pretend to have a final answer but wishes to be included in the debate on the issue. An unfortunate situation arises when debate is blocked. In such cases, dialogue between people with different opinions fails. This occurs when one person imposes his or her opinion on another. Resistance then becomes a form of expression of a voice that otherwise would not be heard. The climate deteriorates when different voices are not given full expression.

2.4 Unity as a source of justification

Unilateral as it was, the decision of both the Senate and the administration was viewed with further suspicion by some of the students selected for this study. Apparently this suspicion had to do with the high premium that they placed on

united action. The upshot was that they adopted an extremely negative attitude against any attempts to be divided in their united drive for carrying. Some of these students believed that this strategy was an attempt to drive a deep wedge between students. As far as they were concerned, if they showed a divided front in their quest to carry, their cause would be doomed to failure. One student remarked:

The senate/administration decision against carrying ... was a divide and rule strategy... they were tempting those who were allowed to "carry" to stay away from the campaign of those who have failed their majors... this tactic was a disaster because we were united.

In addition, some of the students equated the Senate/administration's attempt to divide them with the dominant apartheid philosophy to the effect that an effective way of ruling blacks was to divide. These student's awareness of this strategy is encapsulated in their repeated reference of their commitment to prevent the Senate/administration's attempts to divide them. These students further indicated that they were prepared to answer with mass action if the Senate/administration continued their divide and rule strategy. As explained in chapter 3, this option was eventually implemented and some of the students actually highlighted this in their responses. This sense of oneness is embodied in the following utterance by one male student who constantly referred to himself as a SANSCO activist.

The controversy of carrying did not affect me, but, I could not carry while the future of others was undecided.

However, it should also be pointed out that this question of unity was part of a struggle for alternative voices. It was recognised at this stage, however, that if the students did not unite their voices they would not be heard. In other situations it could be said that it is preferable to invite debate between differing viewpoints (eg about the issue of "carrying" versus "noncarrying"). However, the historical context led some students to believe that in opposition to a strong administration, it might be necessary to present a united front.

2.5 Students' unwillingness to spend time repeating failed major subjects

A handful of respondents displayed little or no comprehension at all of the need to repeat failed major subjects. They looked at this against the background of the precious time a student has to "waste" as a consequence of repeating "the whole year" for the sake of one or two subjects. They indicated that the best solution to this problem would be for the Senate/administration to allow them to carry the failed majors to the next level of study. Their view may have been prompted by the fact that the DET and the various homeland education departments allowed them to teach even if they had failed their third year. Of these students, only two suggested the option of a special examination during the first semester of the current year. In justifying their suggestion, they indicated that the timing of the examination would enable the failed students to catch up with the following level of the failed subjects. One of these students cited a succinct example of what she meant by carrying. She indicated that if she had failed the History Content Course 1, she should be allowed to attend the History Content Course 2 while waiting to rewrite the former. The practical implication of the carrying phenomenon is that a student can continue to fail History Content Course 1 while simultaneously passing History Content Course 2 and possibly even History Content Course 3. This happened at EMCHE when one student successfully completed History Content Course 3 while still needing to pass History Content Course 1, The College had to get in touch with this student and request him (or her) to sit for the History Content Course 1 examination. This not only reveals the problems surrounding the issue of "carrying", but also reveals the problems of the "closed" system of assessing students. This is an issue that could have been carried forward in future debates, if such debates had been allowed.

3 THE VIEWS OF THE "NONCARRYING" PROPONENTS

As the graph indicates, only 25 percent of the sample of students proffered negative opinions about the "carrying" of major subjects. Thus 75 percent of the

proponents of "carrying" and the 25 percent opponents of "carrying" provide a further indication of the fact that human beings are a heterogeneous and multicharacteristic both in terms of meaning attribution and the subsequent action. The reasons advanced by the "anticarrying" group vary in accordance with those advanced by the "procarrying" group.

3.1 "Carrying" lowers academic standards

One dominant theme that emerges in this regard is that the phenomenon of carrying lowers academic standards. Of essence in this argument is that carrying is disadvantageous because it discourages hard work. This theme is captured by one student to the effect that "carrying promotes laziness among students". She ended her submission by asking the following question:

What is the need of evaluation [at EMCHE] if students can demand to carry by force?

This sentiment pervaded almost all the responses of the "noncarrying" proponents. Prominent in their responses is the view that those students who fail major subjects should be made to repeat them. As one student cynically put it: "The failures must repeat for the whole year because their performance has shown that they are incapable students." One SCM student even expressed her disapproval of carrying in biblical terms. She argues that "the people who do not plan for their work in good time always reap what they sow". This student even went to the extent of exonerating the lecturers from blame as a result of the students' failure. She metaphorically indicated that "you can take the horse to the river but, you can't make it drink". As far as she is concerned, students should take a share of the blame for their failure in the examination.

The above quotations indicate that students are worried about the deteriorating of academic standards and academic discipline resulting from carrying. One student

who identified himself as a PASO member dismissed the demands for carrying as "impractical and unrealistic". He expressed himself as follows:

I do not understand how the SANSCO comrades sometimes think because as far as I am concerned that "carrying" lowers the academic standard of education of the African child. As Africans from poor backgrounds we are supposed to contribute meaningfully to the education of a black child - a demand to carry simply shows that these comrades are not serious about the education of the African masses.

Another sentiment that was prominent in their submissions is that a demand to carry will lead to the production of inadequately equipped teachers who will fail to motivate their pupils to work hard because they themselves were not properly trained for the job. The ominous spectre of "carrying" is portrayed in the following comment:

The moment that the pupils discover that the a teacher is empty - they lose confidence - their love for the subject gets destroyed - as a result of this eventuality it is very easy for him or her to be showed the door by the pupils.

Also arguing for the maintenance of high academic standards and academic excellence, some of the students argued that the "procarrying" group must accept failure as a fact of life. In motivating this fact, two female students more or less raised the following question:

How can these students expect to be pushed to the next class if they are not studying?

These students were also of the opinion that the students who had failed could be given an alternative examination so that they could proceed to the next class in a credible way. This is an indication that these students place a high premium on the

values of hard work and achievement. And the perception they have is that teachers should inculcate this sense of hard work and achievement in their pupils. This view is underlined by the following concerns:

If I do not know the content of the major subject that I am supposed to teach, what is it I can impart to the pupils at school? Surely, if I don't study, I deserve to fail. Hard work and success are inseparable, but some people are trying to separate the two.

Notwithstanding the above arguments, the theme of hard work continued to assume serious proportions in some responses. One "anticarrying" proponent indicated in this regard that "education does not allow any short cuts ... I mean hard work brings positive reward and laziness brings failure and pain". This forthright view was supported by one third-year student who also placed a great emphasis on the value of diligence and achievement. She argues as follows:

If we want to carry major subjects, it is as good as shutting the institution for the whole year and then send pass marks to the students while they are sitting at home.

This view was also upheld by others. Another third-year female student raised exactly the same serious concern. As she puts it:

What is the good of coming to the college if everybody is allowed to go to the next year of study whether one studies or not.

This student also mentioned a theme that was not apparent in the responses of other students. She pointed out that it is amazing that the majority of the students who wished to enforce "carrying" were the very ones who spent much of their time in the shebeens near the College. She felt that they were the type of students who were the instigators in boycotting classes thereby depriving others of the precious

time of doing what they had come to EMCHE for. She ended with the words: "Away with student dictatorship, away".

It is interesting to note that this student evokes the idea that any dictatorship is to be opposed. She prefers a situation in which there is negotiation about, say, standards. She feels that this is preferable to what she sees as student imposition of their own criteria alone.

3.2 Political influences

It also became apparent in some responses that a number of students identified a positive and direct causal relationship between political involvement and a demand to carry. The researcher also discerned from these responses that there was an air of discomfort about this relationship. Their belief was that there must be a clear break between the two and the students should steer clear of politics. One student had the following to say in this regard:

My parents sent me here [EMCHE] to study and not to toyi-toyi. [Toyi-toyi was widely used at EMCHE during the carrying campaigns].

Staying away from class was used as a political tool by the students to drive their message home. One student even went to the extent of questioning the relevance of mass action in the institutions of learning. Mass action is viewed against the background of schools in promoting educational morality together with the morality of society. One student went to the extent of patently portraying his disapproval of this relationship and said the following in this regard:

I think it is educationally and academically unsound for the students to stay away from class more especially when it is a bonafide school day. ... Staying away from class unlawfully is equal to the "**liberation now education later**" slogan. A civilised nation cannot accept this - the college is teaching us to be law abiding citizens and not militants.

This student was of the opinion that the closure of the College was justified and it was a correct means of stopping political intrusion in educational matters at EMCHE. Another student mentioned the fact that "my parents will never understand that I left the college just because of politics".

Only three students referred to the rules and regulations spelling out when a student fails or passes. These students argued that these rules should be respected and those refusing to comply should simply be sent home. One of these students also showed support for the Rector. He said that:

The rector must be strong - he must fight the pro-carrying group without fear or intimidation.

Similar to this response is that of another student who said that he really wished that the Senate/administration should have stood their ground against the "procarrying mob" with regard to education. This is typified by the following metaphorical response of one male student:

One must be as firm as a pine tree when it comes to principles and be as flexible as a willow tree in tactics.

It may seem strange in the context of the theoretical argument concerning the application of resistance theory to see students who do not want to become involved in politics. However, their noninvolvement also shows that they see things from a different perspective to other students and therefore construct meaning in a different way. They do not want the education institution to become so politicised that it becomes simply a fight with either side trying to force its way. They would prefer the imposition of rules that everybody can respect, so that education can continue and people can pass subjects according to set criteria. This viewpoint also can be seen to "fit" the theoretical argument concerning the fact that rules can be

respected by different people as part of their intersubjective living. However, these students were unclear about how such negotiations could take place.

3.3 Decision making as the sole domain of the Senate/administration

A substantial number of the “ anticarrying” group did not appear to be bothered by the so-called “ unilateral decision making” of the Senate/administration. They mentioned the fact that they as students had no right to question the decision that the carrying of major subjects should stop. They felt that this avenue was the sole province of the lecturers who are professionally ready to deal with this task. In this regard, one of them indicated the following:

... my upbringing at home taught me that I must listen and be respectful of adults ... I must not argue with the adults - therefore lecturers are adults - I must respect and accept their decision. I believe that they knew what they are doing.

This respondent ended by giving advice to those who cannot cope with their majors to look for alternative careers. Only a handful of the “ anticarrying” group mentioned the fact that although the carrying of major subjects was morally and educationally incorrect, the decision to discontinue carrying should have been supported by all the students. This is indicative of the fact that this small but important part of the “ anticarrying” group did take cognisance of the significance of dialogue and debates also involving the students. This sentiment is expressed in the following statement by one student:

... I do not want to carry but I feel I should have been part of the decision that carrying must stop.

Over and above their awareness of the dialogical and intersubjective nature of social reality, these students indicated in their responses that they also had insight

into the fact that other life skills like "leadership and public communication" are equally important in shaping the life of a student. As one female student puts it:

... lecturers should involve us in debates and negotiations so that we come out of EMCHE being good leaders in our own right and also good in other life situations.

The importance of the dialogical interplay as an effort towards the ironing out of misunderstandings was illuminated in the statement of the following third-year Agriculture student who was categorical in his rejection of unilateral decision making:

I do not favour "carrying", so the only problem I am worried about is that, they issued an announcement at the 11th hour that major subjects are not carried - consultation should have been [instituted] quite early ... I believe that I'm not a child who is simply told what to do.

4 CONCLUSION

The above discussion indicates that the issue of "carrying/noncarrying" engendered a multivariate response among the students of EMCHE. Notwithstanding the variety of interests which underlie these responses, the discourse reveals how, in terms of human volition, phenomena (such as the question surrounding "carrying/noncarrying") give rise to multiple interpretations.

Of course, this is in keeping with the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of this study in so far as it suggests that:

- resistance or the choice not to resist should always be seen to be coupled with the volition of human beings
- in terms of the marriage between the interpretive and critical (resistance) theories, (see ch 2 on theory), human action is informed by an interpretation of the phenomena in question. This highlights the importance of an epistemology that accords space for such variance.

This chapter has shown, by way of example, how students may have varying responses to and varying reasons for the stances that they adopt. The researcher showed in respect of the issue of "carrying" versus "noncarrying", some of the themes that emerged from content analysis.

An attempt was made to show how the differing arguments of the students and in fact the existence of such variation are in line with the confluence of resistance theory and interpretivism through the voluntarist capacities of humans to construct meaning and to act in terms thereof.

The next chapter will explore more fully how the findings can be articulated with the theoretical orientation of this study.

CHAPTER 6

GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1 INTRODUCTION

Following the interpretation of the findings of the various stages of the research enterprise, against the backdrop of the proffered theoretical and methodological orientation, it has been possible to arrive at certain general conclusions. The conclusions pertain to the specific aims of the study in terms of evaluating the student's interpretations of a specific crises that were explored by way of example - namely, the crisis revolving around the phenomenon of the "carrying" or "noncarrying" of major subjects.

In this chapter, the researcher will consider how well the research succeeded (with in the theoretical and methodological framework) in investigating the problem outlined in the research design.. It is thus pertinent to appraise the theoretical and epistemological tenets of the study.

2 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

2.1 The theoretical component

The theoretical aim of this study, namely contracting "a marriage of convenience" (and of theoretical compatibility) between the theories of resistance in education and interpretive theories was considered appropriate for the researcher's purposes. For these theoretical approaches to be meaningful, the researcher thought it appropriate to interpose them with voluntarism in order to enhance choice making which is the backbone of meaning creation and meaning attribution which maintains and keeps alive the possibility of human emancipation in the process of meaning making. An attempt was therefore made to locate student behaviour at EMCHE within this paradigmic framework which the researcher believed would

lend conceptual clarity to the whole notion of meaning creation/ attribution which the researcher constantly argued was the basis of student conflict at EMCHE.

For instance, the researcher looked at student resistance as a phenomenon that needs to be understood in totality. In doing this, he looked at the underlying reasons for resistance and nonresistance among students. Some issues were explored in chapter 3, and the theoretical underpinnings of these explorations were discussed. These were explored fully in chapter 5 where the researcher decided to examine the meaning patterns the students attributed to the "carrying and noncarrying" of major subjects. Hence this provides an example indicating the voluntarism in which the two theoretical orientations (resistance theory and interpretivism) meet.

The theoretical component of this, as explained in chapter 2 of the study, also undertook to find a suitable epistemological orientation for the proffered ontological point of departure conceived out of the marriage of the two theoretical orientations. The search for a suitable epistemology was motivated by the necessity to provide these two theoretical orientations with an epistemology which would not sacrifice its emancipatory spirit of unstifled choice making which is important for meaning creation and attribution. In satisfying this epistemological quest, the researcher decided to use mainly unstructured questionnaires. These questionnaires (which were analysed by means of content analysis) were to a lesser extent supplemented by the use of unstructured interviews in circumstances where respondents were unwilling to participate in the "written" content analysis. These two epistemological approaches enabled the researcher to collect data that were generated by the students' understanding of their experience, namely the "carrying" and the "noncarrying" of the major subjects. The nature of the questions asked enabled the students to write or say more about the "carrying" and the "noncarrying" phenomenon. The uninhibited exposition about "carrying" proved fruitful for the purposes of this study because it afforded the research subjects an opportunity to reveal and reflect on the underlying meanings they assigned to the "carrying/noncarrying" phenomenon. The findings of this study have clearly shown

that these meaning patterns played a crucial role in shaping the different perceptions and behaviour of the research subjects in respect of "carrying/noncarrying". This was a deliberate move away from the objectivist orientation for studying social reality which is propounded by the positivist-oriented structuralist paradigms. Hence a notion of knowledge which could contribute to human emancipation was sought. This knowledge further informs us that the behaviour of the research subjects could not be taken at face value without first looking into and understanding the meaning underlying "carrying/noncarrying". This notion fulfilled the purpose of the study.

2.2 The empirical component

The methodological approach employed in the empirical component of this study was thus attendant on the proposed theoretical orientation which informed the entire construction of the research design.

In terms of the theoretical and epistemological supposition that people have the capacity to confront ideologies that thwart human communication, the empirical research was geared to focusing on conflict situations at EMCHE that were engineered by an apparent lack of understanding that the students were in one way or another sufficiently capable of playing an important role in the cocreation of social reality at EMCHE. Thus in the empirical component there were two main aims, namely:

(1) to explore the way in which the EMCHE students perceived the educational phenomenon of the carrying of major subjects to the following year of study

(2) to capture the different patterns of meanings that the students created in favour of or in opposition to carrying (this decision was supported by the fact that the different reactions of human beings to what constitutes a problem is not a consequence of irrational responses but a product of

carefully contrived meaning patterns which are extremely important in understanding human behaviour)

Therefore, in order to execute the aim of the study, the first cycle of the study undertook a content analysis of the students' responses to unstructured questionnaires and attempted an interpretation both in terms of the theory developed in chapter 2 and the historical circumstances outlined in chapter 1. In this analysis, the researcher managed to extract various subthemes with regard to those students who were in favour of carrying. They are as follows:

- the overriding importance of the DET
- the fear of losing bursaries
- the irrelevance of failing compared to the acquisition of knowledge
- unfavourable home environments
- a lack of prior consultation
- the importance of unity (in terms of opposing a strong administration)
- incompetent lecturers
- the unfairness of repeating only one subject which was often referred to as a waste of time

However those students who were against carrying advanced the following different meaning patterns:

- Carrying leads to the production of poorly qualified teachers.
- Failures must repeat their subjects.
- Consistent hard work is a recipe for good results.
- Students' patronising shebeens is a problem.
- Unquestioning respect for the rules and regulations of the College should be advocated.
- Decision making should be the sole preserve of the College administration.

- A belief that the closure of the College is a deterrent for the intrusion of politics in educational matters.
- Although some students were against "carrying", this highlighted the importance of joint decision making.

It is therefore important to mention the fact that the data could support the claim that the creation of meanings and their subsequent attribution by the students constitute a solid basis in understanding their overall behaviour. This basically means that the students have the ability to consider and reconsider their life worlds and hence to speak the language of possibility.

In terms of the theoretical presuppositions of this study, the researcher does not pretend to offer neutral accounts of reality, but makes manifest that any particular vision or interpretation of reality itself embodies a particular moral commitment of what ought to be. Hughes (1980:116) supports this view when he says that "there is, ... in other words, no Archimedean point, from which to stand back and perceive the social world objectively". This basically implies that all knowledge of social reality is always knowledge from particular viewpoints. In this case, the researcher's commitment to democracy and joint negotiation of reality, was admitted.

The researchers' paradigmatic perceptions about the importance of meanings and the importance of paying serious attention to these starts from the premise that human action is purposeful and meaningful. These meanings and purposes emanate from the "melting pot" of intersubjectivity. This serves to underline that these meanings and purposes are evanescent in nature - hence they are constantly revisable in principle.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

The vast majority of the research subjects reflected an absence of the intersubjective culture at EMCHE. In the light of this, it is argued that unless the organs of democratic governance are put in place and at the same time injected with the all-inclusive culture of democracy, the culture of the conflict between students and the administration will proceed undeterred at EMCHE. This is indicated in spite of the contrary view espoused by very few respondents to the effect that decision making should be the sole province of the Senate/administration. Therefore, as already indicated, this democratic culture ensures the ongoing notion of the symbolic nature of social reality and thus guarantees and fortifies the notion of human emancipation.

This study has, to a particular extent, managed to determine the patterns of meaning that were a driving force behind the students during the conflict that revolved around the "carrying/noncarrying" of major subjects. Thus, it lent credence to the "veracity" of its hypothesis that the intersubjective meaning formulation and attribution constitute the fundamentals of student action in one way or another.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The enormity of this study prevented the researcher from including other important role players during the crisis of "carrying/noncarrying" such as the administration, senators, lecturers, NECC and the ANC education desk in the sample. Their different meaning patterns would certainly have provided far more insight into other important dynamics enveloping the crisis involving the dispute around the "carrying/noncarrying" of major subjects. Furthermore, the study could not concentrate on exploring in depth all the issues raised in chapter 3 - it concentrated on a single example to highlight the epistemological and theoretical position taken.

Therefore future studies could usefully explore some of the following which came to the fore in this study:

- the views of the administration, members of the Senate, lecturers, NECC and the ANC on the "carrying/noncarrying" of majors at EMCHE
- variations in assessing college students in ways that do not depend on rote learning and which can be more relevant to teacher's abilities in the teaching situation
- ways of arresting conflict through early understanding of multivariate interpretations
- the role of the community structures in teacher education

5 CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to develop a theoretical argument that could be used to account for some of the empirical phenomena encountered at EMCHE. These empirical phenomena were isolated as historical incidents and one of the issues in particular, namely the incidence surrounding the contention regarding the "carrying or noncarrying" of subjects was explored in detail by the researcher. This was done with the aid of content analysis of the information afforded through an unstructured questionnaire and by utilising in-depth interviewing in an unstructured way to further probe student responses. An explanation was given of the way in which students responded in various voices to the issues raised by the "carrying or noncarrying" incident. An attempt was made to tie the facts of these variations as well as specific variations to theoretical arguments concerning the possibility of marrying the two theoretical approaches as discussed in chapter 2.

While chapter 3 offered a more general account of some of the areas of resistance, and gave explanations arising from theoretical arguments developed in chapter 2,

chapter 4 showed how a methodology could be developed to explore some of the issues in the future. By way of example, chapter 5 took one of these issues and explored it in detail by means of the methodology outlined in chapter 4. Chapter 6 then proceeded to further tie up the theoretical and empirical components of the study, concluding with a few recommendations for both practice and research.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

THE PROBLEM CONCERNING THE “CARRYING/NON CARRYING” OF MAJOR SUBJECTS

Respondent

Remember that this is anonymous, so please be completely honest. Only in this way can a clear picture be gained on the episode of “carrying” at EMCHE.

There are no right or wrong responses - it is YOUR point of view which is required.

Kindly provide a full response to the questions attached.

Thanked in anticipation.

R.V. RESHA

1. What was your view regarding the "carrying" of major subjects?

2. What was the general view of the students with regard to "carrying?"

3. What was the administration/senate argument concerning "carrying?"

4. What did the administration do in attempting to solve the problem of carrying?

5. Did you support the administration's attempt to solve this problem? If yes or no why?

6. What line of action did the students take in an attempt to solve this problem?

7. Did you believe in this line of action? If yes or no why?

8. Did you achieve or not what you wanted? Give reasons for your answer.

9. The “carrying” problem led to the replacement of the “old” SRC by a new one. What was your view concerning this?

TO : THE RECTOR
c/o ADMINISTRATION
ELIJAH MANGO COLLEGE

FROM : THE S.R.C.
ELIJAH MANGO COLLEGE

RE : RESOLUTION TAKEN BY THE STUDENT BODY ON THE 29TH MARCH 1989 IN A
MASS MEETING

Resolution

We the student body of E.M. Mango College resolve that we won't engage ourselves in any academic activities hence a class boycott until such time that our grievances are met. The boycott is effective as from the 31st of March 1989.

GRIEVANCES

1. Resignation of Mr Steenkamp
2. Dissatisfaction from students regarding the following lecturers :

METHOD BIOLOGY 300

METHOD ENGLISH 300

METHOD ACCOUNTING 200

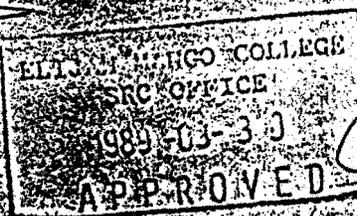
METHOD AFRIKAANS 200

REASONS FOR MR STEENKAMP RESIGNATION

- That he is a racist lecturer
- That he is not competent in his teaching method
- That he employs an obscene language and hence discourage students that they will never achieve the desired standard of academy in that particular subject. (Method Afrikaans)

WINDVOEL V V

THE GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY
S.R.C.



30 MARCH 1989

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1990-DIRECTIVE FOR THE EVALUATION, PROMOTION AND CERTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES FOR ALL FULL TIME TEACHERS' DIPLOMA COURSES

This directive applies to all the candidates for any of the full time Teachers Diploma courses of which the first year of study commences in 1991 and shall come into operation on 1 January 1991.

6. CARRYING OF SUBJECTS

6.1 A candidate may carry not more than two subjects from the curriculum of his first year to his second year of study.

6.2 A candidate may carry not more than:

- (i) two subjects from the curriculum of his second year of study;
- (ii) one subject from the curriculum of his second year of study;
- (iii) one course of the same subject, for example, History I and History II to his third year of study.

6.3 Junior/Senior Primary Subject Didactics is regarded as one subject for determining the number of subjects which may be carried.

6.4 Colleges shall not be obliged to make provision for candidates to attend classes in subjects carried by them. The onus is on the candidate to ensure that he gains the necessary subject competency to be able to pass the subject.

7. CERTIFICATION

7.1 Minimum requirements

A teachers' diploma issued by the Department shall be awarded to a candidate who has met all the requirements set by the curriculum concerned.

7.2 Results

Final results shall be indicated by symbols on the following scale

A	B	C	D	E	F
75 - 100	70 - 74	60 - 69	50 - 59	40 - 49	0 - 39