

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

LEARNER AND SCHOOL: THE INTERPLAY OF SCHOOL CHOICE. A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF TWO WESTERN CAPE SCHOOLS. WHAT IS THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN LEARNER CHOICE AND SCHOOL SELECTION OF LEARNERS?

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Mphil SPECIALISING IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION, PLANNING AND SOCIAL POLICY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the interplay between learner choice and the school selection of learners. This interplay has two points of departure. The one is whether the logic of school choice is different depending on the choice-maker (parent or learner). The other is the process of school selection processes at each school, and how this impacts on, or constrains the choice of the choice-maker.

The study is based on two comparative micro- case studies at two high schools – one a former HOR, and the other a former HOA school – in the Western Cape. Data was collected at the two schools by means of interviews with selected staff and questionnaires were issued to 410 grade eight learners at each school.

The conceptual framework, incorporating the literature review, has positioned this study on two levels. Firstly, through setting the scene for the international school choice debate, with a specific focus on what parents and learners want from the school of their choice. And secondly, in establishing the trends amongst schools in terms of selection processes. Linked to both these positions is whether school choice policies lead to the empowerment of the choice-maker.

The data analysis demonstrates that school choice in South Africa is not a one-dimensional transaction between the choice-maker and the school. On the one hand, each choice-maker wants different things from each school. On the other hand, the process of school selection has two dimensions: one official and public, the other unofficial and private.

In terms of school choice policy, the findings suggest that learner choice is only fulfilled if the school's profile of an ideal learner matches that of the learner. Of more serious concern, is the finding that both schools are employing selection criteria to keep a certain group of learners at bay. The findings of this study suggest that school choice leads to inequity of access.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

DET *Department of Education and Training*

HOA *House of Assembly*

HOR *House of Representatives*

WCED *Western Cape Education Department*

WPCA *Western Province Cricket Association*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY

The widespread debate in the literature about the marketisation of education and about school choice policies has not involved the current school choice trends in South Africa. The concept of education as an object of consumption has only recently gained momentum in South Africa.

School choice in South Africa is a newly acquired right. It has resulted in a domino effect of migration amongst schools. On a superficial level, there are those learners who are leaving the public schooling sector for the private schooling sector. There are those who are leaving the former HOR schools for the former HOA schools, and there are those learners who are leaving the former DET schools for the former HOR schools. This migratory process, however, does not apply to all learners. Being in a position to migrate between schools means having mobility and the financial means to do so.

The interplay between learner choice and school selection of learners is of interest to me, since it explores the issue of equity of access, and ultimately the equity implications of school choice. The motivation of this study relates to the changes and shifts which learners and schools alike are experiencing in the climate of post-apartheid open schools. Underlying the physical shift from one school to another lies the action of learner choice and the possible reaction of school selection. A different logic of choice informs each learner or parent in his or her school choice. At the same time schools are not employing a standard set of selection criteria.

The interest of this study lies in the examination of the interplay between learner choice and school selection. This interplay is partly determined by the profile of the learner, and partly determined by the profile of the school. This study is not only of value in terms of understanding the inter-relationship between learner choice and school selection of learners, but it is especially valuable in terms of understanding the equity of school choice policies.

For the purposes of this study the two terms, *choice* and *selection* will be used exclusively in terms of *learner choice of schools* and *school selection of learners*. The logic of school choice in interplay with the logic of learner selection in South Africa must be understood in the context of broader school choice debates. Fundamentally there are two main arguments relating to school choice. Proponents of school choice believe that an education system organised around choice will promote educational performance by enhancing competition amongst schools (see Bowe et al, 1994; Cookson, 1992; Edwards, Westoby, 1989 and Whitty, 1992). On the other hand, opponents of school choice claim that it reinforces divisions and inequalities (see Ball et al, 1996; Fataar, 1997; Smith and Meier, 1995; and Vally, 1996).

Prior to 1990 school choice decisions within the South African milieu primarily involved a choice between a private and public schooling system. The 'opening of all school doors to all learners' has altered the way in which school choice decisions are being made. Fataar (1997) argues that the new system of school choice is broadly delineated in terms of a privileged schooling sector (comprising private as well as high-fee public schools) serving a minority, with an under-resourced, largely poor quality, public system serving the majority. This means that while the opportunity of school choice is presented to all, not every learner will enjoy the opportunity of the school s/he chooses.

The central concern of this study involves **the interplay between learner choice and school selection of learners**. Secondary to this primary focus are a series of sub-questions, which will also be addressed in this study. These sub-questions are:

1. On what basis are choices being made by learners and parents?
 - (b) What do the choice-makers want from the school?
 - (b) What are the differences in the basis of choice at each school ?
2. How does school selection operate?
 - (c) How do these two schools compare in terms of their ability to select learners?
 - (d) How does this impact on, or constrain the choice of learners and their parents?
3. Who is entering each school?

The heart of this study is best phrased in the following question: How does the logic of school choice, in interplay with the logic of learner selection, impact on equity of access?

approach; (b) the selection of schools for the case study; (c) the interviews; (d) the questionnaires; (e) and the validity and reliability of this study.

- Chapter four is the data analysis section, consisting of nine areas of examination, stemming primarily from data as provided in the questionnaire. The areas of examination involve (a) information about the two schools; (b) response and choice to the questionnaires; (c) the school and the choice-maker; (d) reasons for school choice, as provided by the questionnaire; (e) reasons for school choice, as provided by the choice-maker; (f) the selection process; (g) the racial profile of each school; (h) the issue of class in school choice; and (i) area and school choice.
- Chapter five consists of the data discussion, which utilises the conceptual framework developed in chapter two to draw conclusions from the data. This chapter is shaped by a series of concluding findings, based on evidence from the data analysis. It is divided into five sub-sections, discussing issues relating to school profiles and the selection processes employed at each school.
- Chapter six deals with the implications and conclusions of this study. It also pays particular attention to what the findings of this study means in terms of school choice policy in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. CONTEXT FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

'Schools are a product of choice. They embody, in their function, organisation and content; judgments regarding the nature and purpose of education; assertions about human intelligence, knowledge, and being as well as the suppositions regarding the respective rights and responsibilities of the individual and the state. Where such judgments have not been made, either explicitly or tacitly, there are no schools.'

(Kane, 1992:47)

When F.W. de Klerk's February 1990 speech ended South Africa's isolation, it also signalled a fuller incorporation into an increasingly globalised market economy. While political changes were happening inside the country, there was a spectrum of changes happening outside the country that had to be addressed if South Africa was to become a member of the global village. One of the mechanisms through which these changes were to be bridged and addressed is education, and by implication, schools. In keeping with global trends set by developed countries, South Africa is increasingly becoming part of a broader move towards school choice policies.

Why do governments or bureaucracies opt for school choice policies? As Raywid (1992) explains, there are different choice orientations: education-driven, economics-driven, policy-driven, and governance-oriented. These orientations, she claims, reflect central tendencies rather than sharp differences and are mutually exclusive. Raywid (1992) explains that the education-driven case argues, that choice among schools is desirable in that it makes education work better and to great benefit and satisfaction of the participants. The economics-driven approach to choice urges various forms of privatisation in the interests of forcing public schools to compete with private schools; it promotes competition, consumer satisfaction, and markets that will drive bad schools out of business.

According to policy-driven choice initiatives, says Raywid (1992), the quality of education offered in a particular school or district must not vary from that of other

schools within the state as a consequence of differences in wealth. On the other hand, governance-driven choice, explains Raywid (1992), rests in the desire to remove education from the arena of collective decision and return its control to individuals.

Another argument for the global trend of school choice policies is that presented by the New Right. According to the New Right, argue Brown and Lauder (1996), the route to national salvation in the context of global knowledge wars is through the survival of the fittest, based on an extension of parental choice in a market of competing schools, colleges and universities (see Ball, 1993). They believe that choice of school is seen to be sufficient to raise the standards for all, because if schools cannot sell enough desk space to be economically viable, they risk going out of business. From an economic perspective, Brown and Lauder (1996) continue, the economic needs of the nation will be met through the market, because when people have to pay for education they are more likely to make investment decisions which will realise an economic return.

Critics of the marketisation of education argue that the introduction of choice and competition provides a mechanism by which the middle classes can more securely gain an advantage in the competition for credentials. The reason for this, explain Brown and Lauder (1996), is that not all social groups come to an educational market as equals; it is the middle classes in particular which are more likely to have the cultural capital to make educational choices which best advantage their children (see Brown, 1990, Brown & Lauder, 1992). To Brown and Lauder, the introduction of parental choice and competition between schools will amount to a covert system of educational selection according to social class as middle class children exit schools with significant numbers of working class children. The consequence, they state, will be that the school system will become polarized in terms of social class and ethnic segregation and in terms of resources.

Dehli (1996) argues that general and universal terms such as 'parents' and 'choice' are attached with quite different and contested meanings over times and across geo-political space. By implication, the experience of school choice by parents or learners would not only vary across geo-political space, but also from one learner or parent to the next. The interplay, therefore between learner choice and school selection of learners

varies as much according to the country and the school as it does according to the learner or parent.

The next sub-section will provide a closer examination of the basis on which parents and learners choose a particular school.

2.2. CRITERIA FOR PARENTAL CHOICE

There are those who view parental choice of schools as an empowering action, while there are those who do not. Levin and Riffel (1997) explain that advocates of parental choice of schools believe that choice will result in schools improving the quality of education they provide in their attempt to maintain or increase enrolment. According to these advocates, schools will improve if the external conditions around them are changed.

There have been a range of interpretations of the implications of potential choice. Vally (1996) argues that, *'Parental choice reforms with its ostensible concern for academic excellence, transfers the power to assign children to particular schools away from local authorities, to parents and individual schools'* (1996:1).

Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz (1996) believe that parental choice is not susceptible to one definitive analysis, but rather that there are recurring themes and patterns like the multifaceted relationship between social class and choice. They argue that, *'Almost without exception the disconnected choosers are working class; the privileged / skilled choosers are almost exclusively professional, middle class (public professionals and human science occupations are over-represented within this group); but the semi-skilled choosers tend to be from a variety of class backgrounds'* (1996:92).

Westoby (1989) states that several key provisions can be seen as linked to parental choices, taking effect mainly through competition between schools. At the most immediate level is the competition for pupils. He explains that there are some broad similarities between the features of schools which parents cite as desirable: practical features such as geographical convenience, traditional academic qualities, reputation of the school and good discipline, which are generally viewed as more important for secondary schools.

According to Westoby (1989), the imminence of more open enrolment has heightened interest in how schools may project an attractive 'image'. However, he says, schools may also be expected to respond to shifts in their patterns of enrolment.

As far as the departure from public to private schools is concerned, Dougherty and Sostre (1992) point out that one of the most surprising features of the current choice movement is that many Black parents in the United States have joined White parents in deserting the public schools. Black advocates of school choice, they explain, know how important effective schooling is to black children's futures, but they have become pessimistic about the prospects for reforming the public schools using conventional devices.

In continuing with his examination of why certain schools are chosen, and others not, Westoby (1989) continues that although it is notoriously difficult to make an assessment of a school from external examination alone, this and word-of-mouth is the maximum that most parents have to go on. It is far from certain, he argues, that parents who are active and reflective in choice will opt for schools with the highest test scores, or even the highest 'educational value'. He believes that one important reason for this lies in the character of 'peer group' effects. Statistical studies of the educational achievements of individual pupils, he argues, show substantial, independent effects of various distinct factors, including the character of the school, the individual pupil's own social background and initial educational level, as well as the social and educational characteristics of the 'peer group' with whom the individual child is educated.

Westoby (1989) holds the viewpoint that parents believe that their child will achieve more in so far as she or he is in the company of more able schoolmates, and will achieve less in so far as her class includes more children with behavioural problems or poor attentiveness.

In an American study by Sobel and Beck (1980), for instance, state Wells and Crain (1992), it was found that Black parents were more likely to rate their children's school favourably on factors such as teaching methods, discipline, reputation of pupils, quality of education and curriculum, if they thought it was a predominantly White school. This was true even for Black parents whose children were actually enrolled in all-Black schools. In a similar fashion, explain Wells and Crain (1992), Black parents whose children were really attending predominantly White schools but

who thought that their children were in all-Black schools were much more likely to rate the school poorly.

Wells and Crain (1992) explain how parental views are influenced or constrained by what is on offer. 'Good' schools, they state, are those schools that enroll students who are quiet in the hallways, and who see a direct link between a high school diploma and their futures, and students who value a traditional Eurocentric curriculum. On the other hand, she argues, 'bad' schools are those enrolling students who carry weapons, have little hope of going to college or getting a high paying job, and know more about the life of Malcolm X and the origins of rap music than the history of western civilisation. According to Wells and Crain, there is considerable evidence that educational choices based more on school-status factors than on school-quality factors have, for years, contributed to the extremely separate and unequal educational opportunities for poor and minority students. Whether school- status can be separated from school-quality, however, is another issue.

Given a choice between a well-funded school with a diverse curriculum in a safe suburb and a school consisting of a crumbling building in a crime-ridden inner city, Smith and Meier (1995) argue, few would take the latter over the former. In a public choice system, they explain, the well-funded school would benefit financially by providing the better educational product attracting more students. Expecting the entire clientele of the school with a crumbling building, however, to gravitate towards the suburbs is unrealistic, state Smith and Meier (1995). Those left behind, they continue, will be trapped in inferior institutions providing inferior education. Smith and Meier (1995) claim that virtually every piece of available evidence indicates that what parents and learners demand from schools goes far beyond academic excellence – geographical proximity and the convenience it represents seem to be the primary demand (Elmore, 1990).

In contrast to Smith and Meier (1995), Goldring (1997), in a study conducted in Israel, found different evidence regarding parental choice of schools. According to her study, parents were asked to identify the issues that were important to them in selecting a school. She claims that the most prevalent reasons reported from all parents are the academic reputation of the school (72%), and teaching style (64,7%), and availability of

transportation (50,7%). These findings are almost in direct contrast to that as claimed by Smith and Meier. Higher income parents, Goldring (1997) argues, are significantly more likely to choose schools because of the academic reputation of the school. On the same basis, she contends, higher income parents are more likely to choose because of the school's values and beliefs. In contrast, continues Goldring (1997), lower income parents are significantly more likely to choose on the basis of the availability of special services, individual help and transportation. Hence criteria for school choice is derived from the financial status, and by implication, the class, of the parents.

Wells and Crain (1992) are in agreement with the findings of Goldring. They argue that because educational attainment is a crucial element for status and economic maintenance and achievement, there is great demand for high-status education credentials. Hence, they explain, high-status parents will use whatever means available to enroll their children in the highest status schools. This investment in high-status education will eventually lead to high-status employment.

This study is centred on the interplay between learner choice and the school selection of learners. Having examined the literature regarding parent and learner choice of schools, the next section will review the literature relating to the process of school selection as employed by different schools. Particular attention will be paid to how the operation of school selection processes impacts on or constrains the choice of learners or parents.

2.3. THE PROCESS OF SCHOOL SELECTION

Now that we have looked at the criteria governing parental choice of schools, we need to understand how schools respond to choice via their selection processes. Just as different choice-makers (parents or learners) choose schools differently, so, too, schools are differentially affected and not all have equal power to select. Within the South African context, the focus is on the basis of the school's power to select and exclude, for instance, according to fees and feeder area, and to attract, based on curriculum and learner composition.

White (1988) states that the competition which exists between learners to get into one school stems from the power which a school has over the learner. According to Glatter, Woods and Bagley (1997), in studies by Fitz et al (1993) and Whitty et al (1993), there is some evidence, that in the opinion of parents and learners, schools gain in terms of their image if they have some kind of appealing, defining feature that sets them apart from others, almost regardless of the precise nature or quality of the difference. In the opinion of Glatter et al (1997), there are differences between schools in terms of the reasons parents are drawn to see them as their first choice. Therefore, states Glatter et al (1997), schools with a focus on or leaning towards the academic appear to be catering for parents who particularly emphasise this. In other words, parental views are influenced or constrained by what is actually on offer.

The operation of school selection in South Africa has an even more complicated dimension. Firstly, state schools in South Africa, by definition, explains Fataar (1997), are able to set their own fees. Secondly, the school is also able to determine the composition of its learner body by defining the school's feeder area. To Nkomo, Mkwanazi-Twala and Carrim (1995), the 'opening' of schools in South Africa attempted to desegregate schools but not to deracialise them. This, they argue, is evident in three ways: on the macrostructural level; through admission policies and levels; and by how these problems have been conceptualised. Furthermore, Nkomo et al (1995) believe that, *'Two mechanisms of control simultaneously reinforce each other. Firstly, is a shift from racial criteria for admissions to a social class emphasis. Secondly, these reforms maintain the particular religious and cultural ethos of the school'* (1995:276).

The next sub-section takes into consideration what has been discussed previously in this chapter. In so doing, it provides an analysis of the consequences and effects of school choice, as well as the operation of school selection processes. In parents or learners being able to choose schools, and in schools being able to select its learners, there are those learners who will not get into the schools they have chosen. This is just one on the consequences of the interplay between learner choice and the school selection of learners.

2.4. CONSEQUENCES AND EFFECTS OF SCHOOL CHOICE

What are the effects of school choice in terms of equity and efficiency? Does school choice empower parents differentially?

Vincent (1996) holds the viewpoint that the logic of open enrolment itself suggests that it will eventually lead to less, not more, choice as some schools close due to waxing and waning of public approval. Ball et al (1996) are of the opinion that choice is thoroughly social, and is a process powerfully informed by the complex lives families lead and in short, their position within a social network. Two conclusions are drawn by Bowe et al (1996). Firstly, choice is very directly and powerfully related to social-class differences. Secondly, choice emerges as a major new factor in maintaining and indeed reinforcing social class divisions and inequalities.

Proponents of school choice, states Goldring (1997), argue that public schools of choice attract learners of different racial and socio-economic backgrounds with similar educational interests so as to create racially heterogeneous schools. She continues that it is believed by advocates of school choice that schools of choice provide unique sets of learning opportunities, and encourage innovation. To Goldring (1997), critics of choice programmes charge that school choice can exacerbate existing class or socio-economic differences, especially when they are academically selective and few in number.

With regard to whether or not school choice empowers parents differentially, Vincent (1996) is of the opinion that in theory, parental participation in their children's education could be empowering for parents, since it allows them some measure of control over a welfare state institution. According to Vincent (1996), parental choice policies overlook the ways in which individuals differ markedly in their ownership of social and economic resources, differences which profoundly affect their ability to compete in the educational market place. She continues that even those parents who are in a position to evaluate fully all available choices will be constrained on several levels by those supposed choices.

According to Wells and Crain (1992), school choice policy will only force schools to improve if parents prefer 'school quality' in terms of the actual instruction going on in the classroom – over other school characteristics, such as location, extra-curricular activities, or the status of the students who attend. In American society,

they continue, 'school quality' is often a misnomer for 'student quality', which is measured by heavily biased principles. Wells and Crain (1992) state, "*In fact the true delineation between desirable and undesirable schools is frequently drawn along racial and social class lines*" (1992:67). She says that the whiter and wealthier a school, the better. This means that the quality of a school is too often defined by the colour and less distinctively, the class of the students who attend rather than by any objective measure of the teaching and learning that goes on there.

As can be seen from the above discussion, there are those who believe that school choice policies provide unique educational opportunities, that it promotes educational performance by enhancing competition amongst schools, and will eventually lead to the creation of racially heterogeneous schools. On the other hand, critics of school choice policies see it as a mechanism which will have the effect of reinforcing divisions and inequalities, and as such does not lead to the empowerment of all parents, but simply maintains and safeguards the status quo.

This chapter has also highlighted the criteria on which school choices are made. While a range of different criteria informed different choice-makers, the one factor, which dominated this part of the discussion is that of the discrepancy involving higher-income and lower-income parents. While high-income parents choose schools on the basis of the academic reputation of the schools, lower-income parents choose schools because of the availability of special services, such as transport. What emerges here are primarily two types of choice-makers: (a) the higher-income – high/middle class, Bowe et al's (1996) skilled, professional choosers, (b) and the lower-income – working class, Bowe et al's (1996) semi-skilled and disconnected choosers.

In light of the fact that school choice policy is only beginning to take shape in the discourse of South African education, the conceptual framework has been valuable in terms of setting the scene and tone of school choice abroad. From a broad perspective the literature incorporated in this conceptual framework has provided the study with an idea of the debates involved in school choice policies.

In terms of the boundaries of this study, the following conceptual framework emerges. On the one hand, the literature review has introduced the debates involved in school choice. These debates are especially valuable in understanding the basis on which school choices are made by learners and parents. On the other hand, this study needs to understand the issues arising from the literature as regards: (a) the basis or

criteria of choice; (b) the differences in criteria between schools; (c) the impact of school choice on school selection processes; (d) the constraints of school selection processes on school choice; (e) the composition of learner bodies; and finally (f) the effects in terms of equity of access.

The next chapter will consist of the methodology employed in gaining data in this case study. It will explain the characteristics of a case study. The chapter will also provide outlines of the stages of the data collection methods, as well as a section dealing with the validity and reliability of this study.

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CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter is a description of the framework and guidelines, which have served to structure the collection of data in this research report.

The research strategy employed in this study is that of a case study. There are four stages to this research process. The first entails the selection of two schools in the Western Cape, which serve as the basis for the two in-depth micro-case studies. The second stage of research involves data collection through semi-structured interviews with the headmaster, as well as any teachers involved in the enrolment process of learners.

The third stage entails the questionnaire, which was issued to each grade eight learner at each school. The last stage of this research involves observation and document analysis. The rest of this chapter will give a more specific explanation of each of the stages mentioned above.

3.1. CASE STUDY APPROACH

Leedy describes the case study as, '*A type of descriptive research in which data are gathered directly from individuals (individual cases) or social or community groups in their natural environment for the purpose of studying interactions, attitudes, or characteristics of individuals or groups*' (1993:123).

In a similar description to that of Leedy (1993), Yin (1994) is of the opinion, that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. He further explains that the case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points. One result of this is that it relies on multiple sources of evidence, and as another result, benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. In this sense, explains Yin, the case study is not either a data collection or merely a design feature alone but a comprehensive research strategy.

Yin (1994) continues by identifying three different types of case studies: (a) exploratory; (b) descriptive; (c) and explanatory. When to employ each of these case study strategies, explains Yin (1994), depends on the conditions, such as the type of research question posed; the extent of control the investigator has over events; and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events. Very briefly stated, according to Yin (1994), if the research question deals with '*what*' questions, the goal being to develop pertinent hypotheses and propositions for further inquiries, then the case study strategy is exploratory. On the other hand, if the '*what*' question is a form of '*how many*' or '*how much*' line of inquiry, then the strategy is that of a descriptive case study. In contrast, explains Yin (1994), '*how*' and '*why*' questions are explanatory.

In light of the fact, that the primary question of this study reads as follows, *What is the interplay between learner choice and school selection of learners?* It would be fair to deduce from Yin's (1994) theory, that the case study best suited here would be that of an exploratory line of inquiry. However, linked, and operating as sub-questions to the afore-mentioned primary question, are questions dealing with '*how*' and '*who*'. Hence, categorising this case study as only one line of inquiry would be incorrect. It would be fair to say that the case study employed in this study involves two lines of inquiry: (a) exploratory – in the sense that the study wishes to know what the interplay between learner choice and school selection of learner is; (b) explanatory – in that this study is not only concerned with how school selection operates, but also with how school selection procedures impact or constrain the choice of learners and their parents (choice-makers).

3.2. STAGE ONE: SELECTION OF SCHOOLS

The first stage of this research study involves the selection of two schools in the Western Cape to form the samples for two in-depth micro-case studies. The two schools examined are a former House of Representatives (HOR) school and a former House of Assembly (HOA) school, hereafter to be referred to as school L and school W, respectively. The two case studies are centred on the issues of school choice by the parents or learner (the choice-maker), and the school selection of learners. These two schools were specifically chosen as much for the ways that they are similar, as for the ways they are different.

Superficially, they are similar as it regards geographical location and feeder areas. Historically, however, the schools are different in terms of education departments, and consequently different in terms of the racial profile of learners. The two schools in question are approximately six kilometres apart. This geographical fact is significant in light of the fact that historically the two schools served very different communities, although they are not located that far apart.

Both schools are located in middle class suburbs. School L, however, is located in what used to be called a Whites only area. Since there are very few Coloured families living in the area, there are very few learners attending the school, who live in the vicinity. In fact, none of the grade eight learners live in the immediate area of the school. School W, on the other hand, is located in an area in which a dramatic shift in demographic profile has occurred. Although it was once a Whites only school, which operated in a White middle and working class community, it is now serving a predominantly Coloured middle class community.

School selection of learners operates very differently at these two schools. School W, for instance, has a policy of drawing its learners from its immediate area. School L, on the other hand, has no policy with regard to feeder areas. What is of particular interest to this study, is the ways in which similarities and differences position the schools differently in the school market. Phrased differently, this study is concerned with the logic of school choice and school selection at each of these two schools, as will be discussed in chapter four.

3.3. STAGE TWO: INTERVIEWS

Leedy (1993) is of the opinion, that as far as the structured interview is concerned, it is closely allied to the questionnaire, which also forms part of this methodological framework. Yin (1994) explains, that most commonly case study interviews are of an open-ended nature, in which you can ask key respondents for the facts of a matter as well as for the respondents' opinions about events.

To gain the perspective of the schools regarding school choice, it was decided to interview the respective headmasters, as well as any other teaching staff who were

directly involved with enrolment procedures at the school. These interviews were conducted after the questionnaires had been issued to the grade eight learners of each school. Although I had a checklist of questions, which needed to be answered in light of the focus of this paper, many questions also arose during the actual interview.

Based on the data, which came out of these interviews, significant issues were raised with regard to the process of selection of learners at each school. Firstly, enquiries were made regarding the period of application at each school. Secondly, the application forms were examined with regard to the type of information which was required.

As the actual selection processes differed at the two schools, so the focus of data collection also differed. At school L time was spent looking at the subject selection cards, while at school W it was the list of questions used by the interview team which provided the focus. Grade six report cards at school L played a more important role in the selection process at school L than at school W, where more emphasis was placed on the grade seven report cards. After collecting the class lists of all the grade eight learners at each school, and in conjunction with liaising with register class teachers, it was possible to assemble a demographic profile of the grade eight learners at each school.

In addition to the checklist of questions (*see Appendix 2*) used during the interviews, the following issues were also brought into the discussion: the academic performance of learners; the quality of teachers; the language barrier which many African learners experience; political responsibility in selecting certain learners; school fees; as well as the school's involvement with the community.

3.4. STAGE THREE: QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaire was constructed in order to elicit information regarding the identity of the choice-maker and the basis of school choice. On one level, the questionnaire sought to understand what the choice-makers want from the school, and on another, what the differences in the basis of choice at each school involved.

To Leedy (1993), the questionnaire is a commonplace instrument for observing data beyond the physical reach of the observer, since certain data sometimes lie buried within the attitudes, feelings or reactions of people. Because the questionnaire is a totally impersonal probe, explains Leedy, it must be designed to fulfill a specific research objective and the language must be clear.

For the purposes of this research report, the questionnaire was a way of collecting three types of data: (a) the identity of the choice-maker, (b) the reasons the school was chosen; (c) whether the school was the first choice. The primary source of information for the case study came from the questionnaire, which was issued to every grade eight learner at each school. The questionnaire was accompanied by a letter addressed to the parents or guardians of the learner. This letter briefly explained the reason for the questionnaire and requested their co-operation in providing certain information. According to Leedy, the letter is very important in light of the fact that it should stress the concerns of the person receiving the letter rather than the selfish interests of the researcher.

In order to understand the logic of school choice, the identity of the choice-maker needed to be established, hence the request that the questionnaire be completed by the one who actually made the choice. Each learner was given a week in which to return the questionnaire. Those learners who were absent on the day that the questionnaires were handed out simply did not receive one, since a clearly established time-frame had to be established. Both school L and school W have a grade eight population of 205 learners. Of the 205 questionnaires issued at each school, 136 at school L and 132 at school W were returned. The outstanding questionnaires were either returned late or not all. In terms of the racial profiles of learners at school W in particular, this meant that only one out of the ten White grade eight learners returned the questionnaire. How this lack of information impacts on the study will be discussed in chapter four.

Because the focus of the questionnaire was that of the logic of school choice, one half of the questionnaire centred on the identity and residential address of the learner, while the other half concerned itself with the issue of school choice and the basis on which that choice was made.

Since this study is interested in the class of learners in attendance at each school, an indicator was needed. The questionnaire thus requested the occupation of

the main breadwinner, since this, according to Bourdieu (1993) is related to class. Eder (1993) explains that, according to Bourdieu (1993), the role of occupation determines attributes of status, such as income, prestige, privilege and power. Bourdieu argues that inequality is constituted by having an unequal amount of capital at one's disposal that counts on the economic market. Objective class position, he claims, is defined by possession of this 'capital'.

By contrast, Ball (1996) is of the opinion that the occupation of the main breadwinner may not always be a true indicator of class status. There are different explanations for this: the parents may be divorced, in which case the financial status of one parent may not necessarily reflect the status of the other parent; often there is only one breadwinner for an entire family, which may well include the extended family.

This study is aware of the debates as argued by Bourdieu (1993) and Ball (1996). However, it was decided to go with Bourdieu (1993) for practical reasons. And even though Bourdieu's class categorisation, as pointed out by Ball, has its weaknesses, it suffices for the purpose of this study.

Initially, after analysing the completed questionnaires, I was left with approximately a hundred different occupations. Because of this big number, it was decided to re-categorise these occupations into five groups: (a) professional, (b) skilled, (c) semi-skilled, (d) unskilled, and (e) unemployed. This process was a difficult and problematic one. It was especially difficult to always draw a distinction between skilled and semi-skilled forms of labour. Defining the professional category proved to be less problematic, in that only those occupations which clearly indicated some form of tertiary level study was grouped here. The unemployed category included those choice-makers who said that they were retired. Given the weaknesses, this categorisation, however, was adequate for the purposes of this study.

3.5. STAGE FOUR: OBSERVATION AND DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

In addition to these systematic data strategies I observed selection procedures at school W and analysed certain documents at school L.

I taught at school W for four years. I have been actively involved in enrolment procedures at this school for the last two years. It has been my experience, both as a teacher and as an assistant in the enrolment process that certain criteria are implemented, which are not made public to the choice-makers.

The most common method of keeping certain learners out of school W is through the criterion of language proficiency. Only African learners are asked whether they are proficient in English. None of the Coloured and White learners is asked this question. If the African learner is not proficient, then s/he is told that it would be in his or her best interest to attend a school, which offers mother-tongue instruction.

At school L where I taught for three months a different set of selection procedures are in place. When a learner applies for entrance into grade eight at school L s/he needs to present the grade six report card. Grade seven results are not taken into consideration, since it is the opinion of the school that these results are not a true reflection of the learner's capabilities. Most of the grade six reports, which I examined revealed above average results. Those learners with below average results were not selected by the school. Preference was given to siblings of learners already at the school. Since the school is predominantly Coloured, very few African learners are selected.

3.6. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In concluding the chapter on methodology, attention will be paid to the validity and reliability of this study. According to Yin (1994), there are three ways to ascertain whether a research study is valid or not: (a) construct validity; (b) internal validity; and (c) external validity. As has already been discussed, this case study involves two strategies – exploratory and explanatory. And since internal validity only relates to the descriptive case study, it holds no relevance to this study.

Yin (1994) claims that there are three tactics available to increase construct validity. Firstly, the use of multiple sources of evidence, in a manner encouraging convergent lines of inquiry, which is relevant during data collection. A second tactic is to establish a chain of evidence, also applicable during data collection. The third tactic is to have the draft case study report reviewed by key informants. External validity, states Yin (1994), deals with the problem of knowing whether a study's findings are generalisable beyond the immediate case study.

With regard to the first tactic of construct validity, this case study has made use of three types of data collection methods: interviews; questionnaires; and observation and document analysis. Through the employment of these three methods a chain of evidence, concerning the logic of school choice, as well as school selection processes were established. As far as third tactic of review is concerned, this study has been examined by informants both directly and indirectly involved.

As far as the issue of external validity is concerned, the findings of this study may not be generalisable beyond this immediate case study. However, the operational framework of the methodology, as well as the debates surrounding school choice as discussed in the conceptual framework, could be similarly used to shape the same research question at other schools in South Africa. In the opinion of Yin, the case study is not representative. Rather, the purpose of the case study is to develop a way of understanding an issue, which can then be used to frame a question elsewhere. The purpose, ultimately, is to develop theory regarding school demography in relation to who chooses, how they choose, and school selection operates.

As Yin (1994) explains, the objective of testing the reliability of a study is to be sure, that if a later investigator followed exactly the same procedures as described by an earlier investigator and conducted the same case study all over again, the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions. He continues that the goal of reliability is to minimise the errors and biases in a study, and the phase of research in which this tactic occurs is during the data collection. Yin (1994) says that

the general way of approaching the reliability problem is to make as many steps as operational as possible and to conduct research as if someone were always looking over your shoulder.

How do we know that the data in this case study gives an accurate picture of the school? How do we know that the data obtained is reliable? The answer lies in the fact that more than one method of data collection was used. With regard to how consistent the interviews are, the answer is that they aren't.

Paradoxically, variability of accounts in the interviews, especially at school L, vouches for the validity thereof. At school L the accounts by the deputy headmaster and the senior teacher regarding the process of school selection were not consistent. The deputy headmaster was of the opinion that the sibling factor was the strongest criterion in the process of school selection. The senior teacher, on the other hand, stated that academic performance was the most important criterion in the process of school selection. The conclusion, which one draws from these inconsistencies is that not only are there official and unofficial approaches to the selection process, but there are also multiple understandings thereof. The validity and reliability of the interviews, therefore, lies in the differences between the accounts, rather than in their similarities. In other words, the very inconsistencies between accounts are informative. This does not necessarily mean that interviewees were not truthful, but rather that there are different versions of processes – official and unofficial and different understandings of criteria.

This study acknowledges that the information obtained through the questionnaires provided broad categories, rather than tightly featured data. As far as the question regarding profession was concerned, different associations and meanings were attached to certain professions by respondents. This explains the decision to re-categorise this section of the questionnaire into groups in terms of professional, skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled, and unemployed. This study also acknowledges that not all choice-makers who completed the questionnaires were English speaking. And although it was requested that the choice-maker should complete the questionnaire, there was no way of ensuring this. However, there was no real identifiable reason for choice-makers to obfuscate. Therefore, it is assumed that the information obtained through data collection

is broadly accurate and reliable, if not tightly precise, and that it is useful for the purposes of this study.

This, then, concludes the discussion on the methodology employed in this case study. Now that the operational framework of this study has been outlined, discussed, and analysed, the next chapter will shift in focus to the actual data, which has been collected through the two micro case studies, the interviews, and the questionnaires.

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CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter serves as the heart and focus of this study. The purpose of the data and the analysis thereof is to examine the interplay between learner choice and school selection of learners. The information analysed in this section is based on the data gathered from the interviews, the questionnaires, and through observation and document analysis. The data of each school is initially analysed separately, which is followed by a comparative comment on both schools. All the data relating to school choice, such as the identity of the choice-maker and reasons for school choice were obtained via the questionnaires. The information regarding the selection processes employed at each school was obtained through the interviews, observation and document analysis.

In order to contextualise the data obtained through the two micro-case studies, attention is briefly paid to the histories of the two schools, the spatial demographics relating to the areas surrounding each school, and the reputations, which constitute school L and school W.

4.1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE TWO SCHOOLS USED IN CASE STUDY

Selecting the two schools for the case study was a meticulous process. The strength of this particular comparative case study lies in the fact that although these two schools do not share a common history, they are in many ways similar with regard to geography and the type of learners in attendance. Part of the significance of this study is that the two schools involved have specifically been chosen because of their geographical location – they are situated approximately six kilometres apart. A significant percentage of the learners in attendance at both schools live in the same residential areas.

4.1.1. SCHOOL W

School W is situated in what used to be a Whites only area, serving both a middle and working class community. Today Coloured middle class families are moving into the area, while White middle class families are moving out. The result is two different communities in terms of race and class: one predominantly Coloured middle class, the other, White working class.

In terms of South African apartheid vocabulary, school W was established under the Whites only education department, known as the House of Assembly (HOA). This meant that while school W was equipped with everything deemed necessary by an institution of learning, school L did not enjoy the same necessities.

School W first opened its doors with a group of one class in 1935. The school grew in size, with a tent housing the Woodwork class. The foundation stone for a permanent building was laid in 1938. The school was officially opened on 3 September 1939, but at that time was named after the area in which it was situated. By 1990 it was decided to rename the school in honour of the farmstead on which it was established. Today the school is housed in a double storey building and consists of approximately 27 classrooms, with excellent Science and Biology laboratories, as well as fully equipped Home Economics and Woodwork rooms. It also has a hall and a computer room.

When school W was first established it was dual –medium meaning that lessons were offered in both English and Afrikaans. However, since 1992, when it first became an open school, the number of Afrikaans-speaking learners dwindled to such an extent that the school gradually became only English medium. Consequently, certain teachers left for Afrikaans-medium institutions, while others simply had to stop teaching in Afrikaans and start teaching in English.

Prior to 1992 the school had an entirely White learner population. By 1998, with a total learner body of 775, the school is predominantly Coloured, with a small African component and an even smaller White group. Per annum the school receives approximately 350 grade eight applications, of which only 170 can be accommodated. The total of grade eight learners in 1998 stood at 205. In 1998 the school fees for each

learner – though concessions were made for siblings – was R950. At the beginning of 1999 this figure jumped to R1250.

The school has a staff complement of 26, including the headmaster who also teaches. The school also employs one secretary, a bursar, as well as a cleaning staff consisting of four members. Prior to 1992 the school had an entirely White teaching staff. By 1993 the school employed its first Coloured teacher on a temporary basis. And by 1994 the school had three Coloured teachers – all employed in permanent positions. In 1998 this number had increased to twelve Coloured teachers. There are no African teachers on the staff. Hence with the changes heralded by the open schools, significant changes took place in both the staff and learner composition at the school.

The subjects offered at school W are different to those at school L. The core subjects in the Junior Secondary phase are English, Afrikaans, General Science, Geography-History and Mathematics, while the subject choices offered are as follows: Business Economics, Accounting, Industrial Art, Music, or Home Economics. Typing is also offered, but only from grade nine onwards. In the Senior Secondary phase the compulsory subjects are English, Afrikaans and Biology. While Geography is offered in the junior phase, it is not offered in the senior phase. It is also during the senior phase that the school W learner is first introduced to the subject of Economics.

Unlike the ethos at school L, school W does not place much emphasis on university entry subjects and grades. In 1998, for instance, only five of its matriculants were accepted at top academic institutions, such as the University of Cape Town.

4.1.2. SCHOOL L

School L, a historically HOR school, is situated in what used to be a middle and working class Coloured area, which through the Group areas Act, became a Whites only area in 1980. Today the area of school L consists of a predominantly White middle class community with a small Coloured middle class component.

Like school W, school L is located on what used to be a farmstead. In fact, the original farmhouse now houses the staffroom, the computer room for the staff, as well as the office of the two deputy headmasters. And what used to be the stables, are now three

classrooms, which each houses up to 45 learners at a time. School L was established in 1926, and was officially known as a Coloured school, based in the education department, known as the House of Representatives (HOR).

The school consists of approximately 32 classrooms, but its science and biology laboratories can in no way compare to that at school W. The school does not have its own hall, and has to make do with either hiring a community hall, or by opening the partition between two of its classrooms. Thanks to sponsorship from one of the insurance giants in South Africa, the school has a computer room.

Like school W, school L, at the time of its establishment, was dual-medium. As the learner body grew, it was decided to change to a single medium of instruction – English. However, unlike the situation at school W, this did not result in the departure of certain teachers.

In 1998 the roll at the school stood at 1076 learners, with a teaching staff of 32 members, excluding the headmistress – who does not teach - one secretary, and a cleaning staff of six. The school has always had White teachers on its staff – some temporary and some permanent. That situation is still the same today. What has changed though, is the fact that it is only since the school decided to offer Xhosa to grade eight learners in 1997, that it has employed an African teacher. – the only one on the staff. This is an institution which per annum receives between 600 and 700 applications for grade eight alone. Although the total number of grade eight learners in 1998 was 205, there are only enough places for 180.

In the Junior Secondary phase the core subjects are English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, General Science and Geography-History. The subject choices at school L are as follows: Music, Art, German, Accounting, Xhosa, or Industrial Art. Although Xhosa is offered in the junior phase, it is not carried through into the senior phase. In the Senior Secondary phase, besides English and Afrikaans, both Biology and Mathematics are also compulsory.

Up to the end of 1998 the school fees per year stood at R300. This figure doubled in 1999 due to the fact that the school has had to pay the salaries of four staff members.

School L has a well-established reputation, not only in the Western Cape, but also in South Africa. Not only does it hold the position of being one of the top four of feeder

schools to the University of Cape Town, but in 1998 it also made the Sunday Times list of the top 100 schools in South Africa.

School L cannot be compared to school W in terms of resources and facilities. History has entrenched that difference. What makes these two schools similar, however, are their changing surrounding communities and the fact that the two schools share feeder areas.

4.2. THE QUESTIONNAIRE: RESPONSE AND CHOICE

This sub-section deals with data as collected from the questionnaire. It centres on two issues: (a) the response by the choice-maker to the questionnaire; (b) the number and percentages of choice-makers, who indicated either school L or school W as their first choice. The purpose of this sub-section is two-fold. On one level, it is to establish the level of involvement of the choice-maker in terms of response to the questionnaire. On another level, it reveals the choice power of the school as disclosed through the number of first choices allocated to each school.

4.2.1. SCHOOL W

School W has 205 grade eight learners. Although all of them received questionnaires, 132 completed ones were returned. As indicated by Table A, in the school W sample 77 of the choice-makers listed the school as their first choice.

The 55 grade eight learners, who did not indicate school W as their first choice, had applied to a list of nineteen schools. Of these, applications were made to thirteen former HOA, five former HOR schools, and one private college.

4.2.2. SCHOOL L

Of the 205 questionnaires issued to the grade eight learners at school L, 136 completed ones were returned. Of the 136 completed questionnaires, 124 choice-makers indicated the school as their first choice.

Where the school was not the first choice, a list of nine other schools emerged as first choices. Of these, applications were made to four former HOR schools, and five former HOA schools. None of the choice-makers listed private colleges as a first choice.

TABLE A: FIRST CHOICE AT BOTH SCHOOLS

	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH W</u>	<u>SCH L</u>
	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>
SCHOOL L AS 1 st CHOICE	124	93.23	18	15.79
SCHOOL W as 1 st CHOICE	0	0.0	77	67.54
OTHER FORMER HOA AS 1 st CHOICE	5	3.76	13	11.4
OTHER FORMER HOR AS 1 st CHOICE	4	3.01	5	4.39
PRIVATE COLLEGE AS 1 st CHOICE	0	0.0	1	0.88
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	133		114	

4.2.3. COMPARATIVE COMMENT

As can be seen in Table A, the total number of responses does not equal the total number of questionnaires returned. This discrepancy is due to the fact that certain choice-makers did not complete this section of the questionnaire. Of the 136 completed questionnaires at school L only 133 choice-makers completed this particular section, while 114 out of 132 at school W did so.

Based on the data in Table A, school L enjoys a much higher incidence of first choices – 93,3% at school L to 67,54% at school W. While eighteen of the choice-makers at school W indicated school L as their first choice, none of the school L choice-makers listed school W as their first choice.

A higher number of learners at school W applied to former HOA schools than at school L. And although one of the learners at school W applied to a private college, none at school L sample did so. At neither of the two schools was a former DET school listed as a first choice.

4.3. THE SCHOOL AND THE CHOICE-MAKER

As far as the identity of the choice-maker was concerned, various categories of choice-makers emerged: (a) both parents; (b) the learner; (c) the parents and the learner; (d) the mother; (e) the father (f) the mother and the learner; and (g) the grandfather. The combination of father and learner did not surface in either of the two school samples.

4.3.1. SCHOOL W

As Table B indicates, at school W the mother emerged as the top choice-maker. Second on the list of choice-makers was the category of both parents, followed by the learner. The level of maternal involvement here far outweighed that of any other choice-maker, exceeding the level of paternal involvement by 24,22%. The category of parents and learners, as well as that of mother and learner did not emerge as significant choice-makers.

4.3.2. SCHOOL L

As at school W, the top choice-maker at school L was the mother. The second top choice-maker was a tie between the category of both parents and the learner. The level of paternal involvement is 12,22% lower than maternal involvement. The categories of parents and learner, and mother and learner did not yield significant involvement.

TABLE B: IDENTITY AND NUMBER OF CHOICE-MAKERS

<u>CHOICE-MAKER</u>	<u>SCH L</u>		<u>SCH W</u>	
	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>
MOTHER	38	29.01	46	35.94
BOTH PARENTS	29	22.14	36	28.13
LEARNER	29	22.14	23	17.97
FATHER	22	16.79	15	11.72
PARENTS & LEARNER	9	6.87	5	3.91
MOTHER & LEARNER	3	2.29	3	2.34
GRANDFATHER	1	0.76	0	0.0
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	131		128	

4.3.3. COMPARATIVE COMMENT

Once again, the total number of responses does not correspond to the number of completed questionnaires. As in the previous section, this is a case where this section of the questionnaire was not completed by everybody.

According to the data in Table B, the schools have the same top three list of choice-makers – mother, both parents, and learner. However, while the top categories are the same, the levels of involvement at each school show very different results. School W has a higher incidence of maternal involvement than school L. Similarly, school W has a higher level of involvement of both parents than school L. Therefore, school W has a higher incidence of the category of parents as choice-makers than school L.

School L has a higher incidence of the learner as choice-maker than school W. The category of the learner as choice-maker at school L exceeds the learner involvement at school W by 4,17%. Although the level of paternal involvement did not rank in the top three at either of the two schools, it did have a higher incidence of involvement at school L than at school W. The level of learner involvement at school L exceeded that at school

W. According to the data in this section, at both school W and school L the choice-makers are predominantly either the mother or both parents.

4.4. REASONS FOR SCHOOL CHOICE (AS PROVIDED BY QUESTIONNAIRE)

One of the primary aims of the questionnaire was to understand which factors were informing the choice-maker in his or her choice. Attention was also paid to whether there existed any differences in the basis of choice at each school.

The questionnaire provided a list of possible reasons for the school choice, which had to be ticked off. This list included: (a) geographical proximity, (b) academic status, (c) discipline, (d) type of learner, (e) smaller classes, (f) quality of teachers, (g) quality of resources, (h) family member/s attends or attended.

4.4.1. SCHOOL W

The top basis of choice at school W was discipline, followed closely by geographical proximity. Academic status was noted as the next highest category in choosing the school. The other significant basis of choice was the quality of teachers, followed by the category of family member/s attended or attends. Next followed the categories of quality of resources, the type of learners, and smaller classes. The basis of choice with the lowest incidence was the category of the type of pupil.

4.4.2. SCHOOL L

The majority of the choice-makers at school L chose academic status as their basis of choice. The next top reason was discipline. The next highest basis of choice for choosing school L was the quality of teachers, followed by the category of family member/s attended or attends. Next followed the categories of the type of learner, quality of resources, and geographical proximity. The basis of choice with the lowest incidence was the category of smaller classes.

TABLE C: REASONS AND NUMBER FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

<u>REASONS AS PROVIDED</u>	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH W</u>	<u>SCH W</u>
	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>
GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY	24	5.39	80	19.18
ACADEMIC STATUS	108	24.27	64	15.35
DISCIPLINE	107	24.04	83	19.9
TYPE OF PUPIL	39	8.76	31	7.43
SMALLER CLASSES	3	0.67	24	5.76
QUALITY OF TEACHERS	77	17.3	55	13.19
QUALITY OF RESOURCES	26	5.84	32	7.67
FAMILY MEMBER/S ATTENDS/ATTENDED	61	13.71	48	11.51
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	445		417	

4.4.3. COMPARATIVE COMMENT

The total number of responses, as demonstrated by Table C far outnumbers the total number of completed questionnaires, which was 136 at school L and 132 at school W. This is due to the format of the questionnaire, which allowed the choice-maker to tick off as many bases of choice that s/he felt had played a role in the school choice. The fact that the total number of responses in the school L sample exceeds that of the school W sample is due to the difference between the number of returned completed questionnaires.

There is overlap in the top three categories as far as the top bases of choice is concerned. At school L the top three were academic status, discipline, and quality of teachers. At school W the top three were discipline, geographical proximity, and academic status. The category of geographical proximity at school L featured second last as a basis of choice. The category of quality of teachers at school W featured fourth as a basis of choice.

While academic status held more appeal to the school L choice-maker, the school W choice-maker placed more emphasis on discipline. And while geographical proximity

The discussion of the data in the last five sub-sections has focussed on: (a) the background information about the two schools used in the case study; (b) the response to the questionnaire; (c) the issue of first school choice; (d) the identity of the choice-maker; and (e) the reasons for school choice. The next sub-section pays attention to the process of school selection of learners.

4.6. THE SELECTION PROCESS

The following section will mainly be based on information gathered through three separate interviews, observation and document analysis. At school W the interview was conducted with the headmaster. At school L both the deputy headmaster and a senior teacher were interviewed.

The purpose of this section is to provide information about the selection process, which each school employs. This is important in light of the fact that firstly, historically the two schools were established in two different education departments. Secondly, that they were historically supposed to serve two different sets of learners. Thirdly, that since schools are now open to all learners, this must have impacted on the selection procedures at the two schools. Furthermore, a better understanding of how the selection process operates at each school will further serve to examine the interplay between learner choice and the school selection of learners. Initially the selection process at each school will be examined separately.

4.6.1. SCHOOL W

The selection process at school W involves three stages: (a) collection of an application form at the school at the beginning of the second term, which has to be returned together with an enrolment fee; (b) a letter of reply from the school, requesting an interview; and (c) a letter from the school, acknowledging acceptance or refusal.

As far as the application form is concerned, the earlier you apply, the more priority your application will receive. Although applications close by the end of the second term, this ruling is not carved in stone. Applications made as late as the beginning

of the year of enrolment are also taken into consideration, but these applicants are warned that they will be put on a waiting list. Besides the completion of a standard application form, subject choices also have to be made.

The staff has devised an interview system which consists of two teachers. Each grade has its own interview team. The headmaster also conducts interviews, but only when it involves a special case, or if the parent specifically requests it. One or both of the parents, together with the learner must attend the interview. This attendance in itself forms part of the selection process. What gets taken into consideration is whether the parents and the learner are able to attend an interview on time. The general appearance and attitude of the learner is taken into account, as well as how he responds to questions. Insight into the background of the learner is gained by addressing certain questions to the parents.

During the final stage a letter of either acceptance or refusal is sent to the applicant. The successful ones are requested to return to the school in order to pay a registration fee, as well as to collect a prospectus. According to the headmaster, learners are immediately excluded if they are rude or disrespectful during the interview. An academically weak learner will also not be accepted, and instead recommended to a nearby school, which specialises in dealing with exceptionally weak learners. If there is uncertainty about a particular learner, then the headmaster contacts the learner's primary school and the necessary inquiries are made. The learner will be accepted or excluded based on the type of information, which comes out of this consultation. In the words of the headmaster, preference is given to those who is felt will receive the most benefit from an education at school W.

Because the school caters for the immediate area it has approximately five feeder schools – four of which are former HOA primary schools, while the recently acquired fifth one is a former HOR primary school. This, however, does not mean automatic entrance into the school. Generally, however, claims the headmaster, learners in the area are given first priority, and then those living in outlying areas.

4.6.2. SCHOOL L

At School L the selection committee consists of nine staff members, including the headmistress, one of the deputy headmasters, and seven other teachers. Generally the selection process, as at school W, consists of three phases.

Firstly, between February and March, and only between 9 and 11 a.m., there is a three-week open period in which parents or guardians of grade seven learners can collect admission forms. These forms must be returned by a set date. The school must also be provided with a copy of the grade six report. It is the opinion of school L that many primary school inflate grade seven results of learners so as to ensure entry into high schools, hence the focus on grade six results. Secondly, there is the selection process. Criteria, which are employed range from the sibling factor, subject streaming, academic performance to Maths capability. No learners are guaranteed entry into school, not even those learners coming from the nearby primary school who used to enjoy automatic acceptance. This stopped about three years ago.

Parents are given a selection card, from which they may select a particular stream, such as German, or make a general application. All the learners, who apply are placed into specific categories in terms of subject choice. Learners, who wish to do Art as a subject, for example, have to attend workshops and are given exercises so as to assess their potential. Existing portfolios are not taken into consideration, since those could have been completed by anybody. Learners, who wish to study Music, have to have grade three, as well as undergo an audition with the Music teacher.

Priority accommodation is given to those learners, who wish to follow certain streams and then top up the general applications. Preference is given to learners who have family connections to the school, since the school is strong on traditional links. Learners are excluded if they are fixed to a certain stream and cannot be accommodated. Thirdly, the acceptance letters are sent to the choice-makers.

4.7. THE RACIAL PROFILE OF EACH SCHOOL

School L was officially established as a school for Coloured learners only. However, due to its role in the anti-apartheid struggle, has been admitting African learners discreetly for at least the last three decades, since it was not allowed by the government of the day to do so. School W, on the other hand, was officially established as a Whites only school, and has only officially been admitting African learners since 1992. Given the context of open schools, it is a foregone conclusion that not only are learners and parents choosing schools differently, but that schools are also selecting learners differently. The purpose of this section is to examine whether there has been any dramatic demographic shifts at either of the two schools, since the open schools dispensation.

4.7.1. SCHOOL W

According to the information in Tables E1 and E2, over 90% of the questionnaires that were returned belonged to Coloured learners, the latter makes up 88,29% of the grade eight group. Therefore from 1992 to 1998 the school has shifted from being an entirely White school to a predominantly Coloured one. Although only one White learner returned his / her questionnaire, there are in fact ten White learners in grade eight.

The number of White learners (ten) is less than the number of African learners (fourteen), even though the school is a historically White one, which has only been admitting African learners since 1992.

4.7.2. SCHOOL L

Since school L has historically always served Coloured learners, the fact that the latter group constitutes 96,1% of the total grade eight group is not surprising. What is surprising, though, is the low figure of eight African learners, when one bears in mind that this is a school which has been admitting African learners for at least the last three decades. The school has no White learners in grade eight.

TABLE E1: RACE GROUPS

<u>RACE GROUPS</u>	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH W</u>	<u>SCH W</u>
<u>COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>
Coloured	128	94.12	121	91.67
White	0	0.0	1	0.76
African	8	5.88	10	7.58
TOTAL NUMBER COMPLETED	136		132	

TABLE E2: RACE GROUPS

<u>RACE GROUPS</u>	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH W</u>	<u>SCH W</u>
<u>ACTUAL NUMBERS</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>
Coloured	197	96.1	181	88.29
White	0	0.0	10	4.88
African	8	3.9	14	6.83
TOTAL ACTUAL NUMBERS	205		205	

4.7.3. COMPARATIVE COMMENT

As low as the number of African learners is at school W, it still exceeds the number of African learners at school L. This is especially significant in light of the fact that school L has been admitting African learners for the last thirty years, while school W has only been doing so for the last six years.

Given the fact that school L does not have a clearly defined geographical feeder area as school W, it would be safe to assume that the learners attending school L could very well come from any area within the Western Cape. Yet, based on the data in Table D2, only eight African learners successfully gained entry into school L in 1998.

School W has undergone a dramatic transformation in terms of the composition of its learner profile. In less than ten years the school has completely shifted from being a

Whites only to a predominantly Coloured institution. On the other hand, there has been very little change in the demographic composition of the learner body at school L.

4.8. THE ISSUE OF CLASS IN SCHOOL CHOICE

Each school has developed specific profiles in terms of who is being selected. In terms of who is entering each school, the category of class is linked to the category of race. The purpose of this section is to examine the type of learner who is entering each school in terms of class.

4.8.1. SCHOOL W

The grade eight learners at school W come from a higher percentage of skilled and semi-skilled than professional backgrounds. A low percentage of the main breadwinners are unskilled, and even fewer are unemployed or retired.

4.8.2. SCHOOL L

In the case of school L, a higher percentage of the main breadwinners are skilled than professional or semi-skilled. A low percentage of the breadwinners are unskilled or unemployed.

TABLE F: OCCUPATION OF MAIN BREADWINNER

<u>FORM OF OCCUPATION</u>	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH W</u>	<u>SCH W</u>
	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>
PROFESSIONAL	33	27.97	17	14.66
SKILLED	43	36.44	49	42.24
SEMI-SKILLED	31	26.27	41	35.34
UNSKILLED	9	7.63	7	6.03
UNEMPLOYED	2	1.69	2	1.72
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	118		116	

4.8.3. COMPARATIVE COMMENT

The total number of responses does not equal the number of completed questionnaires. Most of the choice-makers did not complete this section, because, I assume, of the nature of the question. Many of the choice-makers answered this section incorrectly by giving the identity of the main breadwinner, instead of stipulating the profession. As was discussed in the methodology chapter, because I was left with a hundred different occupations, it was decided to recategorise these occupations into five groups.

At both schools the majority of the choice-makers are skilled. School W, however, has a higher percentage of skilled occupations. School L has a higher number of professionals than school W. While the biggest difference in numbers, according to Table F, is in the category of professionals, there was not a big difference in the rest of the categories.

There is a higher proportion of professional families at school L. This means that more learners at school L than at school W are middle class. Because of the high incidence of skilled and semi-skilled breadwinners, more of school W's learners are working class.

4.9. AREA AND SCHOOL CHOICE

Because of the Group Areas legislation the two schooling sectors are spatially defined. On the one hand, school W is situated in what was once a designated Whites only area, but since this label has fallen away, the demographic profile of this suburb has changed to that of a predominantly Coloured middle class area. Those Whites, who could afford it, have moved out; the poorer White community has stayed. In the meantime a Coloured community has taken shape and has replaced the once middle class community. On the other hand, school L is situated in a former Coloured area, which became a Whites only area. Today this area is still predominantly White middle class, with a small Coloured middle class community.

Although school W has a feeder area, from which, according to the WCED, it is obliged to take its learners, the majority of its learners do not live in the immediate vicinity of the school. As table G demonstrates, the learners in attendance come from a range of areas. Since school L is situated in a predominantly White area, none of the grade eight learners reside in the area. School L therefore draws its learners from all over the Western Cape. The purpose of this section is to investigate from which areas each school is drawing its learners. This information will tell us more about who is entering each school.

4.9.1. SCHOOL W

The top feeder area of school W, which is Lansdowne, is not the area in which the school is situated. The next top two areas are Rondebosch East, which is the area of the school, and Athlone, which is also the top feeder area of school L.

According to the data in Table G, learners in grade eight come from twelve different suburbs. As is the case at school L, learners are travelling from Townships, such as Ikhwezi Park and Khayelitsha.

4.9.2. SCHOOL L

The highest feeder area of school L is Athlone, followed by Mitchell's Plain. The next top feeder area is Lansdowne, which also happens to be the top feeder area of school W.

As can be seen in Table G, the grade eight learners come from a total of eighteen different suburbs, ranging from more affluent and previously Whites only ones, such as Rondebosch East and Kenwyn to the poorer sectors, such as Elsies River and Phillipi. Learners are also travelling in from Townships, such as Khayelitsha and Nyanga. None of the learners live in the area of the school.

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TABLE G: RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF LEARNERS

<u>RESIDENTIAL AREA</u>	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH L</u>	<u>SCH W</u>	<u>SCH W</u>
	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>NO.</u>	<u>%</u>
ATHLONE	43	32.09	21	15.91
BELHAR	1	0.75	0	0.0
ELSIES RIVER	1	0.75	0	0.0
GRASSY PARK	10	7.46	4	3.03
GUGULETU	3	2.24	0	0.0
HEATHFIELD	0	0.0	1	0.76
IKHWEZI PARK	0	0.0	1	0.76
KENWYN	4	2.99	15	11.36
KHAYELITSHA	2	1.49	2	1.52
LANSDOWNE	17	12.69	39	29.55
MANDALAY	1	0.75	1	0.76
MITCHELL'S PLAIN	31	23.13	8	6.06
MONTANA	1	0.75	0	0.0
MONTE VISTA	1	0.75	0	0.0
NYANGA	1	0.75	0	0.0
OTTERY	0	0.0	16	12.12
PHILLIPI	1	0.75	3	2.27
RETREAT	7	5.22	0	0.0
RONDEBOSCH EAST	5	3.73	21	15.91
WYNBERG	4	2.99	0	0.0
ZEEKOEVLEI	1	0.75	0	0.0
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	134		132	

4.9.3. COMPARATIVE COMMENT

The list of areas in Table G has been modified. The area known as Athlone includes a list of fourteen different suburbs – ranging from Rylands Estate to Garlandale. All fourteen

of these suburbs were given as the residential addresses of learners attending either school W or school L.

Interestingly, both school L and school W draw learners from Athlone – making it the top feeder area of school L, and the second highest in the case of school W. Although the entire area of Athlone does not fall within the boundaries of the feeder map of school W, certain suburbs, such as Penlyn Estate and Rylands Estate, are legitimate feeder areas to the school. The top feeder area of school W, Lansdowne, is not where the school is located. Lansdowne also holds the position of being the third highest feeder area of school L.

While school L has grade eight learners travelling in from a spectrum of eighteen different areas, the feeder areas of school W adds up to twelve. The two schools share a list of nine feeder areas. This list includes both formerly Whites only areas, as well as township areas.

In concluding this sub-section, the majority of the learners at both school L and school W do not live in the immediate area of the school. This data is not surprising in the case of school L, since the school is situated in a predominantly White area. It is surprising in the case of school W, however, since the school is situated in a predominantly Coloured area.

The next chapter will discuss the data, which has been analysed in this chapter. In its discussion of the data, chapter five will use the literature reviewed in the conceptual framework to shape the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 5: DATA DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an in-depth discussion of the analysis, which has been presented in chapter five and to draw conclusions regarding insights that emerge. The chapter will be shaped and guided by the literature involving school choice, as examined in the conceptual framework of chapter two.

5.1. SCHOOL PROFILES

One of the main similarities of school L and school W is the fact that each school is situated in an area where political decisions have impacted upon and determined the composition of the learner body. School W is situated in a former Whites only area which gradually became a mixed area, consisting of both Whites and Coloureds. Today, with the dismantling of the Group Areas Act, the area is predominantly Coloured middle class, with a White working class component. The few Africans living in the area are middle class. School L, on the other hand, is situated in an area which was predominantly Coloured until some thirty years ago. With the implementation of the Group Areas Act it became a predominantly White middle class community. Today it is a predominantly White middle class area with a small Coloured middle class component, and an even smaller African middle class component.

In terms of the learners at each school, the shift in the composition of the local communities has led to a direct shift in the learner composition at each school. The majority of the learners at school W used to be predominantly Afrikaans-speaking White, with roughly equal proportions of middle and working class. Today, because the community has changed, the school has a learner body which is predominantly Coloured middle class with African middle class and White working class components. The majority of the learners at school L have always been Coloured middle class. Today this picture has not changed much at all. It is still a predominantly Coloured middle class school with a small African middle class component.

The fact that school L is a migratory Coloured school in a predominantly White area shapes the school's policy of not drawing from its immediate area, and in turn accounts for the high number of feeder areas. School W, on the other hand, is a predominantly Coloured school in a predominantly Coloured community.

School W is in flux in more ways than one. It is in flux in terms of its learner body; its staff has changed and is still changing. The community around it has changed, which has led to the school re-defining itself in terms of the identity of this community. Dress codes for instance have been changed to accommodate certain learners who wish to wear head scarves. School times have been changed in accordance with certain religious group who wish to leave school early in order to attend mosque. Accommodation has also been made for learners who take leave from school in order to attend initiation rituals.

School L, on the other hand, has always catered for a middle class Coloured community. The wearing of the school uniform has always been flexible. Learners are allowed to freely exercise different dress codes, depending on their religious beliefs. The changes happening in the area of the school have not affected the structure or learner composition of the school. This is because its history and tradition of catering for a learner body outside its area has rendered it more stable in response to the environmental changes faced by both schools.

5.2. **FIRST CHOICE**

This sub-section will consist of a brief discussion regarding the incidence of first choices of schools in reference to school L and school W.

Two significant factors emerged from the data regarding the number of choice-makers who indicated the two schools as their first choices. Firstly, school L enjoys a more favourable position in attracting a longer queue of learners. This is evident on two levels: (a) the fact that the school receives between 600 and 700 applications for grade eight per annum; and (b) the fact that a number of learners at school W indicated school L as their first choice. Secondly, the learner at school W is more likely than the learner at school L to apply to a former HOA school.

In terms of parental choice reforms, Glatter et al (1997) are of the opinion that there are differences between schools in terms of the reasons parents are drawn to see them as their first choice. Parental views, they argue, are influenced or constrained by what is actually on offer.

The results from this section of the questionnaire is not surprising, when viewed in relation to the public profiles of the two schools. School L has always enjoyed a tremendous amount of respect not only amongst other HOR schools, but in the whole of the Western Cape. Its status as being one of the top four feeder schools to the University of Cape Town is testimony to this reputation. School W has not enjoyed a similar reputation, in spite of the fact that it is a former HOA school.

5.3. BASIS OF CHOICE

In order to understand the interplay between learner choice and school selection of learners, it is necessary to explore what exactly the choice-makers want from their school of choice. Coupled with the conjecture that different choice-makers want different things from different schools, one also needs to examine the differences in the basis of choice at school L and at school W.

The next sub-section will be divided into smaller discussions relating to the bases of choice, as provided by the questionnaire, as well as noted by individual choice-makers.

5.3.1. GEOGRAPHY, DISCIPLINE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

As far as the choosing of schools by the choice-maker is concerned, a very different picture emerged at each school. Based on Table C (*Reasons for school choice*), it was not surprising to find that geographical proximity occupied a much higher basis of choice at school W than at school L. None of the grade eight learners at school L reside in the area of the school, and school L does not have a designated feeder area.

Although there was overlap in the top four bases of choice at each school, the emphasis on each basis differed remarkably. At both schools the categories of academic status and discipline were in the top four bases of choice. But this is where the similarity

ended. While school L's next top basis of choice was the quality of teachers, the next top one at school W was geographical proximity.

These findings concur with the findings of Westoby (1989) in which he states that there are some broad similarities between the features of schools which parents cite as desirable, such as geographical convenience, traditional academic qualities and good discipline. These findings are also relatively similar to those found by Goldring (1997) in her study conducted in Israel. Based on her research, the most prevalent reasons for school choice given by parents are academic reputation, teaching style, and availability of transportation.

However, the differences are as telling as the similarities. The data suggests that, while non-professional parents are more bound by practicalities, such as geographical proximity, professional parents are more likely and more able to prioritise academic concerns.

5.3.2. QUALITY OF RESOURCES AND SMALLER CLASSES

The rest of the bases of choice, as given by the questionnaire, showed no similarity between the two sets of choice-makers.

The basis of choice by the school W choice-maker is based on the reality of unequal allocation of resources between former HOA schools and other schools, which are not White. The fact that a higher number of choice-makers at school W cited quality of resources as a basis of choice falls in line with the fact former HOA schools, by virtue of their history should have better resources.

★ According to the argument of Smith and Meier (1995), few learners would opt for a school consisting of a crumbling building when they can attend a well-funded school with a diverse curriculum. This is certainly the reality of the school choice policies in South Africa which according to Fataar (1997), is broadly delineated in terms of a privileged schooling sector (comprising private and high-fee public schools) serving a minority, with an under-resourced public system serving the majority.

The paradox is that school L choice-makers do choose a relatively 'crumbling' building with larger classes, while school W choice-makers do not. Yet it is the school L

learner who delivers better academic results, and it is school L which holds a reputation of academic excellence.

The higher incidence of the category of smaller classes as a basis for school choice at school W appears to be grounded more in the history of the school as a former HOA school than in real terms. The reality of the situation is that in 1998, while each grade eight class at school L had between 50 and 52 learners, each grade eight class at school W had between 39 and 45 learners. The difference between 45 and 50 is not substantial. This basis of choice is clearly based more on perception than on reality, and echoes the American study by Sobel and Beck (1980). This study found that Black parents were more likely to rate their children's school favourably if they thought it was a predominantly White one.

5.3.3. FAMILY AS A BASIS OF CHOICE

Both sets of choice-makers placed a noteworthy emphasis on the category of family member/s attendance as a basis of choice. The high percentage of the category of family attendance at school L confirms the information given by the deputy headmaster during the interview. It was explicitly stated that preference was given to siblings, and that the latter played a big role in the selection process of learners. However, although the attendance of family members was not given as a reason for selection during the interview with the headmaster of school W, it certainly has emerged as a noteworthy factor, based on the data in Table C (*Reasons and Number for School Choice*).

5.3.4. SUBJECT STREAMING

The subject choice streams at school W and school L have different emphases, but evidently these emphases are not different enough in order to impact on the interplay between learner choice and school selection of learners. What is of some importance, however, is that by making Mathematics compulsory at school L, the school is in part ensuring entrance into university where Mathematics is a core requirement in a number of faculties. Possibly this accounts for the low number of matriculants at school W who

are pursuing tertiary level education at university institutions, and are instead opting for technikon or college institutions, where Mathematics is not always a prerequisite.

5.3.5. BASIS OF CHOICE: CONCLUDING COMMENT

So, what do the choice-makers want from the school? To Westoby (1989), several key provisions can be seen as linked to parental choices, taking effect mainly through competition between schools. He continues that although it is complicated to make an assessment of school from external examination alone, the latter and word-of-mouth is all that most choice-makers have to go on.

Smith and Meier (1995), on the other hand, argue that what parents and learners demand from schools goes beyond academic excellence. The primary demand seems to be geographical proximity and the convenience it represents.

The two sets of choice-makers at each school want different things from each school. The interplay between learner choice and school selection of learners, it appears, operates on two different bases of choice at each school. The logic of choice at both schools is occasionally shaped by the reality of the schools in the case study, other times the logic of choice appear to be based more on perception than reality. While there is overlap in the top order of bases of choice, the level of emphasis at each school varies considerably.

What emerges on the basis of the survey in particular, is that the choice-makers at school W tend to give greater priority to 'inputs' (physical facilities and class sizes), while the choice-makers at school L tend to give greater priority to qualitative features such as quality of teaching and to academic output. The two sets of choice-makers, therefore, are not looking for the same things at each school. A different logic of choice is informing the choice-makers at each school.

5.4. THE SELECTION PROCESS

In comparing the two schools involved in this case study, a certain ambiguity has arisen. This ambiguity lies in the realisation that with the introduction of post-apartheid school choice the unavoidable issue of who really is doing the choosing, the choice-maker or the school has arisen.

Fataar (1997) argues that the operation of school selection is especially complicated in South Africa, since on the one hand, schools are able to set their own fees, while on the other hand, the school is able to determine the composition of its learner body by defining the school's feeder area.

Similarly, state Nkomo et al (1995), the opening of schools in South Africa has led to desegregation but not to deracialisation. This, they claim, is evident through tests in languages, as well as standardised intelligence quotient tests.

As will be discussed in this chapter, both school L and school W seem to have two processes of selection at play – one transparent to the choice-makers, and one only known by those operating within the school. This two-way mirror of selecting learners also seems to be more rooted in ideological objectives, rather than in straightforward selection procedures. This means that not every learner or choice-maker is experiencing equity of access.

5.4.1. SCHOOL W

The selection process at school W which is public knowledge consists of obtaining an application form, attending an interview and waiting for a letter of acceptance or refusal. The unofficial version, which is only known to the headmaster and staff, is based on a set of criteria, which deliberately keeps a certain group of learners at bay.

Since the school has a feeder area, it is obliged to accept learners who live near the school, but the school may also accept learners from further afield, meaning outside the feeder area. Other than the issue of geography, the only other overt selection criterion relates to the interview and the learner's response to that.

What applicants are not aware of is the fact that the school also uses language proficiency as a criterion for acceptance. More specifically, applicants have to be proficient in English in order to gain entry. This seems to be a reasonable expectation, but not if this criterion happens to only apply to African learners. Coloured, Indian and White learners have always been exposed to English medium environments. This is not the case in township schools, where most African learners are coming from.

In explaining the low number of African learners in, and specifically in grade eight, the headmaster explained that the school does not encourage the enrolment of

African learners, especially when they are very weak in English and Afrikaans. The school feels that the main problem is that learners at all schools do not have to pass both languages in grades eight and nine, as stipulated by the WCED, but suddenly are required to do so from grade ten onwards. More commonly it is the African learner who is not English or Afrikaans speaking. This means that most of the African learners encounter serious difficulties, which leads to a high failure rate in grade ten. He stressed, however, that the school does consider the applications of learners applying from the Cape Flats or the townships. In the end, the perceived likelihood of learner success is used to justify the exclusion of non-English speaking African learners.

5.4.2. SCHOOL L

Not only does school L have a two-dimensional selection process, but the deputy headmaster and senior teacher who were interviewed also had two different interpretations of this process. As far as the deputy headmaster was concerned, the sibling factor was the strongest criterion which ensured enrolment. He did not believe that academic performance of applicants was the deciding factor on whether they were accepted or not.

The senior teacher on the selection committee provided a different version of how learners were being selected. He agreed that history and family were important as far as enrolment of learners was concerned, but when the school received so many applications, other criteria had to be taken into consideration. And the one other criterion which enjoyed enormous focus is academic performance.

The official selection process involves obtaining an application form, applying, and waiting for a reply. The criteria for selection include looking at the sibling factor, as well as paying close attention to the academic capability of the learner. The interesting thing about school L is that it has always had a reputation of academic excellence. This clearly provides a drawcard for choice-makers.

Like school W, school L is keeping a certain group of learners at bay. The sibling factor means that those learners who are already in attendance will ensure the enrolment

of others related to them. The criterion of academic performance means that those learners who do not meet the academic requirements of the school will be excluded.

Given the allocation of resources and level of education at schools in South Africa, it comes as no surprise that it is the African learner who comes from the most disadvantaged background. The African learner would not have had a sibling at the school to begin with, since the school was officially a Coloured school. Similarly, unless the African learner has an outstanding academic ability his or her chances of gaining entry to school L are even more unlikely.

According to Glatter et al (1997), there is some evidence that schools gain in terms of their image if they have some kind of appealing defining feature that sets them apart from others. Schools with a focus on the academic appear to be catering for parents who particularly emphasise this. From another perspective, Wells and Crain (1992) claim that educational choices based more on school-status factors than on school-quality factors have for a long time contributed to the extremely separate and unequal educational opportunities for minority students.

5.4.3. THE SELECTION PROCESS: CONCLUDING COMMENT

In the interplay between learner choice and school selection of learners there are two dimensions to the selection process at each school: one structured and official, the other unstructured and internal. This two-dimensional process is particularly strong at school L, where geographical proximity is not looked at. Contradictions exist not only in the selection process at school L, but also in the versions of procedures as related to me by the deputy headmaster and the senior teacher. Also, in their refusal to comment on the low number of African learners in grade eight, it appears to me, that there is an unwillingness to reveal the full story surrounding selection procedures at the school.

School L has a very different selection process to that at school W – both in content and time. Statistically speaking school L has a longer queue of learners wanting entry than does school W. Unlike school W, school L does not have a designated feeder area, and can therefore draw its learners from all across the Western Cape – and as we have found, the school caters for eighteen different areas – and that is only as regards the

grade eight group. None of the learners at school L live within walking distance of the school. This means that every grade eight learner at school uses some means of transport in order to get to school.

The impression that the selection process at school W projects is that who enters the school is determined by who lives in the area. In other words, because there are few African families living in the school's feeder area, there are few African learners entering the school. However, it has already been established that up to 47 grade eight learners at school W do not reside in the feeder area. Therefore school W is in fact not drawing its learners exclusively from its immediate area, and is practising what school L is doing, namely, drawing learners from a wide range of areas. This means that any learner should be able to have an equal chance of selection, since the feeder area is not as important as one is led to believe.

School W also aims to select learners who are likely to succeed academically, but they do not hold as much appeal for such learners as does school L. Consequently, they have to select learners from a less academically strong pool of applicants.

Within the selection process at both school L and school W, there is a certain rhetoric at play. The actual selection process at each school may be very different from the rhetoric in that both schools are keeping African learners at bay. Both school L and school W each have a total of 205 grade eight learners, yet each only has eight and fourteen Black learners, respectively. The issue of selection therefore is in the power of the school. Or as White (1988) puts it, the competition which exists between learners to get into one school stems from the power which a school has over the learner. Both school W and school L have the power to select, though school L has greater selection power than does school W.

5.5. WHO IS ENTERING EACH SCHOOL?

Upon examination the interplay between learner choice and the school selection of learners has a lot to do with whether the learner matches the profile of 'desirable learners' within the school. For instance, because school L has a reputation of being academically strong the learners who are selected must be academically inclined. School W is selecting *

learners who, according to the headmaster, would most benefit from being at the school. Each school, it seems, wants 'desirable learners', but this is not necessarily known to the choice-maker. So what type of learner is accepted at each school? The next sub-sections will respond to this question.

5.5.1. IDENTITY OF LEARNER IN TERMS OF RACE AND CLASS

Both school L and school W are predominantly Coloured in learner composition. While school W has ten White learners in grade eight, school L has none. And while there are eight African learners at school L, there are fourteen at school W. Hence, while school W has completely shifted in the demographic profile of its learners since 1992, school L has not changed at all.

As far as the issue of class is concerned, the learners at school L include a higher proportion of learners from professional families than the learners at school W. This means that school L has a higher proportion of middle class learners in grade eight than school W, which by implication would have a higher proportion of working class learners.

The issue of class or cultural capital (see Bourdieu, 1993) impacts on and constrains the level of parental choice and involvement. According to Ball et al, (1996) parental choice is not susceptible to one definitive analysis; there are recurring themes like the multifaceted relationship between social class and choice. In the terms of Ball et al (1996), there are three types of choosers. The working class are disconnected choosers; the middle class are privileged or skilled choosers; while the semi-skilled choosers come from a variety of class backgrounds.

Goldring (1997) takes the relationship between class and school choice further. She argues that higher income parents are more likely to choose schools because of the academic reputation of the school. In contrast, lower income parents are more likely to choose on the basis of the availability of special services. School choice, concludes Goldring, is derived from the financial status and by implication, the class of the parents.

In terms of this study the school L parents have a higher incidence of professional backgrounds. This means that the school L parents fall into a higher income bracket.

Linked to this is the fact that the categories of academic status and discipline are the top bases of choice at school L.

The majority of the parents at School W, on the other hand, come from a background of skilled and semi-skilled occupations. This means that they are lower-income breadwinners. The top categories of bases of choice at this school are discipline and geographical proximity.

Therefore while the higher income parents at school L opt for academic status and discipline, the lower income parents at school W place more emphasis on discipline and proximity.

5.5.1. FEEDER AREAS OF LEARNERS

When the Group Areas Act became enforced most of the people, who once lived in the area of school L had moved to the Cape Flats (Athlone) and to Mitchell's Plain. What becomes clear from the data in Table F is even though these communities were forced to leave their homes, they have managed to maintain some form of connection through sending their children to school L.

As expected, school L has a far greater diversity of feeder areas than school W. Learners attending school L are coming from a total of twenty different areas, and that is just the grade eight group, as opposed to the sum of twelve in the school W sample. When the areas are examined in terms of class, it can be deduced that the learners at school W are coming from a bigger range of middle class areas, not to mention from more previously whites only areas – such as Rondebosch East, Kenwyn and Ottery. Areas such as Retreat, Grassy Park and Wynberg (below the railway line) have historically always been predominantly Coloured only areas, and commonly associated with working class communities. However, this assumption is repudiated by the higher proportion of professionals in the school L sample than in the school W sample. One possible explanation for this contradictory information is that while the school W parents have opted to move into formerly Whites only areas, the school L parents have opted to remain in formerly Coloureds only areas.

5.5.3. WHO IS ENTERING: CONCLUDING COMMENT

As far as the interplay between learner choice and the school selection of learners is concerned, it has become clear that the selection process at each school has an unwritten layer to it, which is not perceived in the same way by all participants. For instance, school W does not encourage the enrolment of African learners because of the problem which African learners encounter in grade ten, namely, having to pass both English and Afrikaans. On the other hand, school L gives the impression that all applicants have the same chance of gaining entry into the school, when in fact the school has very stringent criteria for enrolment. There is clear evidence, not only in the matric results of school L, but also in the reports of applicants, that the learners are indeed academically strong.

The interplay between learner choice and the school selection of learners has little to do with the choice-maker's democratic right to choose a school. It has even less to do with how early you apply, or whether you fall into the feeder area of the school. Just as each choice-maker wants different things from each school, so each school wants different things from the learners they enrol. Admission ultimately is based on how well the choice-maker fits the profile of desirable learners which has been constructed by the school.

School L and school W want the same type of learner. School W wants one who, in the words of the headmaster, will best benefit from an education at its institution, and if you happen to live in the area and if you and your parents say the right things during the interview, then you are what school W wants. This amounts to a preference for academically strong learners. School L, in keeping with its strong traditions, wants learners with family ties to the schools, but it would be an immense advantage if your grade six results show academic promise.

The selection processes at both schools smacks of elitism. The choice-maker is given the impression that it is s/he who makes the school choice – this is only true when the learner happens to be accepted at the school of his or her choice. While the choice-maker has the right to choose, it is the school, which holds the power whether to say yes or no.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The word 'choice' has a certain ring of freedom to it, a special sense of having the know-how and right to select, to favour. But in this freedom to exercise individual preference lies the implied power of discrimination – not this, but that. Having the right to choose wasn't easy to achieve, nor has its multifaceted meaning been allowed to slip us by. Having the right to opt for, or to decide upon, is not only an individual practice. Indeed, it is by definition and design the choice of everybody and everything. Just as the South African choice-maker may now choose one school over the next, so a school can turn down one choice-maker for the other. That is the power of choice – you may choose, but you have to be chosen in order to obtain your choice. The practice of school choice is not immune to the ambiguities of choice. In fact, it has served to highlight the precarious nature of choice in operation.

The interplay of school choice between learner and school is primarily premised on the choice-maker's decision to apply to a certain school, and for the school, in turn, to either accept or refuse that application. The composition and reputation of the school is to a large extent the determinants of what type of learner applies and is accepted there. Similarly, the make-up and identity of the learner is determined by the school choice s/he makes.

The interplay between learner choice and school selection of learners at school L and school W takes on very different characteristics, and has equally different results. On a superficial level, the choice-makers at each school want different things from the school, which they have chosen. By the same token, the selection criteria employed by each school is fundamentally different.

The balance between learner choice and school selection is weighted according to the length of the queue at each school. In the case of school L, based on the findings involving school choice, and on the fact that the school receives between 600 and 700 grade eight applicants per annum, we know that it has a longer queue than school W.

It has already been established that there is a certain rhetoric at play at each school in order to keep a particular group of learners at bay. So how does each school manage to

select certain learners, and deliberately exclude others? In the case of school W, the action of exclusion arises during the actual selection process. In other words, in the interview teams sifting through the list of learners who have applied, the following criteria come into play: geography, performance during interview, academic weaknesses, and language proficiency. While living in the feeder area does not guarantee acceptance, not being proficient in English virtually guarantees exclusion.

At school L, the practice of exclusion is to a certain extent part of the application process. Up to the end of 1998 only those learners who were already part of the school L network would have access to information regarding the opening and closing periods of application. The method of selecting learners centres on factors of academic performance and siblings. The fact that the school does not have a designated feeder area would hold the implication that anybody can apply and would stand an equal chance of being accepted. This, however, is not the case at school L.

Clearly both schools are positioned in the education market by their histories. What we have is one school with a high profile of academic success versus a school with a low profile of academic success. School L has an established reputation for academic excellence. It has in its favour a stable and consensual school culture, which has been protected by the very learners who are being accepted. Its closed social network has not been disturbed by the onset of open schools in South Africa.

School W, on the other hand, does not have the reputation which school L has. School W has been caught up in the momentum of the implications of open schools. Not only is the demography of learners in flux, but the school has had to re-define and re-align itself with the community, which constitutes its population.

The interplay between race and class in learner choice and school selection is very specific to the historical trajectory of each school. Both attract predominantly lower middle class learners, though one is able to attract more learners from professional backgrounds than the other. Both tend to exclude African learners. But while school W is losing its middle class White learners and retaining a minority of working class White learners, school L is able to build on its historical capacity to attract middle class learners. Thus, both schools are competing for middle class Coloured learners, but school L is historically better positioned to draw these learners.

In conclusion, on the one hand, schools have varying capacities to select and they do in ways which differentiate between learners on the basis of academic ability, race, class and the place of residence. School L and school W prioritise these criteria differently. On the other hand, choice-makers have varying capacities to choose. Some are more mobile than others, or conform more closely to the schools' profile of desirable learners. By desirable learners is meant learners who are academically strong and would improve the image of the school. The choice-makers all prioritise discipline, academic status, type of learners, quality of resources, geographical proximity and the attendance of family members, but they prioritise these criteria differently.

The choice-makers at school L, where there is a higher proportion of professional parents, give greater priority to academic status and discipline. While the choice-makers at school W give greater priority to discipline and geographical proximity. In other words, the one group gives greater priority to educational outcomes – possibly because they are more able to bear the cost of inconvenience, such as transport. This group is what Ball (1996) refers to as the privileged or skilled choosers. The other group gives greater priority to the logistical difficulties of access and the material conditions of the school. According to Ball's (1996) terminology, these are the semi-skilled and disconnected choosers.

The study shows that income, by itself, does not determine the strength of the school in the schooling market. School L set substantially lower fees, yet is better positioned to attract more desirable learners, i.e. middle class Coloured learners. The culture and status of the school, as well as its already established strong links with, holds appeal to a middle class Coloured constituency. This status has been maintained in spite of less attractive resources, the absence of a school hall, higher numbers in classes and lower income from fees. Nevertheless, there are indications that school L is likely to increase its fees in order to improve its material resources and learner-teacher ratios. Its relatively strong position in the education market enables it to do so.

Selection processes, such as the ones in place at school L and school W are not conducive to a climate of positive change. They are not likely to counter social inequalities, and more importantly, these policies will not lead to equity of access. Improved quality of education (Levin and Riffel, 1997), and Goldring's (1997) idea

that public schools of choice attract learners of different racial and socio-economic backgrounds with similar educational interests so as to create racially heterogeneous schools are just not a part of the selection processes, which constitute the other half of school choice.

Finally, what are the implications of these school selection and learner choice dynamics? Ultimately, the choice-makers who are seen as desirable learners and the better positioned schools are likely to find each other. In other words, school L, with its status of academic excellence will always attract learners who themselves value academic performance. While the learners who are academically weak and are less desirable are more likely to be available for selection by less well positioned schools. Both school L and school W, however, are able to exclude the least desirable learners, i.e. the working class African learners.

Thus school L is better placed than school W to entrench and improve its position and resources as a middle class Coloured school. At the same time, learners at school L, who generally arrive with more economic and academic capital than those at school W, are likely to increase that advantage. It is the finding of this study that existing school choice policies which are in practice in South African schools today play a contributory role in the widening of social inequalities. Since choice-makers or social groups do not enter the educational market as equals, it is those with the cultural capital who benefit most from this marketisation. However, they do so within historically produced contexts which shape the linkages between race, class and geography in very specific ways. Therefore, the interplay of learner choice and school selection demonstrates the reinforcement of social inequalities and ultimately inequity of access.

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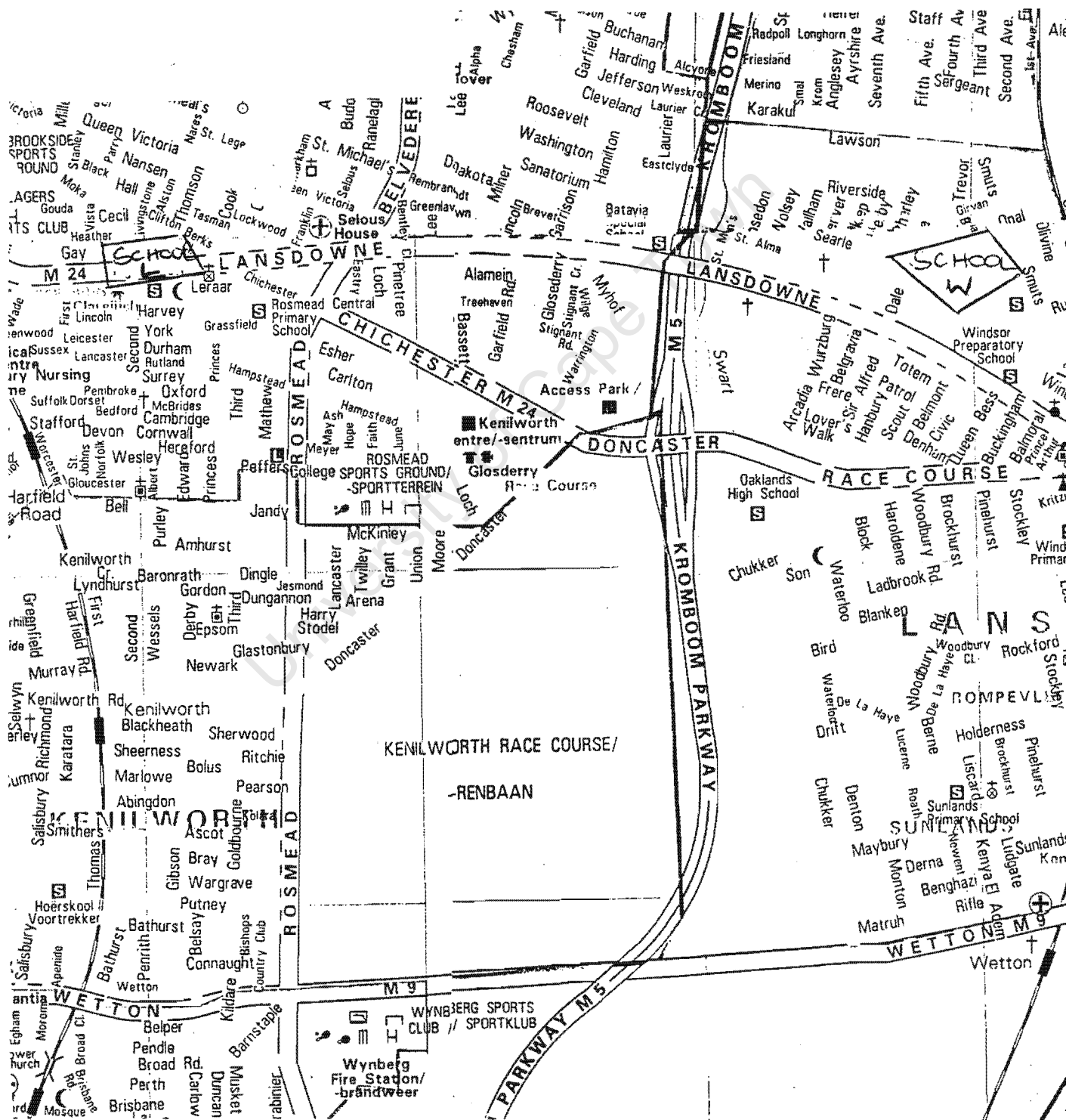
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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

MAP LOCATING SCHOOL L AND SCHOOL W



APPENDIX 2

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW : HEADMASTER – SCHOOL W
DATE: 9 DECEMBER 1998

1. When did school W become an open school?

In 1990. But the situation the school was facing at that time was unique. Middle class Coloured families were moving into the area, while middle class White families were moving out. At the same time working class White families were unable to move out. Amongst middle class White parents there existed the perception that the closer to the mountain the geographical location of the school, the better the education. So the school was losing its pupils at an alarming rate. In order to keep the doors open the school had to accept Coloured pupils.

2. How did the advent of the ‘open school’ concept affect enrolment figures at Windsor?

There has been a considerable decline in White applications, since the area has shifted from a working class to a middle class area. In 1998 we only have ten White pupils in grade eight. There has been resistance to this shift from White parents, as well as the staff at the school. It is always difficult to change the mindset of people. But the school has a policy of zero tolerance of racism, or any other kind of prejudice. I have made it quite clear to all staff members that if they are accused of racism by any pupil or parent then they will be on their own.

3. Does the school employ selection / admission criteria?

Basically we have to accept the pupils living in our area. This year we received approximately 350 applicants, of which we enrolled 186. We give preference to those pupils who we feel will most benefit from an education at the school.

4. Could you be more precise about the enrolment process?

Application forms are available from the school during the second term. Parents of pupils in grade seven are allowed to apply during that time. Our feeder schools are Kerwyn, Ferndale, Sunlands, Rondebosch East and recently York Road. This, however, does not mean automatic entrance into the school. We have devised an interview system, which consists of two teachers. We expect one or both of the parents together with the pupil to attend this interview. This attendance in itself forms part of the selection process. We are looking at whether the parents and the pupil are able to attend an interview on time. The interview format consists of a point system, and if the pupil scores below 30, then that pupil will be excluded from enrolment. During the interview we look at the general appearance of the child, how he responds to questions, his attitude and body language. We also gain insight into the background of the pupil and his parents. You can check the interview assessment for more details.

5. On which basis are learners excluded?

Well, we have encountered rude and disrespectful pupils in interviews. This has meant automatic exclusion. Also, where a child is academically very weak we will not accept that child. If we are unsure about a particular pupil then I will contact the headmaster of the child's primary school and make inquiries. Based on the type of information I get that child will either be accepted or excluded. But generally we will first focus on those children living in the area and then top up from outlying areas.

6. If you are catering primarily for learners living in your area, does this mean that you will have very few African learners at school W?

Yes, it does. We do not encourage the enrolment of Black pupils, especially when they are very weak in English and Afrikaans. The problem is that they do not have to pass both languages in grades eight and nine. Then suddenly in grade ten they have to pass both. This is when most of our Black pupils encounter serious difficulties and fail. However, we do look at the pupil coming from the Cape Flats

or the townships, since there is obviously a reason for them wanting to attend this school.

7. Why do you think learners are applying to school W?

We have sent a message to the community that at this school it is work from the first day. It is business as usual, when other schools are being disrupted by marches and meetings, we put the pupil first. It has also been a governing body decision that every child at this school must have a textbook. We also have a very strict and strong emphasis on discipline, and this we believe is maintained through the physical appearance of our pupils.

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APPENDIX 3

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW : DEPUTY HEADMASTER – SCHOOL L
DATE: 25 NOVEMBER 1998

1. **How did the advent of the ‘open school’ concept affect enrolment figures at school L?**

Prior to 1994 the school had political resilience – when pupils from previously model C schools, primary or high, applied to the school we were resistant to such enrolment. It was felt that if our school was not good enough to begin with, then why did it become an option later in the child’s schooling.

Post ’94, however, we underwent a change in policy, and we accepted model C pupils – people recognised the standards at L. But because of the ‘coloured’ mindset of the parents, we still struggle to get the pupils to wear their uniforms, for example.

2. **The perception is that former HOR schools lost their cream of the crop to former HOA schools. Do you agree with this perception?**

Only in terms of economics. We lose approximately 50-100 pupils per annum, but only the parents who have the money will make the exodus. And any other reasons are unclear. However, we still have a queue, and we have made a conscious decision to decrease our numbers for the next three years. And it has become a general principle that we will not accept any pupils from grades 9-12, unless there are really extraordinary circumstances.

3. **Have you received any applications from White learners?**

Off the record – we had five applications from white pupils this year, of which four were refused. The one is in grade 9. Those four pupils were refused on the grounds that they arrived at the school without their parents. This to us was a poor reflection of the parents’ involvement in their child’s education. We pride

ourselves on tradition and parental participation. Then there is also the political responsibility and heritage, which is attached to this school.

4. Who and how many teachers are in charge of grade eight selections?

Nine teachers are involved in the selection process, including the headmistress. But you will be better informed if you spoke to Mr. M, since I am not on this committee //.

5. Does the school employ selection / admission criteria?

There is a selection process. Admissions open between February and March between 9 –11 am. The pupil has to be in grade seven. We require the December results of grade six, since it has been our experience that schools inflate the results of grade seven so as to ensure entry into grade eight. In any case, the June grade seven report is unavailable between February and March. There is a list of criteria, of which the biggest is the sibling factor, which means automatic acceptance, since we are a school who enjoys a strong sense of history. Acceptance of siblings also means a rebate on school fees, which parents appreciate. But once again, a committee member would be able to provide you with more details.

6. Why do you think pupils are applying to L?

Firstly, the majority of the pupils' parents are ex-pupils. There is also a perception that we have strong discipline. Discipline, however, has slipped over the years, since you were here, for example. But we still try to maintain a high sense of discipline. There has been a dramatic change in staff. We have approximately 8 – 14 staff changes per year. This, I believe, has led to a poor staff image. There is also a feeling that we are academically strong, which is something we push for in our pupils. Prior to '94 both the school and the parents held a political conviction of a 'rounded education' at L. With the open schools the calibre of parents has also dropped. In post '94 we have lost the strong learner-parent relationship which this school once enjoyed.

7. **Would you agree with the statement that the learner population at L is predominantly a middle to upper class one?**

Yes, although we do have a sizable group coming from working class group.

8. **Have you had to re-market the school in order to remain competitive?**

I don't think that the staff has really looked at the structure of the school enough in terms of what is happening at surrounding schools. L. should shift focus from an academic to a broader vision. It has to put in place certain resources – the physical extension of the school – incorporating more outside organisations. Now already the WPCA (Newlands) has initiated a programme, which has adopted L. It has made available to the school all the fields in and around Newlands – squash, tennis, cricket, soccer., rugby, as well as seminar rooms for teacher development. Then there is also our involvement with the Royal Cape Yacht Club. But this shift in focus has to be done on a broader scale.

APPENDIX 4**INTERVIEW : SENIOR TEACHER - MEMBER OF SELECTION
COMMITTEE****DATE: 26 NOVEMBER 1998****1. Who is on the selection committee?**

The principal, one of the deputy principals and seven other teachers, including myself, who volunteered to be on the committee

2. Explain your selection / enrolment procedure.

Generally there are three phases involved. Firstly, between February and March three week open period in which parents or guardians of grade seven pupils can collect admission forms. These forms must be returned by a set date. They must also provide the school with a copy of the grade six report. Secondly, there is the selection process. We employ certain criteria, which ranges from siblings, subject streaming, academic performance to Maths capability, since it is compulsory at this school. Then there are also those pupils who come from Rosmead. There used to be a time when all Rosmead pupils were guaranteed a place at L. This is no longer the case. Pupils who wish to do Art as a subject have to attend workshops and are given exercises so as to assess their potential. We do not look at existing portfolios, since those could have been completed by anybody. Pupils, who wish to study Music have to have grade three, as well as undergo an audition with the Music teacher. Parents are given a selection card, from which they may select a particular stream, such as German, or make a general application. We try to accommodate those who wish to follow certain streams and then top up the general applications. We give preference to pupils who have family connections to the school, since the school is strong on traditional links. Pupils are excluded if there are fixed to a certain stream and cannot be accommodated. Thirdly, we send out acceptance letters.

3. Does academic capability play any role in this selection criteria?

Like I said before, we give preference to pupils who have a link to the school. We receive approximately 600 – 700 applications every year. We only have 180 places. Academic performance is of importance.

4. Why are there so few black pupils at L?

That is a difficult question to answer – one, which I can't really answer.

University of Cape Town

APPENDIX 5

ACCOMPANYING LETTER TO QUESTIONNAIRE, ADDRESSED TO PARENTS
OR GUARDIANS

16 October 1998

Dear Parents / Guardians

I am currently engaged in a Master's degree, specialising in Educational Administration, Planning and Social Policy at the University of Cape Town. My research area focuses on how school choice operates in a post-apartheid South Africa. The Grade 8 group of each school has been selected, since this the group, who have made school choice decisions most recently. I hope that, through this research, policy makers will gain some insight into the experiences of learners and their parents regarding school choice.

You are requested to complete the enclosed questionnaire to the best of your knowledge and return it to the school by the **23 October 1998**. Rest assured that neither your name nor any other information will be revealed to the school / individual, or in the study.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Nuraan Davids

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Dissertation supervisor

APPENDIX 6QUESTIONNAIRE HANDED TO GRADE EIGHT LEARNERS AT SCHOOL AND
SCHOOL WQUESTIONNAIRE*To be completed by the person who made the school choice*

SCHOOL: _____

NAME OF LEARNER: _____

OCCUPATION OF MAIN BREADWINNER: _____

1. Whose chose the school the learner is attending? _____

2. Address : _____

3. How does the learner travel to school ?

Walk

Car

Bicycle

Public Bus

Train

Taxi

School Bus

Motorbike

4. Is this school your first choice? Y / N _____

- If yes, why was this your first choice? _____

- If not:

(a) Name your first choice _____

(b) Why was this your first choice? _____

5. How many other schools did you apply to before this one? _____

6. In addition to your response in no. 4, which of the following factors influenced your choice?

- Geographical proximity
- Academic status
- Discipline
- Type of pupil
- Smaller classes
- Quality of teachers
- Quality of resources
- Family member/s attends or attended