

A case-study of principal succession: The experience of a High School principal and staff.

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Abstract

This is a study of a principal succession in a non-racial, multicultural High School in the North West Province of South Africa, formerly the independent homeland known as "Bophuthatswana". I was employed at the school at the time and am, therefore, a complete-member-researcher. I use a qualitative research approach which relies mostly on in-depth interviews, individually and in groups. I chose my sample by administering a short biographical questionnaire.

I have sought to establish "what is happening?" in the succession process by reporting the insights and experiences of a staff and its new principal. While I use the stage frameworks of more traditional researchers in succession to provide a coherent structure for my analysis, I use the organisational socialisation perspective extensively to analyse the insights provided by the staff and principal. Unlike other principal succession studies, I include the insights of both the principal and the staff. The organisational socialisation approach emphasises that succession is an interactive, multidirectional process.

My study reinforces many of the observations of other researchers in leadership succession, whether in business or Education. However, two elements of succession emerge which appear to be unique in terms of other succession literature. These elements include the impact of socio-political events and what I call "ethno-cultural" aspects on the succession socialisation process. I provide examples of the influence these factors exert in this principal succession. This study is therefore of potential significance to administrators in

both Education and business in the South African context where there are significant changes taking place in the power structures and ethnic makeup of relevant organisations. I also identify a number of areas for further research.

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I would especially like to thank the Principal, Chris de Villiers, who was always happy to answer questions and spend time elaborating on his own experience of the succession. These insights provided the "other side to the coin" which is so often overlooked.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I provide background and explain my interest as well as the purpose, potential significance and limitations of this research.

Background

The school is a secondary school (Standard 5-10), located in the North West Province of South Africa, formerly known as Bophuthatswana. The school, known as Mmabatho High School (MHS), was initiated by Kgosi Lucas Mangope, former President of Bophuthatswana, in his desire to remove the constraints of the segregated and inferior Bantu education inherited from apartheid South Africa. The school was granted *carte blanche* by the Bophuthatswanan Education Department in order to achieve the goals envisioned by Mangope. These goals included establishing a non-racial, multicultural school where children could obtain the best instruction available, especially in subjects such as Mathematics and Science. Teachers were selected to ensure the realisation of this vision. The school operated in this manner from 1980 until April 1994. I joined the school in January 1990 after working for several years in state schools in South Africa.

After many years of continued resistance to the apartheid system, of which the homelands were an integral part, the existing government of South Africa and former homeland leaders were replaced by elected leaders of the New South Africa in April 1994. With the succession of President Mandela and the ANC to government these homelands were reintegrated into South Africa. Former leaders of these states (in most instances) no longer had any role in government. Leaders in Bophuthatswana however, resisted reintegration. Popular opinion in Mmabatho supported reintegration and what has now become known as the "Insurrection" occurred in March 1994. Mangope was ousted and Bophuthatswana became part of the New South Africa.

During the ensuing months, as governments changed hands, much of what had been established during the so-called "Bop regime" continued to operate as it had in the past. However, the new government indicated clearly through various policy draft documents such as the African National Congress draft education policy document (1994) that things were set to change. The new government wished to change much of what had existed under the apartheid education system. There was to be a more equitable distribution of educational resources amongst previously disadvantaged population groups. The former South African government's segregation of schools along racial lines was no longer allowed. Institutions seen to be exclusive or elitist for any reason came under scrutiny and pressure to change - in fact

there was no debate - they had to change. Schools which had previously maintained selective admissions were instructed to allow more students to be admitted. This meant that these school's populations grew considerably as the government insisted on a ratio of between thirty to thirty-five pupils to one teacher. If there were too many teachers with respect to student numbers a number of teachers were asked to leave or be redeployed in order to achieve the predetermined pupil/teacher ratio.

MHS, a non-racial, multicultural school, had operated as one of a handful of designated schools. As such, it had operated under the auspices of said Department but independently in most respects. The school recruited its own staff and selected pupils on the basis of previous academic results and a series of entrance tests. There was freedom to institute educational practices approved of by the school's Management body, the principal and the staff.

The school was seen by the new Education Department to be failing to meet the needs of the community - as catering to a small elite section of the community who had the ability to pass the school's entrance tests. Because the legal status of designated schools was uncertain the new government disregarded the designated status of schools such as MHS and insisted that they fall in line with other government schools. Pressure for

the school to change increased during 1994 and at the beginning of 1995, legislation required the school to increase its pupil numbers and hence, its pupil/teacher ratio. Expatriate teachers were under pressure to leave in order to provide local unemployed teachers with work opportunities which they felt were rightfully theirs. As such, the school and its staff were experiencing changes to the long established *modus operandi*. At the same time, the school experienced a change in leadership. The principal who had been at the school since January 1991 resigned and left in December 1994. A new principal started in January 1995. This principal succession is the source of my study.

Nature of the problem and purpose of my study

Various succession studies in sport and business (Gouldner, 1954; Grusky, 1961, 1963, 1964; Guést, 1962; Gamson and Scotch, 1964; Gordon and Becker, 1964; Helmich and Brown, 1972; Gephart, 1978; Allen, Panian and Lotz, 1979) and in schools (Carlson, 1961; Miskel and Cosgrove, 1985; Fauske and Ogawa, 1987; Firestone, 1990; Ogawa, 1991; Hart, 1993), have shown that this is an area about which there is much controversy. Leadership succession is regarded as worthy of research since leaders and/or managers are seen to be instrumental in determining the efficiency and productivity of organisations. The debate centres around whether succession within management structures does or

does not have any effect on the organisation and its members. Although there is increasing interest in principal succession (see, for example, Ogawa, 1991; Hart, 1993), the literature reflects research done predominantly in industry, business and sporting concerns. Earlier studies such as those conducted by Grusky (1961; 1963) also reflect a focus on establishing the causal relationship between leader succession and various performance factors. More recently, researchers on principal succession such as Firestone (1990) and Ogawa (1991) have focused on understanding succession, not only as a process, but also in terms of the sense-making practices of the participants. Hart (1993) suggests that succession, in particular principal succession, should be seen as an interactive, multidirectional process where the principal is no longer central to the whole scenario but part of a greater socialisation process.

The nature of the problem and the purpose of my research is, therefore, to establish "what is going on?" when principal succession occurred at MHS and what the ramifications were for the school and its staff. I do this by documenting the experiences and perceptions (sense-making) of the principal successor and the teachers who were at the school during this time of principal succession.

Significance of Research

First, as Allison (1983) states, "in contrast to using knowledge about [school's as] organisations to help forge valid images of schools, the literature of organisational theory has been plundered in a search for ready-made models of organisations that could be substituted for the needed images of schools" (p.13). As already noted, a small proportion of research on succession has been done within schools. My research at MHS provides insights not only within the school setting but also within the South African school context. To my knowledge, no research has been done in this area in South Africa.

Second, since MHS is a school which reflects a wide diversity of cultures, my research provides evidence of how cultural norms and expectations impact on the process of principal succession. MHS is unique in South Africa in terms of its student and teacher population. Unlike the majority of schools in South Africa, MHS has a racially representative staff. According to Hansard (10 q col 709, 21 April 1992, cited in Edusource 1993) there were only nineteen non-white teachers among 5200 teachers in White state schools in 1992 (cited in Smith, 1995:5). The racial composition of state schools is certain to have changed since this statistic was derived in 1992 because of the change in staffing policies at state schools. The situation at MHS provides an opportunity to establish the role culture plays in

the participants sense-making processes. While there is a large body of literature on "organisational culture" and "culture in organisations", Hart (1993) is the only author on succession, as far as I can ascertain, who documents the role of race, as linked to culture (ethno-culture), in the principal succession process per se.

Third, my research has revealed an element of succession which is not reported in the succession literature. While several succession studies (Fauske and Ogawa, 1987; Firestone, 1990; Ogawa; 1991) refer to the influence of environmental factors, such as the community, on the succession process, none of these studies reflect the influence of socio-political events accompanying the succession. Principal succession at MHS took place during a time of great, ongoing political and social transformation in South Africa. Insights provided during interviews indicate that socio-political - events impacted significantly on principal succession. I have already provided some background to these socio-political events in the introduction to this chapter. I will provide a more comprehensive overview to these socio-political events in Chapter Four.

Fourth, as school-based research, it narrows the gap that exists in educational research between theory and practice. This can be done by taking information back to the field and in so doing, as

Garfinkel (1967) suggests, "overcome the vast irrelevance of the topics, methods, findings and problems of most social science [and educational] research for practitioners" (cited in Adler and Adler, 1987:30).

Limitations of this study

First, this is a case-study. My survey of the succession literature reveals that most studies are limited to industrial and sporting organisations. Furthermore, to my knowledge, similar research has not been undertaken within South African schools. In order to make comparisons, further case-study research in schools within South Africa and elsewhere would have to be undertaken. Suttles (1986) states that "ethnography is almost always a highly localised effort. Findings need to be linked to other studies, to place them in a cumulative and comparative research tradition i.e., to see where each study fits in the whole picture, and to give direction to further study" (cited in Smith, 1995:8).

Second, while I have used several data sources, the major contribution has been in the form of in-depth interviews, conducted over a period of two months. While Seidman (1991) states that in-depth interviews may be the most appropriate method of investigation when attempting to establish understanding of other people's experiences, he warns that

"researchers who rely on in-depth interviews have to allow considerable tolerance for uncertainty" (cited in Smith, 1995:9). By using a triangulated research approach involving questionnaires, in addition to in-depth interviews and focus groups, I limit potential bias and distortion.

Third, as a member of the school being researched, my role is what Adler and Adler (1987) call a complete-member-researcher. I am a member of the staff at MHS and have been employed at the school since January 1990. This role has no doubt had some influence on the information collected and the quality of that information since I obviously have "roots" in the school concerned. Seidman (1991) strongly recommends that "researchers, especially those using in-depth interviews, identify and acknowledge those roots in order to channel that energy appropriately and to minimise distortion such interest can cause in the way that they carry out their research" (cited in Smith, 1995:9). I have also tried to follow Madsen's (1983) advice not to "be tempted to ignore data that seems at odds with a foregone conclusion, or to minimise them or shape them to suit (my) own purposes" (cited in Smith, 1995:10).

Protocol

I received written permission from the Principal of MHS to conduct this study. This letter is included in the appendix. See

Appendix C.

Teachers were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix A) before participating in the research and they were given the opportunity to withdraw at any time. I hired the services of a typist who has no links whatsoever with the MHS community and whose confidentiality can be relied upon. Where I have used information provided by participants in my discourse I have given them pseudonyms. Participants were placed in focus groups identified after the first interviews. The purpose of these focus groups was to clarify and enhance information provided in individual interviews. While the object of focus groups is to bring a number of different perspectives into contact, these groups pose certain ethical problems in that the material provided during the interviews is shared with group participants. However, within the group context, participants could decline to comment on issues or themes raised. I have not linked information provided during interviews to any individual(s). I did this in order to protect confidentiality.

Editorial comment

While certain references used in the interviews are commonplace in a South African setting, they require explanation in a broader context. South Africa, historically segregated along racial lines, continues to use labels such as "black" and

"white". In addition, the staff at MHS reflects the various language groups and as such, the interviews are filled with many non-English expressions and colloquialisms. While there are a number of Asian teachers on the staff, none volunteered to be interviewed and thus my study reflects the insights and experiences of black, white and coloured teachers only. I did not investigate why various teachers did not wish to participate in the research.

Since the object of this study is to document the experiences of teachers and their sense-making of the process of principal succession, I have made extensive use of material (quotations) taken from interviews. Quotations have been given verbatim with occasional comments provided by myself. Where I have felt that an expression needs further explanation, I have provided this within square brackets.

Overview of the study

Chapter Two provides a broad overview of the development of succession theories. I give a broad outline of the frames of reference used by Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) and Hart (1993) since I use them as explanatory aids for understanding and synthesising the sense-making practices of the staff involved in this research.

In Chapter Three I describe the limitations of past research in educational administration. I explain my choice of a qualitative research approach using a case-study. I also explain the rationale for the use of my data-gathering and analysis techniques I employ.

In Chapter Four I give a contextual background to the research. The insights provided on the process and perceptions of succession by both staff and principal prove meaningless without recreating the historical and socio-political setting in which the succession occurred.

In Chapter Five, I report and analyse the data, relying extensively on the framework provided by Miskel and Cosgrove (1985).

In Chapter Six I have isolated, analysed and discussed two elements of this succession which I feel are of particular importance for the South African context of principal succession.

In the closing chapter I provide a summary and some conclusions. I draw comparisons with the research outlined in Chapter Two and highlight new insights gained in this succession study. I also outline the implications of this research for administrative practice in schools, and identify areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF SELECTED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

Principal succession is an area in education in which very little research has been done. Most of the research done in the field has been conducted on the effects of leadership or managerial succession in large businesses, industrial or sporting concerns. In the articles written about leadership succession in schools few report the views, opinions or sense-making practices of both the staff and principal involved in the process.

Succession, or the process "by which key officials are replaced" (Grusky, 1962:261), is an area of organisational theory which has produced controversial literature over the years. The controversy about succession lies in the fact that as Grusky (1961) states, while the event is acknowledged as being universal "it does not mean that the consequences are uniform" (p.262).

Theories on Succession

Within the school setting, the principal is identified as a key figure in school effectiveness. Edmonds (1979) states "one of the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective

schools is strong administrative leadership, without which the disparate elements of schooling can neither be brought together nor kept together" (cited in Hart, 1993:7).

It is the consequences of principal succession and their impact on the effectiveness of schools that is of concern to many, if not all, who study succession in this context. Some researchers (Firestone, 1990; Ogawa, 1991; Hart, 1993), are more interested in documenting it as a process during which a series of interactions take place within a social system.

There are a number of traditionally held beliefs about leadership succession. Some sociologists are sceptical of the expectation that replacement of key figures in organisations will have any significant influence on organisational functioning. In Brown's (1982) review he states that "... among other views, there are those who believe that succession has no causal impact and is better viewed as ritual scapegoating" (p.1). That is, "succession ... is better seen as a scapegoating ritual performed during transitory performance slides to appease ... and to mask more fundamental organisational weaknesses" (cited in Gamson and Scotch, 1964:69). Studies by other researchers such as Grusky (1961) and Friesberg (1962) have largely been responsible for the widely held view of succession as a "...perturbing event with deleterious consequences for organisational performance (where there is) an increase in

tensions and a deterioration of morale and productivity" (Brown, 1982:2).

Based on the view that succession is disruptive, researchers have sought to establish the causal relationship between succession and organisational effectiveness and performance. Within this framework researchers have focused primarily on issues such as the rate of succession, length of tenure and the size of the organisation. More recent researchers in the field, such as Miskel and Cosgrove (1985), while still believing that succession is disruptive, have focused primarily on factors such as "reason for succession", "demography" and "school culture". In doing so they have moved away from trying to establish the causal relationship between succession and organisational effectiveness towards an approach which emphasises the need to examine how members of organisations interpret and make sense of succession events. This interpretive approach reflects a growing interest amongst organisation theorists and researchers in the cultural dimensions of organisations. Within this paradigm, leaders and managers are seen as operating in an environment which changes from one community to another. Gephart (1978) states, "Sense made of the succession events was framed by the norms of the organisation in which the succession occurred" (cited in Fauske and Ogawa, 1987:28).

All these views of the process of succession have, however, one

aspect in common. They focus on the variables and outcomes of succession and they all implicitly assume that the leader, manager, and in the case of schools, the principal, is central to the issue of succession. Hart (1993) takes a slightly different stance.

Hart (1993), who has conducted an extensive review of current theories and research on leadership succession within school settings states that traditional succession research has failed to provide any real understanding of the process of succession. She suggests that principal succession should be seen, and is best understood, as a group experience in which the school and the successor interact and influence each other. Hart (1993) states:

Whatever our idealized view of leaders and despite calls for principals who shape the fundamental culture, structure, and goals of schools, research and practice support a more complex, interactive view of principal succession. Although they fill a legitimate and powerful authority position in the school structure, successors are still new members of a group and are subject to the social forces that shape people who join established social groups (p.299).

Within this perspective, known as organisational socialisation, succession in schools is seen as a process where leaders both act within, and are acted upon by, the group they are assigned to lead.

Because of the different theories and research approaches, and for the purpose of establishing guidelines for analysis and

understanding of individual's sense-making practices, I have adopted and adapted Miskel and Cosgrove's (1985) "Framework to Guide the Study of Leader Succession" (p.89).

Miskel and Cosgrove's (1985) framework represents a synthesis of a number of themes which recur throughout succession literature. They have grouped these themes within three categories based on a loosely defined time-span for each succession. These categories are:(i) Pre-arrival factors (ii) Arrival factors and (iii) Succession factors. I use these categories and themes to provide a review of a selection of succession factors identified not only by Miskel and Cosgrove (1985), but also by other researchers.

Pre-arrival factors

a) Reasons for succession

There are always a large number of reasons for why a leader leaves an organisation. The reasons for succession are important in that they may impact on the situation which the successor encounters. The reasons for succession may also determine how the successor will deal with the situation encountered.

Gephart (1978) speaks about forced and unforced successions. However, it would appear that the most important issue is not whether the succession is forced or unforced but rather whether there is perceived legitimacy for that removal by the

subordinates concerned.

If the removal of a leader is seen as illegitimate it is likely to precipitate negative reactions. Thus, the perceived legitimacy of successions has to be considered when assessing circumstances which influence subordinates' sense-making of succession.

b) Selection processes

Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) differentiate between two sources for future leaders stating that:

When current members of the hiring organisation are promoted, they are said to be insiders. When successors are selected from an entirely separate organisation, they are outsiders (p.90).

To a large degree, the appointment of an insider or outsider will be determined by existing circumstances within the organisation concerned, especially circumstances relating to the departure of the previous leader. The way in which the successor is appointed is also important because, as Allen and Panian (1982) point out, "it provides valuable evidence about the distribution of power within the organisation" (p.538). Therefore, who is appointed, by whom and for what purpose has important implications for the process of succession and the sense-making practices of subordinates. Birnbaum (1971) suggests that the choice of an insider is preferable to an outsider, the reason being that "when intra-organisational conflict is high, a candidate from within may better understand and be able to cope

than outsiders" (cited in Miskel and Cosgrove, 1985:90). As Ogawa (1991) comments, the reason for this is probably linked the insider's familiarity with organisational norms, since, "several studies have found that organisational norms greatly influence members responses to managerial succession" (p.33).

However, as Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) point out "hiring from the (same) or similar organisations leads to a homogeneity that may represent a significant failing for the institution" (p.91). Why? Smith and White (1987) observe:

The recent decline in American industrial competitiveness in world markets has led to an increasing focus in the literature on how corporations and industries adapt to changing market structures ... (where it is seen that) the choice of CEOs and coalitions of senior executives to implement strategies under conditions of market change can be critical to successful organisational adaptation and, ultimately, organisational survival (p.263).

Selection processes are, however, not just about who is selected and why. Equally important to the process is who is involved in the selection of the successor. Traditionally, teachers, certainly in the South African setting, are not involved in the selection of new principals. "The mandate is usually made by superordinates who want to see changes" (Miskel and Cosgrove, 1985:94). However, Ogawa (1991) notes that researchers such as Goldman and Fraas (1964) found that members tended to be more receptive to successors who had been elected rather than appointed.

c) Reputation of leaders

Within the school context, succession differs from other contexts in that, "The replacement of principals is a relatively common and seemingly undramatic occurrence" (Ogawa,1991:30). Ogawa's study also illustrates that there is a general expectation and acceptance amongst teachers that the new principal will introduce changes.

This assumption has two dimensions: (a) a belief that each principal can set school-wide direction and (b) a belief that each principal brings his or her notion of what the school's direction should be (Ogawa,1991:53).

Therefore, the reputation of the principal successor will be of great importance to the school to which she or he has been appointed. Staff will anticipate certain behaviours and changes based on the reputation which precedes the principal successor's arrival.

Hart (1993) brings an interesting challenge to the whole debate by stating that:

Principals may bring a fine reputation with them; they may have prestigious degrees or possess special expertise ... but the validation of their right to act for the group, to speak for the group, to lead the group towards new goals and new ways of pursuing them emerges from social affirmation, from what Dornbusch and Scott (1975) call the moral legitimacy of authority (p.275).

d) Orientation of leaders

Miskel and Cosgrove observe:

Regardless of the source, new administrators bring unique orientations towards personnel and mandates for change based on personal beliefs, attitudes and ideology (p.94).

Traditional researchers, such as Grusky (1963), observe that the arrival of a new leader will often mean that "members are not only forced to adapt to the successor's new way of doing things, but also to the new informal coalitions that inevitably develop" (p.29). However, more recent research demonstrates that the reaction to the changes linked to the leadership style and orientation of the new principal will depend largely upon what are perceived by the staff to be the norms established within the organisation.

The influence of norms on sense-making will be elaborated upon under the heading "School culture".

Arrival Factors

a) Demography

Researchers such as Simon, 1958; Grusky, 1961; Gordon and Becker, 1964; Helmich and Brown, 1972; Firestone, 1990, report changes in the demographics of organisations. Staff turnover in succession is linked to dissatisfaction of members in relation to the management style of the successor and changes in status

for previously influential groups.

b) School culture

The concept of organisational culture is one that is largely un-researched, within the context of principal succession.

Possible relationships between succession and culture have not been examined directly...but several authors have addressed topics related to culture that begin to shed some light on how shared ideology about leadership might affect the organisation (Miskel and Cosgrove, 1985:97).

A cultural group may be broadly defined as a group within which there is a system of shared beliefs and expectations called "norms". Smith and White (1987) state that the creation of a dominant culture "is seen as a function necessary for the corporation to preserve its values..." (p.263). This dominant culture has, in terms of group-theory literature, developed "commonly understood perceptions of reality...norms of behaviour (which) can be enforced by the group and transmitted from one generation to subsequent generations" (Smith and White, 1987:264).

The norms that researchers speak about are as numerous and varied as the groups that have been researched. Fauske and Ogawa (1987) found that teachers, unlike members of other organisations, attributed much of the responsibility for the setting of norms to the principal.

Whatever the setting for the research, what becomes clear is

that if the predecessor has, imposes or assumes norms which conflict with those of the dominant group (culture), then problems arise. Fauske and Ogawa (1987) note, as did Gephart (1987), that the predecessor's status was degraded when he or she was seen to violate existing norms.

Despite the fact that an insider succession is generally regarded as less conflict-ridden than outsider succession because the insider is familiar with the organisational culture, Lieberman (1956) found that even this type of succession was accompanied by conflict linked to changes in the power distribution within the organisation.

Where there has been a mandate for change and a conscious decision to select a successor who will not adjust to organisational norms, an outsider will normally be selected. However, research by Gordon and Rosen (1981) illustrates that "the combination of authority and strangeness inhibited important informal communications that could provide information about the culture of the group" (cited in Miskel and Cosgrove, 1985:98). It would appear that regardless of whether the successor is an outsider or an insider, in order to be accepted and validated as leader of the group, he or she needs to be completely *aufait* with the norms of the dominant group. To ignore these would be to entertain alienation and resistance.

Succession effects

In summary, the literature on succession provides a number of generalised themes relating to succession.

These generalisations are:

- 1) The reasons for succession create different reactions to the succession process.
- 2) Those who select the successor and the manner in which this is done will impact on sense-making practices.
- 3) There will be different reasons for and reactions to the appointment of an insider or outsider.
- 4) The norms of the organisation greatly influence the perceptions of the predecessor and successor.
- 5) The appointment of an outsider is usually linked to poor performance and a desire to improve effectiveness.
- 6) Community and environmental factors will influence the succession process.
- 7) Change in leadership will give rise to a change in the demographics of the organisation. (Adapted from Miskel and Cosgrove, 1985:pp.100-101)

I list these generalisations advisedly, since, as I pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, generalisations based on the research of large and varied types of organisations may be indiscriminate. I keep in mind, as Allison (1983), Ogawa (1991), suggest, that schools must be considered as significantly

different organisations - as discrete social phenomena.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

The limitations of past research on succession in educational administration

The problem with using research generated by the investigation of industrial, sporting and business organisations is that this research has contributed to the formulation of models of organisations and organisational theory which are then used as a framework within which the nature of school administration is researched. As Allison (1983) states:

(while)...the literature is replete with myriad theories of organisations and is littered with attempts to understand schools through the various perspectives they afford, it is virtually bereft of serious attempts to describe or analyse schools themselves...(and) this omission constitutes a major impediment to the development of useful knowledge in the study and practice of educational administration (p.8).

In other words, as Allison (1983) comments, there is a need to move away from the uncritical reliance on theory and models related to other formal organisations; a reliance which is seen to impede the direct study of schools as discrete social phenomena. "It is the administration of schools rather than of other related organisations that serves to distinguish educational from other forms of administration" (Allison, 1983:9).

I outline how I address this problem in my choice of research method.

Research Method

This research represents a qualitative case-study of principal succession by a complete-member-researcher (CMR) or what Adler and Adler (1987) call "an opportunistic researcher" (p.68). Opportunistic in the sense that I am researching a setting in which I am already a member. As such, I am a "native" of the research setting. CMRs or "natives" often encounter "from both lay outsiders and most especially, other academics, the special stigmata associated with going native in the research setting" (Adler and Adler, 1987:81).

Wolcott (1990) counsels that it is no longer necessary to defend or justify qualitative naturalistic research approaches. Therefore, I provide a rationale for adopting a qualitative approach in the form of a case-study. I also describe the techniques I have used to gather data and how I have set about analysing my data.

Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

There are a number of reasons why I have adopted a qualitative research approach.

Adler and Adler (1987), in a critique of traditional field research approaches state that methodologically, scientific research procedures which separate the subject from the object, that is, that objectify their observations "are a lingering throwback to the absolute empiricism of positivist sociological and anthropological thought ... (of) the 1940s and 1950s" (p.31). Researchers such as Cicourel (1964) and Douglas (1976) reject this dualism. Cicourel states that the separation of the subject from the object is impossible since "all human knowledge is fundamentally influenced by the subjective character of the human beings who collect and interpret it" (cited in Adler and Adler, 1987:31). Allison (1983) supports this stating that, contrary to belief, science is not free or immune to superstition and that "images may often be accepted as valid merely because they have been accorded a spurious scientific status" (p.11).

Hart (1993) observes that traditional succession research is in danger of failing because while it "has facilitated the identification of variables...the number of factors are so large that meaningful relationships are evaded" (p.247). Hart feels that traditional research in succession fails to expand the understanding of the interactions processes that are a result of succession - the how and why of outcomes and changes in the organisation. There is no acknowledgment of how the social group impacts on each new member and how social validation of the

principal successor is gained and affects the behaviour of the participants.

Allison (1983) states that while none of the knowledge processes (folk, literary, scientific) has a monopoly on truth, folk knowledge or knowledge consisting of images formed and modified "through the organisation and integration of the perceptions, experiences and creative thoughts of individuals" (p.10) can provide valid insights into the system in which they are formulated. Garfinkel (1967), who pioneered much of the research done within the ethnomethodological framework, states that research should focus on "how people, in their everyday lives, make sense out of, ascribe meaning to, and create a social structure of the world through a process of continual negotiation and interpretation" (cited in Adler and Adler, 1987:25).

A qualitative approach allows the researcher to examine a large number and range of behaviours and meanings amongst members of an organisation which would be overlooked in quantitative research programmes.

In addition to a largely quantitative approach to succession research, researchers have largely focused on the outcomes rather than the process of succession. There are an increasing number of researchers, such as Garfinkel (1980) and Hart (1993)

who are calling for attention to "what is going on?" and "what people do" (Smith, 1995:33).

My research as a CMR within a school which is multicultural and desegregated may present opportunities and insights into how race, as linked to culture, impacts on the sense-making practices of those involved in succession. To my knowledge, no research representing this particular angle of the succession debate has been conducted either in the United States of America, the United Kingdom or South Africa. Smith (1995) points out "Different cultural groups have different world views...or... paradigms that provide a frame of reference for perception, belief and behaviour" (p.34). A naturalistic approach to research allows the researcher to uncover these world views and how they interact. Within the organisational socialisation framework, it is these world views and patterns of interaction that are seen to be crucial to understanding the process and outcomes of principal succession.

As a complete member of the setting being researched, I have been part of the succession process. While this may pose certain limitations (as discussed in Chapter One), I have used a number of data-gathering techniques in order to check and cross-check information. This multiple approach or triangulation has helped me to ensure that "the data are not simply artefacts of one specific method of collection" (Cohen and Manion, 1991:270).

Finally, being a complete-member-researcher, while it may have certain problems, also has some research advantages. As a CMR I had developed a rapport with teachers prior to the research and this meant there was less manipulation of the research setting. Adler and Adler (1987) also observe and recommend that as an insider "I have a deep and direct personal experience in their (the teachers) world (and as such I should) draw on (my) observations, experiences, and feelings as primary sources of data...cross-checking them against common-sense, the accounts of others and hard facts whenever possible" (p.21).

Rationale for Case-Study

As Grusky (1961) states, while the process of succession may be universal, the consequences lack uniformity. He advocated that "...the nature of the process...may be "discovered" through the case studies of any organisation..." (p.262).

The single case-study provides a framework within which to investigate these events which are unique to this particular research setting. Second, the case-study is the most common means of conducting educational research where ethnographic techniques such as interviews and observation are used. As Hart (1993) suggests, ethnomethods, such as case-studies:

...rely on detailed analysis of interaction processes among people, especially the analysis of talk...(and are a) uniquely suitable method (for) understanding Principal's leadership, because the vast majority of

these interactions are verbal (p.103).

Third, according to researchers such as Gephart (1978), Miskel and Cosgrove (1985), Fauske and Ogawa (1987), the case-study allows "a movement beyond formal conceptions of the organisation to the consideration of informal phenomena that reflects the members meanings and sense-making practices..." (p.101).

Finally, as Cohen and Manion (1991) observe, case-studies "by carefully attending to social situations, represent something of the discrepancies or conflicts between the viewpoints held by the participants...(they) recognise the complexity and embeddedness of social truths" (p.150).

Data Gathering

I used three data gathering methods.

1. Biographical Questionnaire

I used a biographical and demographic questionnaire, as suggested by Judd, Smith and Kidder (1991) and Smith (1995). The questionnaire was distributed to forty two teachers who teach at MHS. The teachers were informed that there was no obligation to participate in the research. Thirty teachers responded to the questionnaire. I used the information provided in terms of questions on race, sex, length of tenure and language group to determine the range of people for my sample of interviewees. I

also provided the principal with the same questionnaire with additional questions specific to his leadership background. A copy of these questionnaires is included in the appendix. See Appendix B.

2. In-depth Interviews

Citing Bertaux (1981), Seidman (1991) states "if given a chance to talk freely, people appear to know a lot about what is going on" (cited in Smith, 1995:39). In terms of organisational socialisation theory, as advocated by Hart (1993), it is "by concentrating on subtle conversational patterns (that) scholars ... learn about processes of interaction and implicit assumptions and beliefs about reality held in common by members of a group" (p.103).

In accordance with Seidman (1991) and Smith (1995), I adopted a three-interview series of open-ended questions conducted over a period of two months. I interviewed each participant for forty minutes at each interview because of the time constraints caused by teaching schedules. Some participants reported back that they had found the interviews interesting as they hadn't consciously structured their thoughts about the succession process.

In the first interview sessions I asked participants to provide some background about themselves, their basic educational beliefs and reasons for teaching at MHS. In the second round of

interviews, guided by traditional and current literature on succession, as well as insights provided in the first interview, I began by asking participants how they had felt when the predecessor had resigned. I hoped that participants would help reconstruct the situation at the school at the end of 1994, as I was unable to do any research of pre-succession events as recommended by researchers such as Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) and Ogawa (1991). In the third interview I followed up on insights provided in the second interview by asking participants to expand and elaborate on certain statements they had made. This type of interview technique is recommended by Judd, Smith & Kidder (1991) who state that:

it allows a more intense study of perceptions, attitudes, and motivations than a standardised questionnaire permits. This type of interview is useful in scouting a new area of research, to find out what the basic issues are, how people conceptualise the topic, what terminology people use and what their level of understanding is (cited in Smith, 1995:pp.40-41).

In addition, interviews permit the researcher to identify the conversational patterns which Hart (1993) speaks about. Seidman (1991) also speaks about patterns, defining them as "connections among the experiences of the participants (where such connections) link people whose individual lives are quite different but who are affected by common structural and social forces" (cited in Smith, 1995:31). Seidman (1991) also states that (i) the discovery of these patterns or connections offers the researcher some alternative to generalisability, and (ii) the three interview structure includes features that facilitate

"authenticity" or research validity.

The structure of the interviews, the passage of time over which they are conducted, the internal consistency, and the researcher's sense of discovery, lend authenticity to the research and allow the researcher to have confidence in the validity (cited in Smith, 1995:41).

I interviewed the principal in a similar way.

Sampling

I conducted purposeful sampling as recommended by Seidman (1991) and Smith (1995) "as the most effective strategy for interview studies" (p.42). As noted previously, only thirty out of the forty-two teachers completed the biographical questionnaire. When determining the range of the sample to be interviewed I considered criteria such as gender, race and language groups, age, experience, position and length of tenure at MHS. I tried to obtain a broad spectrum of participants in terms of these criteria. I divided the interviewees, taking these criteria into consideration, into three broad groups. These groups were (i) teachers who had been at the school from the time of the founding headmaster, (ii) teachers who had been at the school with the previous principal who had succeeded the founding principal, and (iii) teachers who had been at the school since the arrival of the new principal. I chose 11 teachers (25%) to represent the teaching population. As Axelrod (1975) points out, to be selective in the choice of participants enables the researcher "to concentrate on those population segments that are going to provide the most meaningful information" (cited in

Smith,1995:45). Also, by ensuring that participants did not represent the same or similar social and educational backgrounds (maximum variation sampling) I hoped to avoid what Seidman (1991) warns against, that is, "giv(ing) enormous power to the stories of a relatively few participants" (cited in Smith,1995:42).

3.Focus Groups

There are a number of reasons for using focus groups. Hart (1993) states:

People must talk together about a succession event, interpret the meanings others are beginning to develop, and share their interpretations with each other to establish a group version of what is happening...a series of...exchanges and feedback loops...creates a group version of the facts (p.104).

Hart also states that conversations amongst participants becomes an important focus because "solidarity in the form of jargon then frames the real world, the interpretations and claims of all the members of the group and what actually is happening and what it means" (p.105). Focus groups are also seen as a means whereby information obtained in individual interviews can be elaborated upon and enhanced. Morgan (1988) observes that "the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in the group" (cited in Smith,1995:44).

I arranged the focus groups in terms of whether participants had

seen the principal's succession as essentially positive or problematic in some respects. Morgan (1988) suggested that homogeneity or the perception thereof helps discussion and promotes a sense of being "free to talk" amongst participants. Because of the nature of the research, that is, the staff's perception of their principal's succession, I had to be sensitive to the fact that participants might feel disinclined to openly discuss any reservations they had about the process and the principal's role. No one was forced to speak openly in these groups and I observed a degree of reticence on the part of those who did. I did not include the principal in these group discussions because of the confidentiality of the information provided.

Because the initial sample was small, I was unable to comply with Morgan's (1988) recommendation that there be six to ten participants in each group. I selected eight of the original 11 participants and placed them in two focus groups. When working with the focus groups I adopted a strategy recommended by Morgan (1988) where the groups, once presented with broadly defined questions, proceeded to manage their own interaction with myself acting, from time to time, as facilitator. I intervened when I thought it was relevant to do so, mainly to explore certain jargon used by the participants. Hence, my data gathering was as Suttles (1986) suggests "informed by opportunism" (cited in Smith, 1995:47).

The data gathered in the form of questionnaires and interviews remains confidential and I have used pseudonyms in my discussion in Chapter Five

Data analysis

First, I have found it useful to conduct my data analysis within the framework I adapted from Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) as outlined in Chapter Two. The literature research helped me formulate a frame of reference for asking questions.

Second, because of the emphasis in organisational socialisation theory on patterns in communication I looked for common use of jargon such as "supportive" or "trustworthy". According to Agar (1980), the goal of analysis is to identify the themes that summarise the key concerns of participants and which recur throughout the interview data. Agar (1988) argues that there is no apparent substitute for the scanning of the qualitative eye to identify these themes (cited in Smith, 1995:49). A number of themes came to the fore such as "the role of the predecessor", "the role of the department" and aspects of organisational socialisation such as "validation", "vision" and "trust". I have used these themes to guide my forthcoming analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONTEXT.

In the opening chapter I provide a broad background to the school in which the principal succession occurred. However, in order to place the insights of the teachers and principal involved in perspective, it is necessary to outline some of the historical and socio-political events surrounding the succession. Granovetter (1986) recommends that a macro and meso contextual overview be established in order "to understand what is happening and what can and cannot be done by attending only to the micro-level of analysis" (cited in Smith, 1995:52).

First, the school was established as a non-racial, multicultural institution. Its founding mission was to provide historically disadvantaged, predominantly black, students from all over South Africa, but particularly those from Bophuthatswana, with an education that had previously been unavailable to them. As Rita, a senior staff member for some fifteen years states:

The ethos was very much in line with progressively thinking people that were around in the 1980s, wanting to educate pupils so that they could grow into young men and women that could take their place in society. At that time we didn't know what was going to happen down the line in South Africa. We were worried about how pupils would fit in, how they would make it in the South Africa into which we were sending them. Therefore it was always one of the main concerns to send out confident pupils because at first lots of pupils were traumatised by what had

happened in Soweto in 1976. There were some students who had direct personal experiences and we were picking up the pieces. So we were very aware that what we were doing with these students would enable them to face up to, cope with, live with in a positive way with what was waiting for them out there.

The school used a number of entrance tests to select students and this led to accusations from the community that it only catered to a small, elite group. Paulina comments:

The community was against our entrance exams accusing us of accepting students whose parents were known, whose parents are elite.

Second, MHS had a high degree of autonomy in terms of its management structures. Also, unlike most schools in South Africa, MHS aspired to and implemented democratic principles. Students had a Student Representative Council rather than a prefect body. They were encouraged to have a say in the running of the school. Staff too had the freedom to participate in decision-making with respect to school policies. All staff were appointed by the principal in consultation with senior members of staff, the parent body and assistant teachers. Staff were recruited on the basis of merit without consideration for place of origin, gender or race. Unlike many other institutions either in South Africa or elsewhere (Ogawa, 1991), staff, parents and students were involved in the selection of the principal successor.

Third, conditions of service were considerably better than those provided for other teachers on the government payroll. This hadn't always been the case, but it was felt that in order to ensure the best teaching possible, the best teachers needed to be recruited. These improved service conditions included better salaries, free housing and a tax-free gratuity at the end of the contract period. The rationale was that in order for the school to recruit the best teachers there needed to be some financial incentive.

Fourth, unlike other schools in the community, MHS students wrote an examination considered the most demanding and associated with some of the most elite private schools in the country. This added to the perception of elitism.

Thus, MHS is a unique institution by most standards for government secondary schools, let alone a predominantly black school in South Africa.

In 1994, with the succession of the new government, the autonomy of the school came under review. At the beginning of 1995 Departmental officials arrived at the school and instructed the principal-successor to admit more students immediately. At that point the pupil/teacher ratio was 13:1. At the beginning of 1997, with "right-sizing" it will be 30:1. Since 1995 the school has virtually doubled its numbers, going from 432 pupils

in January 1995 to 782 pupils at the end of 1996. The number of staff has been reduced from 42 in January 1995 to 27 in January 1997. Staff reactions to these changes have been mixed. Merissa, who has been at the school since 1988, states:

I think they [the Department] want to destroy our school...the whole way in which we operate and all the structures here.

John, who has been at the school since 1990, feels differently.

I agree with the department. I think education should be made available to everyone as much as possible. The problem is that it is difficult to implement.

In addition to changes in the demographics of the school, the status of the contracts and special conditions of service they protected was challenged with threats by the Department to nullify all agreements made with the former Bophuthatswanan government. Thus, much time was dedicated to establishing the legality of these contracts, to the point where the Education Department was taken to court by other staff members of other designated schools.

Expatriate teachers were told that there would be no work or residence permits for them and as "aliens" they could be repatriated at a moment's notice. Extensions to these permits were grudgingly obtained on a short-term basis. Those on contract were protected for as long as their contract was valid. At the end of 1996 the status of expatriates is still uncertain. Constant battles have been fought with the Education Department

and the Department of Home Affairs to protect the positions of expatriate staff at MHS. This has been seen as highly problematic by the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) who have placed pressure on those in senior positions within the Education Department. They are not happy with what they regard as the protected, elite status of teachers at MHS.

Those coming off contract no longer benefit from special service conditions and employment is offered on a temporary basis. Positions have to be applied for through government channels but the Education Department has not published a gazette since 1994. The staff turnover during the years 1994, 1995 and 1996 has increased dramatically. The yearly average for staff resignations has been 4 or 5 since I arrived at the school in 1990. 12 teachers are leaving at the end of 1996. However, the school will replace very few of these teachers. The school's teaching complement has been reduced as part of the "right-sizing" exercise. While the school is in a position to pay for what it calls "management posts" funded by the parent body, the Education Department has instructed the school that it may not advertise for teachers to fill vacant posts. The idea is that the school will be allocated teachers who are registered with the Department as unemployed.

The principal successor arrived at a time in the school's history when significant changes were occurring. These changes

were being implemented from outside the school as part of a socio-political revolution. Ogbu (1986) states that it is important to consider how historical and structural forces impact on how individuals participate in and interpret social events. While Ogbu is referring to observations made about desegregation in schools, "he was concerned with how societal institutions and forces influence the education system and participants perceptions and behaviour in it" (cited in Smith, 1995:52). Consideration of these forces is also pertinent to understanding the process of principal succession.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SUCCESSION

In this chapter I report and analyse the staff and principal's perceptions of the succession process they have experienced.

I use some aspects of the framework provided by Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) to introduce the succession scenario.

Pre-arrival Factors

a. Reasons for the succession

Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) recommend that any study of succession should establish the background to the succession since, "The successor confronts different consequences depending on the reason for the vacancy" (p.89).

The predecessor, resigned at the end of 1994. Staff reveal certain perceptions about why they think he chose to leave at that time.

Merissa states:

[He left because] he could not cope with the new changes which just came upon him all of a sudden. Maybe to some extent he created it for himself because of the attitude he had towards the new Education Department. In the end he couldn't cope

with the problem.

Rita feels that:

The place became too hot for him and he felt that the type of contribution he was making was not going to be appreciated. It looked to me as if he had to run away to a calmer, more liberal situation. When I say liberal I'm thinking of white liberal attitudes. I think he had to go where he could live out those principles no longer fitting here in Mmabatho.

Tumi observes:

He couldn't stand the pressure as a leader. It looked like he was running away.

The predecessor is seen to be running away from problems he couldn't face. The political pressures and the inability to adapt to them is seen to be instrumental in his decision to leave. As Richard notes:

I think he was the wrong person to be here at that particular time in the school's history.

Teachers' responses to the departure of the predecessor are mixed. Merissa states:

It was a time that was very disruptive for everyone so when he said he was leaving I was shocked. I thought "Shooo!" what are we going to get now...maybe somebody much worse.

Botho feels that:

He should have stayed and fought for what is right...our right to remain as we were.

Henrietta concurs with Merissa. She observes:

I was worried when I heard he was leaving. Alright he had his weaknesses but I have had principals that have been a lot worse and I was concerned about who would take over...afraid that who would take over from him would be worse than him.

Members of staff indicate feelings of uncertainty and insecurity about the successor. Others felt happy about the imminent departure of the predecessor.

Rita states:

There was a sense of relief when he left because I had lost all respect for him and it was difficult for me to work with that person...after all, he was head of the school.

John, a senior member of staff elaborates:

Towards the end of his rule I was starting to get a little uncomfortable about certain things...the way he dealt with the department. I think he tended to disregard the opinions of women. He was democratic as long as his authority wasn't challenged.

Richard feels that:

Nobody really knew where he was coming from. When he took a stand it was often seen as inappropriate.

Tumi states:

He favoured whites. I saw him as a racist.

Socio-political events in 1994 are seen by the staff to have precipitated the predecessor's resignation. Evidence also suggests that there were other problems linked to his relationships with staff members. In terms of Gephart's (1978) definition of unforced and forced successions, the resignation of the predecessor would appear on the surface to have been unforced but in reality it may have been a forced succession, that is, one where the predecessor's performance is assessed negatively, in this case, by the Education Department and the staff. Certainly, the perception is that the predecessor and the Education Department clashed in terms of what they wanted for

MHS.

While the predecessor resigned of his own volition, staff perceptions indicate a sense of the political pressure on him to do so. If language is used as Hart (1993) suggests to construct the truth or reality then the common terms which frequently occur amongst the language of interviewees may be seen as a construct of a common reality. Terms such as "running away" and "could not cope" seem to indicate the staff's understanding of the reasons for the resignation.

Insights provided by staff about pre-succession events can be summarised as follows:

1. The principal was forced to leave because of socio-political events with which he was unable to cope. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

2. While some staff indicate that they felt relieved for various reasons, the majority of those interviewed expressed a great degree of uncertainty and insecurity about the prospect of a new principal. These feelings were linked to whether the successor would be capable of dealing with the pressures which has caused the predecessor to leave, as well as their concerns about their professional lives as teachers.

Merissa states:

I had mixed feelings that day after the interview of [the successor]. I wasn't too sure about him.

Kwaku observes:

Initially staff were very apprehensive. They were not sure about what sort of person he [the successor] was until he was confronted.

All these factors impact on the fears and expectations of the successor because even when members have been involved in the selection process and changes in policy and personnel are anticipated, they may still feel, as Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) observe:

...insecure, suspicious and under inspection...withhold expressions of warmth, and may adversely react to the uncertainties that are introduced into their...surroundings (p.95).

b. The selection process

There were three candidates who applied and were interviewed for the principal's post. Two of these applicants were local Motswanas (one male, one female), and one was a white male from Gauteng. There were no applicants from within the school.

In accordance with the school's policy of appointing staff, all candidates underwent extensive interviewing by the outgoing principal, deputy, senior staff, assistant staff, parents and students. The white male was selected and appointed.

How did teachers at MHS feel about their opportunity to interview and select their own principal?

Rita states:

I think that when there is a change over in principal many people fear what the next principal is going to be like. Many people have certain expectations...but if you don't have a say you feel sort of helpless as to what is going to come your way, especially at MHS where I find there is traditionally so much contact with the principal. I think for me personally I felt empowered to determine the destiny of the school because there is no way you can run away from the principal. A principal is a vital figure in the way the school is run and in the way the school operates and the success of education that is happening. So I could raise my fears, even mention my expectations and feel that I am part of a process.

John concurs with this viewpoint saying:

You don't feel that you have a leader that has been imposed upon you but that you have had a definite role in trying to choose him because he shares your ideas, your vision and so on.

Tumi observes:

If you interview the person you would like to know about certain things. If you get these things from the person then you feel he is the right person, but if somebody just comes then you have never talked to this person and you don't know what kind of person he is.

Martha feels:

At least when you have seen wrong in the previous person you can actually try and form your opinion of this new person. Past experience can definitely help you and whatever bothers you, you can ask the person if he is going to live up to it and hold him accountable to promises made in the interview.

Teachers indicate a positive attitude towards being involved in the selection process. First, they feel that the successor has not been imposed upon them.

Rita observes:

I was very grateful that we were still allowed the opportunity to select our own principal. The Education Department could have sent somebody here that was going to fulfill their aims and objectives.

Second, the staff feel empowered by being able to choose someone who shares the same "vision" as themselves. Ogaŵa (1991) observes that organisational norms will determine the response to the successor. This can occur even at the point of selection should staff be given a chance to choose their own leader.

Richard comments:

He [the predecessor] didn't have the right kind of vision to steer the school through that stage.

Whereas Rita states:

I thought [the principal successor] was the best person to take over at that point. He seemed to know what was happening in educational circles [and] at that time in South Africa, in Mmabatho, in MHS, we needed a person with vision.

Within the organisational socialisation perspective, Hart (1993) observes:

The social structure of the existing organisation, its needs as perceived by current members, and its sacred and tacit practices exert tremendous influence over perceived outcomes. [The] group's social validation of the legitimate authority of the new leader is critical (p.57).

The predecessor is perceived as not having the necessary "vision" which staff indicate is important to the school at that point in its history. Martha identifies another element in the selection process. She feels that it is important to select a

successor who will not engage in the inappropriate behaviours associated with the predecessor. She states:

[The predecessor] gave mixed messages to students and staff. Some people could get away with things. Some of the staff were favourites. He favoured the whites.

Ogawa (1991) notes in his research that the reputation of the successor gave rise to certain expectations because:

Teachers hoped that the new principal would possess characteristics that they had found lacking in the predecessor (p.35).

Unlike the appointment of successors by superordinates, selection by staff, as Martha points out, makes the successor accountable to his or her staff in terms of promises made during the interview. If the successor fails to observe these promises the implication is that he will lose the support of those who selected him.

The principal successor was selected on the basis of the impressions and expectations he created during the interview. As Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) note, the reputation of leaders impacts on the sense-making processes of staff. By creating certain expectations and impressions in the interview the successor established a reputation of sorts. What were these expectations and impressions?

Tumi:

It was very clear that he was a hard worker which I admired, so I expected him to come and work really hard. I was hoping that his hard work would pull us up again.

Rita

We were looking forward to having a strong person who was prepared to listen to students, listen to staff, listen to the general voice of education out there and make the most of what he hears...not just pretend to hear but really tries to do something about what he hears.

These comments are made against the background of perceptions about the predecessor who as Martha points out:

would get very angry with you if you challenged him on anything. In that respect I wasn't happy to ask questions.

Merissa also observes:

[The predecessor] wasn't a man of his word whereas [the successor]...I saw from the interview...I saw him as somebody who likes to stand by his word.

A selection process where the staff are involved may thus become a status degradation ceremony (Gephart, 1978) of the predecessor. Staff speak about wanting someone with "vision" and someone who will "stand by his word". The staff select the new principal because they perceive him to have qualities they saw lacking in the predecessor. Berger (1984) found that leaders must be compatible with the people involved in the selection process. While Berger is commenting on the appointment of successors whose "definitions of reality" differ from those of the selectors, his observations about the successor's divergence from these definitions of reality in terms of orientation and management style provide some understanding of why the predecessor resigned. He states that if the relationship between relevant parties becomes strained, the successor [the predecessor] may find the situation so untenable that he or she

is forced to leave, that is, "the probability of succession is increased" (Berger,1984:102). The predecessor's relationship with the Education Department and his staff was problematic. As Richard notes:

[The predecessor] couldn't negotiate a new relationship with what was coming.

Finally, allowing staff as opposed to senior officials to select their own successor may also resolve some of the debate surrounding the choice or selection of an insider versus an outsider. Seen within the organisational socialisation framework, the new principal, whatever his or her origin (insider/outsider) "must be...validated by social processes and granted legitimacy by subordinates" (Hart,1993:13). Staff perceptions at MHS about being allowed to select their own principal successor support the legitimacy debate presented by Hart (1993). Citing from research done by Goldman and Fraas (1964), Ogawa (1991) states "The difference in receptiveness to successors...may be traced to the legitimising effect of subordinates' participation in the succession process" (p.35).

Arrival Factors

The principal's successor started at MHS in January 1995. What were the circumstances in the school at that time?

January 1995 - Staff perceptions

Merissa:

The staff were depressed because the future was so uncertain. Everybody felt uncertain and we felt stressed because the previous headmaster wasn't firm like a rock for us.

John:

I think our morale as a staff had been eroded by many factors...the conflict with the Department, the fact that the conditions of service are not the same.

Martha:

I think we are scared of the Department. They are trying to break the school down by giving us problems in every single way they can think of - I don't know if they want us to throw in the towel or what?

Rita:

When he [the successor] came here there was almost a feeling of despair after [the predecessor] left us and the circumstances under which he left. We were sort of...we felt sort of like orphans. Quite a few of us felt sort of abandoned.

Merissa:

I think the staff as a group was just falling apart. Everybody was just drifting away; everything was going down in the school.

The successor's perceptions

I came into a situation for which I was totally unprepared. I hadn't been given any information about what was happening with the Department. I think it would have helped to have a hand-over period the previous year...you know, the negotiations that had happened with the Department would have been clearer to me. It would have been clearer to me as to what direction the school should take. I think it was only in my second term that I really started understanding some of the issues and being able therefore to tackle them. I sensed a sort of chaos and demotivation, so my first few terms were spent trying to stabilise what I thought I saw as a very insecure staff. I had

to prioritise what I wanted to do. I focused on the staff. I put morale as very high on the list. I was worried that there would be a big turnover of staff...which there wasn't actually. I tried by all means to prevent that by trying to keep our relationship with the Department. I fought battles to maintain some kind of stability.

Both the new principal and the staff speak of the "uncertainty" and the "decline in morale" that was felt amongst them. The principal successor's insights confirm those of Weindling and Early (1987) who note that while others, such as the deputy-principal are often granted time to familiarise themselves with the situation, the new principal is thrown into the "deep-end", having to "function as mediators between diverse and conflicting interest groups [such as the staff, Department and parents]" (cited in Hart,1993:128). Duke, Isaacson and Schmuck (1984) comment, as does the new principal, on the unexpected demands made on the successor "the unanticipated time press and the disconcerting feelings of unpreparedness" (cited in Hart,1993:128).

The Successor's Response

I thought it was very important for me, for the staff to trust me that I was working in their interests and the interests of the school. I have consciously taken a different route. I have given a lot of time to motivating the staff because what is happening at the school and out there in education is impacting on all teachers.

Turner (1988) speaks of "ontological security" where "For a

person to feel ontological security in a social situation, she must believe that no critical dimension of the situation remains hidden" (cited in Hart,1993:111). The principal successor speaks about prioritising "morale" and "maintaining stability" by "keeping the staff informed on a daily basis about what was happening". He indicates that he wished to gain the "trust" of the staff which as Rita states "felt abandoned". The principal successor, by prioritising motivation and getting the staff "to trust me that I am working in their interests" includes himself in the social reality of the staff. In so doing he makes himself part of the group's concerns and "establishes that he possesses the common experiences, critical and valued skills, and values and beliefs...that contribute to the trust necessary for healthy interaction" (Hart,1993:110). Tumi, when asked about her feelings towards the new principal, states:

He is a man of his word unlike [the predecessor]. He develops a procedure and sticks to it.

In dealing with the situation as he finds it, Weiss (1978) and Nicholson and West (1988) observe that sense-making for a new leader depends on the amount of change occurring between the old and new environment. When the successor was asked to clarify his particular stance with the Department his response provides some interesting insights.

I have had an experience of coming into a bad situation and turning it around in time. What I learnt there I have been able to almost subconsciously bring into this environment. If I had come here without that experience I would have been

eaten for breakfast by this whole system. I would have drowned here if I hadn't brought that experience that was very transferable. If I hadn't brought it here I would not have coped. Also, the successions I have been involved in have helped me with this succession.

This observation supports that made by Smith and White (1987) which suggests that organisations should not select successors with the same institutional experiences as the predecessor because this might lead to poor adaptation in the face of change. While the situation at MHS provided the principal successor with an opportunity to transfer the knowledge and socio-political skills he had gained in one environment to another, the successor's skills and background were different to that of the predecessor.

Speaking on why he felt his predecessor resigned, the principal successor states:

He and his deputy were trying to maintain something that was changing. He felt he had to leave because he did not have the experience to deal with these changes. He did not have the experience because he had been here all the time. He had never had to cope with change. The school was set on a course which inevitably brought it into conflict with the Department.

Carlson (1961) notes that it is the possession of knowledge forged in other organisations which allows the outside successor to cope with a changing environment as well as to change it. Also, experience of previous successions develops coping skills which assist in further successions.

Problems facing the principal successor at the time of succession

During the focus-group sessions the staff identified a number of common problematic areas with which they felt the new principal had to contend.

a. "The Department"

Staff perceptions

Merissa states:

The Education Department was a problem. [The principal successor] had to wipe out past problems we had and start afresh. People were already very negative. There was a general uncertainty amongst the staff and pupils about the future of the school.

Kwaku observes:

The school's status was uncertain. It was not certain whether it was going to be closed down. The plight of foreign teachers like myself was uncertain.

John comments:

You know, when you come to think of it, we have been on the edge of collapsing completely as an institution because of the external threats which could have amounted to the complete and utter collapse of the school.

The Principal Successor's perceptions

The Department were forcing change faster than they were legally allowed to in 1995. I tried to prevent a complete slide by looking at our relationship with the Department. I decided to take a stand on the expatriate issue. Diane once said to me "Why don't you go and get some lessons from Harry [another principal of a designated school] on how to run the school. I resisted her and discussed my differences in approach with Harry. I work with people, respect

them, but I am firm and diplomatic. Recently Mr. Visser rang me from the Department and said he has no problems with us, so my approach has worked. There is more acceptance. We are not a punch bag any more. Now things can move in a different direction. The staff are more secure and I can get on with other things.

The staff and the new principal speak of the school "sliding" and being under threat from the department. The school is seen to be on the edge of disaster in January 1995. The successor's perception that the crisis has been averted is confirmed by John, who states:

The threat from the department is much less now.

b. "Disunity on the Staff"

Staff perceptions

John notes:

There do tend to be groups amongst the staff. I find it disconcerting for example where a lot of Afrikaans teachers tend to sit together every break-time. There seems to be something symbolic about the fact that they are facing the wall.

Tumi observes:

I think [the principal successor] realised that there was no unity amongst the staff. People preach about a lack of unity but they do not want to meet. They don't want to make the effort.

John adds:

By the time [the successor] came to the school the seeds of uncertainty had been sowed. I think that in 1995, despite all the problems, we had more sense of unity because we all felt we were fighting a common enemy, the common enemy being the Department. In 1996 we have had other serious problems to address yet there doesn't seem to be the same sort of unity now.

When asked about the origins of the perceived disunity amongst

the staff various black members of staff make the following observations. Tumi notes:

People were wondering when the new principal arrived if they would be treated as they had been by the previous principal. There are teachers who were the favourites, who are used to feeling special. They are now feeling uncomfortable and they are taking it out on other people.

Martha elaborates on what Tumi says:

Certain people could get away with murder. They could lie to [the predecessor]. Somehow I always felt he was a racist. He always made fun of other cultures. The whites get away with more. They go in and demand whatever they want and get it [all whites?]....yes, all whites.

Botho confirms what Tumi observes. She comments:

When [the new principal] arrived there was a feeling of uncertainty. People were wondering if they would be treated like they were by [the predecessor]. He had favourites and they wanted to know if they were going to be free like before.

MHS is a non-racial, multicultural school. The predecessor is seen to have violated the organisational norm of non-racism. In so doing, he created a situation where there is a perception of a dominant group along racial rather than cultural or professional lines. In an environment where such a delineation is problematic, the perception amongst staff members, especially black members, indicates uncertainty about whether the successor will continue to support what was regarded as the dominant group during the tenure of the predecessor. On the other hand, Merissa, who forms part of what the black staff regard as the "favourites", states:

I was anxious that [the successor] answer my questions about Afrikaners [in the interview] because [the founding principal] didn't like Afrikaners. I wanted to find out where [the principal successor] stood.

This perception of favourites and those less-favoured has been perceived since the time of the founding principal.

I will comment in more detail on the role of race (ethnicity?) in the succession process in Chapter Six.

c. "Staff turnover"

There has been a change in the demographics of the school since the arrival of the principal successor. Between December 1995 and December 1996 there has been a thirty percent turnover in staff. The reason for this is difficult to assess. However, seven of the twelve staff members who left at the end of 1996 are expatriates.

Staff perceptions

Kwaku states:

This province seems to have a vendetta out on all expatriate teachers.

Commenting on some of the changes taking place in the school,

Richard says:

There has been an increase in the numbers of students. There is a lot less creative energy. I think we lost that in 1993, 1994 with all the political pressures and uncertainty.

Simon (1958) argues that:

At any time in the life of an organisation when a change is made that (a) explicitly alters the inducements offered to any group of participants and/or (b)...alters the contribution demanded from them or alters organisational activity in any way...the effect may be immeasurable in terms of turnover rates of employees (cited in Helmich and Brown, 1972:378).

Staff at MHS have seen changes in the following aspects of their work lives:

1. The status of expatriate teachers.
2. The status of contracts and hence, service conditions.
3. Increases in student numbers and hence, work loads.

All three factors mentioned above are linked to changes implemented by the new Education Department.

The Principal Successor's Perceptions

I tried by all means to prevent a high turnover in staff. I took a stand on the expatriate issue and tried to ensure conditions for those coming off contract. However, there are some staff who have left because they were "anti" my progressive stance. The negative people have left.

The principal successor's perceptions indicate that he feels that staff are leaving not only because of environmental factors, such as the influence of the Education Department, but also because of his progressive stand. When asked to elaborate on this stand the new principal states:

I refused to take the same direction as other designated school principals. I decided to take the diplomatic route and work on our relationship with the Department. There was no point in taking a hard-

line attitude. Change was inevitable. Not that I wanted to, but we couldn't resist that sort of political pressure. It would have been very foolhardy to even try, both for the staff and the future of the school and its students.

Rita concurs. She states:

There are some people who feel that [the successor] is far too soft, too understanding [towards] the Education Department. They feel he gives in. There is a group who feel he should resist the demands of the Education Department.

While change is associated with principal succession, the changes which staff are resisting are imposed from outside of the school. Conflict occurs between the staff and the principal successor who have different perceptions about how to deal with these changes.

d. "Problems with the new staff"

Staff perceptions

Kwaku states:

There is a problem with the new young teachers. They try to win the students' sympathy, to be popular. They are not aware of the school's history and the role that [the successor] has played in trying to keep staff.

Rita feels:

There is a decline in enthusiasm amongst the staff. There are some staff members who do not go to class. Something has crept into the school. You find teachers skiving off. There is no loyalty from these people, no knowledge about what the school stands for, no loyalty in terms of "this is what MHS is all about". The ethos of work and commitment seems to be lacking amongst the young teachers.

John observes:

I think the fact that the school hasn't collapsed has a lot to do with [the successor's] leadership. I think that some of the new teachers are not aware of this and they react differently to [the successor] than more established teachers do.

Rita, who has been at the school for many years, accounts for this. She states:

I think the problem with new staff lies with the way in which we have appointed people. Often it was a last resort issue. We don't have as many applicants as we used to have where we could really sift through them. I think we have just appointed people who are less committed, less enthusiastic about education, often just taking up a job. I think it has been the case of weak choices.

John adds:

I think we always used to get staff with a strong sense of commitment. I think the new teachers have a sense of commitment but I don't think its quite as strong as it used to be. The good, old days are gone.

The Principal Successor's perceptions

There are a lot of staff whose educational values are different. I am not saying they are worse than mine, or bad. They have come from different backgrounds and when I say this I am not just referring to local teachers who have come in with a very poor image of what the school is all about and what has happened to the school. I find the lack of commitment very disappointing and difficult to understand. People just don't keep basic book-keeping as we call it. I am not quite sure how I can handle this problem because it is a dual thing to both discipline and then motivate staff. It takes a lot of time and quite frankly I haven't had the time. I feel there aren't enough people on the staff who work extra hours or as a team. Its an uphill battle to try and get people to try and change their attitude and behaviour. Often there is no spark, nothing extra, nothing different. Its the same old thing, year after year.

The perceptions amongst staff differ with those of the new

principal. The successor feels that the apathy amongst the staff is more general than just amongst the new teachers. Whilst older members of staff speak of "a lack of creativity" amongst themselves, they appear to feel that this is different from the lack of commitment amongst the new teachers.

Henrietta feels that the problem amongst the new teachers has arisen because:

There has been very little in-service training for new teachers. We are all so busy with our own work and some of the staff have a "sink-or-swim" attitude. The family relationship has gone. There is no interest in one another anymore. The compassion for other members of staff, the workers has disappeared.

Staff members who have been at the school for several years express a sense of having lost the family atmosphere at the school and complain about the new teachers who have no sense of the school's history. Of interest is the status of the new principal and the new teachers since both are newcomers in terms of the school's history. Schein (1985) contends that the members of staff who have been at the school prior to the successor or the new teachers, represent an organisational culture which operates on a system of beliefs and assumptions:

which are shared by the members...they operate unconsciously and are learned responses to a groups problems of internal integration...a learned product of group experience...to be found only where there is a definable group with a significant history (cited in Hart,1993:92).

However, as Deal and Petersen (1990) point out, the new staff

and principal "will carry cultural imprints from their previous place" (cited in Hart, 1993:136). Perhaps the problems with the new teachers lie in the fact that, unlike the principal successor, they have not had to familiarise themselves with the school culture in order to stabilise a crisis situation which is closely linked to the school's perception of its self. The staff indicate having problems with the "changing vision" and the fact that they have no time for "in-service training". Rita also indicates that she feels that the interest in each other, "the family relationship" has gone. If this is so, perhaps the new teachers are not being socialised into the MHS "family" or organisational culture in the same way they were in the past. As such, they retain their "cultural imprints" which set them apart from those who have a history with the school. They are also not part of the crisis which has been instrumental in uniting the "older" staff against "the common enemy".

Conclusions drawn about perceptions

The problems identified and discussed were identified as common both by the principal successor and the staff. However, there is some divergence in perceptions which are of interest because they represent a conflict in terms of the "definitions of reality" that Berger (1984) refers to.

The successor states that while the Department was foisting

change on schools, he was surprised at:

...the politically conservative attitude amongst staff and parents.

He also feels that:

The school was trading on its reputation from the past. What I had been led to believe was not here. Staff are moribund.

When asked how this situation has impacted on his succession, he states:

I feel very depressed by it. The problems with the Department and the resistance to change from staff and parents has retarded the implementation of programmes I had in mind. I've had to prioritise what I've need to do. I have had to bring the crisis under control which has meant that I haven't been able to communicate my vision.

The principal successor's insights support Hart's (1993) idea of a multidirectional view of principal succession. Smith and Petersen (1988) state:

The findings of researchers provide firm evidence for the view that influence processes between superiors and subordinates are two-way rather than one-way (causing) leaders to perceive subordinates in certain ways and consequently to employ certain behaviours towards them rather than others (cited in Hart, 1993:9).

The principal successor, speaking about his initial reaction to the staff, comments:

In prioritising what I needed to do to stabilise the situation, I made it my first priority to understand the staff culture, the things which were driving and concerning the staff. They were very threatened.

Hart (1993) calls this process described by the principal successor as "socialisation", a process which involves:

the individuals' adjustment and adaptation to the expectations of the group. Through this process, people come to internalise the values, norms, and beliefs of the groups to which they belong and to accept the meanings these groups ascribe to events, other people and ideas (Hart,1993:10).

The principal successor acknowledges:

- I have had to modify my management style in the circumstances. First, the staff do not react to anything authoritarian although I have had to be authoritarian on occasions where I felt there was a practical need for it. Second, I've had to compromise. I suggest something and then leave it for a while, and when I think the time is right I try to reintroduce it. I don't like to impose ideas. I have spent a lot of time trying to learn the culture and trying to understand the transformation process. I believe I am starting to communicate but it has taken me a while. I didn't want to go off half-cocked and bring in my own personal mission. It had to be a mission that evolved in terms of my values matching those of staff and parents. It has been a bit of a juggling act matching the needs of the staff, parents and community with those of the Department.

The principal successor's experiences at the outset of the succession support Wanous' (1980) categorisation of stage frameworks in organisational socialisation. Instead of exerting his authority as a formal leader and imposing "his mission", the principal successor has "confront(ed) and accept(ed) the reality of the new social setting (where) expectations are confirmed or disconfirmed, conflicts between personal values and needs and the climate of the organisation are confronted" (cited in Hart,1993:31). Comments by the successor, such as "I suggest something and then leave it for a while" indicate what Wanous

(1980) categorises as the second stage of organisational socialisation or "role clarity" where "The tasks of the new job are assessed (and) the newcomer learns to cope with resistance to change" (cited in Hart,1993:31). Nicholson and West (1988) call this phase the "adjustment phase" where the successor "must reach accommodation with the work role, the people with whom she interacts and the culture of the school" (cited in Hart,1993:31).

These observations contradict those made by traditional researchers such as Grusky (1961,1963). Grusky (1963) observes that the arrival of a new leader will often mean that "members are...forced to adapt to the successor's new way of doing things" (p.29). On the contrary, as Hart (1993) suggests, the principal successor's observations indicate that he "...is part of a social context that wields a combined source of power over (his) beliefs and actions greater than the power of either previous professional socialisation or (his) own formal authority" (p.13). The new principal acknowledges this when he states:

I have had to manage the situation and put my own plans on hold.

Succession Effects

Changes

Change is an inherent part of the succession process. As Hart (1993) points out:

The expectation of change dominates pre-arrival and early encounter experiences in schools (p.237).

Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) suggest change is inevitable since:

Regardless of the source, new administrators bring unique orientations toward personnel and mandates for change based on personal beliefs, attitudes and ideology (p.94).

Grusky (1963) states:

A managerial change inevitably upsets old patterns of behaviour. The recruitment of the successor from outside may be an important factor affecting the degree of stability created by the successor (p.29).

a. "The vision is changing"

Staff perceptions indicate a sense of a number of changes since the arrival of the principal successor.

John comments:

I think the vision is changing. I think some of us are still trying to retain the vision, the ideals of the school, but I think it is becoming diluted and that we are getting a lot of new people in the school. We are trying to get them involved in the whole ethos of the school, the aims and ideals.

Rita observes:

It is not just as simple as saying that the school has changed since Dick and Harry took over. It has been a gradual process. I think it has been happening over a number of years. I think that with the whole of South Africa changing, the whole educational scene changing, together with the staff turnover and the

change in principal. I think I see it as a complete situation in South Africa, including everything, the community, teachers, principal and South Africa in general.

John and Rita identify the role of socio-political changes, both locally and nationally, in the changes at the school. The increase in student numbers, as outlined in Chapter Four, is linked to changes in the national Education Policy. Some staff see these changes as problematic.

John comments:

The high morale that was here in the early days was due to the fact that the school was smaller and we were more sure of ourselves.

Tumi states:

I think that when I first came to this school when [the founding principal] was here, there was a better relationship between staff and pupils. I think this was because it was a smaller school and there was an intimate family air. But, I am afraid, that the sort of family ethos of the school is definitely being eroded away as we get larger. The school is becoming a lot more impersonal.

Staff indicate a resistance to the increase in student numbers for a number of reasons. First, the school is perceived as losing its intimacy. Second, as Rita notes:

Teachers are under a lot of pressure because of an increase in numbers and the subsequent increase in teaching loads.

However, not all staff feel negatively about the changes linked to increased student numbers.

As Richard observes:

The initial vision has become inappropriate in the new South Africa. Now I think we have the challenge, not only to provide a creative learning environment but to do it on a much broader scale. We have to do

it without the extra privileges and things that we had in the past. We don't have to change the fact that we are a good school but just do things in a more equitable way.

b. "Disciplinary problems are coming to light"

Staff also indicate that they see changes in student discipline.

Henrietta states:

I think the school has gone worse with discipline. It wasn't as bad as this in the past.

Rita comments:

Many disciplinary problems are coming to light. I can't say whether these problems have been here all the time. I don't know where the problem is coming from but its not general. I want to say that since 1994 what is happening in the school is a reflection of the community out there. We want to impart certain models to the students yet the parents are not setting the example. You feel like you are fighting a losing battle.

John feels:

Problems exist with the general sort of discipline. I think the problem has escalated over the last two years.

When asked why she thinks this change in student discipline is occurring, Petro states:

I think part of the reason is the fact that there are more students and that perhaps we have more local students.

John, like Rita, attributes the changes in student discipline to a change in the community. He observes:

Under the Mangope regime there was an authority structure in the community based on fear, perhaps also based to some extent on traditional values as well. The regard for authority is not as prevalent as it used to be prior to the insurrection.

Thus, some staff link the changes in student discipline to

changes in community values. Some see them as linked to the increase in student numbers. Others, such as Tumi attribute the changes to the principal successor. She feels:

[The principal successor] is far too tolerant.

Petro observes:

Sometimes I feel that [the successor] is too democratic.

Kwaku comments:

Sometimes I think [the principal successor] is too democratic. Students are taking advantage of his liberal attitude.

Merissa adds:

[The new principal] involves the students too much. There should be less student involvement in decision-making. I think their role is far too dominant.

Commenting on changes in the school and the role played by the principal successor, Petro observes:

It feels we have more disciplinary problems. I can't remember if we had them last year [1995] but then [the principal successor] was struggling to get the school going and it didn't come to his attention.

Botho observes:

I think [the principal successor's] energies were tied to administrative responsibilities and battles with the department in 1995. So in many way he wasn't able to focus on discipline problems.

Kwaku feels:

[The successor] treats students in an adult way, but they are not used to that kind of treatment and have taken advantage of it as being overly liberal.

Thus, the staff attribute the perceived changes in discipline to

a number of factors. First, the increase in numbers. Second, the changes in the community. Third, the fact that staff feel the successor hasn't had time to deal with the problems within the school. Fourth, the successor's style of managing students.

Yet another perspective is raised by staff members. When asked if the successor's management style was contributing to changes in student discipline, Merissa states:

The problems with discipline were always here. They were here when [the founding principal] was here, but it was always pushed under the carpet. [The principal successor] has just brought these problems out and is trying to iron them out.

Tumi concurs. She says:

I think the problems with discipline have been here a long time. [The successor] is dealing with them.

Kwaku observes:

Problems have multiplied since the [successor's] arrival. Possibly his style of management allows problems to emerge more distinctly than they used to. Discipline problems have always been here. [The successor] has inherited them.

Rita feels:

What is happening right now in the school has very little to do with [the successor's] management style or him being the head of a school. I think from television to the broader South Africa is what is impacting on the school and making changes unavoidable.

These staff perceptions indicate a sense that the successor has inherited problems in student discipline which existed even in the days of the founding principal. As such, the successor's management style is seen to have had no influence on the emerging disciplinary problems. Rather, the successor's style of

management is seen to allow inherited problems to emerge.

The perceptions from different sectors of the staff are therefore contradictory. However, the common thread in all the interviewees responses is (1) the influence of the community and socio-political events on changes within the school community, and (2) the role that the principal successor's management style plays in observed changes in student discipline.

The role played by the community and socio-political events in this succession will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Six.

c. "Always trying to see both sides"

Staff comments about the interview of the successor and the expectations created during the interview indicate a desire for a successor who, as Rita puts it:

was prepared to listen to students and listen to staff unlike [the predecessor] who often put students badly on the line when they were going against him. He badly humiliated students if they dared to question him.

Merissa and others assess the principal successor. Merissa states:

Very important to me is the fact that [the successor] is always trying to look at both sides of the story and to accommodate you whenever he can. He is trying to get everyone to be open about everything and he is trying to create a better environment.

Petro observes:

I can't see that anybody can accuse him of not being democratic. He tries his best.

Kwaku feels:

He is more democratic in his approach than [the predecessor].

However, while acknowledging a desire for a democratic approach to decision-making and supporting the democratic stance taken by the successor in relation to staff concerns, staff appear to want this democratic process to be limited when applied to student matters.

Comments from the principal successor indicate a fundamental difference in the approach to student discipline.

I have tried to empower the Student Representative Council (SRC). I have tried to make the students feel that they are cared for, that they understand what the bottom lines are and that I will not tolerate the stepping over of established boundaries. I have also changed the school constitution and brought the students onto the management side of the school. The students have also felt very threatened by the changes. They need to know what is going on in their school. There is a problem with discipline but I gather it has always been a problem. It is just coming to the surface. What has happened in the community has impacted heavily on the school. Together with the staff, I have put a disciplinary committee in place and all misdemeanours are reviewed by this committee.

The successor accounts for the stance he has adopted with students. He states:

When I was at [one of my previous school's] the students challenged the staff. I was heavily involved with negotiations with students about various issues. I prefer to bring students "on board" and by doing that, familiarising them with the whole process of negotiation and the responsibility for their

decisions. I think the powers of the SRC have been limited at MHS. I am trying to improve and expand these. I don't find the student demands threatening but then I have had a lot of experience in negotiating with students in very difficult, demanding situations. There is a very conservative element amongst the staff at MHS.

The principal successor acknowledges, as do the staff, the influence of events in the community on the school. He also observes that he feels, or has been informed, that the disciplinary problems are not new to the school. He differentiates between himself and the staff in terms of his experience in dealing with students. He perceives a "conservative element" that are resistant to his style of managing students.

Gabarro (1987) notes that:

prior experience profoundly influences the manager's actions and what he tends to focus on, as well as the kinds of problems he is likely to face (cited in Hart, 1993:77).

The successor's experience has influenced the way in which he sees and deals with students. He wishes to "empower them" and "bring them "on board" in decision-making. He believes that there should be more, rather than "less student involvement" as Merissa suggests. While some staff have, as the principal successor observes:

automatically clicked into the way I'm thinking and have come on stream very quickly,

other staff members indicate that they find the successor's approach highly problematic.

Petro states:

To me it feels like democrazy.

The principal successor acknowledges this resistance adding:

There has been resistance to what some people regard as my progressive stance, not only with the Department, but also with the students. However, I was determined to use my particular approach because it was the right one for me and it has given me results in the past. It is my way of operating.

The successor's observations support those of Hart (1993) who states:

Successors come into an organisation with a set of ...beliefs...learned in other settings [which] seem to have a major effect on the way in which change is approached (p.77).

However valid these beliefs are, or whether the successor, as an outsider, as Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) suggest "provides a healthy importation of new knowledge and skills [which] become the catalyst for innovation within the organisation" (p.91), the fact that the successor does not appear to discriminate between staff and students' democratic rights contravenes certain staff "norms". Grusky (1967) states that these norms are established as a shared set of understandings based on people working together over a number of years. Ogawa (1991) observes that the reaction to the leadership style and orientation of the new principal will depend largely upon what are perceived by the staff to be the norms established within the organisation. If, as Gouldner (1954) and Gephart (1978) establish, the successor violates existing norms, staff members react negatively. Staff

support becomes ambivalent and potentially alienating. Tumi comments:

[The founding principal] was much firmer with his management of students.

Petro feels:

[The successor] needs to become much firmer if he doesn't want the situation with the students to deteriorate completely. I feel that the pupils should know that up to here they can negotiate and no further. I think there is a line he has to draw. He is far too idealistic.

These contradictory perceptions amongst the staff are quite normal since, according to Morgan (1986):

Modern analysis of organisational politics is quite explicit in treating the organisation and its environment as a set of conflicting groups with divergent values and interests (cited in Firestone, 1990:352).

These groups represent different cultures. Norms are an integral part of any culture. The use of terms such as "too democratic" and "too idealistic" display the grouping of certain members of staff in terms of what they think is an acceptable or "normal" educational philosophy for the successor. Firestone (1990) suggests decision-making within any organisation becomes a bargaining process between these groups or subcultures. Firestone (1990) points out that "such bargaining will lead to coalitions that determine the organisation's structure...[and] reflect the interests of some groups more than others" (p.352).

d. "The white triumvirate"

The principal successor indicates a desire to retain and implement a process which some staff see as being "overly liberal". Gouldner's (1954) research establishes that when the members refuse to implement and enforce a "new regime", the successor may overcome the problem by employing what is known as "strategic replacement". In so doing, the successor's use of strategic replacements "empowers the manager to form a new, informal social circle, which revolves around himself and supports his own status and policies" (Helmich and Brown, 1972:371). Martha perceives such a change in the power structure of the school. She states:

The school is being run by three people. I call them the "white triumvirate". There is a fourth in training. People are being appointed and promoted within families. It is becoming a family business. Things are being done and then only do we hear about them. Tony [one of the "triumvirate"] does whatever he wants and then the staff are left sitting with the baby.

It is interesting to note Richard's insights. He feels:

I think [the successor] is committed to involving the staff in all decision-making. He is a very creative person and many of the solutions he has come up with do both things at once and that excites me. That makes me happy in my work. I think that although some of the staff don't like the changes they have had to accept them as a necessity for survival. I feel we have had to change the initial vision and the way of doing things in order for the school to survive in the changing environment. I'm sure that with another principal it would have been much worse.

Richard clearly demonstrates his support of the principal successor. His perception of the principal successor, unlike Martha, is one of encouraging involvement rather than exclusion.

The successor's response to resistance from certain sectors of the staff is:

The negative staff members have left and are leaving.

I am quite happy about that.

In being happy to release staff who oppose his "progressive stance", it would appear that the principal successor is gathering a supportive group around himself. Some staff indicate that they are not happy about this grouping. Berger (1984) notes that if the successor tries to change the status quo, that is, by adopting a progressive stance, this "triggers community opposition, which may in turn transform the forward-thinking chief executive into a scapegoat" (p.104). The fact that the triumvirate, or supportive group, is "white" complicates the issue and obviously raises certain suspicions amongst black staff members. If it wasn't an issue it would not have been mentioned. Atkinson's (1984) observation that "blacks are still extremely wary of whites; that trust has not been built up and that there are sensitivities - particularly among those who have lived in South Africa - which take a long time to remove" (p.19) would still appear to hold true.

What is happening is perhaps best understood within the organisational socialisation perspective. The new social structure forms the context for socialisation. Within the social context, contact, communication and similarity are seen as important factors. The successor becomes an "insider" when he is afforded moral legitimacy to act on behalf of the staff. If this

doesn't occur, the successor, as Firestone (1989) notes, "is never socialised into the group to the extent of allowing others to give him influence over their values and beliefs" (cited in Hart,1993:131). The creation of what Martha calls "the white triumvirate" or a group who are seen to hold all the power in decision-making, is regarded as problematic, especially since, as Martha notes "its a triumvirate just like the one that existed during the time of [the predecessor]". It is also problematic because this perception may lead to the exclusion of the principal successor from the black ethno-cultural group on the basis that he only represents the interests of white staff members.

The emergence of areas of conflict represents the third stage of organisational socialisation process as outlined by Feldman (1976) and Wanous (1980). It is during this phase where, as Feldman (1976) suggests:

The newcomer and the group come to an agreement about this person's fit into the group [and] the newcomer resolves conflicts about how his work fits into the organisation and resolves the conflicts that arise within the work itself (cited in Hart,1993:30).

Wanous (1980) calls this stage the "Location Stage" where the successor learns to deal with the ambiguities he finds in his work and shows "increased commitment to the organisation, an altered or reaffirmed self-image and values, and new interpersonal relationships develop" (cited in Hart,1993:31).

The successor's observations confirm those of Feldman (1976) and Wanous (1980). He states:

I have found the disciplinary problems and process challenging and rewarding. I have grown through the whole experience and I hope the staff and students have too. So many staff are seeing the students in a different way. I think those staff who don't understand are very confused and they can't get on stream, they can't be committed, they can't be enthusiastic. It is my job to encourage staff to understand that vision and my goals and I've seen that as soon as someone buys into it there is no stopping them. I need our staff to be dynamic and to be encouraged to feel dynamic and growing. There have been a lot of changes, fundamental changes in the whole of society and we need to change our approach. I've struggled and believe it has taken a while but I have clarity of purpose now which is much stronger than I ever had in my whole life. People like Tony and Clive [part of the "triumvirate"] have come on side. Tony has always been on my side. He told me recently he was very excited about what we are doing. I think he went through a patch where he was really questioning his role. He is very excited about the restructuring of his post. Clive as well. He was a very conservative element to begin with. He is a classic case where I could have alienated him so easily if I had been a different person. Now he questions me honestly and openly. I like people to build, to come together as a team and actually operate as a team. When I first came here people were very divided and insecure. I think my role is changing. At first people saw me as a father figure who was going to sort out all their problems. It was a learning phase, learning what the culture was here, what the expectations were. I believe that I have worked my way right out of that now and that I am very much in a growth and development phase. I think there are things that still need to be done but there is a greater confidence in that at least I know what I am doing and staff are prepared to trust that even if they don't fully understand. There is more consensus, more meshing of gears than grinding of gears.

Another element influencing the social context and hence the socialisation process of the successor is that of race. This

element will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

The Principal Successor's Performance

Up to this point I have reported the staff and new principal's sense-making of the succession. Feldman (1976), Wanous (1980) and Nicholson and West (1988) provide useful frames of reference within the organisational socialisation perspective for analysing the stages of socialisation displayed within the succession process.

After the initial phase of "socialisation" (Feldman, 1976), "role clarity" (Wanous, 1980) and "adjustment" (Nicholson and West, 1988), Feldman suggests that "the group and the newcomer come to see how this person [the principal successor] fits into the organisation [and] evaluate his performance" (cited in Hart, 1993:30).

Staff perceptions

Rita says:

His management style reflects a deep concern for the young person of South Africa. I think he has given so much in terms of time, emotion and himself to the school.

Merissa states:

I feel he is open. He really is an example of transparency. I feel he can adapt to the changes. He is flexible, and, very important to me, he is always trying to look at all sides of the story and to accommodate you whenever he can. He has a lot of

patience in difficult situations.

Kwaku comments:

He is somebody who stands by his word unlike [the predecessor] and he tries to implement decisions taken by the staff.

Martha observes:

He has come into a real mess and tried to get the best for everyone. He is trying his best to iron everything out.

Richard states:

I think he is a committed democrat. He is always interested in giving the benefit of the doubt before he takes any action.

The staff perceive a man who is democratic, open, transparent, a "man of his word".

Thus, the principal successor fulfills the expectations created during the interview. Merissa says that during the interview she saw the new principal as "a man of his word". Comments by other staff members support this impression. Rita indicates that in the selection process she "was looking forward to having a strong person who would listen to the staff". Kwaku's comment suggests that the new principal fulfills this expectation.

In Rita's assessment she says:

The shortcomings are there but I would say he has lived up to ninety-percent of my expectations.

Richard feels

[the successor] has a balance of being able to listen and negotiate when it is necessary, but also being able to make tough decisions. He doesn't get

defensive and threatened.

In addition, since the school has always, as part of its founding mission, aspired to democratic principles, the successor's commitment to these principles is commented on by virtually all staff who were interviewed.

The behaviours of the successor are contrasted with those of the predecessor.

John observes:

I don't think he [the predecessor] took too kindly to people who disagreed with him. There was a bit of laziness because I think it takes a lot of energy if you are running a truly democratic school.

Merissa states:

[the predecessor] wasn't a man of his word. If you told him something confidential he always brought it out into the open. He would be very autocratic and sometimes very easy come, easy go.

In terms of a comparative assessment with the predecessor, the principal successor is rated more favourably amongst the staff interviewed.

The Principals Successor's perceptions

I was aware of some level of resistance to my appointment. Some staff and parents were "anti" what they felt was my progressive stance with the Department. I was depressed by it to begin with. But I have grown. I have learnt a lot. I feel more accepted. I would say there was a lot of staff who automatically clicked into some of my ideas but there were others who were definitely holding back. They wanted to see if I could take the "flack". I feel that I can now go to many different sectors and there

will be a good proportion of the people who will welcome my company and welcome my guidance and, unless I misjudge it, the majority of staff support me, although not all. I feel much more comfortable now about what I can actually say at staff meetings. I can actually say things which I may regret but don't because I know the staff will let me know if they don't like what I say.

This impression is confirmed by Rita who states:

I think one can divide the staff into about three groups. There are some people who think he [the principal successor] is far too soft, too understanding. They feel he is far too understanding of the staff, the pupils who have problems and the education department. They feel he gives in. Then there is a group who think he should resist the demands of the department and should be harder on the staff and pupils. There is a group who appreciate the demands he feels and lend them their support. There is also a group who have very little feeling for the school and I don't think that anything [the successor] does really rubs off or makes any difference. It is a very small group who just doesn't care.

Hollander (1979) argues that acceptance of a leader takes place over a time period where a number of exchanges are made.

Hollander states:

As leaders demonstrate their competence at tasks valued by the group and conform to group norms [such as democratic principles], they provide benefits to individuals and the group. Validation also results, securing for the new principal the right to be different, to make changes (cited in Hart, 1993:101).

The successor has identified the willingness of the staff to accept errors he might make or "regret". This observation is supported by comments from the staff.

Rita observes:

The shortcomings are due to human error. If I have a problem I can go to him and chat about it. He is trying his best.

Kwaku says:

I like his present style. He pursues the truth and takes action.

Martha comments:

Sometimes he does run contrary to staff opinion but he has admitted that he went wrong or he has gone the wrong way.

Tumi feels:

He is democratic. You are free to go to his office and say "I don't like this" and he appreciates it.

Henrietta says:

He has tried as much as possible to implement what is decided upon by staff. He has tried to get feedback from the staff to assist his line of action and whether he is on the right path or not.

Hollander (1979) suggests that by demonstrating a commitment to the organisation and its members, the successor will accumulate what are called "idiosyncrasy credits". Buchanan (1974) states that "These credits purchase for the holder the right to deviate from rigid expectations and group norms without penalty" (cited in Hart, 1993:101)

Commenting on why he has given the principal successor his support, Richard observes:

It is mainly to do with his consistency and strength of character. I think [the successor's] value system is quite clear to himself and to others.

Hart (1993) states "The relative stability of the core self-concept affects the process and outcomes of social interaction,

especially during critical events such as leader succession. A number of interaction theories acknowledge that self-esteem and consistency are important factors shaping interaction" (p.121). This is an aspect of the succession process which goes beyond the scope of this research.

CHAPTER SIX

ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

I have set aside a separate chapter within which to discuss two elements of the succession process that have emerged during my research.

During my literature research I found accounts of research on "organisational" or "school culture" and its influence on the succession process. However, while Hart (1993) mentions, in passing, the role of culture and the role of environmental factors in organisational socialisation, no researchers appear to have documented the impact of socio-political events (as part of environmental factors) or race on the succession process, principal succession in particular.

a. Socio-political events - "Political pressure"

While aspects of the political changes that occurred in Bophuthatswana in 1994, 1995 and 1996 emerge within the discussion of other elements of the principal succession, I feel it is necessary to link these socio-political aspects more coherently in terms of how they have influenced the staff and principal's perception of the succession, because, as John observes:

The insurrection of 1994 has had a devastating and ongoing effect on the whole Mmabatho community and these effects are being felt within the school.

First, with reference to why the staff felt the predecessor left, Rita observes:

Mmabatho was definitely a place where a lot of politics was going around in educational circles, in the community, in the school. I don't think [the predecessor] wanted to be part of the political transformation process.

Tumi adds:

I think [the predecessor] left because of the pressure from the government, because the government were demanding things from MHS. He couldn't accept the changes demanded by the Department about the change in student numbers and our entrance tests.

Kwaku comments:

I think he left because of the political pressure.

Second, at the point of selection of the successor, staff indicate a number of factors which influenced their response to the selection process. Rita comments that she was happy to be part of the selection process because:

At least I know that if a person is appointed then that person was not sent by the Department. The Department were so "anti" us at that time.

The Education Department are seen, as John suggests, as "the common enemy", the representative of the government who were "demanding certain things". Merissa sums up the perceptions of some staff. She states:

They want to make us just another black school like the old Bantu Education schools. They are jealous of

what we have achieved. They want to put other people, their people, in the school and to get rid of the old staff.

The predecessor is seen to leave because of "pressure from the government which "he couldn't accept". Rita speaks about "the politics going round in educational circles" and Kwaku observes that there was "political pressure" on the previous principal. Thus, socio-political events have, through affecting pre-succession events, also affected the succession because the principal successor inherits a situation where the staff fear the "total collapse of the school" and feel that maybe the Department wants them "to throw in the towel".

The principal successor provides an insight into his understanding of the socio-political environment at the time of his succession. He comments:

The whole of South African society, not just Mmabatho, is in a state of revolution. I came into a school that was fighting to retain the identity it had in a defunct regime. There had been a huge clash between the management of the school and the Department. It was not of my making. I found many staff, pupils and parents who wanted to retain the status quo. The school community refused to accept the changes and felt very threatened. Parents took their children out of the school because they felt that their children weren't going to get the same type of education they had received in the past. The school management of the past is seen by the present Department to have by-passed official channels. MHS was seen to have the ear of higher authorities which granted the school special favours. The new Department wants to change this. It is also under pressure from the South African Teacher's Democratic Union (SADTU) to change the situation at MHS. SADTU want to see changes in student numbers, the appointment of local teachers and the removal of special privileges for teachers at MHS.

The principal successor also refers to the "internal politics" that operate in the school, as opposed to the "external politics" of the Department. He observes:

Some people accused me of being weak when I wouldn't take a stand on certain issues like the "four-term year". As far as I was concerned, it could have been very, very politically incorrect for me to do so.

The new principal elaborates on how his previous experience helps in his decision-making. He comments:

I don't think many people would have coped with all the politics. I think the very special political experiences I've had as a conscientious objector have helped.

Pfeffer (1978) identifies the settings in which leaders work as one of the constraints which might impact on the leader's influence and performance in an organisation. These environmental factors include community norms and government policies. As Hart (1993) states, "not only must [the successor] respond to forces in the environment, [he] also finds that the alternatives available to [him] in making decisions are defined by powerful constituencies in the environment" (p.52). Richard sums up the role he feels the principal successor has to play in dealing with these constituencies. He observes:

I think [the principal successor] is trying to compromise the vision of the Department with the socio-political responsibility he feels, the specific needs of the school community and obviously the parents want the best for their children. So, it has been a bit of a trade-off.

Responding to how he feels these demands have impacted on the succession, Richard adds:

I was hoping that [the principal successor] would be

able to implement his whole educational philosophy. I think this was his expectation too, but I don't think he has been able to do much. I think his energies have been tied to administrative responsibilities, to the battles with the Department. In many ways, a lot of what [the principal successor] wants to implement in the school he just hasn't been able to do.

Martha adds:

[The principal successor] hasn't had much time to spend on the school. Problems with the Department have taken a hell of a lot of time. He hasn't had time to blossom as a principal with his academic work. He has so many ideas which he wishes to implement but he just doesn't get the time.

John feels:

It is rather sad that he has had to be so tied up in his office with problems with the department. They seem to be ongoing.

Thus, the socio-political changes in South Africa, and in particular, those in Mmabatho, and their consequences for the MHS community are seen to have a direct influence on the succession, influencing both the predecessor and the successor, albeit in different ways. The principal successor is seen to be locked in a battle with the Department which diminishes his time at the school. The new principal acknowledges this. He states:

The political demands of the job and the ongoing problems with the Department have meant that I have had to focus my energies elsewhere. It has retarded the implementation of educational programmes I wanted to do at the school.

Rather than using his educational skills, the principal successor has had to use his political skills to "manage and stabilise a crisis situation". As Hart (1993) suggests, "most people who work in schools assume that succession will occur and

that the primary influence flow is downward from the principal to the school" (p.40). However, insights provided by both staff and principal appear to support the organisational socialisation perspective of succession, that is, that succession is two-way process where the principal successor, as a leader both acts and is acted upon by the social context in which he finds himself. In this succession, this includes the socio-political context.

The influence of the teachers' organisation SADTU, and the pressure it is placing on the Education Department, brings another element to the succession process. SADTU is a union representing the interests and concerns of teachers on a national level. As such, it expresses the norms and beliefs of the people it represents. Demands by SADTU, through the Education Department, for MHS to change its basic operation, demonstrate the extent of the influence of other organisations on the sense-making involved in succession. Perhaps, as Ogawa (1991) suggests, schools, as a particular type of organisation:

based on the type of work they undertake and thus on the type of workforce they employ, differ in the extent to which groups outside the organisation influence the manner in which organisational members make sense of administrative succession (p.56).

This element of succession in schools goes beyond the scope of this paper and requires further research.

b. Culture - "There is a conflict of cultures"

Hart (1993) suggests that "The nature of existing cultures is viewed as influential in shaping the outcomes of leader succession" (p.31). Schein (1985) asserts that "any leader must develop an understanding of an existing cultural environment" (cited in Hart,1993:132). The term "culture" requires some explanation since, as Smircich (1983) observes, "there are a number of different ways in which the concept of culture has been used in organisation studies" (p.340).

Using the work of other researchers in the field, Smircich (1983) derives a composite definition of "culture". She states:

Culture is the social or normative glue that holds an organisation [group] together. It expresses the values or social ideals and the beliefs that the organisational [group] members have come to share. These values or patterns of belief are manifested by symbolic devices such as...specialised language (p.344).

Thus, one may speak of an "organisational" or "school culture" as well as "culture in the organisation". The school's mission statement "We are a non-racial, multicultural school" is an aspect of the school's culture. The expression "culture in organisations" or "culture in schools" refers to subgroups within the organisation who have their own cultural identity defined by such elements as shared norms, customs and specialised language or jargon. At MHS there are several groups identified by certain ethnic factors such as race and spoken

language. I use the term "ethno-cultural" when referring to these groups.

When Kwaku speaks of "a conflict of cultures" on the MHS staff, he is speaking about ethno-cultural conflict. During the initial interviews, several staff members indicated a perception of "racial conflict" amongst the staff. Using the perception of racism as a basis for discussion, I formed a focus-group to investigate this feeling, with particular reference to the role of the principal successor and its influence on the sense-making of the succession. Schein (1985) suggests that in order to establish a common version of the sense-making practices of staff members, one needs to call all those concerned together as a group. This group is identified by their commonly held views which are expressed through the language (jargon) they use. This jargon is accepted and understood by those who belong to the group. As Hart (1993) suggests, "Solidarity in the form of jargon then frames the real world, the interpretations and claims of all the members of the group about what is actually happening and what it means" (p.105). Smith (1995) also notes that "Members of the same societal culture who share common taken-for-granted beliefs, values, and standards of behaviour are likely to ascribe similar meanings to events" (p.223). The focus-group included all the black members of staff who were participants in the research since the terms "racial tension", "racism" and "cultural conflict", "the whites" or like-terms

were common to all their responses.

Kwaku identifies the problem. He states:

One of the students was killed in a car accident. There was an issue about whether lessons should be suspended so that staff and pupils could attend the memorial service. It brought about a clear division because [the principal successor] said that lessons would continue and staff and pupils could choose whether they wanted to go. There were staff members who felt that everything should have been suspended. It resulted in a very unpleasant situation.

Staff account for why they think this "split" or "division" amongst them occurred. Martha comments:

Basically we are a black majority culture and somehow that is not taken into consideration. There was one white person who went to that funeral. In the past, when [the founding principal] was here, we would all have been present at the memorial service. Everybody, staff and students should have gone. It was close by. When people were interviewed they were asked about their attitude to cultural things and on that basis they got the post. I was so disappointed on that day because so many staff showed that they were not concerned about the culture of the community they live in.

Whether a homogeneous black culture, that is, a "black majority culture" exists, is open to question. However, for the purposes of this research, I will use this term since it is the term used by the black staff.

Black staff feel that as a majority, their culture is being overlooked in decision-making. Martha recalls the interview of the principal successor and other staff members and holds them accountable to certain promises they made and expectations they created. She feels that the funeral incident indicates that

these promises were insincere. The credibility of those staff members who did not go to the funeral has been compromised, particularly as they form part of the MHS organisational culture which claims, as part of its mission statement, to acknowledge the customs and traditions of all cultural groups within the school. Commenting on the funeral incident, Tumi observes:

It is extremely important that [the principal successor] as the leader of the school, knows and understands the different cultures of the staff. I personally think that the problem about the funeral and no whites being there is a cultural problem, but other staff are seeing it as racist. [The principal successor] needs to call in all the different groups on the staff. [The Deputy, a Motswana] should be assisting [the principal successor] with the customs of the Batswanas.

Blalock (1986) states that "ignorance or unconscious arrogance can produce unintentional insult, competition, misunderstanding and conflict" (cited in Smith, 1995:22).

Kwaku supports this observation. He adds:

[The principal successor] apologised about the decision he had made concerning the funeral stating that because he comes from a different culture he has a different perception about attending funerals. However, the new, younger staff have used what is a difference in culture to make statements like "[The principal successor] is a racist". They say things like that without realising that cultural differences or cultural background lead to certain decisions which may be different.

Botho elaborates on why the incident about the funeral is of such importance, particularly in terms of the credibility with the black members of staff. She states:

A leader in this community cannot say "I don't attend funerals because it is not part of my culture". He is part of a majority culture and must make sure he

understands its customs and traditions. A funeral is a community event amongst the Batswana. Everyone goes to funerals. If a person is a leader in a community he must be at the funeral, even speak about the person who dies. It is compulsory to attend, and when the student from MHS died, all the staff and students should have attended the memorial service. If you can't go, then you must go and pay your respects to the family to show your concern. [The founding principal] always attended funerals. He went as far away as Bloemfontein and Soweto. A parent died in Vryburg. [The founding principal] went to the funeral. As a leader in the community [the principal successor] must do what the community expects in order to gain respect. [The principal successor's] failure to attend the funeral, even if he sent a representative, has caused a lot of bad feeling. In the past we even used to attend Indian funerals. Because [the principal successor] has not learned about our culture and there were no whites at the funeral, there are accusations of racism. Funerals are extremely important in our community. If you don't attend you are treated as an outcast. The [principal successor] made a bad mistake in the eyes of the community.

The principal successor is being held accountable not only within a cultural context in the school, but also as a leader within a larger cultural environment. His behaviour is compared with that of the founding principal. Botho and Tumi have been at the school since the time of the founding principal. Of interest in their response to the principal successor is the fact that the successor's behaviours are compared with those of the founding principal and not the predecessor. Schein (1983) observes that "the founder's values will be staunchly defended because they form the basis for the group's [school's] identity" (cited in Smith, 1995:97).

The principal successor, when asked to elaborate on the funeral incident, links his decisions to the value he places on individualism as opposed to group culture. Herein lies the conflict. He states:

The worth of the individual is one of my priorities. However, the sense of the black majority group comes up quite often. Like the funeral. That kind of thing actually clashes with my thought of a student as an individual with a choice about whether to attend the funeral or not.

According to Botho, cultural traditions dictate that there is no choice. The principal successor's decision, based on personal beliefs, contravenes the dictates of a cultural group to which he does not belong and this compromises his credibility with that group. Because, as is often the case in South Africa, a particular culture is linked with a particular race, the issues of race and culture become blurred, and there are accusations of "racism". Within a school which espouses "non-racism", the perception of "racist" is problematic.

Hart (1993) observes:

Validation lends the power of the group to the principal's goals. Validation emerges gradually and cumulatively. If a new principal hopes to affect this process, she should give careful attention to the complex array of people and cultivate the skills of cultural analysis (p.274).

The principal successor states on a number of occasions, in different ways that "The first priority on my list was to understand the staff culture". However, the criticism provided by black staff members indicate that they feel the principal successor needs to develop an awareness of not only "the staff

culture" but also the ethno-cultural aspects of various subgroups on the staff. As Wherein, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) note, there is:

An ideology that edits members' everyday experiences, shared standards of relevance as to prejudices, models of social etiquette and demeanour, certain customs and rituals...a sort of category regarding what is appropriate and what is not (cited in Hart, 1993:130).

Since the "ideology" of the black subgroup on the staff represents that of the greater community, the same censorship of the successor's behaviour within the school subgroup will also occur in the broader community and amongst the parents. In addition to his accountability as a leader in the broader community, the principal successor, as the leader of the school, is seen to set the example for the rest of the staff. The issue of white staff's attendance at the funeral is seen to be part of the racism amongst the white staff which the principal successor is seen to sanction by not attending himself.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

At the end of Chapter Two, I listed a number of generalisations provided by Miskel and Cosgrove (1985). These generalisations concern themes which have emerged in other research. I have used some of these themes, when relevant, within which to summarise a few aspects of my research.

SUMMARY

1. "The reasons for succession create different reactions to the succession process"

This succession demonstrates that the perceived reasons for the departure of the predecessor have a significant effect on the sense-making of the succession for both the staff and principal successor. Staff imply that the predecessor left for a number of reasons.

First, he left because of political pressure. The predecessor's problematic relationship with the Department sets the scenario for the principal successor's encounters with the selfsame Department. The principal successor constantly refers to having to focus on his relationship and that of the school with the

Department. He also refers to having to having to concentrate on politicking rather than educational issues. The predecessor is seen to have created this clash by his inability to adapt to the demands for change.

Second, staff indicate that their relationship with the predecessor was compromised by certain behaviours he exhibited. Status degradation occurs when staff indicate that the selection of the successor was influenced by a desire to avoid selecting a new principal who would behave in the same ways as the predecessor.

Third, staff indicate mixed reactions to the appointment of the principal successor. Some indicate that they would "rather have the devil I know than the devil I don't know". Others are pleased to have selected someone they feel has the same "vision" as themselves. The principal successor indicates that he was unaware of the situation with the Department and felt that he should have known so that he could have been better prepared.

2. "Those who select the successor and the manner in which this is done will impact on sense-making practices"

MHS staff are in a unique position in terms of most South African schools. They are permitted to be part of the selection of their principal successor. As other researchers such as

Firestone (1990) and Ogawa (1991) note, the selection of the principal successor is often done by senior Departmental officials. Involving the staff in the selection process is empowering as it includes members in decision-making usually left to those at management level. As such, the threat of hidden agendas that are often associated with Departmental appointments and which cause suspicion of the successor, are removed. It also, although not totally, removes the insecurity linked with "not knowing who you are getting". Some staff indicate resistance to the appointment and indicate a "wait-and-see" attitude because "promises are not always kept". An interesting element in this succession which must change the nature of the principal successor's relationship with the staff, is the fact that because the staff have a say in the selection, the potential successor must "sell" himself to those who interview him. This introduces a level of accountability to staff rather than just to those in senior positions. Martha refers to this accountability on a number of occasions.

3. "There will be different reasons for and reactions to the appointment of an insider or outsider"

The principal successor is an outsider, unlike the predecessor who was promoted from within the ranks. Although considerable research has focused on this element of succession, there are no references from the staff to the fact that the successor was an outsider. This may be due in part to the fact that, as the

principal successor states, "I make a concerted effort not to refer to my experiences in previous schools". The whole discourse about whether it is better to appoint an insider or outsider becomes rather involved, since much of the research findings are contradictory. The organisational socialisation perspective provides another approach to the whole debate. I will discuss this further on in this chapter.

4. "The norms of the organisation greatly influence the perceptions of the predecessor and successor"

Part of the resistance to the predecessor and the evaluation of the principal successor is linked to the organisational norms of MHS as expressed by the mission statement "We are a non-racial, democratic, multicultural school". This is revealed through perceptions of staff that ethno-cultural traditions are neglected, and the accusations of racism against both the predecessor and the principal successor. The predecessor is also heavily criticised for his perceived disregard of the school culture of democratic procedure. The principal successor is afforded support because of his adherence to this norm.

5. "Community and environmental factors will influence the succession process"

The socio-political events in Mmabatho and environs, and their impact on the school community, are marked in this succession.

Researchers such as Fauske and Ogawa (1987), Firestone (1990) and Hart (1993) speak about the low morale associated with some successions. However, low morale, as documented by these researchers is largely linked to the disenchantment staff members feel with the principal successor. In the succession at MHS, however, the low morale is seen to have been present prior to the arrival of the successor and is linked to the "external threat" posed by changes in the Education Department and its demands for changes in the status of the school.

6. "Change in leadership will give rise to a change in demographics"

MHS exhibits an increasing staff turnover. Perceptions on behalf of both staff and the new principal link this increase, in part, to the principal successor's "progressive stance" with "the common enemy".

Some staff wanted the principal successor to reject the demands being made by the Department to increase student numbers. Some teachers wanted MHS to become a private school in order to avoid what they felt was interference from the Education Department. The principal successor felt that it was politically unwise to challenge what was part of national drive to bring about a more equitable distribution of students in relation to teachers.

Part of the change in demographics is linked to the Department's

intolerance of expatriates and the bureaucratic obstacles used to terminate their services.

Organisational Socialisation: "What is going on?"

The generalisations I have used provide a useful means of summarising some elements and outcomes of the succession process, but they do very little to further the understanding of the succession process itself. Therefore, they are limited. The organisational socialisation perspective, on the other hand, encourages the researcher to ask "why?". Why, for instance, is the fact that the principal successor is an outsider not significant in this succession? Why do pre-succession events appear to be more disruptive than the succession itself?

Staff speak about the school being on a collision course with the Department since 1994. Perceptions of the staff and principal successor at the end of 1996 indicate that instead of the Department "picking on the school", MHS is "no longer the punchbag". In terms of research by Gephart (1978) the principal successor could have been held responsible for perceptions of deterioration in the school, such as "the deteriorating discipline". This accusation does occur in some cases, but the majority of staff attribute the changes to influences outside the school or the principal successor's management style which they feel allows problems which "have been inherited" from both

the founding principal and predecessor to emerge. The answers to "what is happening?" and "how, and why, is it happening?" appear to lie with what Hart (1993) terms "social validation".

"Social Validation"

The assumption that a new principal may arrive and use his or her formal authority to implement or impose change is challenged by social interaction and organisational socialisation theorists.

Firestone (1990) and Hart (1993) observe that the use of the formal authority invested in principals is insufficient in effective school leadership. Within the organisational socialisation framework, the new principal is seen as a newcomer to a social group (the school and its staff). Like any newcomer, the principal successor is required to gain acceptance through social validation from the group. As Hart (1993) suggests, social validation occurs only after repeated interactions where the staff learn to trust and respect the principal successor on the basis of outcomes valued by the group. Validation of the principal successor's right to act on behalf of the staff emerges from social affirmation. Blau (1964) states that within the context of the social relationship between leaders and subordinates "we cannot force others to give their approval, regardless of how much power we have over them" (cited in Hart, 1993:9).

Thus, rather than succession being a process where the principal successor and the outcomes of his or her performance become the focus of attention, the two-way interaction between the staff as a group and the principal successor gains importance. Social validation must occur within the group as a whole because, if it only occurs with a few individuals, others may see this as unacceptable influence on the part of a few staff. This may give rise to accusations of favouritism as is the case with the staff perception that both the founding principal and the predecessor had "favourites". The perception that there is the creation of a "white triumvirate" is problematic for the validation of the principal successor.

Validation may also occur if the principal successor takes the time to familiarise himself with the beliefs that represent the common reality of the staff. While the principal successor speaks of what he regards as a "conservative element on the staff" who are "threatened by the changes which are occurring", he demonstrates an acceptance of these feelings by "trying to secure the positions of staff and ensure that contracts are honoured". He also speaks about putting "morale as a priority" and "trying to get the staff to trust that I am working in their interests". In doing this, the principal successor, while feeling differently about Departmental demands, accepts how the staff are feeling and tries to resolve the situation with the Department so that, the successor states, "the staff can work

without worrying about their salaries or their work permits".

The principal successor states that he established what was important to staff by interviewing them individually when he first arrived at the school. This enabled him "to prioritise, to focus". Hart (1993) observes that validation occurs when a principal successor takes the time to "work towards understanding the norms, beliefs and assumptions that are essential components of the new group's sense of professional and social worth and the essence of good practice and decent behaviour in the school which must not be violated" (p.276). In dealing successfully with the socio-political pressures to the point where "The Department now leave us alone", the principal successor is seen as skilled, in contrast to the predecessor who "couldn't cope". Hart (1993) asserts that "the more skilled and knowledgeable the principal, the more prepared she will be to adjust to a new school and move through the stages of leader succession and organisational socialisation that will bring her to a position of influence in the school" (p.278). Staff indicate that they see the principal successor as a "man of his word", "a committed democrat", who "develops a procedure and sticks to it". Others speak about "his consistency" and "strength of character", where "there are shortcomings but they are due to human error". In this way the principal successor achieves social affirmation and is accepted by the group, or if one likes, becomes an "insider". Thus, the process of

organisational socialisation would appear to resolve the debate about insider versus outsider. It demonstrates that without social validation, even an insider, as was the case of the predecessor, will be treated as an outsider if he or she violates group norms.

This is also clearly indicated in the incident about the funeral. In this instance, the principal successor is seen to violate the norms of the ethno-cultural subgroup. However, these norms may not be totally cultural in origin. Like Atkinson (1984), Ogbu (1986) comments that "historically there have been many events in black-white relationships that have left blacks with the feeling that whites and the institutions they control, cannot be trusted" (p.38). Thus, the history of certain groups may be as important as their cultural identity.

The feelings about the development of a controlling group called "the white triumvirate", together with the funeral incident, may appear very threatening to a group of black staff who have been historically and culturally marginalised and overlooked during the era of apartheid in South Africa. The apparent lack of awareness and lack of sensitivity of the principal successor to these aspects of the people he works with, compromises the trust the principal successor has built in other areas. The reaction of this ethno-cultural group to the decision taken about the funeral also displays the limitations placed on the

ability of the principal successor to impose his own values, in this instance, that of individualism.

To conclude, a number of factors place constraints on the way in which the principal successor performs. First, socio-political upheaval and all its ramifications for the school community and hence, the succession. Second, the staff hold the principal successor accountable for certain promises made and expectations created during the interview process. Social validation is achieved if these expectations are met. If, however, the principal successor contravenes any of the promises he makes or the norms of any group, credibility wanes and hard won trust is jeopardised. While staff indicate making allowances for human error, an issue as sensitive as perceived racism is not so easily laid aside. Thus, while the principal successor traditionally represents the ultimate decision maker in the school setting, this succession demonstrates the ability of the staff to hold the principal successor accountable and show disapproval. The principal successor himself acknowledges the two-way influence when he states, "I have worked hard to win the confidence of the staff. It has been a slow process. I feel more accepted". As Blau (1964) observes, "The pressure to follow suggestions and orders does not come from the superior who gives them but from the collectivity of subordinates" (cited in Hart, 1993:14).

Succession would therefore appear to be more disruptive in situations where the principal successor transgresses organisational norms and assumes that he or she can implement or impose norms and values that do not have the sanction of the staff. It is only once the principal's actions have demonstrated valued outcomes that social affirmation and validation occur. Then, as an "insider", the principal successor is afforded the support to bring about change. However, if at any time the principal successor fails to observe the group norms which the group regards as non-negotiable, the group may withdraw its support while the principal successor is given time to make amends. Social validation, once given, is not unconditional. The successor has to continue to negotiate and maintain a place in the society in which he or she leads. It would appear that the schools in which principal successors continue to be socially integrated, whether consciously or not, are the schools that experience less disruptive successions.

Suggested implications

1. The succession at MHS represents a unique setting. The staff were involved with the selection of the successor. The staff are multicultural. The succession took place during a time when a succession in government brought about extensive socio-political change with implications for the school and thus, for the principal successor. Observations

and subsequent analysis, in the context of socio-political change, need to be substantiated by research in similar situations in South Africa and elsewhere. Spindler (1982) suggests, "An in-depth study that gives accurate knowledge of one setting not markedly dissimilar from other relevant settings is likely to be generalisable in substantial degree to these other settings" (cited in Smith, 1995:304).

2. Research by Firestone (1990), Ogawa (1991) and Hart (1993) and my own research show that there is a need for potential principal successors to familiarise themselves with pre-succession events. The principal successor felt that there "Should have been a hand-over period" prior to assuming the post of principal. He feels that this would have facilitated his knowledge of a situation which had a significant influence on his succession.
3. Hart (1993) suggests that potential principal successors should be educated about the process of succession prior to the event. As Smith (1995) notes, very few principals in South Africa receive any training in management skills such as "Conflict" and "Crisis management" and "Negotiation skills". Very few have any knowledge of the elements that are central to succession, or the explanatory contribution of interaction theory, or social psychology, or anthropology. Principal successors need to acquire knowledge in these areas. Where new principals are already "installed", they could attend exploratory workshops where

they can reflect on their own experiences and those of other principal successors. Even principals with experience of previous successions could benefit, since each succession is a unique experience in terms of the organisational culture that principal successors encounter. There will be areas that overlap, but there will be areas which are unknown and, therefore, unforseen.

4. In the socio-political environment in South Africa, where "democracy" is the buzz-word, leaders will increasingly encounter resistance to leadership based on formal authority. They have to be willing to engage in the socialisation process if they wish to be effective.
5. Staff recommend that the principal successor should call the ethno-cultural groups that are represented on the staff together in order that they might inform the principal successor about their traditions, customs and expectations in this regard. Staff recommend that the principal successor should have a "cultural advisor". Staff observations suggest that if the principal successor chooses to ignore the norms of "black majority culture", accusations of racism, whether real or imagined, will make the management of multicultural settings increasingly problematic. The principal successor indicated that, in response to the funeral incident, he had asked for staff to form a committee which would "look at a bereavement policy". As school settings become more integrated in terms

of their staff populations, this issue will gain increasing importance in managing the succession process effectively.

6. The role and influence of outside organisations such as SADTU should not be ignored.

Future Research

I have referred extensively to the organisational socialisation perspective as outlined by Hart (1993). Several suggestions by researchers such as Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) prove useful in establishing pre-succession and succession events. Traditional researchers such as Gouldner (1954), Grusky (1961;1963), Gamson and Scotch (1964) focus on the outcomes of the succession process in relation to organisational performance, and hence, on the successor who they see as central to the whole process. The organisational socialisation framework adds another dimension to research on succession since it views succession as a two-way process where the successor and staff are granted equal status in influencing succession outcomes.

Therefore, future researchers could investigate a number of elements of the succession process which emerge when viewed as a socialisation process.

1. The role of self-esteem and how it influences the way in which the principal successor interacts with staff.
2. The role of "organisational culture", but particularly, "culture in organisations" in the succession process

appears to be largely overlooked.

3. There are references to the role that the community and environs might play in the succession process but these generally refer to the impact of community norms on the succession process. Further research could be conducted in the area of socio-political influences in leadership succession.
4. The use of language (jargon) in the construction of "definitions of reality" in multicultural settings might be of interest to those who study succession, since so much of the interaction which takes place between staff and the principal successor is determined by communication, or the lack of it.
5. In my succession research, I report the perceptions of the staff and principal after the principal successor has been in office for eighteen months. At what point does the succession end? Feldman (1976) and Wanous (1980) suggest that the new principal reaches a point where he or she settles in and there are "feelings of mutual acceptance" (cited in Hart, 1993:31). This succession appears to support the observations of Fulk and Cummings (1984) and Nicholson and West (1988) who suggest that "stabilisation never occurs" (cited in Hart, 1993:29), and the principal successor has to engage in ongoing consultation and negotiation with staff and students, where they "continually project into the future, combining their

appraisal and assessment of current work performance with preparation for future transitions" (cited in Hart, 1993:30).

I would suggest that those who research the succession process, have more than a working knowledge of various disciplines such as sociology, social psychology and anthropology. I found aspects of these disciplines critical to my whole understanding of the ways in which the staff and principal successor were interacting.

Conclusions

It would appear that the principal successor inherits a situation in which certain dynamics of interaction exist between the staff as a social group, and the greater school and community environments. Whether the principal successor's succession is disruptive to the organisation or not would appear to depend on his or her willingness to become part of this group and the broader environment through various socialisation processes.

In this succession the principal successor encounters a situation where outside forces have precipitated a crisis of identity for both the staff and school. By dealing with the crisis and stabilising the influence of the disruptive elements from outside the school, to the point where the staff and the

principal successor no longer feel that the school is focus of Departmental attention, the principal successor is seen to have prevented the feared "collapse". In doing this he achieves valued outcomes and is afforded social affirmation. The principal successor states, "I feel more accepted". This perception is supported by the staff. The disruption is clearly linked by the staff to socio-political events and problems that have either been inherited (discipline) or acquired (new teachers).

The succession is generally perceived in a positive light. However, the issues linked to ethno-cultural transgressions are potentially very disruptive and demonstrate the need for leaders to familiarise themselves with the organisational culture, including its sub-cultures.

Traditional researchers, such as Gouldner (1954) and Grusky (1961;1963), link successful successions to the appointment of insiders in preference to outsiders. It would appear that social validation of the successor is more important in the success of the successor than whether he or she is an outsider or not. Despite all the support from staff for his work "in their interests" with the Department, this support is rapidly withdrawn when he is seen to transgress the norms of the majority culture. Should the principal successor's interactions continue to compromise his inclusion in the dominant ethno-

cultural group, the implication is that his support will diminish, as did the support of the predecessor.

In conducting this research I found the organisational socialisation perspective the most useful within which to conduct my analysis. My research could be summed up in a few simple sentences if the purpose had been to document the outcomes of this succession since my observations support many of the outcomes observed by other researchers such as Grusky (1961;1963), Helmich and Brown (1972), Gephart (1978), Miskel and Cosgrove, and Fauske and Ogawa (1987). However, the organisational socialisation framework, which draws on social interaction theory, symbolic interactionism, social psychology and anthropology permits the researcher to develop an understanding of the nature of succession, and "how" the principal successor interacts with the staff in his newfound role. Also, within this perspective, where succession is seen as a two-way process, it is essential to record the sense-making of both the staff and principal successor. This enables the researcher to establish how staff culture impacts on the principal successor's sense-making of his own succession and visa versa. Hart (1993) sums up the need to approach the process of succession as a socialisation process. She states:

The mix of persons and group is unique for each succession. This uniqueness poses dilemmas for those who study succession [as well as those who experience it]. If we fail to examine it only from the perspective of the principal, we fail to explain the history of the event, or the school, and are unable to

account for the conduct of the people involved. But if we go too far in focusing on outcomes and ignore the dynamic mix of people, processes and contexts that shape succession, and the schools and districts in which succession occurs, we lose track of the qualities and power of the individual. We fail to tap the uniqueness and creativity of the single person that stimulates so much of our interest in leadership in the first place (p.8).

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Susan Dowding from the Education Department at Rhodes University, Grahamstown. I hope to gain some understanding of staff experiences with the new principal. The account will contribute to my Masters in Education mini-thesis. You were selected as a possible participant of this study because you are a member of the Mmabatho High School staff.

If you decide to participate, I will ask you to complete a biographical questionnaire. I will use this questionnaire to select teachers to participate in two forty minute interviews over two months. I will also ask you to participate in one, one hour group interview with fellow teachers. I appreciate the demands this will place on your time, and will arrange interview times to fit in with your schedules and preference. I propose to audiotape all interviews.

Any information that is obtained that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your identity will be kept confidential by the use of pseudonyms. I intend to use Mmabatho High School's name. Tapes will be transcribed by a typist of integrity. All information will remain in my possession.

Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. NAME:

2. PLACE OF BIRTH :

3. NATIONALITY:

4. HOME LANGUAGE:

5. QUALIFICATIONS:

6. TEACHING EXPERIENCE (in years)

7. YEARS AT MHS:.....

8. WHO WAS PRINCIPAL WHEN YOU STARTED AT MHS?

(Additional questions only to be answered by the principal)

9. Have you ever been a principal before?.....

10.Where have you worked?.....

11.What sort of responsibilities have you had in previous positions?.....
.....



Mmabatho High School
Office of the Principal

Private Bag 28
Mmabatho 2706
North West
Province
Tel 0140 21006
Fax 0140 841381

21 October 1995

Dear Suc,

You are hereby granted permission to conduct research at Mmabatho High School. You may interview any staff who so volunteer and you may use any other resources and materials that could be of value to your research. I understand and acknowledge that this research will be used for your Master's Degree.

Good Luck! Could we please have a copy when your thesis is complete?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris de Villicrs', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Chris de Villicrs
(Principal)

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