

**A CRITICAL LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE  
DISCOURSE ON RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES IN  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO ESTABLISH THE  
HEGEMONIC INFLUENCE OF COLONIAL  
RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND THEIR  
EFFECT ON SCHOOL POPULATIONS**

**by**

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A critical linguistic analysis of the discourse  
on religious observances in public schools to  
establish the hegemonic influence of colonial  
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school populations

by

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Thesis in compliance with the requirements for the Doctor's Degree in  
Language Practice in the Department of Media, Language and  
Communication, Durban University of Technology.

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for any  
other degree or examination at any other institution.

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## **Abstract**

Even after political liberation in South Africa, a mismatch exists between the principles of freedom of religious observance taught in Religion Education and the actual religious observances in public schools. Anglican hymns, prayers and observances are still being used in schools where the religious ethos has changed from one of Christianity to include Hinduism, Islam and Judaism, as well as Shembe and Zionist religions. The Draft Policy on Religion Education stipulates that there should be a distinction between home religions and the school's official religious instruction. School religious observances, particularly observances which reflect the oppressive nature of past colonial impositions, should not give offence to learners from other religious denominations, or belittle their own practices. This thesis investigates the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances and their possible effect on school populations. Within a critical linguistic approach, which explores the ways in which language both sets in place and reflects the relations of power implicit in social functioning, a critical discourse analysis was carried out on current and topical media texts reporting on contentious issues involving religious observances in schools. Community members were also consulted by means of surveys and interviews so as to provide an overview of the social context of the wider community within which the schools were situated. The resulting data could then be used to triangulate data obtained from the discourse analysis, and either confirm, modify or challenge the latter. The results suggest that, not only is there a strong hegemonic influence present in schools, as a result of the lingering vestiges of traditional colonial Christianity, but that modern Christian movements are also beginning to exert a persuasive influence on non-Christian populations. The issue of religious observance in schools is a highly complex and potentially controversial issue, but one which merits study in view of the fact that the stakeholders' right to freedom of religious observance may be violated on a daily basis.

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# Preface

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of the candidate's knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made or in prior publications/papers by the candidate.

## PRIOR PUBLICATIONS/PAPERS BY THE CANDIDATE

Govindsamy, L. 2011. An analysis of the discourse of religious observances in public schools to establish the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances and their effect on school populations. In *Proceedings of 7th ICE 2011 Conference*, 7 – 9 July, Samos, Greece.

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## REFERENCING STYLE USED

The referencing style used is that given in the *Referencing guide: Harvard referencing style* (Durban University of Technology Library 2013). *EndNote 7* was used to generate the Reference list, using the DUT Harvard EndNote style 2013.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Context of the research

In spite of the fact that South Africa is twenty years into its democracy, very few changes have been made at school level with regard to respecting the learners' religious values in daily school. Ms Angelina Matise Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education in South Africa, stated that the teaching of Indian languages at schools would not be discontinued, and this was met with praise by community leaders (Phoenix Sun Reporter 2011). However, the discourse of religious observances in public schools still does not reflect the diverse religions of the school populations, and reveals that these observances are remnants of colonial domination, mainly of British origin (for example, Anglican hymns at assembly), but also echoing the Dutch Calvinism which prompted Christian National Education (CNE). What is even worse, Claassen (2003) reports that many South African public schools are flouting the National Policy on Religion Education (South Africa. Department of Education 1996) by openly using indoctrination to influence pliable and vulnerable youth in South Africa.

This study deals with the lack of religious tolerance at schools in South Africa, which suggests that there has been no actual implementation of the South African Schools Act Policy on Religious Education. The onus for implementation lies firmly in the hands of the Education Department, educators, school governing bodies and teacher unions. As Roux points out: "Since 2003, Religion in Education has a democratic government-approved policy document that enhances opportunities to explore religious diversity and to improve and celebrate respect for diversity" (2009: 3). It is the contention of this study, however, that the Department of Education (DOE) has done little to implement the existing policy to provide adequately for the learners' religious diversity. The political situation has changed considerably since the 1994 elections in South Africa, and yet many learners of diverse



religious denominations are not shown respect for their religion at school assemblies. In KwaZulu-Natal, where the numbers of the Indian community are highest, the national government has done very little to promote the cultural, traditional and religious ethos of Hindu citizens.

It is possible that the Government's apparent lack of interest in promoting cultural religious diversity springs from the determination to keep the Constitution free of religious elements (Jansen 2012); for example, there is no "God" mentioned in the new South African Constitution (but "God" is mentioned in the Preamble, see Kumar 2006: 276). The policy is necessary, and has long been overdue, in terms of giving full expression to the invocation of respect of all religions in our Constitution and the principles governing religious freedom (Asmal 2003). This is in sharp contrast to the previous policy (South Africa. Department of Education 1996). It is also possible that the liberation Government wished to avoid the excesses of the Apartheid Government in promoting CNE. However, the multiple denominations within indigenous African cultures would seem to require more than lip service to religious tolerance; some focus on the very diverse religious needs of the learners is clearly needed.

## **1.2 Research problem**

The research problem to be addressed was arrived at by means of the research problem cycle (Pratt 2007), as will be described below.

### **1.2.1 The social problem**

The wider social (i.e. "real-world") problem (Waghid 2002) to be addressed was identified as follows. It was evident from the literature reviewed (see Chapter 2) that the South African liberation government's attempts to provide a policy regulating fair and equitable religious (or other) belief practices in schools celebrating the rich cultural diversity of South Africa's population had run into problems at the implementation stage. Evidence was also found in the literature to suggest that remnants of colonial observances entrenched in

public school practices may have overridden post-liberation attempts to have an equitable dispensation operating in public schools. This was seen to work against the South African Constitution's celebration of diversity, including religious diversity. Having identified this as the real-world problem, this study set out to explore any lingering hegemonic influences of colonial religious observances and their effect on school populations, as in the title of the thesis. The title then sums up the "purpose statement" of the thesis (Creswell 2007: 103-104), which is expanded into the general aims given below.

### **1.2.2 The social problem narrowed down to research problem**

In the second phase of the research problem cycle, the real-world problem was narrowed down to the research problem (Creswell 2007: 102-103). This constituted investigating the reactions of members of selected public school populations in KwaZulu-Natal to current religious practices in public schools, as set against their own personal religious belief systems. Because of the sensitivity of the topic, and the need for anonymity, reactions published in media articles were also investigated, as well as the reactions of members of actual public school populations.

### **1.2.3 The research questions**

The third phase of the research problem cycle involved posing research questions to guide the inquiry (Creswell 2007: 107-113). After a review of relevant literature in order to focus on the specific problem to be addressed, the following research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent can the influence of colonial observances be found in current religious observances in public schools?
2. What does analysis of the discourse on current religious observances in public schools reveal about the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances on school populations?

3. In view of the answers to the above, what recommendations could be made about religious observances in public schools?

As the issue was one of empowerment in terms of religious practice not being aligned with liberation policy, as the many examples in the literature review suggested, answers were sought within a critical linguistic approach, as is described in Chapter 3 (Research orientation and methodology).

#### **1.2.4 Anticipated research answers and limitations**

With regard to the fourth phase of the research problem cycle, it was anticipated that data would confirm the hypothesis that the lingering hegemonic influences of colonial religious observances still affected multicultural school populations in a bias which was discriminatory and therefore unfair to some stakeholders. It was not thought that this would be the only hegemonic influence operating, as religion itself is permeated with complex relations of power (Dirks 1989). It was also anticipated that culturally diverse hegemonic influences might be seen to operate where indigenous and inter- and intra-ethnic influences came into play, in keeping with a culturally diverse society. However, while these were noted (and commented on) in passing, it was beyond the scope of this study to focus on *all* hegemonic influences operating on religious observances in public schools, which meant that the research was limited to focusing on colonial influences.

### **1.3 Aims and objectives**

The general aim of the research, then, was to investigate the discourse on religious observances in public schools to establish the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances and to investigate the effect of these religious observances on the school population. It was hoped that this might suggest suitable recommendations which could be made to schools and to the Education Department for ensuring not only religious tolerance and

freedom, but that groups other than Christian were not marginalised when it came to the religious observances of the school.

The specific objectives for this study were as follows:

- to assess the extent of the influence of colonial practices on current religious observances in public schools;
- to investigate the reactions of members of the school population, both in the community and in media articles, to current religious practices in public schools, as set against their own personal religious belief systems.
- to formulate recommendations about school religious practices which might be acceptable to all role players within a multicultural school body.

The motivation for this study came from the researcher's experiences of attending school in the apartheid era from Grade R to Grade 12, where exclusively Christian prayers were recited, although the school population consisted of mainly Hindu learners. Later, as an educator, the researcher observed that the school prayers still did not cater for the Hindu faith, but no one at that point questioned why this was so. The status quo was accepted by parents because it was the apartheid "law" that the school follow the Christian ethos. It was the researcher's hope that one day she would make a change to that state of affairs which led her, twenty-five years later, to investigate this topic.

From the researcher's perspective, there was certainly very little attention given to it. Both modernization and the increasing secularisation of families appear to have resulted in a gross neglect of traditional value systems (Post Reporter 2012: 15). The new educational structure has also not facilitated the adequate incorporation of religious tolerance at school assemblies in South Africa, and this has affected learners, who are losing the traditional knowledge systems which should have enabled them to develop religious cultural values. In the context of the South African pluralistic society, it would seem advisable at least to include materials in school assemblies from the

different religious traditions, so that the learners can draw knowledge from their cultural religious resources for their development. However, the results of this study suggest that the situation is complex and conflicted, and that the way forward must be negotiated with care.

## **1.4 Main themes of the research**

The following main themes of the research are briefly discussed, namely, the anomaly of a secular constitution governing the diverse religious practices of a multi-faith population, the dominance of colonial religious practices in South Africa, the impact of hegemonic influence on people's everyday lives, and the mismatch between South African policy on religion and practice in public schools.

### **1.4.1 Secular constitution vs. diverse everyday religious practices**

One key theme is the anomaly of a secular constitution governing the diverse religious practices of a multicultural (and therefore "multi-faith") population. South Africa, while it has a multi-faith but predominantly Christian population, has a secular constitution which is clearly intended to ensure "fairness" to all of its diverse citizens, and protection of individuals' religious rights is specifically mentioned. It will be suggested in the course of this study that secularity, far from being the answer to religious diversity, can in fact lead to violations of people's ethnic and cultural religious rights on a daily basis. This study will look at the ways in which the lives of the "little people" are affected by sweeping national directives and policies, often set in place in the interests of "fairness" or "equality". The findings of this study will suggest that application of these policies may in fact violate certain groups' religious beliefs on an everyday basis, leading to conflict and, in extreme cases, litigation. Litigation by offended individuals cannot, however, set right what the secular South African constitution has so far failed to do: ensure that the rights to individual religious freedom are upheld. Court cases are, moreover, expensive, stressful, often prolonged, and, in the case of the religious rights

of minors at public schools, potentially even more traumatic for the children concerned than the actual offences against them.

#### **1.4.2 The dominance of colonial religious practices**

In the 2014 South Africa Demographics Profile (Index Mundi 2014), South Africa's religious diversity is reflected in the statistics shown in Table 1.1, which shows the relative size of the various religious groups. It can be seen that the Christian group (whether Protestant or Catholic) far outnumbers other groups at nearly 80%. Traditional Indian religions (e.g. Muslim and Hindu) thus fall within a possible 3% minority. In spite of the fact that within this Christian majority, large numbers of black Christians are "culturally and socially at variance with the white Christians" (Kumar 2006: 281), the figures (from the 2001 Census) suggest that non-Christians are in danger of being swamped or overlooked where the religious preferences of parents for their children at school are considered.

Table 1.1 Statistics of religious groups in South Africa (Index Mundi 2014)

Religions	Protestant 36.6% (Zionist Christian 11.1%, Pentecostal/Charismatic 8.2%, Methodist 6.8%, Dutch Reformed 6.7%, Anglican 3.8%), Catholic 7.1%, Muslim 1.5%, other Christian 36%, other 2.3%, unspecified 1.4%, none 15.1% (2001 census)
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One of the problems of a democratic system is the protection of minority rights which can regularly be "outvoted" by the majority in an apparently "fair" process. While lip service is paid by the government - and most people - to the respect needed for diverse religious practices, it is another thing for people to have to cope with this diversity on an everyday basis, as will be suggested by the data gathered from community members and media articles.

The dominance of colonial religious practices leads to two more sub-themes, which are, however, important in their own right, that is, how hegemonic influence operates to impact on people's everyday lives, in particular their religious observances, and the mismatch between policy and practice in religious observances in public schools.

#### **1.4.3 The impact of hegemonic influence on people's everyday lives**

Another key theme, and in fact part of the title of this study, is how hegemonic influence operates to impact on people's everyday lives, in particular their religious observances. It will be suggested in this study that the implicit way/s in which ideology drives hegemonic influence makes the religious observances of one group seem "normal" and "natural", and others "unnatural", "deviant" or even "evil" (see Blumenfeld 2006). The ideologies are not necessarily those which inform traditional colonial religious practices, but also the beliefs fuelling the growing trend towards the adoption of more modern (and therefore more popular) Christian movements. The manifestations of resistance to hegemonic influence, and how it is handled or not, in specific conflicts, will also be dealt with.

#### **1.4.4 The mismatch between policy on religion and practice in public schools**

The mismatch between government policy on religious education and actual practice in multicultural public schools in South Africa can be seen as a result of the somewhat laissez faire application of the principles of the secular constitution in schools, and the hegemonic influence of not only colonial religious observances but those of today's Christian majority. Although African Christianity may be very different culturally and socially to traditional colonial styles of Christianity, political expediency may mask these differences to result in a united front, as comes across clearly in the analysis of article 8 (Sapa 2014) in Chapter 6. This backs up the contention that more guidance and more rigorous oversight is needed on the issue of the religious rights of individuals governed by a secular constitution.

## **1.5 Definitions of key terms or concepts**

While these are discussed in more detail in the body of the thesis, some of the key terms or concepts are defined briefly here, as follows.

### **1.5.1 Religion Education**

Religion Education is defined as “a set of curriculum outcomes which define what a pupil should know about religion” (South Africa. Department of Education 2003). It is a curricular subject for instruction in religion in general, the different religions of the world, and religious diversity in South Africa and elsewhere (South Africa. Department of Education 2003: paragraph 17). Like other curricular subjects, it is scheduled in the school timetable, and has specific goals and outcomes. It is intended to assist learners to explore the pluralistic nature of religion in South Africa.

### **1.5.2 Religious instruction**

Religious instruction, unlike Religion Education, is a general term used to signify instruction in a particular faith or belief for the purpose of inculcating that belief in learners (South Africa. Department of Education 2003: paragraph 54). In South African, only private schools clearly designated as religious schools may offer religious instruction as part of the curriculum (examples of such schools include convents, seminaries and madrassas).

### **1.5.3 Religious observances**

Religious observances are “those activities and behaviours which recognise and express the views, beliefs and commitments of a particular religion, and may include gatherings of adherents, prayer times, dress and diets” (South Africa. Department of Education 1996: 26). The focus of this study is on observances such as school assemblies, prayers and other discourse reflecting “views, beliefs and commitments of a particular religion”, although other related issues (e.g. dress, diet and regalia) are dealt with.



#### **1.5.4 Religious discrimination**

Religious discrimination can take place in many different ways:

Examples of religious discrimination are as follows: firing an employee or loss of promotion due to the employee's religious beliefs; failure to give an employee a raise until the employee no longer spends time discussing religious beliefs with co-workers; harassment of employees because they wear religious clothing (Huang and Kleiner 2001: 128).

Clothing is an issue at point in South Africa, where Muslim children at a local high school were banned from wearing their traditional "fez" headgear, related to their religious beliefs, to school, because of the school's dress code (Harper 2011). However, religious discrimination at school and the workplace is an international phenomenon, as the analysis of news media in this study will suggest.

#### **1.5.5 Religion and religious beliefs**

According to Vickers:

The simplest way to define a religion is to set out a series of beliefs which any religion will contain. The approach is seen in some of the early cases in the UK in which religions are defined as relating to a belief in God or some other supreme being (2008: 16).

Closer to home, writing in the context of the South African Constitution, Rautenbach, Jansen van Rensburg and Pienaar (2002: 6) cite the following "dictionary definition" of religion as being adequate: "Religion is the belief in a superhuman controlling power, especially in a personal God or gods entitled to obedience and worship". They continue thus: "Religion is normally associated with the existence of a God or gods to whom some form of worship and obedience is due" (2002: 6). To follow up this point, beliefs about the existence of a god are usually represented as being divided into three categories: theism, or the belief that a god exists; atheism, or the belief that a god does not exist; or agnosticism, the view that the existence of a

deity is unknown or unknowable. Sherkat identifies five further variations on beliefs about the existence of a god:

- (1) atheism;
- (2) agnosticism;
- (3) belief in a higher power, but not a personal god;
- (4) belief in god with doubt; and
- (5) certain belief in god (2008: 439).

But while Sherkat's terms might be useful in providing a rule-of-thumb way of referring to religious beliefs, it must be emphasised that they were derived from research carried out in the United States, and, as Blumenfeld (2006), points out, this country is permeated with what he terms "Christian privilege" (2006: 195). The variations Sherkat identifies, then, may not be universal, or true in inter-religious or even *intra*-religious terms. In the Congo region, the diversity of designations of God even in the same language "raises questions on what each designation means and shows that God's symbols vary, depending on actors" (Mudimbe and Kilonzo 2012: 48).

The focus of this study is not to interrogate religious beliefs per se, but the hegemonic influences which may result in dominance of one or more faiths. It is therefore not the intention of this thesis to arrive at a conclusive definition of religion or religious belief, for reasons which should become clear in this section. It is accepted that, in a multi-faith populace, a multiplicity of perceptions of religion and religious belief will exist, both between and within religious groupings. Even the term "groupings" should be regarded with caution, as there are problems identifying what constitutes a "doctrinal school" (see Bellah 2011: 441). Common-sense interpretations in the narratives of participants will therefore be relied on, with the proviso that what is seen as a "natural" or "normal" belief (or object, or practice) may well be suspect in terms of hegemonic influence. However, it is the dominance of certain beliefs (or objects, or practices) which this study investigates, not whether these convictions are "sincerely held" (Cash, Gray and Rood 2000: 127): it is assumed that participants are speaking in good faith about their convictions for the purposes of this project. There are also good reasons for

focusing on participant narratives (whether spoken or written: a news report is also a “story”). Firstly, narrative is one of the sites of discourse research (Ainsworth and Hardy 2004: 154). Next, as Bellah (2011: 33) points out: “the truth of a narrative in this sense [i.e. the mythical sense] does not arise from the ‘correspondence’ of its words or sentences to ‘reality,’ but from the coherence of the story as a whole”. This suggests that we cannot necessarily elicit disparate religious “beliefs” from participant narratives, but must take the “stories” at face value.

This brings us to the issue that beliefs may not necessarily be viewed in terms of abstract concepts, as in the definitions given at the beginning of this section. Olupona refers to the need to study religions in Africa “not as fixed beliefs and practices, but as sacred orientations and activities that produce meaningful responses from others” (2012: xxi). In some instances, rituals, regalia, dress and sacred objects *are* the religion; beliefs are contained *in* these elements, rather than being represented *by* them. Durkheim’s contention was that “beliefs and rites are inseparable because the rites are often the *sole manifestation of otherwise imperceptible ideas*” (Jones 1986: 115, my emphasis). In some cultures religious ritual blends with what westerners would see as “secular” areas of life. Dirks (1988: 3) reports that, in India, “Not only is there no fundamental ontological separation of a ‘religious’ from a ‘political’ domain, but religious institutions and activities are fundamental features of what we describe here [i.e. in the West] as the political system.”

Religious belief in itself is problematic to define. As Cash, Gray and Rood (2000: 127) point out, when attempting to define religious beliefs as accommodated in the workplace: “Courts have tried, with limited success, for nearly 60 years to define and interpret exactly what constitutes religious belief.” Rautenbach, Jansen van Rensburg and Pienaar (2002: 6) also mention definitions of religion which do not relate to a deity, and which “require only a devotion to some or other principle and the exercise or practice of rites and observances”. In fact, definitions of religion may exclude

belief itself, in the sense of absence of belief: the *Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief* describe religion or belief as “theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs, as well as *the right not to profess any religion or belief*” (Council of the European Union 2013: para 11, my emphasis).

The above examples suggest that attempts to accommodate the growing diversity of religious beliefs and observances both in the workplace (Cash, Gray and Rood 2000) and schools will be fraught with problems. While most workplace requests are for religious leave, as Cash, Gray and Rood point out:

...an increasing number of employees are requesting more nontraditional accommodations. In the SHRM survey, display of religious materials in the workplace was the second most frequent type of religious accommodation requested, followed by requests for space and time for religious observance, study, or discussion during work breaks. Other requests involved wearing religious dress or jewelry at work and proselytizing to coworkers (2000: 125).

It is precisely these elements which were found to cause contention and conflict - even peremptory dismissal or expulsion - in the cases investigated in this thesis. It will be shown that it is in the practical application of well-meaning and fair religious policies where things break down (Cash, Gray and Rood 2000: 127-128).

#### **1.5.6 Public schools**

In South Africa all state (or government) schools are public schools. These consist of primary and secondary schools open to all children who reside in the Republic of South Africa (RSA). Ex-model C schools were the once privileged government schools reserved for Whites, but which were then opened to all races. They are still, however, better resourced on the whole than township or rural schools (Soudien and Sayed 2004: 110-111). The only privileged schools in South Africa (now open to all races, but available only to the children of the affluent) are the private schools.

### **1.5.7 Church schools**

Church schools are places of education which teach a general curriculum but with a particular religious character. This term was introduced in Britain in 1990, because Muslims were demanding institutions which would provide the same education as schools but would, in addition, inculcate their own cultural religious values (Soper and Fetzer 2007: 935). This type of institution is, however, distinct from an institution which teaches mainly religion and related subjects.

### **1.5.8 Discourse and critical discourse analysis**

According to Fairclough, the originator of critical language study (also termed “critical linguistics”) discourse can be defined as “language as social practice determined by social structures” (1989: 17); he continues: “actual discourse is determined by socially constituted *orders of discourse*, sets of conventions associated with social institutions” (e.g. schools, organisations). Explaining how class and power operate in capitalist society, Fairclough asserts that discourse is “ideologically shaped by power relations in social institutions and in society as a whole”, but, in turn, it also shapes power relations, in the process contributing to either social continuance or change. For these reasons, critical discourse analysis can play a key role in revealing hegemonic influences and the ideologies underpinning these.

Critical discourse analysis is used to analyse texts (oral, written or visual) in the context of the social institutions in which they are uttered, in the process revealing the hegemonic forces which influence social interactions, as well as the ideologies driving these forces. The term “hegemony” is taken to mean the “power to rule, not necessarily by physical force of coercion, but through ideology” (Gramsci 1971: 506-507). Both Bourdieu (1991) and Foucault (1986) saw hegemony as an implicit influence, which this study has found to be the case. The term “ideology” is understood to be a set of beliefs which strongly influence the way/s of thinking of certain groups, and thus sets in

place what is viewed as “natural” or “normal”, in this way favouring certain groups above others (Grundy 1987: 109). While some researchers see critical discourse analysis as a research orientation (Weninger 2008: 145), for the purposes of this study, critical discourse analysis is treated as a methodology, falling within the field of critical linguistics and governed by the critical paradigm.

## **1.6 Value of the research**

The value of the research is thought to lie in identifying and exposing the mismatch of government policy on religious rights and actual practice, as well as the violation of schoolchildren’s religious rights in educational contexts, by use of critical discourse analysis. This study also attempts to suggest possible practical solutions to the impasse which is still seen to exist between colonial observances and the religious diversity of a multicultural society. The empirical work was carried out at grassroots level by consulting actual parents and their travails, as experienced first-hand and as documented in the media, rather than working at the level of abstract policy. While parents are in theory free to comment on school policy on religion, the reality is that many feel reluctant to express their views when they feel that their own religious beliefs have been marginalised. While actual parents were consulted in this study, their reluctance to give details which might have enable the schools or community members to identify them has been overcome in this case by carrying out the critical discourse on media articles. In this way, the identities of role players and their contentious issues are already out in the public domain so that confidentiality has not been breached.

## **1.7 New contribution to knowledge**

While similar studies have been carried out in Malaysia (Hee 2008), the United States (Blumenfeld 2006), Europe (Triandafyllidou 2012) and Britain (Philips 1998), to the researcher’s knowledge, this is the first study of its kind carried out in post liberation South Africa. A study was carried out by Modipa

(2014), running parallel to this one, but, while coming to similar conclusions about the “mono-religious” nature of school assemblies (2014: ii), it focused rather on the operation of Student Governing Bodies (SGBs). This study is the first critical discourse analysis aimed at finding evidence of the hegemonic influence of colonial religions in the documenting of everyday public school religious observances in media articles, supported by the transcripts of interviews with ordinary members of the community.

## **1.7 Overview of subsequent thesis chapters**

The rest of the chapters in this thesis will unfold as follows:

### ***Chapter 2: Literature Review***

As the review of the literature will attempt to show, South Africa has the problem of a secular Constitution governing the religious rights of a multi-faith populace. The Policy on religion and Education discussed here is an attempt to bring about an equitable and just dispensation on religion in multicultural public schools. However, implementation is fraught with problems, as will be shown. The complex and diverse combination of factors which has led to this situation will be discussed in this chapter.

### ***Chapter 3: Research Orientation and Methodology***

After providing an overview of the research design, this chapter looks at the critical orientation as being one of the Habermas’s (1972) paradigms, and then at the field of critical linguistics which falls within this paradigm. An overview is then given of the critical discourse analysis used in this study, as well as the methods used and selection of data sources. The media articles used for the critical discourse analysis are identified, and then the coding method used for assisting the critical discourse analysis is described, showing how it is appropriate for the purposes of this study.

#### ***Chapter 4: Results of the Case Studies***

The data gathered in the case studies were analysed in an attempt to provide answers to research question 1 and, to some extent, research question 2, and the results of the case studies are presented in this chapter. The latter provided some insight into the participants' responses to the current state of affairs in schools which their children attended, and could be seen to preempt and support some of the findings of the critical discourse analysis.

#### ***Chapter 5: Results of the Discourse Analysis***

The results of the discourse analysis of newspaper articles are presented, showing what the discourse on current religious observances in public schools revealed about the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances (research question 2). The discourse analysis was also used to support the answers to research question 1 which were provided by the case studies (in Chapter 4). In the course of the analysis, answers were also sought for research question 3, as to what recommendations could be made about religious observances in public schools.

#### ***Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations***

Chapter 6 comes to some general conclusions about the hegemonic influence of not only colonial religious hegemonic influences, but those of the more modern styles of Christianity, on religious observances in public schools. It then makes some recommendations based on both the conclusions and the suggestions arising from the community and the media articles.



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

As the review of the literature will attempt to show, South Africa has the problem of a secular Constitution governing the religious rights of a multi-faith populace. The result is that, while everyone is, in theory, free to believe what they choose, and to a large extent, to live according to their beliefs (i.e. within the limits of the law), the country is riven by what may initially seem petty disputes and lawsuits, but are actually the surface manifestations of a deeper unease. It is the contention of this thesis that individuals' rights to religious freedom are being violated on a daily basis, and that, while South Africa has a secular Constitution framed expressly to support these rights, the dominance of Christianity has a coercive effect on non-Christian<sup>1</sup> citizens, in particular, on impressionable young learners in school populations. The complex and diverse combination of factors which has led to this situation will be discussed in this chapter.

### **2.2 Colonial religious influences in Africa**

According to Mudimbe and Kilonzo (2012), Christianity reached Africa in a series of phases or "waves":

Three historical waves initiated three different Christianities: first, the conversion of North East Africa from the apostolic era and since the sixth century and their relation to Islam. The second wave, which began in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, parallels European imperialism; and finally, the nineteenth century, the period of conquering colonial Christianity (Mudimbe and Kilonzo 2012: 42).

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<sup>1</sup> Even the term "non-Christian" suggests that Christianity is the "norm" and that "non-Christians" are somehow divergent, but it is used in this account in the absence of a positive term with the same meaning.

It is the nineteenth century period of “conquering colonial Christianity” which is most relevant to this study.

According to Page and Sonnenburg (2003: 496) Christianity is the religion which has most been associated with colonialism. This is because Catholicism and Protestantism were the national religions of the European nations heavily involved in colonialism worldwide: consequently the religions of the colonialist nations were viewed as enforcing and justifying colonialism (Bevans 2002). While missionaries were initially portrayed as living saints, they later came to be viewed as “ideological shock troops for colonial invasion whose zealotry blinded them” (Andrews 2010: 663). This is because the Christian dogma was seen as being used to justify the activities of the colonialists. Boer’s portrayal of colonialism supports this view:

Colonialism is a form of imperialism *based on a divine mandate* and designed to bring liberation - spiritual, cultural, economic and political - by sharing the blessings of the Christ-inspired civilization of the West with a people suffering under satanic oppression, ignorance and disease, effected by a combination of political, economic and religious forces that cooperate under a regime seeking the benefit of both ruler and ruled (Boer 1988: 7, my emphasis).

While it is fair to say that the Christian evangelical movement was inextricably involved in colonialism, there is debate about the actual impact of missionary activity, as “the missionaries played manifold roles in colonial Africa and stimulated forms of cultural, political and religious change” (Sharkey, cited in Khan 2002). However, on the positive side, they “provided crucial services like education and health care that would have otherwise not been available to the Africans”, “provided women in Africa with health care knowledge and basic education”, and “allowed social mobility within the society by allowing all types of people to come to their churches” (Sharkey, cited in Khan 2002).

However, whatever good the missionaries might have achieved in colonial South Africa in the last century, it is important to make a distinction between Calvinist “Christians” and other mainstream Christian denominations, such as Roman Catholic, Methodist and Anglican (see van Wyk 2014). While this is to some extent a generalisation which overlooks the differences between different groups, it must be noted that Calvinism, which ironically sprang out of a desire for freedom of conscience (Van Wyk 2014), was the doctrinal basis for one of the most oppressive political systems ever devised, apartheid. Calvinism was also the doctrinal basis for a coercive educational religious policy, “Christian National Education” (Van Wyk 2014: 2), which denied school populations the right to freedom of religious belief and observance.

On the other hand, the “Church” (as characterised by other non-Calvinistic mainstream churches), while it first supported colonial hegemony, eventually came to challenge the excesses wrought by the Calvinism-inspired apartheid Nationalist government. It threw off the paternalistic role it had adopted during colonialism, and challenged the apartheid government and its narrow Calvinistic interpretation of Christianity. The support of non-Calvinistic Christianity for the African National Congress (ANC) was in fact an important factor in political liberation. In an ironic about-turn, the “Church” is now reported to have “forsaken” the ANC liberation government: “Relations between the ANC and South Africa’s mainstream churches have reached an all-time low under the Zuma administration” (Hunter and Mataboge 2014/15: 2). According to Hunter and Mataboge (2014/15), the ANC stands accused of favouring “wealth religion” (i.e. that of popular Pentecostal churches, see Meyer 2012: 153; Gumede 2015: 15) and ignoring the abject poverty in which most of the population live while ANC politicians enrich themselves.

On the positive side, as Etherington (2012) comments, the popularity and media exposure of Pentecostal Christianity (e.g. in gospel singing and township jazz), has led to a convergence of indigenous modes of evangelism

with foreign elements to make Christian evangelism a truly “African” phenomenon:

Thus it happened that modern Christian missions, which originated as an alien religious enterprise, developed over time into a primarily African enterprise, marked by a range of complex and continuing interactions with Christians on other continents. Mission remains a potent force in African religious, social and political life (Etherington 2012: 206).

Etherington adds that, ironically, Africa has now become a “significant exporter” of its own missionaries, who can be found engaged in evangelical and pastoral work worldwide.

## **2.3 Christian National Education**

Racial discrimination has plagued South African education since its history. Education in South Africa has historically been marked with unequal provision and segregation along racial lines (Gilmour and Soudien 1994). For over one hundred years racial discrimination has been evident in the South African schools. With the rise to power of the Afrikaner government, education policies became openly - and intentionally - discriminatory. When the National Party came into power in 1948, the Indian, Black and Coloured Departments were not given the opportunity to plan their own curricula (Gounder 2005). According to Steyn, writing about that era:

The legacy of apartheid has left South Africa with an education system that is characterised by fragmentation, inequity in provision, a crisis of legitimacy, a demise of a culture of teaching and learning in many schools as well as a resistance to changing the way things have been done in the past (2002: 272).

After 1976 the education system took a drastic turn. All those who were responsible for South African Education were forced to review their policies. By 1978 the South African government had given notice of its intention to change the Bantu Education Act of 1953.

As du Toit points out: "Religion, specifically the Reformed traditions, provided the National Education Policy Act, which prescribed a Christian orientation in education" (2006: 678). The Christian Education Policy Act of 1967 required that "education in schools should have a Christian character, founded on the Bible, enhanced by religious instruction as a compulsory, non-examinable subject" (South Africa 1967a). According to the policy makers, "the word *Christian* was defined as 'according to the creed of the three Calvinistic Afrikaner churches'" (Rakometsi 2008: 28). Thus "Christian" referred to Calvinistic Christianity, and Christian National Education did not allow for minority religions or denominations other than Calvinism (Dickinson and van Vollenhoven 2002: 10). Moreover, during the apartheid regime there were marked disparities between different Departments of Education (which were racially segregated) as far as religious issues were concerned (Mestry 2007: 57). This meant that, in some of the racially segregated schools (i.e. those governed by different Education Departments), religion was either not taught at all or offered as an optional subject, "Biblical Studies". The Christian Education Policy actually prevented non-Christian learners from becoming informed adequately about their own ethnic or community religions (Mestry 2007: 57). For example, pupils of Indian culture, instead of learning about their own ethnic Hindu or Muslim faith, would have attended classes in Right Living, a "moral education" subject which was introduced in 1966 for all learners in Indian schools (Tate 1995: 13). According to Kumar, "This privileging of a certain ethnic group and a certain denomination of the church during the apartheid era essentialized religion in that race and religion became two faces of the same phenomenon" (2012: 389).

## **2.4 Religious rights in post-liberation South Africa**

Post-liberation South Africa saw a change from Christian National Education. This was not merely a question of striking Christian National Education from the statutes, but of ensuring that domination by one powerful religious group, denomination or sect did not happen again. The new South African Constitution and the various supporting Bills and Policies were therefore

framed so as to ensure the individual's freedom of (and freedom from) religious beliefs. In particular, the Constitution and supporting documents focused on the rights of school populations. In each case (i.e. the general population and school population) this was done by default rather than proactively by means of a secular Constitution, and by prohibiting transgressions, rather than proactively supporting freedom of belief.

The South African Government has in fact been accused of being particularly inert, not only in policing and punishing transgressions in public schools and colleges, but in actively promoting initiatives to support multi-faith freedom school populations (there are exceptions, as will be shown in the discourse analyses). Also, it has been spelt out more clearly what school authorities may *not* do, rather than what they *should* do, leaving the courts with the problem of deciding exactly what is constitutional and not (Mestry 2007). In fact, the courts have found that some of the provisions of the School Policies and Bills are in fact non-feasible, which makes them unconstitutional (as they cannot be carried out), and that some would be unconstitutional *if* carried out (Mestry 2007: 62-64), leaving the school authorities with an unsolvable dilemma. Even worse, there are state provisions which attempt to placate majority-religion school populations by allowing them more latitude with official school religious observances than the Constitution strictly provides for. Government does not have the power to override the powers of school governing bodies (SGBs) in the matter of deciding what religious observances might suit the ethos of a specific school population (Mestry 2007: 65). In this regard, Soudien and Sayed (2004: 108) show how very easy it is for parent bodies to use racially exclusive tactics without ever having to use the term "race". The current situation in South Africa will be discussed in more detail below.

#### **2.4.1 The claim that South Africa is a "secular state"**

The Honourable Blade Nzimande, Minister of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), has claimed publicly that South Africa is a secular state (Jansen 2012). Now it *is* a secular state in the sense that, as in

most democracies, government apparatus (legislature, education, law, and so on) has come to be run on non-religious principles. But while South Africa has a secular Constitution, it is a multi-faith country (Lee 1988; Sachs 1989; Mestry 2007; Maluleka 2010) with a majority Christian population (60%). Insisting that schools are “secular” actually violates the right to religious freedom of belief and observance of Christian learners, amongst others (hence the provisions the Government has made in somewhat diluting the secular stance).

All that making schools secular would achieve would be to prevent majority religious groups from literally “making life hell” for believers in minority religious groups (or non-believers, i.e. atheists or agnostics, see Claassen 2003): it would not actively support the rights of the latter groups. This is before we come to the premise of this thesis: that the lingering colonial hegemony of Christianity (whether of British or Dutch origin) has biased schools in favour of Christian practices, often covertly enshrined in “school rules” (Harber and Sakade 2009). To add to the complexity of an already problematic issue, many Government Ministers (Cochrane *et al.* 1997), as well as Heads of State (West 2009) are overtly Christian, and Pentecostal styles of Christianity are gaining influence with the majority African population (Meyer 2012). This is the same majority population which voted the Communist-inspired, and therefore traditionally atheist, ANC into power, assisted, ironically, by the many influential figures in the Christian Church who united to support liberation. While “God” is not mentioned in the South African Constitution, there is a reference to God in the preamble (South Africa 1996). The title of the South African national anthem, *Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*, means “God bless [South] Africa”. This complex and diverse state of affairs will be discussed in the following sections.

#### **2.4.2 Constitutional provisions underpinning freedom of religious belief**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Republic of South Africa. 1996) contains a Bill of Rights, referring to “equality, human dignity and freedom” (Chapter 2), and includes an item on freedom of religion, belief and

opinion (Chapter 2.15). Van Wyk identifies these as the stipulations pertaining to freedom of religious belief and prevention of discrimination on religious grounds (2014: 7-8):

**2.9.3** The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

**2.15** 1. Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.  
2. Religious observances may be conducted at state or state-aided institutions, provided that –  
a. those observances follow rules made by the appropriate public authorities;  
b. they are conducted on an equitable basis; and  
c. attendance is free and voluntary.

**2.29.** 3. Everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that –  
a. do not discriminate on the basis of race;  
b. are registered with the state; and  
c. maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at compatible public educational institutions.

**2.31.1.** Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community –  
a. to enjoy their culture, practise their religion and use their language; and  
b. to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.

As a result of the above stipulations, van Wyk (2015: 08) concludes that “there is no radical separation between state and church” (see Chapter 3.15.2). Therefore, he continues, South Africa should not be described as “a *secular* state, but as a religious *neutral* state”, or even as “an *impartial* state”. Mestry (2007) refers to this impartiality of the state as “positive neutrality”, and does not see it as rejecting spirituality. In fact, he views this rather as implying “a profound appreciation of spirituality and religion in its many manifestations, as reflected by the deference to God in the preamble to the Constitution” (2007: 59).



However, the data gathered in this thesis, particularly in the discourse analysis, will suggest that, as in United States of America, the South African state allows more partiality to Christianity than to other religions, which suggests that it is “impartial” on paper only. The data will also suggest that, rather than championing the rights of a diverse population, the South African state is singularly inert when it comes to the religious (or other belief) rights of its non-Christian population, leaving it to individual parents to protest, and the courts to decide, what neither the Constitution nor the Religious Policies have made clear.

#### **2.4.3 Religious rights provided by the Constitution**

Mestry hails the adoption of the Constitution with its Bill of Rights as “a milestone in the constitutional history of South Africa”, and “the cornerstone of democracy which applies to all law, and binds the legislature, the executive, the judiciary and all organs of state” (2007: 58). The term “organs of state” would include government departments such as Departments of Education, and functionaries within these departments, such as schools and school governing bodies (Section 239 of Republic of South Africa 1996).

The policy for the role of religion in education (South Africa. Department of Education 2003) is based on the following values set forth in the South African Constitution: citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination, as well as freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. The Constitution can thus be seen as providing a framework for the relationship between religion and education (Mestry 2007: 58). However, the “organs of state” would need to ensure that freedom of religious belief and observances was actually guaranteed in everyday social functioning (Coertzen 2002: 191). The Constitution gives South African citizens the following religious rights, namely, the right of:

- conviction (i.e. belief), in Section 15 (1) of the Bill of Rights;

- expression (i.e. prayers and observances), in Section 16 (1) of the Bill of Rights; and
- association (i.e. gathering with like-minded people), in Section 18 of the Bill of Rights.

There are similar to those rights given in countries such as Britain, Canada and New Zealand. As summed up by Mestry:

Religious freedom means the right to express one's religious belief or philosophical convictions, both in private and in public, individually or jointly with others, freely in the form of teaching, practice, worship and observances. *The right to freedom of religion includes the right to receive religious teaching, training and instruction on a voluntary basis.* It also includes the right to produce religious publications and other materials and to disseminate them (2007: 58-59, my emphasis).

As the Bill of Rights is impartial, the state (as well as its various functionaries) is then put in the position of arbitrating as fairly as possible various diverse claims to freedom of religious belief and observance. These may in fact clash with each other. Where the state cannot offer a ruling between competing belief systems, there is no other option but for complainants to have recourse to the courts for legal arbitration. Moreover, arbitration may have to balance religious rights against other constitutional rights, as in the public's right to be protected from "religious" herbs which may contain illegal drugs, and property owners' rights not to have ancestral religious burial rights carried out on their land (Chidester, Hadland and Prosalendis 2003: 303).

As cited above, in general, "Religious freedom means the right to express one's religious belief, both in private and in public, freely in the form of teaching, practice, worship and observances" (Mestry 1007: 58). Mestry cites numerous court decisions on the interpretation of the nature of the religious rights assured by the Constitution, including the following:

In *S v Lawrence* <sup>23</sup> heard in the Constitutional Court of South Africa, freedom of religion has been described as 'the right to entertain such religious beliefs as a person chooses the right to declare religious beliefs openly and without fear of hindrance or

reprisal, and the right to manifest belief by worship and practice or by teaching and dissemination' (Mestry 2007: 60).

In particular, Mestry cites decisions which emphasise the individual's freedom of choice as to *what* religious ceremonies to participate in or *whether* to participate in the first place. According to the judiciary, the Constitution rules that religious observance (or non-observance) is fundamentally optional, and cannot be subject to coercion by the state:

The Constitutional Court held that the requirement of free and voluntary attendance at religious ceremonies is an explicit recognition of the deep personal commitment that participation in religious ceremonies reflects. It also recognised *that the freedom of religion requires that the state may never require such attendance to be compulsory*. It protects the rights to conscience both of believers and non-believers and those whose religious beliefs differ from the beliefs which are being observed at the public institution (Mestry 2007: 59, my emphasis).

This is because the Bill of Rights protects South African citizens from discriminatory or coercive practices. Mestry cites Judge Chaskalson's statement on coercion: "Coercion includes not only such blatant forms of compulsion as direct commands to act or refrain from acting on pain or sanction, [but] indirect forms of control which determine or limit alternative courses of conduct" (2007: 59). It is the indirect forms of control which, this study holds, are of most concern, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 (see 3.2.3). This is because impressionable children of school-going age may be swayed, against their free choice, to perform - or neglect - religious observances by indirect means. Indirect coercion may happen "when an institution approves one religion over another or religion over non-religion" (Modipa 2014: 122). Children may then be indirectly coerced in terms of feeling obliged to conform to "accepted" school practices, or a religious regimen implicitly embedded in the school rules (see Harber and Sakade 2009: 172-174). Even corporal punishment (which is currently proscribed in South African schools and violates a pupil's constitutional rights) can be traced to being part of the ethos of Christian schools (Mestry 2007: 60).

## 2.5 The new dispensation on religion in Education

However, in post-liberation South Africa (i.e. after 1994) the primacy of the Christian religion was, as Mestry puts it, “challenged in the post- apartheid democratic and pluralistic culture where the human rights of all are protected” (2007: 57). The rights to freedom of belief and religious (or non-) observance stipulated in the Constitution required a new policy laying out both the definition and application of these rights in education in terms of both religious subjects allowed courses run and every-day running of public (i.e. state) schools and colleges. In this new dispensation, it is acknowledged that schools have a special role to play in religious education. However, the South African Draft Policy on Religion and Education explains that public schools have a responsibility to contribute not so much to religious education per se (which is the role of home and community), but to *learning about* religions:

In this document we set out the policy on the relationship between religion and education that we believe will best serve the interests of our democratic society. In recognising the particular value of the rich and diverse religious heritage of our country, we identify the distinctive contribution that education can make to teaching and learning about religion, and promote the role of religion in education. In doing so we work from the premise that *the public school has an educational responsibility for teaching and learning about religion and religions*, and for promoting these, but that it should do so in ways that are different from the religious instruction and religious nurture provided by the home, family, and religious community (South Africa. Department of Education 1999: [1], my emphasis).

As the (then) Education Minister Kader Asmal explained in the “Minister’s foreword” to the *National Policy on Religion and Education*:

The Policy recognises the rich and diverse religious heritage of our country and adopts a co-operative model that accepts our rich heritage and the possibility of creative inter-action between schools and faith whilst, protecting our young people from religious discrimination or coercion (South Africa. Department of Education 2003).

South African public schools therefore have an educational responsibility to provide education on religion at schools, but *not to inculcate, persuade, bully or coerce learners into adopting or practising any one religious belief*. The Department of Education and Culture has based the policy regarding religion and education at schools on the co-operative model (Chidester 2003: 261). In this model, the primary aim is that religion in education should be seen more as being “educational” than “religious” per se; this is also confirmed by the wording of the policy document:

The study of religion must serve recognisable goals that are consistent with the aims and objectives of the curriculum. Religion education must contribute to developing basic skills in observation, listening, writing and thinking” (South African Draft Policy on Religion and Education 20 June 2003, paragraph 17).

An earlier draft stated that a school assembly should not provide the opportunity for religious expression. In response to the public indignation this aroused, the chief director of the Department of Education and Culture is quoted in the news as saying: “religious observances would not be banned, as had been claimed in some quarters, but, if these did take place, these had to be equitable, fair and on a voluntary basis” (Daily News 2003: 5 in Kumar 2006a: 288). It was also understood that, whatever (optional) prayers and observances did take place at school (i.e. on a voluntary basis), these would suit the character and ethos of the school population. As 60% of the country’s population is Christian, one can see where misunderstandings or misinterpretations might creep in. And, as Chidester comments: “Nothing can be said so clearly that it cannot still be misunderstood”, citing this case as an example:

In an article covering the speech for The Teacher, the headline shouted provocatively, 'Keep God out of the public schools, says Mangena' (Naidu 2001). Of course, Deputy Minister Mangena said nothing of the sort. Rather than making theological or atheological claims, he outlined an educational policy that was consistent with South Africa's Constitution (Chidester 2006: 263).

### 2.5.1 The Policy on Religion and Education

The Manifesto on values, education and democracy set the scene for the Policy on Religion and Education. According to Roux:

The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (DoE 2000) is another example where democratic values were brought into the education realm. In many ways South Africans took the lead in exploring religious diversity and its values in all its appearances with a tendency to learn from one another and to explore new research opportunities across international borders (2009 6-7).

The Manifesto (2001) encouraged schools to expose their pupils to the diversity of religions: “Affirming diversity is a value integral to the notion of a pluralist society” (Ferguson 2011: 1). Ferguson (2011: 1) cites Abdelfattah Amor, the United Nations special rapporteur, on the role of Religious education in the pursuit of tolerance and non-discrimination:

Religious education should be conceived as a tool to transmit knowledge and values pertaining to all religious trends, in an inclusive way, so that individuals realise their being part of the same community and learn to create their own identity in harmony with identities different from their own (Amor 2001: 2).

The adoption of a policy of education in religion, rather than a continuance of the apartheid policies of instruction in religions, showed that the Department of Education had put the emphasis on educational outcomes in the teaching and learning *about* religion, religions, and religious diversity (Chidester 2006: 262). This had also meant that the educational policy had shown itself to be responsive to the religious diversity of the country (Mestry 2007: 58; Roux 2009: 6-7). The Department of Education’s Policy on Religion and Education (South Africa 1967a) made it clear that the government would provide only one type of school subject relating to religion, namely “Religion Education” (Jeenah 2002: 6). The Norms and standards for educators (1998) required teachers to show an appreciation of and respect for people with different values, beliefs, practices and cultures. Teachers were also expected to gain knowledge about the beliefs and observances of the major religions in South Africa.

The Ministry of Education's Policy on Religion and Education was developed in various drafts from 1999 to 2003. Apart from teaching and learning about the major religions of the world, all of which are practised in South Africa, the emphasis is also on values and moral education (Kumar 2006a: 273-274). This is done without patronisingly relegating moral education to segregated non-Christian groups, as with the Right Living subject, under the apartheid dispensation of the past. The policy must not be interpreted as being anti-Christian, however, as it accords respect to *all* religions. It is against "single-faith religious observances" in schools, as well as "a single religion or a particular religious ethos, irrespective of whether the school may be religiously homogeneous" (Mestry 2007: 58). Yet, as was mentioned earlier the Government cannot override the powers of SGBs in deciding what (permissible) religious observances might suit the ethos of a specific school population (Mestry 2007: 65). This already sets the scene for dissention even if the provisions of the policy are adhered to rigorously; if they are not adhered to, as has been found to be the case in this study, learners' religious rights may be violated on a daily basis.

As will be discussed later, problems exist in terms of the exercising of constitutional rights clashing with the rights to religious observance contained in the provisions of the Policy on Religion and Education. This is because the Constitution is secular, impartial in not favouring any one religion, realistic, in acknowledging that, in a multi-faith country, all religions must be allowed respect, but hampered in not being able to describe how these ideals can be reconciled in various aspects of everyday life. It is not actually the role of a constitution to be prescriptive: a constitution sets broad guidelines which are open to individual interpretation in different contexts. However, expecting the ordinary parents who comprise the governing bodies of schools to arrive at decisions which will suit the Constitution as well as the other parents would be difficult enough, if it were not that most parents in this study appeared to be ignorant of the provisions of the policy.

This policy, then, like the Constitution, is not meant to be prescriptive, but to provide “a framework for schools to determine policies and for parents and communities to be better informed of their rights and responsibilities in regard to religion and education” (Mestry 2007: 60). According to Roux (2009: 6) the main aim of this policy is “to facilitate the next generation educationally about diversity and the religious realm and reality of SA and the world as a global village”. The principle of “Unity in diversity” must be observed, following the South African motto (“!ke e: Ixarra lke” in the Khoisan language).

Key points in the Introduction to the policy are as follows:

- The relationship between religion and education needs to be congruent with the democratic values of the Constitution.
- The role of the public school in teaching about religion is different from that of the home, the family and the religious community.
- The policy is a framework only, and not a prescriptive set of instructions.
- There is recognition that, in the past schools have overstepped the bounds of fair and democratic practice in discriminating on the basis of religion.

The policy outlines the different areas involved in both religion and education (see Figure 2.1), namely:

- Religion Education,
- Religious instruction, and
- Religious observances.

#### ***a. Religion Education***

Religion Education is not to be confused with “Religious Studies”, “a subject which is being proposed for the Further Education and Training band (Grades 10-12), in which pupils undertake the study of religion and religions in general, with the possibility of specialisation in one or more in that context” (South Africa. Department of Education 2003).



# **National Policy on RELIGION AND EDUCATION**

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Figure 2.1 Contents of the National Policy on Religion and Education

As defined in the policy (South Africa. Department of Education 2003): “Religion Education describes a set of curriculum outcomes which define what a pupil should know about religion”. Religion Education is then a curricular subject “for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity in South Africa and the world” (South Africa. Department of Education 2003: paragraph 17). As with other curricular subjects, it is located in the school timetable, and has specific goals and outcomes:

Religion Education should enable pupils to engage with a variety of religious traditions in a way that encourages them to grow in their inner spiritual and moral dimensions. It must affirm their own identity, while leading them to an informed understanding of the religious identities of others (South Africa. Department of Education 2003: paragraph 19).

It is therefore an “open, plural, historically informed, intercultural and interdisciplinary study of religion”, consistent with the reality of South Africa’s religious pluralism and the importance of celebrating diversity. It is different from the type of religious instruction which took place in colonial and pre-liberation schools, and still takes place (lawfully) in religious schools: “Instead of promoting a religious position, a programme in Religion Education pursues a balanced approach to teaching and learning about religion” (South Africa. Department of Education 2003: paragraph 25). Religion Education also performs a moral function in tracing moral values back to the world’s main religions, thus enriching Life Orientation programmes. As Mestry points out, “Religion Education has a civic duty rather than a religious function, and promotes civic rights and responsibilities” (2007: 61).

#### ***b. Religious instruction***

The policy’s definition of religious instruction is as follows: “Religious instruction is understood to include instruction in a particular faith or belief, with a view to the inculcation of adherence to that faith or belief” ” (South Africa. Department of Education 2003: paragraph 54). Only non-public schools which are designated as religious schools (e.g. a Convent, Seminary or Islamic school) may offer religious instruction as part of the curriculum. However, the policy on Religion and Education allows public school *facilities* to be used for this purpose, provided that it is not part of the formal curricular programme (or interrupts it), that attendance is optional, and that school facilities are shared out in an equitable manner to all religious groups.

#### ***c. Religious observances***

As with religious instruction, “the Governing Bodies of public schools may make their facilities available for religious observances, in the context of free

and voluntary association, and provided that facilities are made available on an equitable basis” (South Africa. Department of Education 2003: paragraph 58). These may include voluntary religious observances on (1) public occasions (e.g. Christmas Carols) (2) voluntary gatherings of teachers and pupils (Hymn festival) during term or the vacations and/or (3) “an observance which may be ongoing, and entail other dimensions such as dress, prayer times and diets, which must be respected and accommodated in a manner agreed upon by the school and the relevant faith authorities” (South Africa. Department of Education 2003: paragraph 59). The policy also encourages fair and equitable ways of acknowledging the multi-faith nature of the school community. In fact the policy encourages voluntary religious observances in which the public participates. However, “Although such religious observances take place on the school property, *they are not part of the official educational function of the public school*” (South Africa. Department of Education 2003: paragraph 60, my emphasis).

Problems might rise with the following provision, however:

School Governing Bodies are required to determine the nature and content of and religious observances for teachers and pupils, such that coherence and alignment with this policy and applicable legislation is ensured. It [*sic*] may also determine that a policy of no religious observances be followed (South Africa. Department of Education 2003: paragraph 61).

Soudien and Sayed have explained how school governing bodies operating in various contexts can legitimise potentially racist and exclusive measures in the name of “standards”: “Open as schools had formally become, in practice they remained sites in which the hegemony of race continued to operate” (2004: 111). It must be conceded, as well, that, with the best will in the world, there are a number of problems associated with the actual implementation of the Policy on Religion Education.

### 2.5.2 Problems with the Policy on Religion and Education

Ironically, for a policy arising from the provisions of the South Africa Constitution in terms of freedom of belief, objections to the policy are mainly on the basis of its constitutionality. Mestry sums up the anomalies and contradictions as follows:

While the policy for the role of religion in education flows directly from the Constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination and religion there are a number of issues that makes the policy unconstitutional. The meaning of 15(2) of the *Constitution*<sup>76</sup> concerning religious observances; the problems of single-faith observances; and the dis-empowerment of school governing bodies in relation to the policy violates the right to freedom of religion of individuals (2007: 65).

According to van Oostrum (2003), “Various religious organisations claim that the policy violates the right to freedom of religion”<sup>2</sup> (in Mestry 2007: 62). The argument goes thus: the Department of Education takes a neutral position in defining the role of religion in public schools; however, obliging schools to adopt this position is *not* neutral, as:

The objective of this neutral approach is in fact to impose on pupils a particular view about matters of faith that is determined by the state. Pupils will be encouraged, or rather compelled to analyse religions critically, including their own, from the point of view of its contribution to the realisation of the values the state pursues, and not for the purposes of their personal salvation (Mestry 2007: 62).

In other words, if you hold a particular devout belief, it is a type of coercion to expect you to suspend this belief because the law obliges you to do so: being “neutral” in fact violates your constitutional right to be religious. Conversely, atheists might feel that their beliefs were being violated to have to pretend for neutrality’s sake that other people’s religious beliefs must be entertained seriously. Finally, “neutral” educational functionaries may actually be viewed as being hostile towards the school population’s religious beliefs.

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<sup>2</sup> Boldface has mainly been removed from Mestry’s (2007) points for the sake of easier reading.

A similar objection is raised to the policy's multi-faith approach, as cited by Nicolson (2003: 14) in Mestry (2007: 62): "the majority of South Africans are Christians and religion education should therefore reflect this". Nicolson claims that a multi-faith religious education will "confuse" children, who cannot absorb so many belief and value systems. Even worse, it will weaken the value system they held originally, and encourage "toleration", which implies "neutrality or religious relativity". There were claims that legislating multi-faith religious education could be considered both unconstitutional and anti-Christian (Kumar 2006a: 288). To follow up this point, in terms of banning religious instruction as part of the school curriculum or daily official events, Mestry (2007: 60) cites van Oostrum (2001) as saying that there are religious organisations which interpret the policy on religious instruction as a ban on the freedom of association assured in the Constitution: it is therefore potentially unconstitutional.

In view of the diversity of school populations and other logistical constraints, however, it would not be feasible for the Department of Education to implement religious instruction in schools. The heavy workload of teachers, the times allocated to different mainstream subjects, financial and other logistical implications, and qualifications of teachers in religion are some of the barriers to introducing religious instruction in schools. Mestry (2007: 60-61) suggests that school times could be revised to accommodate parents who wish their children to receive religious instruction in public schools, citing New Zealand's "Education Act 1964" as an example of how this could be done (i.e. by authorising primary schools to close for up to one hour a week for the purposes of religious exercises and instruction).

As far as religious observances are concerned, according to their constitutional rights, the learners at public schools have a democratic right not to take part in any form of religious observance which differs from those customary to their own religion. However, du Toit (2006: 686-687)

points out that the western orientation of the constitution disregards the collective of a person's human rights in the African context and also makes no distinction between the sacred and religious view of an individual. Schools in South Africa have ostensibly not deviated materially from this Eurocentric view, as the western influence is strong and still has an influence in public school assemblies.

Mestry (2007: 63) criticizes the policy for being “vague”, in not specifying when and where the “multi-religious” observances might be fitted into the school day. If not enough time is allocated or the arrangements are not feasible for the mandatory even-handed diversity of activities, sections 2.15.1.2 of the policy cannot be implemented effectively, namely:

2. Religious observances may be conducted at state or state-aided institutions, provided that –
  - a. those observances follow rules made by the appropriate public authorities;
  - b. they are conducted on an equitable basis; and
  - c. attendance is free and voluntary.

The fact that it cannot be implemented, as Mestry points out, makes the policy “unconstitutional”. Mestry (2007: 63) explores this further, suggesting that the “use of a universal prayer and selected readings from various religious texts” would be an “appropriate” way of acknowledging the multi-faith composition of South Africa. However, he cites a Court reasoning on the issue of implementation:

Compulsory attendance at school prayers would infringe freedom of religion. In the context of a school community and the pervasive peer pressure that is often present in such communities, voluntary school prayer could also amount to the coercion of pupils to participate in the prayers of the favoured religion. To guard against this, and at the same time to permit school prayers, **section 15(2) (previously 14(2)) makes clear that there should be no such coercion.** It is in this context that it requires the regulation of school prayers to be carried out on an equitable basis. I doubt whether this means that a school must make provision for prayers for as many denominations as there may be within the pupil body;

**rather it seems to me to require education authorities to allow schools to offer the prayers that may be most appropriate for a particular school**, to have that decision taken in an equitable manner applicable to all schools, and to oblige them to do so in a way which **does not give rise to indirect coercion of the ‘non-believers’** (Mestry 2007: 63, author’s emphasis).

The implications, however, are that what might be seen (i.e. by school governing bodies) as “most appropriate for a particular school” would most likely be that defined by the most powerful section of the school population, and that defined as “normal” by years of colonial imposition and Christian National Education, namely Christian-orientated prayers. The case studies in this thesis (see Chapter 4) in fact suggest that public school assemblies in a predominantly Indian community are still dominated by Christian-orientated prayers and hymns. This state of affairs is confirmed by Modipa’s conclusions in a study running parallel to this one:

This [i.e. the current] situation ultimately allows educators and principals to manipulate the environment of policy development and implementation. The result thereof includes the situation where one religion is being given priority over others, adoption of a particular religious character because other stakeholders do not have the knowledge about their religious rights, and the direct and indirect coercion of learners and educators to attend an assembly turned into a mono-religious observance (Modipa 2014: ii).

This supports Roux’s (2005: 304) earlier finding that “only one religion [i.e. Christianity] was still dominant in the multireligious school settings”.

A final comment on constitutionality of the Policy on Religion and Education: Mestry points out that Section 7 of the South African Schools Act (South Africa 1967b) empowers school governing bodies to make rules to conduct religious observances at public schools, provided that these such observances are conducted on an equitable basis and attendance is free and voluntary. The Minister, according to Mestry, then does not have the power to make policy regarding religious observances: “It is *ultra vires* and therefore invalid because it encroaches on the powers of governing bodies” (2007:

64). School governing bodies cannot then be instructed how to run religious observances at their schools.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

Chapter 2 has attempted to show that attempts to provide a policy regulating fair and equitable religious (or other) belief practices in schools celebrating the rich cultural diversity of South Africa's population may well have run into problems on the basis of implementation. The confusion of the exact nature of the allegedly "secular" state and its prerogatives, the grey areas implicit in ministerial versus school parent body powers, as well as the predominantly pro-Christian composition of the population, do not bode well for non-Christian learners. Moreover, the lingering remnants of colonial observances embedded in public school practices may well have overridden post-liberation attempts to have an equitable dispensation representative of the Constitution's celebration of diversity operating in schools. This study, then, set out to explore any lingering hegemonic influences of colonial religious observances and their effect on school populations (as in the title of the thesis). As the issue was one of empowerment in terms of religious practice not being aligned with liberation policy, as the many examples in this chapter suggest, answers were sought within a critical linguistic approach, as will be described in the next chapter.



## **Chapter 3: Research Orientation and Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter first gives the research design used in the study, and then goes on to describe the various aspects of this design in more detail. The first aspect of the research design discussed is the critical paradigm, this being one of the basic human orientations identified by Habermas (1972). Next, the field of critical linguistics is shown to fall within this paradigm. An overview is then given of the critical discourse analysis methodology used in this study, as well as the specific methods and data involved, including the newspaper articles used for the critical discourse analysis. Finally, the coding method for the critical discourse analysis is described, showing why it is appropriate for the purposes of this study.

### **3.2 Research design**

An overview of the research design is given in Table 3.1. In keeping with the theme of empowerment, this study falls within the research orientation provided by the critical paradigm (Habermas 1972: 308). At a lower hierarchical level, the disciplinary field within which this research is situated is critical linguistics (Fairclough 1989; 1992). The methodology used is critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995). While some researchers treat critical discourse analysis as an orientation in itself, in this study it is rather shown to be subsumed under the critical paradigm and critical linguistics respectively. The research tools, namely, questionnaires/interviews (i.e. to contextualise the discourse analysis), and analysis of the discourse of written texts, are typical methods of critical discourse analysis, as will be shown in the more detailed exposition given below. The products of the research constitute a snapshot in time of community religious beliefs and practices reflecting not

only the current power relations but also the historical underpinning which made them what they are today.

Table 3.1 Elements of the research design

<b>RESEARCH DESIGN</b>				
<b>ORIENTATION</b>	Critical paradigm			
<b>DISCIPLINARY FIELD</b>	Critical linguistics			
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	Critical discourse analysis			
<b>RESEARCH TOOLS</b>	Parent questionnaires/interviews		Analysis of religious and media texts	
<b>Methods</b>	<i>quantitative questions</i>	<i>qualitative questions</i>	<i>content analysis</i>	<i>critical discourse analysis</i>
<b>Purpose</b>	to provide the context for the CDA	to arrive at critical insights into the issues arising in the CDA	to give surface account of religious practices	to identify hegemonies and ideologies driving the conflicts
<b>Products of the research</b>	community context	personal insights into issues arising	descriptions of conflicts	critical insights into causes

### 3.3 Critical theory

The research orientation within which this study falls is critical theory. This is because the issue of freedom of religion is an empowerment issue. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the South African Constitution specifically guarantees “freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion” (South Africa 1996) and in terms of the National Education Policy Act of 1996 learners and educators have the right to “freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, speech and expression” (South Africa 1996). Although this policy potentially empowers holders of diverse beliefs, as Chapter 2 showed, there is a mismatch between actual religious educational practice and policy in South Africa. This study, then, looks at the disempowerment reflected in South African religious discourse practices,

mainly caused, it is believed, by the hegemonic influence of Christianity. The research approach which deals with the issue of how disempowerment is embedded in texts is critical linguistics, or “critical language study” (Fairclough 1989: vi), which is dealt with after the section on critical theory.

Table 3.2 Phases of hegemonic influence in religious instruction in South Africa

PHASES	Phase 1 <b>EXPEDITION</b> (territorial)	Phase 2 <b>ADMINISTRATION</b> (national)	Phase 3 <b>TRANSACTION</b> (global)
HEGEMONIC INFLUENCE	Portuguese/ Dutch/British -	Afrikaner -----> ----->	--->[Post- liberation] ANC
PREDOMINANT RELIGION	Christian	Christian	---> Christianity [Religious autonomy?]
IDEOLOGICAL INFLUENCE	Missionary schools	Religious schools* -- > Christian National Education	Social imperatives (e.g. class: true ideology, as it is implicit)
TIME FRAME	1500s – 1800s	1800s – 1900s	1990s – present day
*These included schools other than Christian, privately funded.			

Table 3.2, based on Naidoo’s (2012: 18) model of language hegemony, shows phases of religious hegemonic influence in South Africa. The key issue here is that the “power effect” in religion, while set in place by colonialism, is no longer fuelled by colonial domination and the resulting legislation of the postcolonial administrations, but is ideological in the sense of being a class issue. As Table 3.2 suggests, in spite of a constitution which supports religious autonomy, Christianity is still the dominant ideology.

### 3.3.1 Origins of critical theory

Critical theory is one of the orientations, or paradigms, contained in Habermas’s (1972) comprehensive theory of knowledge. Habermas identifies three basic orientations (see Schubert 1986: 181), based on knowledge-constitutive human interests (Habermas 1972: 205) which represent knowledge as being based in human behaviour; in other words, knowledge is seen as a *social* construct. According to Habermas, knowledge-constitutive interests are human interests or inclinations actively

involved in creating knowledge (Habermas 1972: 206-197). The three interests identified by Habermas are the technical, practical and emancipatory interests, which are the basis of the empirical/analytic, hermeneutic and critical paradigms (termed “sciences” by Habermas 1972: 308). The knowledge constitutive interests which govern the three paradigms are shown in Table 3.3, drawn up by Schubert (1986: 186), based on a formulation by Hultgren (1982: 29), derived mainly from Habermas’s comprehensive theory of knowledge. These knowledge constitutive interests are grounded in human behaviour and are thus a social phenomenon (Mccarthy 1978: 55).

Table 3.3 Three basic life orientations in Habermas’s paradigms (Schubert 1986: 181)

TYPE OF SCIENCE OR INQUIRY	Empirical/Analytic	Hermeneutic	Critical
INTEREST SERVED	Technical	Practical	Emancipatory
SOCIAL ORGANIZATION	Work	Interaction	Power
MODE OF RATIONALITY			
	Posits principles of control and certainty. Operates in the interests of law-like predictions that are empirically testable. Assumes knowledge to be value-free. Assumes knowledge to be objectified. Values efficiency or parsimony. Accepts unquestioningly social reality as it is.	Emphasizes understanding and communicative interaction.. Sees human beings as active creators of knowledge. Looks for assumptions and meanings beneath texture of everyday life. Views reality as inter-subjectively constituted and shared within a historical, political, and social context. Focuses sensitively to meaning through language use.	Assumes the necessity of ideological critique and action. Seeks to expose that which is oppressive and dominating. Requires sensitivity to false consciousness. Makes distorted conceptions and unjust values problematic. Examines and explicates value system and concepts of justice upon which inquiry is based.

Habermas’s paradigms are “comprehensive world views”, as described by Kuhn (1962: 175), and represent the main types of knowledge construction

found in western society, although subsequent orientations include social constructivism (Guba 1990) and the critical realist philosophy (Bhaskar 1979, 2008). Guba and Lincoln define a paradigm as follows:

A paradigm may be viewed as a *basic set of basic beliefs* (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the “world,” the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do (1994: 107, my emphasis).

According to Guba, paradigms can guide our actions in different walks of life, such as law, religion or sport (1990: 18).

### **3.3.2 Principles of critical theory**

The principles of critical theory as shown in Table 3.3 are discussed as applying to this study. As mentioned in the preceding chapters, the liberation principles of freedom of religious observance are not being applied evenly in actual practice in South Africa. The *type of enquiry* involved in critical theory is as follows. The critical paradigm requires: “a transformation of consciousness, that is, a transformation in the way in which one perceives and acts in ‘the world’” (Grundy 1987: 99). Consciousness of religious rights in South Africa may have been changed in terms of the necessary legislation, but full implementation has not followed. The critical orientation can also be referred to as “critical praxis”, or practical *action* (Grundy 1987: 60-61), and it is the lack of transformation in practice which is the focus of this study.

The *interest served* is emancipatory (see Table 3.3), which depends on participants having the option of autonomous action (Grundy 1987: 113; Marshall 2005: 295); this should be should be a matter of free choice, and informed by the theoretical insights gained. According to Marshall, “For Habermas the goal of Critical Theory is to be found in the pursuit of truth, for the pursuit of truth is to lead a life free of domination” (2005: 295). In South Africa, the Constitution guarantees freedom of religious choice, but it appears that pressures exist which distort and inhibit the practice of freedom of

choice. The interest served in critical theory is an interest in emancipation as a social reality, not specifically an individual achievement (Grundy 1987: 114), although this study makes reference to individual instances of disempowerment in arguing a case for full social religious emancipation in practice, as well as in theory. As Table 3.3 shows, the *social organisation* of the critical paradigm is power, as a social organisation is needed that “empowers human beings to transcend constraints imposed by socio-economic class and its controlling ideologies” (Schubert 1986: 182). As Table 3.2 suggests, is it now social imperatives, for examples, those driven by class, which give a bias in favour of certain religions. As these imperatives are ideological, and therefore implicit, it is difficult to apply legislation such as to bring about religious empowerment.

Because the social pressures are ideological, some form of *ideological critique* is necessary *to expose that which is oppressive and dominating* and to allow autonomous action. Ideology is the “set of ideas or opinions which dominate the thinking” of a given group, and establishes “natural” views of the world which can hide unequal forms of social relationship (Grundy 1987: 109). Ideology means that “communication may be ‘systematically *distorted*’” (my emphasis), and can cause problems for consensual meaning (1987: 107). This is why the critical paradigm *makes distorted conceptions and unjust values problematic*. Dominant ideologies can be exposed through a process of reflection which *requires sensitivity to false consciousness*. This also requires self examination, for, as Schubert states, “To identify certain values as unjust, it is imperative that those who engage in critical science explicate the values that they hold” (1986: 182).

The critical paradigm did not gain much prestige until the 1980s, when its supporters had gained powerful positions in the universities (Popkewitz 1984: 54). However, it has been suggested that, in spite of its increasing popularity in academic circles, critical theory has not helped the disempowered, and has actually become part of “normalizing” the education system which keeps the inequality in place (Gur-Ze’ev 2005: 13-14). As this study attempts to

show, it is in the area of practice, not principles, where critical theory falls short, and a pedagogy intended to be emancipatory should not remain committed to theoretical principles only (Mason 2005: 315). To sum up: “Critical theory looks at, exposes, and questions hegemony - traditional power assumptions held about relationships, groups, communities, societies, and organizations - to promote social change” (Davis 2008: 140). As Modipa comments:

Critical theory seeks to interrogate, among others, the outcomes of illegitimate, domatory and repressive factors where one person or group’s freedom and power is bought at the price of another’s freedom and power (Modipa 2014: 125).

It must be noted that, while the interest served by critical theory is emancipatory, it is not claimed that critique automatically promotes social change or results in emancipation. Its function is to expose practices which are oppressive and dominating and thus *pave the way to autonomous action*. Oppressed, marginalised or dominated groups are then better able to contest unequal practices and lobby actively for change in order to arrive at a more equitable social order. They are better equipped to do so if they can “unpack” the language which both masks unequal power relations and keeps them in place (see Fairclough 1989: 197-232). Finally, it must not be thought that overcoming widespread hegemonic forces such as those exerted by colonial domination will result in general emancipation. A postliberation society governed by the most equitable constitution is not free of attempts at domination, and critique must also expose the hegemonic tendencies which might be evinced by previously disadvantaged masses or minority groups.

### **3.3.3 Hegemony and ideology**

The previous section showed how the principles of critical theory could be linked to aspects of Habermas’s critical paradigm, referring to the third column in Table 3.3. The concepts of hegemony and hegemonic influence are of key importance to this study, because it does not deal with legislated or coercive means of disempowerment (as with Apartheid laws and armed

enforcement by the police and army) but with a subtle influence, “true ideology, as it is implicit” (Table 3.2., Phase 3). As mentioned earlier, ideology is a pervasive influence which is difficult to challenge (in this case, the “set of ideas” establishing Christianity as the power religion). Interestingly, religion itself has been described as a form of ideology, in terms of postulating belief systems which transcend rational argument (Hadley 2009: [1]). According to Fairclough and Wodak:

Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, *they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations* between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/ cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people (1997: 258, my emphasis).

Thus the hegemonic influence of any one belief (or religion, in this case) exerts itself (and is reflected in) the texts which are everyday part of school routines (e.g. hymns, prayers, rubrics used for school assembly procedures). It is also reflected in the texts of the news media, as in this study, in newspaper articles reporting various instances of alleged religious discrimination. Hegemony, then, refers to the dominance or position of power enjoyed by various groups, practices or even ideas, whereas ideology is the chief means whereby this dominance is set in place and maintained.

Gramsci is credited with the earliest use of the term “hegemony”, meaning the state’s power to rule, not necessarily by physical force of coercion, but through ideology (1971: 506-507). As Philips points out, Gramsci associated hegemony with “a state’s ability to govern through ideology as well as through force” (1998: 215). Philips goes on to say that it was Williams who was the first to separate the concept of hegemony from state or institutional control, although Gramsci did not actually limit the concept of hegemonic influence to that of the state over the home population, but also mentioned “the growing strength of American capitalism and its increasing hegemony over Europe” (Gramsci 1971: 102). Philips does point out, however, that



hegemony has come to have different associations from those attributed by Gramsci, and was not necessarily seen by Gramsci as an implicit force:

There is no evidence in his writing that he saw hegemony overall as somehow more implicit than explicit, though he certainly meant to uncover what he saw as unrecognized organizational and ideational processes in the constitution of state hegemony (Philips 1998: 215).

However, both Bourdieu (1991) and Foucault (1986) saw ideology as an implicit influence, in terms of Bourdieu's (2007) concept of "habitus" and Foucault's emphasis on powerful discourses dominating society in a general way (Taylor 1984). While neither Williams, Bourdieu nor Foucault viewed the operation of hegemony as operating in specific institutional contexts, and rather as a general pervasive force (Philips 1998: 216), this thesis views ideology as operating both at a general level in society (i.e. in South Africa) and in institutionalised contexts (i.e. public schools).

Giroux's contention was that schools are not just instructional sites: "Schools are social sites whose particularity is characterized by an ongoing struggle" (1982: 95). They also "involve "areas of contestation and struggle among differently empowered cultural and economic groups" (Giroux 1983: 74).

According to Winkler:

Because modern capitalist society is characterized by hegemonic consent as much or even more than by coercion, the ways in which individual consciousness and collective consciousness are structured are vitally significant to any theory of radical change. *Schools are part of this struggle over consciousness* (1984: 197, my emphasis).

Although ideology is no longer equated with culture (Philips 1998), it is the contention of this thesis that it is the cultural loading of colonial influences in favour of western ideals of Christianity which makes it inappropriate in a multicultural post-apartheid society with a Constitution which legislates freedom of religious beliefs. This refers back to Gramsci's warning of the

“Hegemony of Western Culture over the whole World Culture”, and his following point:

Even if one admits that other cultures have had an importance and a significance in the process of “hierarchical” unification of world civilisation (and this should certainly be admitted without question), they have had a universal value only in so far as they have become constituent elements of European culture, which is the only historically and concretely universal culture - in so far, that is, as they have contributed to the process of European thought *and been assimilated by it* (Gramsci 1971: 765).

It is the contention of this thesis that in post liberation South Africa, where freedom of religion is the constitutional right of every citizen, religious practices in schools are dominated by western influences, to the detriment of non-western or indigenous beliefs.

### **3.4 Critical linguistics**

As mentioned above, the research approach which deals with how relations of power are embedded in texts is critical linguistics (Fairclough also terms this “critical language study”, 1989: vi). According to Fairclough, the object of critical linguistics is as follows:

To highlight how language, in its everyday as well as professional usage enables us to understand issues of social concern. More specifically, to examine how the ways in which we communicate are constrained by the structures and forces of those social institutions within which we live and function. To display, too, how these institutions and our roles within them are in frequent measure defined by such particular language use (1989: ix).

Critical linguistics falls within the critical paradigm (Habermas 1972: 308), represented in Table 3.3 above (Schubert 1986: 181). Critical language study was developed mainly by Fairclough (1989; 1992, 1995), using the work of Habermas (1972), Bourdieu (1991), Foucault (1986), Giroux (1980) and Gramsci (1971). The main tenet of critical linguistics is that discourse is underpinned by social relations of power, and that it both sets in place and reflects these power relationships. Thus hegemony and ideology (discussed

above) are key concepts in critical linguistics, as hegemony refers to the existing power relationships which are maintained through the influence of ideology. While ideology is a contentious element and variously defined (Schieffelen and Woolard 1998: vii), there are four common characteristics: (1) it is mental or conceptual in its makeup, (2) reflects a partisan position (which is, however, represented as a “universal truth”, or “natural”), (3) provides a link to power, and (4) is subject to “distortion, illusion, error, mystification, or rationalization” (Schieffelen and Woolard 1998: 5-7). Ideology works through discursive practices, which, as mentioned above, “can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations” between various groups of people (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 258). Critical language study, then, deals with “unpacking” texts to identify the relations of power, expose the “truths” as partisan positions, and see through the distortions to reveal whose interests are being favoured over and above those of others.

As Fairclough (1992: 12) comments:

Critical approaches differ from non-critical approaches in not just describing discursive practices, but also showing how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief, neither of which is normally apparent to discourse participants.

To sum up: critical linguistics deals with the analysis of texts in order to uncover the relations of power revealed in texts.

In critical linguistic terms, texts both set in place and reflect relations of power (Fairclough 1989). Critical linguistics therefore focuses on the analysis of texts in order to identify the relations of power revealed in texts, that is, critical discourse analysis. Critical linguistics was strongly influenced by Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (Halliday and Fawcett 1987), which provided the foundation for current critical discourse analysis methodology (Weninger 2008: 145).

### **3.5 Critical discourse analysis**

According to one of its seminal authors the motivation for engaging in Critical discourse analysis is emancipation and the development of emancipated forms of social life (Fairclough 1995). Weninger (2008: 145) reports that critical discourse analysis gained recognition in the late 1980s through the writings of Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, and Teun van Dijk, a group of mainly European linguists. Similar (but not associated) work was done by James Paul Gee in the United States around the same time, and traces the “intellectual origins” of critical discourse analysis back to the British and Australian critical linguistics of the 1970s, which “researched the intersection of discourse, ideology, and power” (Weninger 2008: 145). The methods used in critical discourse analysis are not necessarily similar, and critical discourse analysis is sometimes treated as a research approach rather than as a methodology. Some researchers see it as “an explicitly critical and political orientation to studying discourse” (Weninger 2008: 145). However, it is the contention of this study that critical discourse analysis is a methodology, subsumed under the critical linguistics approach and informed by the critical paradigm. As mentioned above, critical linguistics deals with “unpacking” texts to identify the relations of power involved in given social interactions, expose the partisan positions enjoyed by groups, and reveal whose interests are being favoured. It thus uncovers the relations of power revealed in texts, and the process of textual analysis is termed critical discourse analysis.

According to Suhardja (2008: 39), critical discourse analysis “assumes that all discourses are historical and therefore must be understood in context”, and therefore factors such as culture, society and ideology should form part of the analysis. Wodak (2002: 13) emphasises this contextual aspect: “the concrete analysis should take into account historical developments of discursive practices”. This is why the literature review attempted to set the South African situation of religious education and school observances into its historical context. Moreover, as already mentioned, South African society is

multicultural, with diverse religious belief and value systems which are at present not given equal representation in public school religious observances, suggesting that the dominant ideology is western and Christian orientated.

### **3.6 The critical discourse analysis used in this study**

The critical discourse analysis method described by Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995) was used in this study, as it deals with the way in which the social problems are revealed in the language, rather than Wodak's discourse-historical approach (2002: 64). This research is focusing on a specific social problem, the inequality in public acceptance of diverse religious beliefs and observances. Although Wodak's (2002: 65) suggestion of triangulation was used, it is rather Fairclough's "middle range theory", which was used, as it focuses on a social problem and tries to see where it shows in the language appearing in discourses (Meyer 2001: 22).

According to van Dijk, Critical discourse analysis "focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge relations of power and dominance in society" (1988: 2). The analysis attempts to reveal how certain religious observances have gained dominance in schools, the social relations which have sanctioned this dominance, and the "subject positions" of the various stakeholders (i.e. the degree of dominance or powerlessness afforded to the roles they adopt - or are given - in this context (Fairclough 1989). A process of triangulation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000; Wodak 2002) was used to correlate findings from the analysis of texts, questionnaire responses, texts of public school hymns and observances, and interview transcripts. Conclusions are drawn as to whether school religious observances constitute abuse (i.e. a norm violation which hurts others, van Dijk 1998: 5), and recommendations are made as to how this can be avoided.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this study. Qualitative methods afford the researcher the opportunity to understand the participants,

their experiences and perspectives (Rubin and Rubin 1995; Huysamen 2001; Mathers, Fox and Hunn 2002). The quantitative aspect of the methodology involved questionnaires, and the qualitative aspect, interviews of participants from three public schools so as to establish an overview of the religious observances which the schools practise. The questionnaires were administered before and after the interviews took place in order to follow up points or explore emerging themes further. These questionnaires and interviews made up a series of case studies (Radnor 2002), so as to contextualise or “frame” the rich data which was obtained from the textual analysis. The questionnaire and interview questions were arranged from simple to complex so that the interviewees would be able to adapt and adjust to the type of questions asked. Documents relating to school religious practices were also collected as evidence to back up the data from the participants and from the texts analysed. The textual analysis involved quantitative as well as qualitative data.

### **3.6.1 Data from questionnaires and interviews**

The answers to the various questionnaires and interview questions provided quantitative and qualitative data which was used both to provide a background context and to explain the various issues and sentiments arising in the discourse analysis. As it was anticipated that both religion and religious education would be a sensitive topic, it was considered unlikely that one extensive questionnaire would reveal the complex layers involved in people’s everyday religious experiences. For this reason, the data was uncovered in various layers of questioning in both questionnaires and interviews, as is shown below. The questionnaires and interviews were administered as follows:

1. A preliminary questionnaire was administered to parents asking closed and open questions on religious observances carried out at public schools.

2. To probe the issues emerging further, open-ended interviews were held with another group of parents, and discussion points were transcribed.
3. A second questionnaire was administered to a second set of parents asking closed and open questions on religious observances carried out at public schools.
4. A second interview session was held to explore further the extent to which Charismatic Christianity was starting to exert hegemonic influence.
5. A third interview session was administered to establish community responses to the issues raised in the media texts, and confirm whether these echoed the issues seen as important by individual community members (media texts 1-6 only were used, as the other 3 texts had either not yet been published or selected).

All questionnaire and interview questions, as well as transcripts of responses, are contained in Appendix B. The rationale for the above procedures was as follows.

The preliminary questionnaire (1.) was intended to gather data about the participants' demographics, the religious practises currently taking place at their children's schools, and their feelings about this. This was so as to establish a kind of "base point" for the interview discussions which were to follow with the same participants. Parents at the researcher's school were approached by the interviewer after a School Governing Body meeting. Permission had been obtained from the principal of the school to hand out the questionnaires before the parents were approached. Parents attending the School Governing Body meeting were targeted, as they were the ones who, by virtue of their attendance, showed interest in school governance, and were a multi-faith group.

The results of the preliminary questionnaire suggested various issues which needed to be followed up for further clarification. To probe further the issues which were emerging, open-ended interviews (2.) were held with another

group of parents from the researcher's school, and discussion points were transcribed. The researcher contacted parents telephonically before carrying out the interviews, which were conducted privately with each participant. In spite of the privacy afforded and attempts to set parents at ease, this set of participants appeared somewhat nervous when answering questions on religious education. This was possibly because they were worried about victimisation of their children at school (i.e. should they disagree with the school's policy or practice), so that the issues arising could not be interrogated in detail. For this reason, before following rounds of questionnaires and interviews, potential participants who appeared to be more comfortable discussing religious issues were identified, and the interview strategy was modified so as to move from less potentially sensitive matters to more sensitive matters. Participants were obtained from different schools to obtain a more generalizable picture of practices and to ensure anonymity (participants could have been identified, or there could have been claims that they had been identified - equally threatening - if they had all come from one school).

A second questionnaire (3.) was administered, with the following questions directed more pointedly towards the issues which had emerged in responses to the first questionnaire and interviews. It must be remembered that the discourse analysis of media texts was going on concurrently with the administering of questionnaires and interviews, and issues emerging there were also probed in this questionnaire. Moreover, parents at same school where the researcher taught had initially had seemed reluctant to open up about school religious views, for fear their children might be identified and victimised, so another school was chosen. As with the first questionnaire, the procedure was carried out after a school governing committee meeting, once permission has been granted by the principal, and after the parents had been informed that a researcher would like to ask them some questions pertaining to her study.

One of the key issues emerging in the data gained from the above



procedures was the growing popularity of Charismatic Christianity. Therefore a second interview session (4.) was held to explore further the extent to which Charismatic Christianity might be seen to be exerting an influence on school religious observances. This was thought to be important, as it might show that it was not just colonially-imposed Christianity which was exerting an influence on religious practices in schools, but popular choice by the community. However, in terms of exercising a situation of privilege in schools for Christian learners, the dominance of Christianity set in place by colonial imposition would mean that “popular” was also viewed as “normal” (Blumenfeld 2006: 96). The researcher telephonically sought permission from the school principal before approaching the parents of the third school after a school budget meeting. The principal of the school informed parents that a researcher was conducting interviews and sought their permission first before allowing the researcher to interview them. The interviews were scheduled to take place on days after the meeting and were held with individual parents privately in classrooms.

A third interview session (5.) was administered to establish community responses to the issues raised in the media texts, as by this time a sample of six had been analysed. This was done to confirm whether these articles echoed the issues seen as important by individual community members. As with the second interview session, parents were asked to volunteer after a school budget meeting (the same one mentioned above) and private interviews took place in classrooms. The same group of parents was involved as that in the second interview session

### **3.6.2 Texts used as evidence of hegemonic influence**

Three sources of texts were used to show hegemonic influence/s and/or participants’ responses to this, as follows:

*a. Sample texts showing religious observances at public schools*

Sample texts of typical hymns and prayers used at public schools in South Africa were gathered to establish whether they were predominantly Christian in origin by means of content analysis (see Appendix A).

*b. Texts of answers to questionnaires and interview responses*

The texts of *answers to questionnaires and* various discussions recorded during interviews were used to establish the reactions of various community members (i.e. parents) to religious observances at public schools. The content of these texts was used to show “grassroots” community responses to the issues of religious observances at public schools, and to pre-empt and set the scene, as it were, for the discourse analysis of media texts.

*c. Texts of media articles*

Texts of media articles (mainly from newspapers) dealing with contentious religious educational issues were collected and analysed (see Appendix C). This was done, firstly, as a “base point” for gauging community reactions as published in the press. Next, the media articles could be subjected to detailed analysis in a way which did not invade on the privacy of various community members, as the texts were now in the public domain. Finally, use of media texts also allowed some comparison with the reactions of the global community to key issues in religious education. Nine articles were used for the discourse analysis, tracing topical stories which appeared in mainly local newspapers in the course of the research, and as the analysis revealed certain trends. The articles were selected from mostly middle class conservative newspapers (e.g. *The Mercury*, *The Independent*, *Sunday Tribune*) which are pitching the news towards a multicultural readership. However, *The Post*, which caters for a mainly Indian readership, was also used, to identify any issues affecting the Durban Indian community, which is disproportionately large compared to that in other centres. As various disputes focusing on religious observances (particularly dress) reached the press, these were analysed using critical discourse analysis. Evidence of various instances of discrimination found in the articles was then cross-

referenced against issues raised in the interviews and surveys. Both data analyses were ongoing and interconnected, with the interviews raising ongoing issues which then achieved topicality or prominence in the press. The participants could then be questioned further on issues raised in the press.

The articles, in the order in which they are presented in Chapter 6 and Appendix C, are as follows:

1. Ajam, K. Christians in bunfight over food labelling: many faiths join to oppose group's court application. *The Independent*. 19 January 2013: 2.
2. Soobramoney, C. 2012. Don't be bullied: abuse was not music to pupil's ears. *The Post*. 16-20 May 2012.
3. Post Reporter. 2012. Religious tolerance is vital in society. *The Post*. 17-21 October 2012: 7.
4. Harper, M. 2011. Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban *Sunday Tribune*. 21 August 2011.
5. Jansen, L. 2012. Minister to probe Islam row. *The Mercury*. 5 June 2012.
6. New York Times Reporter. 2012. Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools. *International Herald Tribune: The Global Edition of the New York Times*. 19 October 2012: 3.
7. Shan, J. 2013. South African Rastafarian student Sikhokele Diniso returns to school after dust-up over dreadlocks. *Hinterland Gazette*. 2 March 2014. Available: <http://hinterlandgazette.com/2013/04/south-african-rastafarian-student-sikhokele-diniso-returns-to-school-after-dreadlocks-dust-up.html> (Accessed 2 March 2014).
8. Sapa. 2014. Parties outraged at school religion case. *The Mercury*. 3 September 2014: 4.
9. Mungroo, V. 2014. Church angers Hindus: visiting pastor's pamphlet deemed offensive *Sunday Herald*. 20 July 2014: 1.
10. Maluleka, S. 2010. Teacher calls for religious tolerance in schools. *The Post*. 18-22 August 2010: 19.
11. Jones, M. 2014. Sharing to build bridges of religious tolerance. *The Mercury*. 24 July 2014: 6.

Note that the last two articles were not selected for discourse analysis per se, but rather to provide comment, or offer validation or clarification of the issues which were raised in the other nine. It must also be noted that articles 1 and 9 do not in fact deal with religious observances in *schools*, but were added to the analysis as they brought into sharp relief the issues causing contention, the former, in a humorous mode (“bunfight”), the latter, in a very serious vein. In other words, they contextualised the issues described in the intervening news articles by giving insight into examples of religious intolerance serious enough to reach the press in the greater community. Article 9 also focuses on the influence of the Charismatic movement, following up the perception that some of the school observances noted in the case studies were the influence of modern rather than traditional Christianity. It was considered that the articles selected provided a fair mix of local and international news, with only *The Post* being aimed predominantly at Indian readership.

### **3.7 The coding used in the discourse analysis**

Saldana (2009) stresses the need to use or develop a coding method which is appropriate for the task. He suggests the following criteria:

1. Is the coding method harmonizing with your study’s conceptual or theoretical framework?
2. Is the coding method relating to or addressing your research questions?
3. Are you feeling comfortable and confident applying the coding method to your data?
4. Are the data lending themselves to the coding method?
5. Is the coding method providing the specificity you need?
6. Is the coding method leading you toward an analytic pathway? As you’re applying the coding method to the data, are you making new discoveries, insights, and connections about your participants, their processes, or the phenomenon under investigation? (Saldana 2009: 50-51, slightly adapted).

### 3.7.1 The coding used for analysis of media texts

The newspaper article texts were analysed using the following codes (with the abbreviations shown in parenthesis):

The text was coded for discourse analysis as follows:

Hegemony vs. legislation:

Hegemony {HEG} (i.e. hegemonic influence evident)

Constitution {CON} (i.e. reference to the Constitution)

Subject positions:

Powerful {POF} (i.e. coming from a position of power)

Powerless {POL} (i.e. coming from a powerless position)

Attitudes:

Humour {HUM} (i.e. humour is used)

Pro-tolerance {PRO-T} (i.e. evidence of tolerance)

Intolerance {INTOL} (i.e. evidence of intolerance)

Fact/opinion:

Factual {FACT} (i.e. presented as fact)

Opinion {OPIN} (i.e. presented as opinion)

Reported speech (of role players):

Direct speech {REPT-D}

Indirect speech {REPT-I}

Main role players include:

- Press
- School personnel
- Public
- Education authorities
- Religious groups

Subject positions (e.g. strong, submissive, conciliating) taken up by various role players were indicated in brackets { }. Any signs of overt or covert conflict and/or aggression were also noted (but not coded).

The following issues mentioned by Saldana (2009) were also dealt with in the analysis, but were noted descriptively rather than by means of codes, as it was not the intention of the research to develop a hierarchy of coding, but to flag key issues which could then be discussed with direct relevance to the topic. As Saldana (2009: 84) points out: “detailed coding is not always necessary, so sentence-by sentence or even paragraph-by-paragraph coding is permissible depending on your research goals and analytic work ethic.” These issues were as follows (some are self-explanatory, others are explained):

- code frequency (2009: 68)
- descriptive or “topic” coding (2009: 70)
- process coding (i.e. of activities, particularly those relating to conflict, 2009: 77)
- initial coding (i.e. coding developed in the process, as in this study, 2009: 81– 82)
- breaking it into parts (i.e. groups, role players, parts of article, 2009: 84)
- affective coding and emotion coding (2009: 84)
- values coding (2009: 89 - 90)
- versus coding (identifies opposed groups/elements, 2009: 93-94)
- evaluation coding (where role players offer evaluations, 2009: 97-98)

Dramaturgical coding (Saldana 2009: 102) perhaps needs particular mention, although it was also dealt with in note rather than code form in this study. According to Saldana, dramaturgical coding relates to the use of motifs, narrative or theming in exploring “underlying sociological and psychological constructs” (2009: 102). In the discourse analysis of newspaper articles, similes, metaphors and other imagery were found to be very useful in “unpacking” attitudes which could not be overtly expressed for reasons of press ethics, laws against libel, slander and hate speech, and political correctness, amongst other reasons.

### 3.7.2 The match between coding and criteria

In terms of harmonising with the study's conceptual or theoretical framework (criterion 1), it is the contention of critical linguistics that hegemony works mainly through ideology and not through physical or legal coercion, that is, in a subtle and mainly hidden way (Foucault 1986; Gramsci 1971; Bourdieu 1991, 2007). It is a pervasive force which operates, whether contested or uncontested, in a number of different contexts (Philips 1998: 216). Legislation such as the Constitution does contain ideological elements, but at least these are usually made overt and transparent. The interesting thing is that both the literature and the data suggest that the ideology in the Constitution is not being upheld in actual practice in everyday social life, hence the need to interrogate practices in a way which reveals the hegemony which is actually operating, rather than the "official" version. The codes relating to "hegemony" and "constitution" thus directly harmonise with the theoretical framework of critical theory and critical linguistics, as do the codes relating to identifying powerful or powerless "subject positions".

"Attitudes" are also relevant to the theoretical framework (criterion 1) in terms of revealing the "partisan positions" of participants (i.e. the main "role players" identified). The coding of "fact" and "opinion" refers to the aura of "distortion or illusion" identified with ideology. This is not to say that the textual analysis claimed to identify fact as opposed to opinion: what it aimed to do was to note *what is represented in the text as fact or opinion* (i.e. is what is "normalised" or made "natural" by the way in which it is expressed).

"Reported speech" was later added to the coding (see Saldana 2009: 81– 82) to distinguish between what was stated as fact in the articles by the reporter and what was stated by role players mentioned *in* the article. Granted that, most, if not all, of the content of newspaper articles is gleaned from sources, and thus could be said to be "hearsay", some sources might be seen by reporters as being more reliable than others. It was also thought that there might be reasons as to why reporters emphasized that they were citing *role*

*players'* statements and opinions, and not necessarily giving their own "take" when controversial religious issues were involved.

The research questions are directly related to hegemonic influence (by means of ideology) and what role players might suggest as a better option, thus the coding method can be seen to be relating to or addressing the research questions (criterion 2).

As for the other criteria, the researcher felt "comfortable and confident applying the coding method(s)" to the data (criterion 3). This was because the data actually did "lend themselves to the coding method" (criterion 4). The coding method also provided the "specificity" needed (criterion 5), as it was well geared to the task of eliciting hitherto hidden or masked relations of power, subject positions, alignments and partisan positions. The coding also led to "new discoveries, insights, and connections" about the role players. Finally, the coding method was also effective in leading the researcher "toward an analytic pathway" (criterion 6), because, as the coding proceeded, more and more hidden but linked elements could be seen. This meant that the "surface meaning" of the article texts could now be penetrated to reveal the complex, diverse, conflicting and every-changing relations of power under the surface. They could thus provide a clear indication of the hegemonic operation of colonial hegemony as well as the more recent and "trendy" Charismatic religious ideology.

It must be emphasised, however, that the role of coding in discourse analysis is not to provide quantitative evidence of the kind found in positivist research. (Ayres 2008: 868). Its role is rather to highlight indicators in the text which can be interpreted only with reference to wider contextual issues, and it must be remembered that "Extra-linguistic factors such as culture, society and ideology are part of the analysis of context" (Suhardja 2008: 39).



### **3.8 Conclusion**

In the next two chapters an attempt will be made to use the data gathered by the above means to answer the research questions. Answers to research question 1: (To what extent can the influence of colonial observances be found in current religious observances in public schools?) will be elicited from the data provided by the following:

- Representative samples of prayers, hymns and assembly readings from public schools (Chapter 4).
- Responses of parents in questionnaires and discussions (Chapter 4).
- The critical discourse analysis of media articles (Chapter 5).

Research question 2 (What does analysis of the discourse on current religious observances in public schools reveal about the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances on school populations?) will be answered with recourse to the data provided by the critical discourse analysis of media articles (Chapter 5). After coming to some general conclusions about the hegemonic influence of colonial religious practice, an attempt will be made to suggest what recommendations could be made about religious observances in public schools, thus suggesting possible answers to research question 3 (Chapter 6).

## **Chapter 4: Results of the Case Studies**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The data gathered in the case studies is analysed in this chapter in an attempt to provide answers to research question 1, although they can also be seen as partially corroborating answers to research question 2. Research question 1 queried to what extent the influence of colonial observances could be found in current religious observances in local public schools. A series of case studies followed through this question, which involved gathering sample texts of religious observances as well as rounds of surveys and discussions. The latter provided some insight into the participants' responses to the state of affairs in schools which their children attended. The results of the case studies are presented in this chapter.

### **4.2 Religious observances found in public schools**

Religious observances found in public schools were established, firstly, by collecting samples of texts of hymns, prayers and texts of other religious observances (mostly from school assemblies). Next, surveys and interviews were held with parents from various schools probing the kinds of religious observances their children experienced at different public schools, as well as the parents' response to this state of affairs.

### **4.3 Sample texts of hymns, prayers and observances**

Table 4.1 shows samples of some of the Christian hymns and prayers commonly used in South African public schools. It can be seen that, while some hymns are traditional Christian hymns from the liturgy, there are also hymns derived from the more modern Christian movements (e.g. Charismatic Christianity). The latter are thought to be a more powerful influence, as the adoption of the more modern styles of Christianity was achieved because they are popular, that is, an example of true hegemony

achieved by ideology (see Table 3.1 on p. 38). There is also the sense that the hegemonic colonial influence of traditional Christianity (e.g. Anglicanism and Calvinism) has been diluted by the growing popularity of the Charismatic movement.

Table 4.1 Samples of Christian hymns and prayers used in public schools

TITLE OF CHRISTIAN HYMN OR PRAYER		
P	The Lord's Prayer (traditional, <i>King James Bible</i> , Matthew 6:9-13)	T
P	The Lord's Prayer (traditional, <i>The Gospel of Luke</i> : Ch.11 2-4)	T
P	Our Father (more modern version, <i>New Testament</i> : Matthew 6:9-13)	M
P	Our Father (modern version)	M
H	Father, we thank Thee	T
H	The Joy of Sharing	T
P	Assembly prayer (Reverend Francis Bland Tucker 1895-1984)	T
P	Morning prayer	M
P	End of year prayer	M
H	My life is in you, Lord (Daniel Gardner 1986)	T
H	Shine, Jesus, shine	M
P	Responsorial Psalm 145 Missal Reference page 841	T
Key: P – prayer, H – hymn; T – traditional, M - modern		

Although this to some extent pre-empts discussion of the data obtained in the survey and interviews, some parent responses to the predominantly Christian prayers and hymns in public schools will be dealt with here (see Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4).

Table 4.2 illustrates responses from parents who are mainly in favour of maintaining the Christian prayers currently featuring in school assemblies, and would not like to have a change in the way the morning assemblies are conducted. However, terms such as “recited...for many years” and the notion that *The Lord's Prayer* is a “national prayer” (it is not) suggest that people in South Africa have been culturally conditioned to view an established educational practice (approved by many Christian government ministers) as “normal”, with “no need for change”. This confirms the argument of this study, that “Religious powerlessness has its historical

foundations in the colonial period” (Blumenfeld 2006: 197), and that these participants have been marginalised in terms of their culture-specific religious practices. As Blumenfeld points out, “This marginalization can have very serious implications on individuals’ sense of self and on their identity development, for *they begin to view themselves through the lens of the dominant group* (2006: 199, my emphasis).

Table 4.2 Positive responses to Christian hymns and prayers used in public schools

H	It is a national prayer [i.e. “Lord’s Prayer”] so in order for it to be said
H	This prayer has always been said.
C	There are no changes in the school assemblies.
C	There is no need for any change.
C	I just feel that the school prayer which is being recited by the learners for many years is apt and just. It is easy to say and it has universal meaning.
C	My child is quite comfortable with the recitation of the “Our Father” prayer.
S	I repeat, there is certainly no need for change.
M	The Christian prayers should be said but only once a month.
H	The school has not effected any changes [so none needed]
H	Allow for the learners to recite a different prayer every day, eg. On one day a Muslim Prayer, second a Hindu prayer, etc.
C	No, we are secure in our faith and not deterred by whatever religious observances that are carried out by the school.
C	Yes, my preference being the teaching of the Christian Doctrine.
C	I did not see the need to follow Hinduism because, I did not understand the scriptures and hence I found being a Anglican much more easier to understand.
C	It gives me a sense of direction in my life and I am able to understand the teachings of the Bible easier that reading the holy scriptures from the Hindu books.
C	Yes, my children attend morning assemblies which have Christian hymns recited. I prefer this being done because it gives them a spiritual upliftment and a sense of grounding.
Key: C - Christian, H - Hindu, M - Muslim, S - Shembe	

Table 4.3 shows that some parents do *not* agree with the way in which the current assemblies are being conducted. This comment sums it up in terms of the focus of this study: “we are living in a multi-cultural society but we are

still following the old values of the British.” This shows that some parents are aware of the nature of their disempowerment, that it is rooted in the colonial era of British occupation. Table 4.4 shows an overwhelming response in favour of multi-faith prayers being used at school assemblies, “because in this way everyone’s religious values will be respected”, and “Learners will hence slowly begin to recite prayers from the other religions”; in other words, start to understand the religious observances and beliefs of other people in a multicultural, multi-faith country. This is echoed in National Religious Leaders Forum secretary-general Ashwin Trikamjee’s words when interviewed for a news article in *The Post*: “Other religions, no matter how small they are, should be accommodated during prayer” (Maluleka 2010: 17).

Table 4.3 Negative responses to Christian hymns and prayers used in public schools

H	Since democracy, we need to evoke a change in the way school assemblies are conducted.
C	Christian prayers during the morning assemblies? [no]
H	The only prayer which they would recite is the Christian prayer. I am totally against this.
M	I will never allow my child to recite any prayer besides the one which is based on Islam.
H	Christianity is just one of the religions at school so why must Christianity gain more preference over the other religions?
H	It is in my belief that school assemblies need a change. For far too long it has just been only Christian centred.
H	My child cannot be forced to say any other prayer.
H	Certainly not, we are living in a multi-cultural society but we are still following the old values of the British.
H	It is very Christian orientated and I feel that it needs to be changed.
Key: C - Christian, H - Hindu, M - Muslim	

The word “respect” is in fact a key indicator of the participants’ powerlessness in the face of what Blumenfeld (2006: 195) terms “Christian privilege”. Powerless people are not accorded respect: “The powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them... and they rarely command respect” (Young 1990: 43).

Table 4.4 Suggestions for changes to hymns and prayers used in public schools

H	Gosh, change is certainly overdue. It would be a great idea, to have a multi-faith assembly. Learners will hence slowly begin to recite prayers from the other religions
H	Include the various religious prayers in the assembly.
C	Morning assemblies should include multi-faith prayers.
H	Different types of prayers should be said to include all religious beliefs.
H	Allow for the different religious faiths in the school assemblies to be respected.
M	School assemblies should not favour one type of belief system. Include all the other faiths in the current school assemblies.
H	A prayer which respects the different cultures should be said on different days.
H	I would love to have a change in school assemblies because in this way everyone's religious values will be respected.
H	A prayer for each and every religious group [should be said].
M	Different religions should be respected I would love to have a day in assembly when the Muslim prayer could also be recited.
Key: C - Christian, H - Hindu, M - Muslim	

## 4.4 Results of surveys and discussions

The results of the surveys and discussions are discussed in this section.

### 4.4.1 Results of preliminary questionnaire

The preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix A) investigated, amongst other things, the range of religions of parents, their religious practices, their knowledge of the school's religious policy, as well as the school's interpretation of national policy. It was also designed to gain their response as to their feelings about the type of prayers being recited at school assemblies. Table 4.5 gives an overview of the responses to the closed questions, and Table 4.6 lists some of the longer responses to the open-ended questions.

As shown in Table 4.5, six participants were interviewed, two Hindu parents, two Muslim parents and two Christian parents. All except one attended some form of religious service. Only two out of six were aware of the existence of

the Policy on Religion and Education, but five claimed that it had not been implemented at the school which their children attended. All but one (a Christian parent) were in favour of change from the current system of reciting only Christian prayers. Again, “Christian privilege” makes the Christian parent accept the state of affairs challenged by the others as “normal”.

Table 4.5 Responses to question 11 of preliminary questionnaire

Participant	Yes/no or short responses to preliminary questionnaire					
	1. <b>Religion</b>	2. <b>Attend services?</b>	3. <b>Service attended?</b>	4. <b>Aware of RE Policy?</b>	6. <b>Implemented at school?</b>	9. <b>Prayer change?</b>
1	Hindu	Yes	Home prayers	Yes	No	Yes
2	Hindu	Yes	Temple	No	-	Yes
3	Muslim	Yes	Mosque (men)	No	No	Yes
4	Christian	Yes	Sunday Church services	Yes	No	No
5	Christian	Yes	Hermon Temple	No	No	No
6	Muslim	No	-	No	No	Most certainly

Table 4.6 provides more detail from parents who initially had felt that they could not provide more detailed responses for the fear of being victimised at their child/children’s school. The picture emerging is one of confusion and to some extent apathy about the Policy on Religion in Education and whether it needed to be implemented. Four of the parents felt that there was a need for change in the way school assemblies were conducted, while two felt that there was no need for any change. The responses from the parents shown in Table 4.6 are similar to the responses from the parents who were interviewed in Table 4.4. Respondents mention “democracy” and a need for change, but appear not to realise that the power to uphold their democratic rights is contained in the provisions of the Constitution and the Policy on Religion and Education.

Table 4.6 Longer responses to preliminary questionnaire

<b>5. What are your views on the Religious Education Policy?</b>	
1	It [the policy] is not necessary.
2	-
3	-
4	It shows a respect for all other religions.
5	-
6	No.
<b>7. Why do you think the Policy has not been implemented at your school?</b>	
1	Lack of interest.
2	No.
3	It does not apply to them.
4	There was no reason to because the parents did not come forward with regards to changing the way prayers were said at the school assemblies.
5	Parents are in the dark about any changes to religious policies.
6	Not enough info to get started.
<b>8. Why Christian prayers still being recited during the morning assemblies?</b>	
1	Policy on religion education has not been unpacked.
2	There was no reason to.
3	It has always been said at morning assemblies.
4	This prayer has always been said.
5	It has always been recited and it promotes my religious values
6	The school has not effected any changes.
<b>10. What type of prayers should be said by the learners?</b>	
1	A prayer which respects the different cultures should be said on different days.
2	A prayer for each and every religious group.
3	A prayer for each individual religious group.
4	-
5	-
6	Different religions should be respected, I would love to have a day in assembly when the Muslim prayer could also be recited.
<b>11. Do you have any other comments or concerns to add?</b>	
1	I would love to have a change in school assemblies because in this way everyone's religious values will be respected.
2	A prayer for each and every religious group.
3	Since democracy, we need to evoke a change in the way school assemblies are conducted.
4	There is no need for any real change... um, yeah, change <i>is</i> needed.
5	There is no need for any change.
6	All religions should be respected and not only Christianity

This is possibly because, as suggested in the Literature review, the provisions of the Policy are not spelt out clearly, are often confused and/or



contradictory, and are left up to the courts to decide (Mestry 2007). It is no wonder, then, that the parents interviewed come across as confused and apathetic. As Blumenfeld comments, “oppression constitutes more than the cruel and repressive actions of individuals upon others...it also occurs within the day-to-day practices of contemporary democratic societies” (2006: 196). Christianity, no matter how diverse and fragmented, is the majority religion (80%) in South Africa, and, as such, exerts a dominant influence, which, by virtue of its pervasiveness, is viewed as “normal”.

#### 4.4.2 Results of first interview

Table 4.7 shows some of the key issues emerging from the interviews which were held to follow up issues arising from the preliminary questionnaire and the discourse analysis (carried on in between the case studies).

Table 4.7 Key issues emerging from the interviews

<b>Points/issues stressed by parents during the discussion</b>		
H	1	Totally against Christian prayers being recited at school assemblies. The home environment encourages Hinduism and the school environment encourages Christianity hence the child is totally confused. The Hindu culture is slowly being eroded. Solution would be to embrace all religions at school assemblies.
C	2	School assemblies have a universal meaning to all religions. There is no issue here. If change is implemented then there will be confusion. Follow the lead of other countries of the world and leave school assemblies as is.
M	3	Change is needed urgently. Implement change immediately. Thereafter learners will show respect to the other religions and harmony will prevail.
H	4	Schools are very Christian orientated and a change is needed. It is felt that Christianity gets more preferences than other religions and this is totally unfair.
M	5	This participant will not allow her child to recite Christian prayers at school assemblies because it goes against the Islamic faith to say prayer which is not of taught at their Madressa classes. Even if assemblies are changed, this parent will not allow her child to say the other prayers.
H	6	No prayers should be said at school assemblies. Parent is happy with the current status quo.
Z	7	Need to show respect for other religions.
Key: C - Christian, H - Hindu, M – Muslim, Z - Zionist		

In these interviews the responses were more spirited in advocating change. The majority of the parents felt that it was unfair that only one religion be given preference over the other. They felt that there was a need for change in the way school assemblies were conducted, and that change in the current school assemblies was long overdue. The Christian parent, however, was (understandably) against changing school assemblies.

#### **4.4.3 Results of second questionnaire**

Case study 2 involved interviews (also in Appendix A) using the same questions with parents from a different school, probing more deeply issues about which the previous group had appeared to be reticent. It was also used to investigate further certain issues which had emerged as a result of the discourse analysis of newspaper articles. The crux of the questioning was to ascertain whether parents knew how the policy on religion and education had been implemented at the school which their children attended, and whether they felt empowered by the policy (or not). They were also asked whether the policy had created a school context where their own religious beliefs were respected, and what they thought could be done to change this, if not.

Table 4.8 contains some longer responses from parents who had initially felt inhibited about answering questions in the first questionnaire due to the fear of being victimized at the school their child attended. Most of the above parents who were interviewed had no time to attend religious services for a variety of reasons. All of the interviewees had also not been workshopped on the Policy of Religion and Education, and there seems to be apathy on the part of the schools to deal with the issue. The participants in this interview agreed with other parents (i.e. those previously interviewed) that there was a need for a change in the way school assemblies were conducted, and expressed a wish for multi-faith prayers in schools.

Table 4.8 Longer responses to second questionnaire

<i>1. Why do you not attend religious services?</i>	
1	No time.
2	Get home late from work.
3	I am a shift worker.
4	I do attend religious services.
<i>2. How has the Policy on Religion and Education been implemented at your school?</i>	
1	The national government has imposed the prayer.
2	It has not been implemented.
3	Some learners learn their vernacular while others do not.
4	No. This policy was never discussed.
<i>3. Have you as a parent been workshoped/empowered with regards to this policy? Why/why not?</i>	
1	No. No notification from school has come to us.
2	No. It has not been discussed at school governing body meetings.
3	No. School has not informed us about it.
4	No. there has no discussion w.r.t this policy.
<i>4. If the current prayers/hymns which are recited/sung at school do not fit in with your religious beliefs or the policy, why do you think they have not been changed?</i>	
1	The school did not suggest a change.
2	Yes.
3	Yes.
4	The school has been slow to implement this type of change.
<i>5. What suggestions can you make towards making the school assembly (1) more in harmony with your own religious beliefs and (2) more in tune with the beliefs held by all in the school community?</i>	
1	Incorporate the various religious prayers in the assembly.
2	Morning assemblies should include multi-faith prayers.
3	Different types of prayers should be said to include all religious beliefs.
4	Allow for the different religious faiths in the school assemblies to be respected.

Table 4.9 contains suggestions from Christian, Hindu and Muslim parents on making the school assembly more in harmony with parents' own religious beliefs and more in tune with the beliefs held by all in the school community: again, a multi-faith approach is favoured.

Table 4.9 Responses to question 5 of second questionnaire

<b>Suggestions towards making the school assembly more in harmony with parents' own religious beliefs and more in tune with the beliefs held by all in the school community</b>		
H	1	Parent agrees to include other faith's prayers at school assemblies.
H	2	Multi-faith prayers should be included at school assemblies.
M	3	All religious beliefs should be included.
C	4	All faiths and religious values should be respected.
C	5	No one type of faith should be favoured.
M	6	Different types of prayers should be recited on a daily basis.
Key: C - Christian, H - Hindu, M - Muslim		

#### 4.4.4 Results of second interview

The Literature review and the discourse analysis (as will be discussed in Chapter 5) suggested that Charismatic Christianity was emerging as a strong influence in non-Christian communities. For this reason, interviews were held with mainly Charismatic Christian participants coming from a cultural background where the traditional cultural religion would be Hinduism or Islam. This was done to gain insights into the attraction of Christianity as opposed to its imposition by colonial influence and legislation. Two traditional-style Christians were also interviewed for possible comparison/contrast. The key points arising from the interviews are given in Table 4.10.

The interview responses suggest that all participants felt that they were not losing out on their Indian culture, because they still attended traditional Hindu festivals (e.g. Diwali); in fact there was a "fusion of cultures" because they celebrated Christmas as well as being able to dress in a traditional way when they attended Hindu festivals. Charismatic Christian parents said that they preferred their children to follow this type of Christianity as they believed it had more to offer than other types of Christianity. Charismatic Indian parents, however, did not mind wearing Indian outfits to religious ceremonies because they felt that the dress code did not affect their belief in Christianity.

Table 4.10 Rationale for choosing Charismatic vs. Traditional Christianity

1	CC	Reason	Jesus Christ and how he gave his life for us. Spiritual life is not just "religion". It is a relationship with God.
		Adds	In Christianity it is to be born again is to undergo a "spiritual rebirth" (regeneration) of the human soul or saint from the "Holy Spirit).
		Trad	No, being a Christian we also have special events such as baptism, weddings and Christening of a new born baby.
2	CC	Reason	Christianity is not a religion. It is a way of life. It has taught me about Christ, his death on the cross for my sins. Once I was a sinner, but now I have been saved by the previous blood of Christ Jesus, I am not saved by animals, but of God's own son, Jesus.
		Adds	It has given us hope, peace and joy and the assurance that when we die on earth, it is not the end. We will live forever.
		Trad	No, I am not losing out on Indian Culture.
3	CC	Reason	I was born in a Christian home.
		Adds	I have evidence that my prayers have been answered and my faith helps me to see beyond the natural.
		Trad	Absolutely not.
4	CC	Reason	Nothing is being "followed".
		Adds	They are the same.
		Trad	No. Half my family are Hindus. We celebrate Christmas and Diwali.
5	TC	Reason	I did not see the need to follow Hinduism because I did not understand the scriptures and hence I found being an Anglican much more easy to understand.
		Adds	It gives me a sense of direction in my life and I am able to understand the teaching of the bible easier than reading the Holy Scriptures from the Hindu books.
		Trad	No. Although I have converted to an Anglican Christian, I still do enjoy going to traditional Hindu ceremonies, but I do not participate in the rituals observed.
6	TC	Reason	I clearly understood what was expected off me and why I had to do certain things. Christ died to free me from my sins. He re-united me with God the Father.
		Adds	I am thankful to God for sending his Son in human form, to die on the cross for my sins so that I am forgiven.
		Trad	No, Christians have their own culture which also allows us to fuse with the Indian culture, e.g. wearing Indian clothes.
Key: CC - Charismatic Christian, TC - Traditional Christian			
Reason - What caused you to follow this type of worship?			
Adds - What does it do for you that traditional (Indian) religions do not?			
Trad - What about traditions such as weddings?			

The second participant in the survey felt that she was not losing out on her culture by being a Charismatic Christian. She went on to state that, whichever prayer was recited, her children would not be affected because they were very staunch in their beliefs. The third participant felt that being a Charismatic Christian had allowed God to answer her prayers and that this had attracted her to this movement. The fourth participant in this survey felt that being introduced to this type of Christianity was what they had known

from birth, and that their grandparents had followed this type of Christianity: Charismatic-style Christianity was also very easy for them to understand.

These responses suggest that there are many different reasons for the move from Hinduism/Islam to Charismatic Christianity, and that it depends on individual preferences. Both of the traditional Christians cited ease of understanding as the reason for choosing Christianity. The fifth participant felt that she was able to understand the teachings of traditional Christianity better than the Hindu scriptures. Although this participant had converted, she still attended Hindu ceremonies, but did not participate in any rituals. Participant six also felt that traditional Christianity was far simpler to follow than Hinduism, as, she felt, in the latter type of worship there are so many rites and rituals to follow.

The responses in Table 4.11 show the contrast between eastern and western culture as experienced by the Charismatic and traditional Christian participants. What was very clear is that three of the Charismatic participants found that being a Charismatic Christian was easy to understand and also “modern”, while the other participants stated that they were not converts but rather born into this type of religion.

All of the participants agreed that they retained elements of Indian culture regardless of religion followed, in that they still wore traditional eastern Indian dress to functions and also ate traditional Indian food. They had hence not completely divorced themselves from Indian culture. As for the adoption of “non-Eastern” Charismatic Christianity, according to Kumar (2006b: 364-365), it is not unusual for diaspora groups to “invent new rituals or doctrines and reorganize their lives around them” according to the contexts in which they find themselves, and this appears to be very much the case here.

Table 4.11 Contrast between eastern and western culture

1	CC	Western	Life and teaching of Jesus Christ e.g. Miracles of Jesus, which are as follows: He walked on water, healed the sick, turned water into wine, etc.
		Own culture	Marriage, death, cremation, burial are all done but in different ways. In Christianity there is no specific food or clothing that one has to use.
		Role	Yes, wearing an Indian outfit.
2	CC	Western	Christianity does not have its origins from the west. It is not a Western Religion, it has originated from Israel.
		Own culture	It is not my choice, but God chose me, before the foundations of the earth.
		Role	No, because we do not follow any.
3	CC	Western	I was born as a Christian and that is the only religion that I understand and know.
		Own culture	We respect other religions.
		Role	Yes, being that I like the Indian attire such as the Punjabi and the Sarie.
4	CC	Western	It was an easy philosophy
		Own culture	Same, because both religions are respected.
		Role	Yes, I attend all ceremonies and functions.
5	TC	Western	It has a lot of meaning to me and is also recognised world wide.
		Own culture	I still interact with Indians. I attend cultural events organised in the community.
		Role	No.
6	TC	Western	As the Indian culture emanated from a foreign country, I find truth in my belief as a Christian. I fully understand what I believe in. Most Indians do not even know why they do certain rituals, they do it because their parents have passed it down to them.
		Own culture	We cook Indian foods, curries and wear Indian outfits. Culture is what we do daily.
		Role	None whatsoever. My lifestyle is that of a Christian, portraying the character and qualities of Jesus. Most traditional Indians are moving away from their culture for convenience and time. They even shorten certain rituals to suit their own needs.
Key: CC - Charismatic Christian, TC - Traditional Christian			
Western - Why did you choose a religion which has western origins?			
Own culture - How does your choice of religion fit in with your notion of Indian culture?			
Role - Is there any role that traditional Indian religions still play in your life?			

Table 4.12 shows that responses about any preferences they might have for the religious observances carried out at public schools were divided (three had preferences, three did not). This is understandable in terms of the fact that Christians are a majority group in South Africa, and there is little or no disempowerment to contest. Of the three who expressed preferences, two were for Christian observances, the other, for multi-faith. Interestingly a

respondent from the traditional Christian group showed a nostalgia for Indian (Tamil/Hindi) elements.

Table 4.12 Preferences for the religious observances carried out at public schools

1	CC	Yes, at our school we have many observances, e.g. religious holidays for Diwali, Ascension Day, Eid, etc. Before Diwali festival a small programme is hosted to entertain learners. Before Christmas, indigent learners are given a special lunch.
2	CC	No, we are secure in our faith and is not deterred by whatever religious observances that are carried out by the school.
3	CC	Yes, my preference being the teaching of the Christian Doctrine.
4	CC	No, I respect all religious denominations.
5	TC	Yes, my children attend morning assemblies which have Christian hymns recited. I prefer this being done because it gives them a spiritual upliftment and a sense of grounding.
6	TC	No, but I wish that, like, Tamil/Hindi is offered in school, Christianity as a teaching should also be considered. Although I understand that Tamil/ Hindi are languages and English is already offered.
Key: CC - Charismatic Christian, TC - Traditional Christian		

#### 4.4.5 Results of third interview

Responses to the third interview session offered insights into parents' reactions to six of the newspaper articles used in the discourse analysis (six only, because some of the more recent articles used had either not yet been selected, or in some cases, published, at the time the interviews were held.)

To pre-empt the analysis given in more detail in Chapter 5, in *Christians in bunfight over food labelling*, a Christian group (not a majority group) is making an objection to halaal food labelling being on all products. This objection is taken so seriously by other religious groups (including other Christian groups) that they make a point of making formal statements in the interests of freedom of religious observance. The "victim" group was identified as Muslims, and the conflict is between a Christian sect and Muslims, with other religious groups and other Christian groups opposing the sect's position as being extreme. As shown in Table 4.13, the first two respondents saw the religious groups as the victims, suggesting that someone who protests is by definition a "victim".



Table 4.13 Responses to questions on *Bunfight over food labelling*

1. Responses to questions on <i>Bunfight over food labelling</i>				
	Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/ why?	Who comes across as most sensible in this case?	What religious right is being challenged/ trampled upon?	What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation?
1	The victims are [seen as] the other religious groups because they do not know if the product respects their religious values.	The Christians.	The right of the other religious groups who feel that the food products should be labelled.	Instead of this matter going to the High Court for a ruling, the various religious groups should have consulted with one another and come to a solution.
2	The different groups who are opposing the ban.	The Hindu people.	The different groups who are opposing the ban.	A meeting should have been called and the matter should have been discussed.
3	The Christians.	The Muslim community.	The right to have products certified according to our religious values.	This Christian group should have some knowledge as to what is happening in other cultures and not just impose their values onto others.
4	The Christians.	The Christian group.	The right of the Christian group so as not to have any labelling onto foods.	The other groups should respect what is being said here.
5	The Muslim people.	The Muslim people.	The right of our people to know if the food being sold is halaal or not.	The Christian group should have agreed to have signs on all food packaging.
6	The Hindu people.	The Hindu community.	The right of the Hindu community to know if a product contains pork or not and this can only be done if it there is a label that says so.	The Christian group should have realised that they are coming up against opposition from other groups and they should have left the labels on.

This is somewhat disconcerting, as the whole point of protesting against unjust practices is to *avoid* becoming a victim. The next two respondents saw the Christians as the victims (they meant the sect protesting about the labelling): this is even more disconcerting, as further investigation suggested that the group was somewhat over-zealous in its determination to stamp out “pagan” practises, which is hardly a victim position. The last two respondents identified Muslims and Hindus respectively as the victims, which seems to represent partisan positions, as is the identification of Muslims and Hindus as “most sensible”, when in fact the united front presented by the other religions is far more “sensible” (i.e. reasonable and humane) in its arguments. The issue of the religious right being challenged is fairly clear (but also partisan

from the last two respondents). One respondent, however, insisted that it is the religious right of the extremist Christian group *not* to have food labelled (i.e. with other religious symbols) which is being challenged. Now it transpired (in subsequent inquiry) that members of this group actually believed that their food was being contaminated by “pagan” religious rituals when marked with halaal or other non-Christian markings, so one can appreciate that their objections were not trivial, but deadly serious.

As a solution to the dispute, respondents seemed to feel that discussion, mutual respect and common sense should have prevailed, and that the matter should not have gone to the courts. However, in a multicultural, multi-faith country this is exactly why there should be more detailed guidance in the Constitution (or related policies) as to the resolution of such disputes. In schools with multi-faith populations, not just food labelling but also provision of food deemed religiously correct is an issue. Earlier, I stated: “In some instances, rituals, regalia, dress and sacred objects *are* the religion; beliefs are contained *in* these elements, rather than being represented *by* them” (p 12). Food and food rituals can be an essential part of religion, not just a symbol for belief.

In *Don't be bullied* (see Table 4.14), a Hindu student is reported to have been bullied by an Afrikaans female music teacher for wearing a sacred red string (known as a “Luxmi string”) while in school uniform. The issue is that of wearing religious regalia, and the conflict is between an Afrikaner teacher (supported by the Principal, who is her husband) and Hindus. The victim here is identified (i.e. in the Press) as the Hindu schoolboy.

Four respondents identified the Hindu child as the victim, but two claimed that the teacher was the victim and the school had a right to enforce the Christian doctrine at the school. It is of concern that a parents should think this in a country with a secular constitution and policies which uphold individuals' rights to freedom of religious belief. The same two respondents thought that the teacher (and the principal) acted sensibly. The same four

who identified the Hindu school child as the victim though that his parents acted sensibly in upholding his right to wear the Luxmi string. Solutions ranged from suggesting that the parents explaining the significance of the Luxmi string and that the school must “embrace change”, allowing the child “to practise his religious freedom”, to “following the school rules” and “transfer the child” if parents are unhappy with the school. Again, participants realise the seriousness of this religious practice, which cannot be “separated” from public school life (see Dirks 1988: 3).

Table 4.14 Responses to questions on *Don't be bullied*

2. Responses to questions on <i>Don't be bullied</i>				
	Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why?	Who comes across as most sensible in this case?	What religious right is being challenged/ trampled upon?	What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/?
1	The victim is the learner who attended Parkdene Primary School. He had been subjected to racial discrimination and verbal abuse.	The parents of the pupil.	The right of the Hindu learner to wear his religious red string to class. He had been instructed by the teacher to remove this string.	The parents should have empowered the school as to the significance of the red string and explained to the school community that there was not harm being caused to anyone by the learner wearing this string to school.
2	The pupil.	The parents	The right of the Hindu learner to wear the Luxmi string to school.	Allow the child to practise his religious freedom.
3	The teacher.	The teacher and the principal.	The right of the school to enforce the Christian doctrine at the school.	The learner should follow school rules and not wear the string to school.
4	The learner.	The parents.	The right of the Hindu learner.	The child should be allowed to wear the string to school.
5	The Hindu child.	The Hindu parents.	Hinduism is not allowed to be practised at the school because the management does not respect Hindu symbols as part of the school dress code.	The school should embrace change and allow for the various religious symbols to be worn to school.
6	The teacher.	The teacher.	The right to have Christianity as the only religion respected at school.	The parents should have taken transfer for their child.

In *Religious tolerance is vital in society* (see Table 4.15), specific cases of alleged discrimination locally and overseas are reported, namely, cases of

victimisation for the wearing of religious regalia in school or at the workplace: a pupil and policeman were victimised for wearing a red string; a pupil and worker at Heathrow were victimised for wearing a nose stud; a Muslim girl was obliged by the court to attend swimming classes with bare-chested boys. The issue is one of the right to wear religious regalia in school and at the workplace, or, in the case of the Muslim girl, not to have sacrilegious practices imposed on her. The conflicts described are between schools and employers and their Hindu and Muslim pupils or employees.

Table 4.15 Responses to questions on *Religious tolerance is vital in society*

3. Responses to questions on <i>Religious tolerance is vital in society</i>				
	Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/ why?	Who comes across as most sensible in this case?	What religious right is being challenged/ trampled upon?	What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation?
1	Sunali Pillay, the Hindu policeman, Amrit Lalji, and the Muslim girl.	The victims in each case who had been subject to racial discrimination.	Their right to wear their religious items. They were victimised because they saw the need to wear their religious regalia to their place of work / school.	The management should have empowered themselves with the reason behind the learner wearing the red string and not been so harsh in the way the situation was handled.
2	The principal, the Brigadier ..., the Employers at London Heathrow Airport and the management at the German school.	The principal, the Brigadier (Owen Yamani Zama), the Employers at London Heathrow Airport and the management at the German school.	The right to have Christianity enshrined as a universal religion.	The victims should have accepted the decisions made by the various role players and moved on with their lives.
3	Sonali, the Hindu policeman, Amrit Lalji and the Muslim girl.	The victims.	The right of all of the above victims to practice their own religions.	The courts should always uphold the Constitution and that is to ensure that the various religions are respected.
4	The four different individuals in the article.	The law or courts.	-	The right to practice Christianity as a modern religion.
5	The various people mentioned in the articles.	The courts.	Hinduism and Islam.	Each victim has the right to fight for their own religious values and beliefs.
6	The individuals mentioned in the article.	The people who have complained.	The right for these individuals to practise their own religious beliefs and values.	Each and every individual should have been given the right to exercise their own religious belief system.

At least there is agreement on who the victims are: this is probably because the newspaper article places these individuals very firmly in the victim category. However, only half of the respondents see the victims as having behaved “sensibly”: this quality is attributed by the others to the employers/management and the courts, that is, authority figures. Disturbingly, Christianity is thought by one respondent to be “enshrined as a universal religion”, and we are also told that people should have “The right to practice Christianity as a modern religion” (so “modern” is “good”). There are three pleas for religious rights to be upheld, but also the disturbing notion that management have the right to make the rules, and people should just “move on with their lives” instead of complaining. This indicates a realisation that, in countries where Christianity and Christian religious practices are not only “normal”, but privileged, as Blumenfeld (2006) points out, there is no point in challenging everyday conditions of employment.

In *Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban* (see Table 4.16), a case of alleged discrimination against Islamic headgear is reported, where school pupils were asked to remove their fezzes by a Hindu school principal during the Muslim fasting period. The conflict is between Muslim and Hindus, the issue that of Religious regalia worn in school, and the victims are a group of Muslim schoolboys at a school where the Principal and senior staff members are Hindus.

Four respondents saw the Muslim schoolboys as the victims, and their parents as “sensible”, but two saw the principal as the victim, and also the most “sensible” person. Yet one of the two Principal supporters saw that the religious rights of the schoolboys were being flouted. Five felt that latitude or compromise should be been extended to the fez wearers, but the sixth felt that the Principal, an authority figure, should have been deferred to.

Table 4.16 Responses to questions on *Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban*

4. Responses to questions on <i>Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban</i>				
	Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why?	Who comes across as most sensible in this case?	What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon?	What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation?
1	The group of learners who wanted to wear their religious headgear to school.	The parents of the learners.	The constitutional right of the learners to wear their religious item to school.	The code of conduct and dress policy of the school should have included the wearing of the fez to school and this was left out of the school policy.
2	The principal of the school.	The principal of the school.	The principal's right to uphold the school code of conduct.	The parents should have respected the principal's views.
3	The Principal.	The Principal.	The right of the Muslims.	The principal and the governing body should have come to a compromise.
4	The Muslim boys.	The parents.	The Islamic Faith.	The Muslim boys should have been allowed to wear the fez to school.
5	The Muslim boys.	The parents.	Islam.	It should have been ruled that fez should be worn to school.
6	The learners of the school.	The parents.	The right of the learners to practise their own freedom of religion.	The principal should have been more understanding of the situation and allowed the learners to wear the fez to school.

Now the interesting thing here is that this looks like an instance of a previously disadvantaged minority (i.e. Hindu community, under British and Afrikaner rule) exerting power over another previously disadvantaged minority (Muslims) by virtue of being more dominant (i.e. as school management). However, it is the contention of this study that school rules themselves and the fetish made of “correct school uniform” are in fact remnants of colonial Christian hegemonic influence (see p 24, with reference to Harber and Sakade 2009). This influence is something so implicit that it is not perceived, and therefore not challenged by respondents.

*Minister to probe Islam row* (see Table 4.17) is a report about a protest by black college students who claimed that abiding by Islamic custom and religious rules had become mandatory at a dormitory leased from an Islamic institute. The issue is one of Islamic customs being imposed on non-Islamic

college students. The conflict is between the trustees of the Muslim institute and the black college students, who are portrayed as the victims.

Table 4.17 Responses to questions on *Minister to probe Islam row*

5. Responses to questions on <i>Minister to probe Islam row</i>				
	Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why?	Who comes across as most sensible in this case?	What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon?	What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation?
1	The Christian students because they had to abide by what the Muslim authorities had stipulated in terms of their occupation at the hostel.	The Christian students.	The Christian way of life, because the Christian students were not allowed to practice their way of worship.	The authorities should have consulted with parents of the students and reached a solution to the problem.
2	The students.	The students.	The right to practise Christianity instead of Islam.	The students should not be victimised.
3	The students.	The students.	Christianity.	The students should not be forced to practice in a faith other than their own.
4	The students	The students.	Christianity.	The organisation has no right to enforce Islam upon Christian students.
5	The Christian students.	The students who want their religion to be respected.	The right of the students to practise their own religion.	The students could have found other accommodation.
6	The students.	The students.	The right to respect the students.	The students should have moved out and found other accommodation.

Here there is unanimous agreement that the black college students were the victims, and that their resistance to being oppressed was “sensible”. There is also unanimity that the rights of the students (i.e. to practise Christianity) were being violated. It is disturbing, however, that two respondents said that the students should have moved out or found other accommodation, although three upheld the students’ right to their religious convictions, and another respondent suggested consultation with parents.

No one suggested that it might have seemed “normal” to the Muslim janitor to expect Muslim behaviour as being proper in the context of a Muslim hostel, and that the students were perhaps somewhat crass in not realising this,

instead perceiving it as a form of “oppression”. There is also the issue of the previously disadvantaged masses (the black students) exerting hegemonic influence over the minority group (Muslims), as the students were now the same culture as the majority of the liberation government officials.

*Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools* (see Table 4.18) is a global news report about Russian President Putin making a public statement rebuking Muslim girls for wearing head scarves in Russian schools, as the practise is against Russia’s “secular” school policy. The issue is once more the wearing of religious regalia in school, the conflict is between the Secular Russian government and Muslims, and female Muslim schoolgirls are portrayed as the victims. Five respondents identified the Muslim girls as the victims, but one, quite perceptively, realised that the schools had been placed in an invidious position, one principal even having been threatened with physical harm in retribution.

Table 4.18 Responses to questions on *Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools*

6. Responses to questions on <i>Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools</i>				
	Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How?	Who comes across as most sensible in this case?	What religious right is being challenged/ trampled upon?	What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation?
1	The Islamic students.	The Russian President, Vladimir V. Putin.	The rights of the Muslim girls to wear their head scarves to school.	The girls should respect the laws of the country.
2	The girls.	Mr Putin.	The Christian Faith.	Respect the law of the country.
3	Russian school.	The President.	The right to uphold a secular state.	Respect the fact that all citizens are treated equally.
4	The girls.	The President.	The Islamic Faith.	Allow the girls to wear their scarves to school.
5	The Muslim girls.	The President.	The Christian faith.	The girls should respect the dress code of the school.
6	The Muslim girls	The Russian President	The Christian Faith	The girls should respect the dress code of the school

The unanimous support for President Putin as being the “most sensible” person is distressing, as once more the powerful authority is seen as the



decision-maker on the exercising of religious rights (in this case, secular rights). Only two respondents saw the Muslim girls as having their rights trampled on and the Islamic faith as being challenged. The rest (oddly) seemed to think that *Christianity* was being challenged: this is remarkable in terms of Russia being a communist state, and, in theory, anyway, a secular country.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

As far as the representative sample of hymns, prayers and other assembly procedures goes, it seems that schools are following Christian observances of colonial origin in public schools in predominantly Indian communities. This suggests that the Government is “soft” or apathetic about transgressions by Christians against the religious rights of non-Christians. It also hints at the growing influence of Charismatic Christianity. Interest was expressed in changing to multi-faith prayers and observances but there was passivity or apathy on the part of the parents surveyed in actively pushing for change: life is too busy, and daily work is too time-consuming and exhausting. There was also evidence of deference to authority figures such as school principals and powerful figures such as President Putin. This may have made parents think twice about challenging their authority: rather “walk away”.

It was evident that there was confusion about the provisions of the Constitution and the Policy on Religion and Education as to what these actually meant in terms of their application to everyday school life. This is not surprising, as the literature reviewed suggests that these statutes *are* confusing, and that anomalies, contradictions and inconsistencies exist. Parents’ attempts to identify the victims and oppressors in the news articles were also confused, and perhaps this explains why it is usually only individual parents who protest when their children’s education and wellbeing are threatened by oppressive or coercive school practices. Attempts to mobilise groups against such oppression would come up against the reality that there would be very little agreement in a multi-faith parent body as to

what should actually be done. However, one cannot blame the parents for what democratic legislation has not made very clear.

In answer to research questions 1 and 2, there is sufficient evidence in the case studies to show that the influence of colonial observances *can* be found in current religious observances in public schools. Parents who participated in the interviews provided oral evidence about the type of prayers which were recited and it was clear that the assemblies were conducted purely in a Christian ethos. A more disturbing finding is that the real threat to non-Christian beliefs and practices appeared to come from the emerging Charismatic movement as it is not “legislated”, as with Calvinistic Christianity in the apartheid era, and is becoming increasingly more popular, a case of true hegemony achieved by ideology. While the parents provided valuable insight into the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances, an analysis of the newspaper articles was thought to be a better option in exploring the issues raised here in more detail. This is because it would protect the identity of the parents and avoid possible victimisation (particularly of their children), as the articles were already in the public domain, as it were.

## Chapter 5: Results of the Discourse Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 deals with the results of the discourse analysis of newspaper articles showing what the discourse on current religious observances in public schools reveals about the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances. As mentioned at the end of Chapter 3, the discourse analysis will be used to support the answers to research question 1 which were provided by the case studies (in Chapter 4). The main focus, however, is to show what the analysis of the discourse on current religious observances in public schools reveals about the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances on school populations (research question 2). In the course of the analysis, answers will also be sought for research question 3, as to what recommendations could be made about religious observances in public schools. These will, however, be dealt with in Chapter 6.

### 5.2 Overview of range and scope of the articles analysed

The following overview gives some idea of the range and scope of the articles analysed, and, in the process, explains why they were chosen.

**Christians in bunfight over food labelling - Many faiths join to oppose group's court application:** This starts the analysis on a light-hearted note ("bunfight") but shows that people have strong passions about the topic, religious food labelling, which is highly contentious, although seemingly trivial on the surface. It also suggests that people of different religious groups are divided into mindsets (i.e. tolerance vs. dogmatism) rather than arguing for a specific religion. This suggests that the solidarity of various religious groups and alignments is not necessarily dictated by dogma. While this article is not about religious observances in schools, it sets the next seven "school" (or

college) articles in context by showing the complex and dynamic nature of the greater community in which the school episodes play out.

**Don't be bullied - Abuse was not music to pupil's ears:** Here the situation is shown as being more serious. The "bullying" comes across as not only abusive but racist in character. However, the case reported has not yet been proved or resolved, and may possibly be smoothed over by the authorities.

**Religious tolerance is vital in society:** This report suggests that the intolerance for religious observances apparently suffered by the school boy (mentioned in previous article) is endemic worldwide, and leads not only to bullying, but loss of jobs where cultural religious preferences are not fully understood by employers and authorities.

**Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban:** The words "up in arms" suggest that religious disagreements have now developed into open warfare, where Muslim parents feel "insulted" by the Hindu Principal's alleged ignorance of the significance of wearing the fez.

**Minister to probe Islam row:** In an ironic about face, in this article non-Islamic students are offended by allegedly having to observe Muslim prayers and practices while staying in an Islamic residence, although there seems to have been some misunderstanding about "behaving and dressing decently" as opposed to "adopting Islamic behaviour and dress". While this goes outside the ambit of "school" observances, it shows that the problems experienced by school pupils may extend into higher education and training.

**Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools:** This sets the Islamic dress issue in an international perspective. In another "turn around", so to speak, the national policy of secularity intended to endure "fairness" to all religious denominations can be seen actually to cause deep offence in some cases.

**South African Rastafarian student Sikhokele Diniso returns to school after dust-up over dreadlocks:** This is the first report about South Africa written by an international reporter, writing from a centrist American perspective. Here humour is again used to defuse the situation, but “dust up” suggests both a street fight, and that the hair style is “dirty” (a “hot mess”). The reporter is from Haiti, but seems to have identified strongly with American Christian values, to the extent that she is applying western stereotypes to the schoolboy, while appearing to “laugh it off”. This article illustrates the possible conflict felt by people who have adopted western values and customs (including Christianity). It also illustrates the difficulty of reporting religious conflicts fairly in terms of religion being a very emotional issue for people.

**Parties outraged at school religion case:** Two Christian-oriented political parties, the African Christian Democratic Party and the Freedom Front Plus, are protesting against a court case brought by the Organisation for Religion, Education and Democracy (OGOD) against Education Departments and six schools. OGOD is allegedly doing so because of over 60 cases of the schools’ “suppression of ‘scientific and cultural knowledge’, religious coercion and abuse of pupils’ rights at public schools”, and the Education Departments’ allowing this to happen. The irony here is that both “sides” claim to be arguing for religious tolerance and the constitutional right to practice individual, community or cultural religious observances. What the pro-Christian political parties appear to have overlooked is that OGOD has evidence to suggest that non-Christian pupils are not only being denied this right, but are being coerced (in six schools) into following Christian beliefs and practices. It is also apparent that the African Christian Democratic Party and the Freedom Front Plus see Christianity in schools as “logical” and “normal”, and any attempt to question this as a “witch hunt” against Christians.

### **Church angers Hindus – Visiting pastor’s pamphlet deemed offensive:**

This article deals with an attempt by an overseas pastor and the Head of Potters House to invite Hindus to a Charismatic Christian church service. This was viewed as highly offensive by the Hindu Community of Verulam, and an apology was made after a complaint by the Hindu Maha Sabha. Even though it does not deal directly with religious school observances, this article was selected as the last one in the news cycle for discourse analysis, as it sums up the outrage of non-Christian communities who are made to feel that Christianity is better, in fact “makes more sense” than traditional ethnic religions such as Hinduism.

Up until “Church angers Hindus”, the articles have dealt with the results of colonial imposition of Christianity (in the form of Anglicanism or Calvinism). We have also seen examples of what happens when countries (e.g. Russia and Germany) have tried to detach the church from the state, and have a policy of secularity which might be seen as “fair” in terms of not allowing any one religion to influence “correct” public behaviour. In spite of these attempts at “fairness”, what citizens of these countries see as violation of their right to freedom of religious observance still occurs all too often. It must be emphasised, also, that only the “tip of the iceberg” is visible in the press.

“Church angers Hindus” was dealt with last in the discourse analysis as it describes the results of Christian hegemony on non-Christian populations in the form of attempts at evangelism by Charismatic movements. These attempts reflect the force of true ideology, as the principles by which they operate are not legislated or coercive, but subtly persuasive. Conformity is no longer the result of the state or government coercion or repressive laws, but of subtle social trends towards “fashionable” “modern” living (as portrayed on American television). The word “charismatic” itself is derived from the Greek word χάρις (charis: grace or kindness), which is also the origin of the word “charm”. Charismatic pastors use charm, not coercion, to attract converts. This process is still about power, however, and Pastor Robinson clearly intended to present an argument which claimed that Christianity

“made more sense” (i.e. was better) than Hinduism, which the Hindu community, understandably, saw as highly offensive, and as an attack on its beliefs and values.

Analysis of the articles has brought the researcher to the point where the traditional ethnic religion of her forefathers is seen as being caught between the forces of two powerful movements. These are traditional Christianity, the result of colonial imposition, and the more recent Charismatic Christian movement, which can be seen to exert a persuasive force not evident in more traditional forms. In this article, it can be seen Hindus have hardly emerged from the travails of a repressive past before being solicited by the attractions of an enticing and “fashionable” modern religion. That this was viewed by them as an attack and an outrage is hardly surprising. What Pastor Robinson had not realised was that, in South Africa, state and church *are* separated, in terms of having a secular constitution. The paradox is that the constitution does not enforce a secular state of affairs in public social life, but makes it mandatory for *all* religions to have equal respect by the law of the land. As just the *existence* of other religions is seen by some folk as a mortal offence, this is a tall order to fulfil in everyday social functioning, and it is no wonder that those affected so often resort to litigation to settle religious disputes, as will be unfolded in the rest of this chapter.

### **5.3 Key issues emerging from the analysis of news articles**

The key issues emerging from the analysis of news articles main issues have been identified in Table 5.1. They concern mainly the visible or outward signs of religious beliefs with respect to the following:

- the wearing of religious regalia (red band, nose stud)
- the wearing of religious or “improper” dress, headgear or hairstyle (Burkha, fez, immodest dress, dreadlocks)
- religious observances (such as reading the Bible or attending Mosque).

The resulting conflicts range from disagreement to outright aggression.

Table 5.1 Key issues emerging from the analysis of news articles

	SUMMARY OF NEWS ARTICLES	Conflict	Issues	“Victim” group
South Africa	<b>Christians in bunfight over food labelling</b> A Christian group (not even a majority group) is making the objection, which is taken so seriously by other religious groups (including Christian) that they make a point of making formal statements in the interests of freedom of observance.	Christian sect vs. Muslims; other Christians	Food labelling	Muslims
South Africa	<b>Don't be bullied</b> A Hindu student is reported to have been bullied by an Afrikaans female music teacher for wearing a sacred red string (known as a “Luxmi string”) while in school uniform.	Afrikaner teacher (CNE) vs. Hindus	Religious regalia	Hindu child
SA/London /Germany	<b>Religious tolerance is vital in society</b> Specific cases of alleged discrimination locally and overseas are reported, namely, cases of victimisation for wearing religious regalia in school or the workplace: pupil and policeman victimised for wearing a red string; pupil and worker at Heathrow victimised for wearing a nose stud; Muslim girl obliged by court to attend swimming classes with bare-chested boys.	Schools and employers vs. Hindus and Muslims	Religious regalia in school and workplace	Hindus and Muslims, children and adults
South Africa	<b>Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban</b> One case of alleged discrimination against Islamic headgear is reported, where school pupils were asked to remove their fezzes by a Hindu school principal during the Muslim fasting period.	Muslims vs. Hindus	Religious regalia in school	Muslims
South Africa	<b>Minister to probe Islam row</b> This is a report about a protest by students who claimed that abiding by Islamic custom and religious rules had become mandatory at a dormitory leased from an Islamic institute.	Muslim trustees vs. students; Muslim clerics	Islamic customs imposed on college students	Non-Muslim students
Russia	<b>Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools</b> This is a global news report about President Vladimir V. Putin speaking against the wearing of head scarves in Russian schools, which is against Russia's “secular” school policy.	Secular Russian govt. vs. Muslims	Secular govt. bans religious regalia in school	Muslim female schoolgirls
South Africa	<b>South African Rastafarian student Sikhokele Diniso returns to school after dust-up over dreadlocks</b> A U.S. based blogger from Jamaica reports on a South African schoolboy's exclusion from school through the wearing of Rastafarian dreadlocks.	School vs. Rastafarians; Blogger vs. schoolboy	School rules vs. religious regalia	SA Rastafarian schoolboy
South Africa	<b>Parties outraged at school religion case</b> Two Christian-oriented political parties are protesting against a court case brought by OGD against Education Departments and 6 schools for allowing “suppression of ‘scientific and cultural knowledge’, religious coercion and abuse of pupils' rights at public schools”.	Christian political parties vs. OGD	Enforcing Christian beliefs/observances	Non-Christian pupils at six public schools
South Africa	<b>Church angers Hindus – Visiting pastor's pamphlet deemed offensive</b> An attempt by an overseas pastor and the Head of Potters House to invite Hindus to a Charismatic Christian church service is viewed as highly offensive, and an apology is made after a complaint by the Hindu Maha Sabha.	Hindu Maha Sabha vs. Potters House Church	Insult to Hinduism; attempts at evangelism	The Hindu community in Verulam



In the news articles published about religious disputes in South Africa, the headlines all contain words associated with violence or aggression, namely: (bun-)fight, bullied, up in arms, row, dust-up and dread(locks), outraged, anger(s). The headlines from the news articles with an international slant (*New York Times*, *The Post*) do not contain terms associated with violence or aggression. The South African-published article which also refers to cases in West Germany and England focuses on “religious tolerance” in the headline, although the article reports on various cases of “victimisation”. The more global news article contains the weaker term “protests”, which presents Putin’s position as reasonable rather than aggressive or punitive.

It must also be noted, when looking at the role-players involved in the conflict, that there is no clear case for a “Christians vs. non-Christian” oppression (signalling overwhelming hegemonic force), but that the conflict is much more complex. This does not mean that the hegemonic influence of Christianity no longer exists, but that it has, in the true sense of ideology, gone “underground”, that is, become implicit in various walks of society. It “bubbles up”, so to speak, in various manifestations, when it becomes offensive or oppressive, and finds expression in the press or the courts (often both, as the articles show). However, legislation cannot enforce religious tolerance: it can only uphold the law of that country. In a secular country, it may actually enforce religious *intolerance*. The conflicts apparent in the news reports analysed are a direct result of diverse beliefs coming up against the idea that certain beliefs and observances are “normal” and “right”, and that others are “deviant” and/or “wrong”. It might be thought that in a recently formed democracy, the multicultural - and therefore religiously diverse - nature of the populace would support a stance where all religious beliefs and observances were afforded tolerance at least, if not respect. The South African Constitution in fact legislates for religious tolerance, as shown in Chapter 2. However, the news articles show how, every now and then, conflicts break the tenor of everyday social life, most disturbingly, in the context of religious intolerance in schools. As Chapter 2 has shown, religious tolerance in schools has also been legislated in various educational White Papers and policies. Yet the news articles still give evidence of the lingering

vestiges of Christian National Education, as well as the growing influence of the more modern Charismatic Christian movement.

## **5.4 Conflicts arising as a result of hegemonic influence**

Key indicators of the still-present hegemonic influence of Christianity are the conflict and disputes, many of which are the result of *non-Christian religious observances* not being tolerated. School pupils are shown as being victimised, as are adults, for not following the religious observances of more powerful groups (not necessarily Christian). This can often be seen to result in anger, bitter conflict, even litigation or threats of physical violence. To provide more evidence for this state of affairs, the conflicts in the eight newspaper articles use for the discourse analysis are discussed below.

### **5.4.1 Conflict in *Christians in bunfight over food labelling***

The main conflict here is between a coalition Christian group (not a denomination) and religious groups which require religious labelling on food, that is Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Shembe Church (see Table 5.2). The Christian group concerned is the “National Association and Coalition of Christian Groups and Individuals for Practical Equality and Protection of Constitutional Rights”. This coalition group objected to the fact that many food products are labelled with non-Christian religious emblems (e.g. with Muslim, Hindu or Jewish symbols), and claimed that there should be alternative products available without these labels. The objection was made on the grounds that Christian consumers were paying extra for religious labelling for minority groups (e.g. Muslims), and, in the process, financing non-Christian activities and the propagation of non-Christian faiths. The objection was lodged legally as a court application. While other groups are affected by the application, it is clear that Muslims were being targeted, possibly in retaliation for the failure of an attempt earlier in the year to have halaal labelling completely removed from hot cross buns sold by Woolworths (reported in the *Cape Times* of 29 March 2014).

The reporter gives three responses objecting to the court application, one giving the Muslim position, the other, the Jewish position, and the other, the Shembe position. The first two groups rely on food labelling (i.e. to ensure food consumed is halaal or kosher) and were targeted in the application.

Table 5.2 Positions of role players in conflict over food labelling

ISSUE: Whether hot cross buns should be labelled "halaal"		
AGAINST	ARBITRATION	FOR
<b>Christian Coalition group</b> → National Association and Coalition of Christian Groups and Individuals for Practical Equality and Protection of Constitutional Rights: court application against Ministers of Health, Trade and Industry, and the National Consumer Tribunal	<b>Court</b> Pretoria High Court	← <b>Muslim</b> United Ulama Council of SA
		← <b>Shembe</b> Shembe Church
		← <b>Shembe</b> Shembe Church
		← <b>Jewish</b> Union of Orthodox Synagogues of SA
		← <b>"Moderate" Christian group</b> Rhema Church, Rhema Family Churches and International Federation of Christian Churches
		← <b>Food suppliers</b> Kraft Foods South Africa and Africa Spice Limited

The Muslim position in response to this objection was given by Rafiek Mohamed (secretary-general of the United Ulama Council of SA), who argued in reply that Muslims had not imposed halaal labelling, but that religious groups had been approached by food suppliers, the rationale being that foods with religious labelling would appear more attractive to potential customers.

Representing the Jewish position, Darren Sevitz (chief executive of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues of SA, or UOS), added weight to Rafiek Mohamed's argument by pointing out that the religious certification of foodstuffs had no significant effect on the price paid by consumers, and said that he had actually done some research to check this.

Two food companies, Kraft Foods South Africa and Africa Spice Limited deposed affidavits stating that religious certification of their products was paid for out of separate budgets (i.e. not by the customer). This supported Darren Sevitz's contention that this was so.

The application was also countered by a court affidavit supporting the Muslim and Jewish positions. This affidavit was deposed by Pastor Ray McCauley, on behalf of Rhema Church, Rhema Family Churches and International Federation of Christian Churches (with a combined membership two-and-a-half million members). While the term used is that several (Christian) churches "distanced" themselves from the application, they in fact actively *opposed* it by countering it with an affidavit. Landile Shembe, of the Shembe Church, with five million members, supported the views given by Pastor McCauley for opposing the affidavit.

Professor Gundelfinger, on behalf of the UOS, "could not comment". However, he pointed out that one positive result of the dispute was that Muslims, Hindus and Jews were "supporting each other in a common cause", and that "other Christian churches ...were supporting the Muslims, Jews and Hindus in opposing the application". This meant that there was solidarity amongst groups which were perceived as being "antagonistic towards one another" when it actually came to defending their religious rights.

#### **5.4.2 Conflict in *Don't be bullied* - Abuse was not music to pupil's ears**

The main conflict here is between the school and the parents of the Hindu child, who was allegedly "bullied" by an Afrikaans music teacher for openly displaying a "Luxmi string" (i.e. religious regalia) in school (see Table 5.3). The Principal supported the teacher in terms of the school's policy, and denied the allegations. The parents would not move the child to another school, citing zoning rules, and asserting that one must stand up to bullies.

The Gauteng Education Department appears to have taken the complaint seriously, said it would be investigated, and asked the teacher and principal

to respond to the allegations. Attorneys were called in by the Principal to respond to the Department's request.

Table 5.3 Positions of role players in conflict over wearing of Luxmi string

ISSUE: Wearing of Luxmi ring by pupil in school		
AGAINST	ARBITRATION	FOR
<b>School (CNE)</b> Afrikaans music teacher Principal (her husband) Kwa Attorneys →	<b>Education Dept</b>  Gauteng Education Dept	<b>Hindus</b> Parents of child (pupil allegedly victimised for ←wearing Luxmi string) Shembe Church

The reporter, Candice Soobramoney (Hindu), appears to side with the child in terms of presenting the case as “bullying” before this has been confirmed in an official investigation.

In this case, an Afrikaner school is still seen to be retaining the ethos and practices of Christian National Education (CNE), and is not respecting the pupil's constitutional rights, although the Education Department took the complaint seriously and asked the teacher and principal to respond to the allegations. This, then, is a classic case of the hegemonic influence of Christianity as a remnant of the colonial (British and Dutch) focus on Christianity, which has polarised school and parents along racial as well as religious groups (the teacher is alleged to have used a racist term).

#### 5.4.3 Conflict in *Religious tolerance is vital in society*

Taking the “Sunali nose stud” case as a starting point, various examples of religious intolerance are cited, both local and international (three cases concern Hindu victims of alleged intolerance, the other, a Muslim schoolgirl – see Table 5.4).

In the first case, the conflict is between Durban Girls' High school and the Hindu parents of the schoolgirl, Sunali (particularly the mother). This is presented as a case of discrimination against a Hindu practice, suggesting

that the school still retains the ethos and practices of Christian National Education (CNE), more particularly, the English tendency towards favouring Anglicanism (a remnant of colonial occupation by the British).

Table 5.4 Positions of role players in conflict over wearing of religious dress

	ISSUE: Wearing of religious dress/items in school/at workplace		
	AGAINST	ARBITRATION	FOR
1.	<b>CNE</b> School (Durban Girls High)	<b>Court</b> South African Constitutional Court	<b>Hindu</b> Parents of Sunali (Hindu school girl wearing nose stud)
2.	<b>SA Police Management</b> Zulu Station Commander	<b>Human Rights Body</b> Taken up with Human Rights Commission	<b>Hindu</b> Hindu policeman wearing Luxmi string during work hours
3.	<b>Airport Management</b> Heathrow	<b>[Not known]</b> Employers later admit “mistake”]	<b>Hindu</b> Hindu woman wearing nose stud while working at Heathrow Airport
4.	<b>Secular school</b> School in Germany	<b>Court</b> Administrative Court in Kassel rejects application	<b>Muslim</b> Parents of Muslim girl uncomfortable about attending mixed-gender swimming classes ←Lawyer

In the second case, a South African Policeman was asked to remove a Luxmi string during work hours, by a Zulu male commander. The conflict is not just between the Hindu policemen and police management, however (i.e. as a result of the historical impact of Afrikaner and British prejudice or colonial practices). It is implied that Zulu staff are resentful of Hindu staff being allowed to wear religious regalia or symbols when they themselves cannot, so the conflict is not without racist connotations (i.e. three-way), although the prohibition seemed “fair” on the surface. As the directive on dress code dated back to 1977, however, it appears that both Hindu and Zulu staff are at a disadvantage where wearing - to them - “normal” religious regalia is concerned. As both Indians and Africans can be seen to be affected by an outdated colonial directive, it is not surprising that a complaint (by the Hindu

policeman) was taken up with the Human Rights Commission (outcome pending).

In case three, a Hindu woman working at Heathrow Airport was fired for wearing a nose stud as religious regalia (i.e. the same problem experienced by Sunali). Her employers admitted to having made a “mistake”, as they had allegedly misinterpreted their own regulations, and they subsequently re-employed her. Here it is not clear whether the conflict is about religious intolerance (although it is cited as such), as not enough detail is given. The employers might well have forbidden the use of piercings and/or studs in order to ban “punk” style dress, which would have been inappropriate in a VIP lounge. Again, the conflict is between employee and management.

In the fourth case, a Muslim schoolgirl was denied her request not to have swimming lessons with bare-chested boys (she felt uncomfortable at showing herself to or even seeing boys, according to the Quranic teachings). The court rejected the application, as the “norm” in Germany at the time was mixed-gender swimming classes. While German politics are still influenced by religion, religion is separated from the secular state in Germany (Korioth and Augsburg 2010). The following principle applies in this case: “no person shall be favored or disfavored because of his or her personal religious opinions” (Korioth and Augsburg 2010: 322). The conflict is between the pupil (and her family) and the school management, with the courts backing up school management.

#### **5.4.4 Conflict in *Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban***

The Hindu principal (backed up by the Hindu spokesperson of the South African Principals’ Association) is shown as being in conflict with the parents of Muslim pupils, who contested his instruction that their male children remove their fezzes (headgear with religious significance) in compliance with the school dress code (see Table 5.5). This was after the school Principal, Mr Gordon Govender (Hindu), had instructed the Muslim boys to remove their fezzes.

Table 5.5 Positions of role players in conflict over wearing of fezzes in school

ISSUE: Wearing of fezzes by Muslim pupils in school		
AGAINST	NO COMMENT	FOR
<b>Hindus</b> Hindu school principal Spokesperson of SA Principals' Association	<b>Education Dept</b> KZN Education Department has not commented	<b>Muslims</b> Parents of Muslim pupils Muslim Spokesperson of KZN Parents' Association

The South African Principals' Association spokesperson (Hindu) claims that there has been a "misunderstanding". The wearing of fezzes could in fact have been allowed if the Governing Body had been approached to give permission: this insinuates that the Muslim parents were remiss in not finding out about and following official school procedures. KZN Parents' Association Chairperson, Mr Sayed Rajack (Muslim) speaks out vehemently against the "outlawing" of fezzes, and is reported to utter threats against the school (i.e. boycott, school may close down or merge if study body decreases). The KZN Education Department is reported as not yet having commented.

#### 5.4.5 Conflict in *Minister to probe Islam row*

This report is about protests by African students (non-Muslims) who claimed that abiding by Islamic custom and religious rules had become mandatory at a dormitory leased from an Islamic institute (see Table 5.6). The students claimed that they were also denied their own religious practices (e.g. reading the Bible). As in the previous article, "confusion" is identified as the excuse for the offence: a hostel staff member denied that reading the Bible had been banned, and claimed that the only requirement was to attend prayers and dress decently. The conflict is between the non-Muslim students and the As-Salaam Institute (see Table 5.6).

The Rector of the Coastal KZN Further Education and Training College did not get involved: "Had no comment". However, Blade Nzimande, the Minister of Higher Education, launched a probe into the college, and this is highlighted in both the headline and the opening paragraph of the article.



Table 5.6 Positions of role players in conflict over rules at Islamic hostel

ISSUE: Non-Muslims allegedly obliged to abide by Islamic rules at hostel			
AGAINST	INVESTIGATION	FOR	NO COMMENT
<b>Non-Muslim</b> African college students	<b>SA Government</b> Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education, “launches probe”.	<b>Muslim</b> The As-Salaam Institute (is alleged to have enforced rules.)	<b>FET College</b> Rector of the Coastal KZN Further Education and Training College
<b>Muslim</b> Secretary General of KZN Jamiatul Ulama; Staff of hostel (denies rules were enforced.)			

We are not told that Education Ministers intervened in any of the other disputes documented in the articles collected, but there is not enough evidence to suggest that religious disputes attract ministerial attention only when African students appear to be being victimised. The Secretary General of the Jamiatul Ulama, KZN, Rafiek Mohamed (Muslim), came out in support of the non-Muslim students, and condemned the practice, saying that they rejected Islamic institutions which obliged non-Muslims to follow Islamic practices, and that it “made a mockery of the [Islamic] Faith”.

#### 5.4.6 Conflict in *Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools*

This refers to a global news report (actually part of in-flight reading materials gathered by the researcher) about President Vladimir V. Putin speaking against the wearing of head scarves in Russian schools on the basis that it is against Russia’s “secular” school policy.

A school principal “forbade girls from Muslim families to wear head scarves at school”, and said she was threatened when the parents protested. The report points out that there are 20 million Muslims in Russia’s 143 million people, and that they are a majority in many regions, so that the protesting parents are in fact from a majority, not minority group (the latter is often the case in when an ethnic religious group’s rights are threatened).

The conflict is then between Muslim parents and the Russian state, with the Russian secular policy being enforced by the school, and supported publicly from the top echelons of government by the Russian President (see Table 5.7). Their parents protested the move; the school principal allegedly received threats from the parents.

Table 5.7 Positions of role players in conflict over wearing of head scarves

ISSUE: Wearing of head scarves to school by Muslim pupils		
AGAINST	ARBITRATION	FOR
<b>Secular school</b> School principal “forbade girls from Muslim families to wear head scarves at school”.	<b>Government</b> President Putin of Russia (secular state)	<b>Muslim</b> Muslim parents (out of 20 million Muslims in Russia)

#### 5.4.7 Conflict in *South African Rastafarian student Sikhokele Diniso returns to school after dust-up over dreadlocks*

In this example, a reporter with a Jamaican background appears to show solidarity with the South African school authorities in criticising Rastafarian-style dreadlocks as an inappropriate hairdo for a pupil attending school. The conflict is between the pupil with dreadlocks and his family and the school authorities (Principal, Governing body and Staff, see Table 5.8).

Table 5.8 Positions of role players in conflict over dreadlocks hairstyle

ISSUE: Pupil wearing Rastafarian dreadlocks hairstyle at school			
AGAINST	MEDIATION	FOR	HEDGES
<b>SA School</b> School authorities	<b>NGO</b> Equal Education spokeswoman (African) mediates between parents and school	<b>Rastafarian</b> Parents and schoolboy (and his brother)	<b>Education Dept</b> Spokeswomen (English)

The pupil was told to leave school and stay away until he had cut his hair. The Education Department spokeswoman (Bronagh Casey) hedges, and

claims the parents were invited to discuss the matter with the school. It is, however, the non governmental organization (Equal Education) Chairwoman, Yoliswa Dwane, who acts as mediator for the pupil between school and parents to allow him to be readmitted (but only after his hair is cleaned, combed and tied back neatly).

#### 5.4.8 Conflict in *Parties outraged at school religion case*

The Organisation for Religion, Education and Democracy (OGOD) intend to take to court six public schools and the ministers of Basic Education and Correctional Services; the former, for imposing Christian observances and ethos on non-Christian pupils, the latter, for allowing this to happen. OGOD is not anti-Christian, but considers the imposition of Christianity on non-Christian pupils to be oppressive and unconstitutional. There is also the implication that scientific subject knowledge being withheld because of Christian fundamentalist principles being applied in lessons.

Table 5.9 Positions of role players in conflict over imposition of Christianity in public schools

ISSUE: Enforcing Christian observances and ethos in public schools		
AGAINST	ARBITRATION	FOR
<b>Pro-constitution</b> The Organisation for Religion, Education & Democracy lodge court case against Education Depts and 6 schools. →	<b>Court</b> In progress	<b>Public schools</b> 6 public schools <b>Political parties</b> African Christian Democratic Party & Freedom Front Plus ←intend to oppose court case. <b>Government departments</b> Ministers of Basic Education and Correctional Services not “for”, but “let it happen”.

The African Christian Democratic Party opposes this intended court action, and sees the retaining of Christian values as “constitutional”; their argument is that Christianity should remain in schools because the constitution promotes freedom of religion. The Freedom Front Plus sees OGOD’s actions as an attempt to demonise Christianity and replace it with atheism.

#### 5.4.9 Conflict in *Church angers Hindus*

The conflict is between members of the Verulam Hindu community and Pastor John Robinson, Head of Potters House Missionary Movement, and a former Hindu who converted to Hinduism (see Table 5.10). Pastor Robinson had distributed a pamphlet (titled “Christianity or Hinduism - what makes more sense?” Members of the Verulam Hindu community found the implied denigration of the Hindu religion offensive, and a complaint was made on their behalf by the South African Hindu Maha Sabha organisation.

Table 5.10 Positions of role players in conflict over offensive pamphlet

ISSUE: Implied insult that Christianity “makes more sense” than Hinduism		
AGAINST	RESOLUTION	FOR
<b>Hindus</b> SA Hindu Maha Sabha sends rebuke, threatens legal action on behalf of offended Verulam Hindus →	<b>Out of court</b>  Parties reach mutual agree- ment.	<b>Charismatic Christians</b> Potters House Church: Pastor Robinson Pastor Samuels ← desist and issue apology

Ashwin Trikamjee, Maha Sabha President (also Secretary-General of National Religious Leaders Forum), said that the pamphlet was “unconstitutional” (i.e. unlawful), as it was derogatory to Hinduism. Pastor Robinson claimed no offence was intended, and pleaded ignorance of why it might have been found offensive. He appeared confused, as (he claims) it would not have been seen as offensive in the USA. Pastor Robinson had clearly not “done his homework” in finding out what would be acceptable to communities in South Africa.

The crux of the matter is that Robinson’s pamphlet was seen as an attempt at Christian evangelism, intended to attract Hindus to Charismatic Christianity. This is true hegemony, where the power relations are not made overt and explicit until the issue boils over into open conflict. The ideology, that Christianity might be a “better” option than Hinduism, is implicit (i.e. ideology is seen as operating as an insidious force permeating society).

#### **5.4.10 Common factors in the conflicts identified**

While it can be seen that alignments between different groups of role players are dynamic rather than static, a common factor is that the conflicts are usually three-cornered, with two groups (plus their supporters) opposing and some authority figure arbitrating (e.g. court, government, education department, human rights body or NGO). It is clear, however, that one cannot enforce religious rights by means of the courts or ministerial edict (this much must be obvious even to the powerful Russian President, Putin). More rarely, mediation takes place, as in the case of the “Rastafarian dreadlocks”, and even second thoughts, as in the case of the Heathrow management’s reversal of the unfair “nose stud” dismissal. Appeals to mid-level authorities tend to be met with hedging or “no comment”, showing reluctance or inability to deal with the situation. Even though humour is sometimes used, perhaps to defuse the tension or to suggest that role players may be over-reacting, there is evidence throughout of deep anger and frustration, as well as clear cases of victimisation on religious grounds, distressingly, victimisation of children.

What is equally distressing is finding that government policies of secularisation, clearly intended to ensure fairness of practice in religious school observances, appear to cause as much offence as enforcement of one powerful (and therefore “normal”) religion. There is obviously no easy solution to the problem, and South Africa’s “secular” Constitution could be viewed as a blueprint for future conflict, rather than as a means of ensuring that religious rights are upheld.

A common theme running through the conflicts is the impact of Christian influence, presented as “normal”, “natural” and “making more sense”, on non-Christians (note that even the term “non-Christian”, which is used here to avoid giving offence, suggests that there is something aberrant or negative about not being Christian). This influence is shown throughout as being oppressive, demeaning and offensive to other groups, even to the extent of shaming some Christian denominations into showing solidarity with Jewish,

Muslim and Shembe groups in opposing religious discrimination or victimisation. There is clear evidence of hegemony in the conflicts. However, it cannot be attributed entirely to the power afforded to traditional Christianity by the colonial past. In fact attempts at evangelism by pastors of the Charismatic Christian movement appear to give just as much (if not more) offence than attempts of schools to enforce traditional Christian practices on all pupils, no matter what their personal, community or cultural beliefs are.

## **5.5 Discourse analysis of news articles**

In this section the results of the discourse analysis of the nine news articles are given. The table format used illustrates how the hegemonic influences underpinning the events reported can be traced through the specific situation in which the events occurred, the genre in which they are reported, and key discourse indicators in the article texts. An argument is then made for the identification of hegemonic influences operating, notably the influence exerted by Christianity, but sometimes appearing in more modern styles than those of the past colonial denominations of Christianity.

### **5.5.1 Analysis of article 1**

The position of the Christian group (The National Association and Coalition of Christian Groups and Individuals for Practical Equality and Protection of Constitutional Rights), at least on the surface, is as follows. Food labelling is not an issue for most Christian denominations. However, it *is* an issue for Muslims, Hindus and Jews. As Christians do not need religious labelling for food, no one else should need it. At least *some* food should not be labelled, so that Christians are not made uncomfortable by the sight of Muslim, Hindu or Jewish religious symbols (see Figure 5.1). While the group's motive is clear, it is masked by the claim that religious labelling is "unconstitutional", based on South Africa's secular Constitution, and the fact that Christians are the majority religious group in South Africa (i.e. they claim to be representing *all* Christians, which we find out is not true). In any case, this is hardly a convincing argument, as the Constitution is meant to protect minority rights.

# Christians in bunfight over food labelling

## Many faiths join to oppose group's court application

KASHIELA AJAM

A Christian group that wants religious certification and signs on food packaging to be banned, faces an uphill battle against Muslims; Jews, Hindus and millions of members of Christian churches who are opposing the application in the Pretoria High Court.

The National Association and Coalition of Christian Groups and Individuals for Practical Equality and Protection of Constitutional Rights filed papers asking that the court declare that the religious certification of food, which excluded the Christian faith, was unconstitutional.

The group objects to the fact that a wide range of food products is religiously labelled as such as those carrying the halaal, Hindu or Jewish signs, indication the product is suitable for consumption by these groups. It says there should be alternative products available without these labels.

The coalition launched the application against the ministers of health, and trade and industry, and the National Consumer Tribunal.

Philip Groenstien, a member of the group in Pretoria who brought the application, says the main religious group in South Africa are Christians, with 80 percent. Muslims make up less than 2 percent and Jews, Hindus and Buddhists make up the rest.

He contends that it is unfair that the majority of people in the country should bear the brunt of costs imposed when food is religiously certified.

"The RSA public is mostly uninformed that more than 98 percent of (consumers) pay for about all the Muslim certification costs...and that they effectively finance Muslim activities and spreading of their influence in this respect."

Rafiek Mohamed, secretary-general of the United Ulama Council of SA, which has been admitted as an intervening party, said none of the religious certifying bodies in South Africa imposed their certifying process on suppliers. It was in fact the suppliers who voluntarily approached the bodies, because this brought value to their products.

"People who disapprove of the religious signs can simply abstain from purchasing such a product," he said.

"The real nature of the (application) is based on religious rivalry, jealousy and defeatist resentment. Such antagonism should not be dressed up as a legal issue... This case demonstrates the urgent and compelling need for religious tolerance."

Darren Sevitz, chief executive of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues of SA (UOS), denied the religious certification of foodstuffs had any significant effect on the price paid by consumers. The UOS is the second intervening party.

Sevitz approached several manufacturers regarding their policies and found that the cost of religious certification was not passed to consumers.

Kraft Foods SA and Africa Spice Limited have both deposed affidavits, saying religious certification of their products is paid for out of separate budgets.

Meanwhile several churches have distanced themselves from the application. Pastor Ray McCauley, on behalf of Rhema Church, Rhema Family Churches and International Federation of Christian Churches, with a combined membership of two-and-a-half million members, also deposed an affidavit in support of the

intervening parties.

“The church and its members do not have any objection to the certification of food products.

“We do not regard the certification of food products as any infringement of religious rights and do not see any need for the relief sought by the applicant.”

In another affidavit, Landile Shembe, of the Shembe Church, which has five million members, concurred.

Professor Billy Gundelfinger, acting on behalf of the UOS, said that although he could not comment on the case, something positive had emerged, in that Muslims, Hindus and Jews were supporting each other in a common cause.

“Notwithstanding the fact that a Christian group had launched the application against them, other Christian churches, whose combined membership exceeded 10 million were supporting the Muslims, Jews and Hindus in opposing the application.

“The Muslim and Jewish communities often perceived as being antagonistic towards one another, were standing shoulder to shoulder in defence of their religious rights,” Gundelfinger said.

Figure 5.1 Text of article 1

The group also uses as an argument the added cost of religious labelling (i.e. borne by Christians) when so few consumers are Christian.

The underlying reasons for the objection to the food labelling are not cost or constitutional rights. According to its website, the group apparently wants to ensure that: “Measures are put in place to ensure that the Christians [*sic*] food basket is free from idol sacrifices” (WHISNews21 2012). The group’s website reveals that the labelling of food with non-Christian symbols is viewed not only as the consumption of “food which has been devoted to foreign gods” (i.e. in the halaal, kosher and other ritual processes) but also as the paying of a “religious tax” to promote non-Christian religions. Both practices are viewed as going against the Bible and “investing against Christ”. Now the underlying ideology becomes clear. There are no texts labelled as “intolerant” as the group’s animus against non-Christians is for the most part carefully concealed. However, it is clear that Christianity is “good”, and all other religions are “bad”: Christian food must not be tainted with idolatrous practices. What is almost comical, if it were not so full of prejudice, is the way that the group carefully argues its way around this premise, finding politically correct reasons for its animus against other religious beliefs. This perhaps explains the humour in the headline, because stigmatising other religions is in fact *not* very funny. The Muslim reporter is gently pointing out



that all this fuss about food is making people seem ridiculous: in fact it is the pettiness of the application which is exposed as ridiculous.

It is clear why Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Shembe adherents oppose the “non-labelling” Christian group, as these are all groups which require food labelling so as to follow orthodox religious observance. They also might well object to being viewed as people with “foreign” - and therefore aberrant - religions. It is not so obvious why the Rhema Church, Rhema Family Churches and International Federation of Christian Churches oppose the “non-labelling” Christian group’s application, except that they are acting in the spirit of fellowship and sharing rather than exclusion: this is a feature of the “modern” style of Christianity these groups follow. They might well not identify with the specific beliefs of the “non-labelling” Christian group, which do not reflect the beliefs of the greater Christian congregation.

The reporter lays the issue out very clearly, and manages to expose what is going on by clear statements (see Table 5.11) showing that the Christian group’s insistence on banning food labelling is in fact a form of bullying by association with a historically-entrenched hegemonic majority. The non-labelling group assumes power from the perceived overall dominance of Christianity in South Africa, but does not have the support of all Christian groups, and its argument is specious. This is exposed by Rafiek Mohamed, secretary-general of the United Ulama Council of SA: “The real nature of the (application) is based on religious rivalry, jealousy and defeatist resentment. Such antagonism should not be dressed up as a legal issue...” This is, of course, an opinion, but it seems to sum things up more clearly than the previous “facts”, which are nothing but a series of evasions of the real issue, as reflected on the non-labelling group’s website, which shows overtones of racism in labelling non-Christians as “idolaters” carrying out arcane rituals which “contaminate” Christian foods.

Rafiek Mahomed’s term “defeatist resentment” possibly alludes to the “storm in a teacup” caused earlier in the year (in the *Cape Times* of 29 March 2014), when Woolworths came under heavy criticism for selling hot cross buns with

halaal labelling. Instead of removing the labelling, Woolworths responded by making “unlabelled buns” available for customers who objected to the halaal labelling.

Table 5.11 Key discourse indicators in article 1

HEGEMONY	Hegemonic influence of Christianity used by one sect
CONTEXT	Religious certification of food in stores
SITUATION	Christian group claims religious food labelling is "unconstitutional"
GENRE	demands with specious argument

The non-labelling group's attempts to remove religious labelling completely by high court ruling can then be viewed as retaliation for not having achieved complete success in the earlier dispute. Note that the group also asks for "alternative products available without these labels", which was the outcome of the hot cross bun dispute (as Woolworths was seen to comply with this more "reasonable" request). A reminder of their previous failure to achieve complete banning of non-Christian religious labels has been achieved by using "bunfight" in the title (this current article makes no overt mention of hot cross buns in the content).

The arguments for continuance of religious food labelling are presented clearly in the manner of reasoned debate, supported by twelve factual statements (the non-labelling group managed only six). The final summation is a matter of opinion, that "something positive had emerged, in that Muslims, Hindus and Jews were supporting each other in a common cause", but it is an opinion consistent with religious tolerance, and the pro-labelling group scores high in that area, with ten {PRO-T} codes.

The ideology can be seen to operate as follows. This is a thinly-disguised attempt to make non-labelling "normal", and religious labelling (and thus the religions associated with it) "deviant" or "wrong". Not only is Christianity "better", but this group's particular brand of exclusivity is seen (by its adherents) as the "right" kind of Christianity. This is possibly why other Christian groups do not support the non-labelling group's application, as they would then be seen to be supporting the extremist sentiments revealed on the group's website.

### **5.5.2 Analysis of article 2**

The first part of this article (in Figure 5.2) is presented almost in the manner of a narrative moral tale (see Table 5.12), illustrating that one should "stand up to bullies": this is the "lesson" the parents "tried to instill in their son". There is very little that is presented as fact (i.e. about the actual bullying) in the story (the {OPIN} code count is 12), yet most readers would be inclined to

believe it. Why? This is because it is an archetypal account of the kind of racial discrimination and abuse suffered during apartheid, and its effect on victims.

## **DON'T BE BULLIED**

### **Abuse was not music to pupil's ears**

**CANDICE SOOBRAMONEY**

DO NOT allow others to bully you.

That was the lesson Indian South African parents from Boksburg tried to instill in their son, who suffered racial discrimination and verbal abuse allegedly by his white Afrikaner music teacher for the past three years.

The parents, who cannot be named as it would identify their minor child, claimed at Parkdene Primary School insisted the grade three pupil remove his red Luxmi string from his wrist.

Hindus believe the string, customarily tied at the beginning of a religious ceremony, serves as a blessing or form of protection.

They say the teacher often tormented their son and at one stage provided him with scissors to cut the string in her presence.

The teacher allegedly also called the boy a "coolie" in front of classmates. The parents complained to the principal about the alleged victimisation – at first unbeknown to them the teacher was his wife. They were told their son should hide the string under a jersey.

"My son dreaded going to school so much so that when dropped off in August he smashed his hand in the car door to avoid going," said the mother. She said the last straw was when the teacher called the child "deaf, dumb or stupid".

### **Verbally Abused**

This happened after his father complained again to the principal that the teacher verbally abused the boy.

The parents subsequently filed a complaint with the Gauteng Department of Education. The mother said since the case was being investigated her son's attitude had changed.

"He has become happier. He seems eager to do his homework unlike before when he was fearful."

On Monday the boy came face to face with the music teacher after reports were published last week about his victimisation.

His dad said: "He was a bit nervous as he did not know what he was in for but she put a movie on for the pupils to watch during the lesson. I assume this was her way of avoiding him."

### **Zoning Rules**

The mother said due to them living five minutes away from the school, the zoning rules stipulated he attend Parkdene Primary.

Asked why they did not insist their son be transferred, she said they did not run

away from bullies

“We wanted our son to learn that being bullied is unacceptable. We told him and continue to tell him, that, whatever happened to him was not his fault and that he should not be scared anymore.

She said she hoped the music teacher would be removed and the principal replaced.

The mom said there were other Indian South African parents who subsequently complained about victimisation.

But Gauteng Education Department spokesman Charel Phahlane said they received no other official complaints. He said a letter was issued to the teacher last week to allow her an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

Once this is done a disciplinary process will follow.

Questioned on whether the principal’s actions would be probed, Phahlane said they would “investigate the whole matter.”

He added the Constitution was clear that no one should be discriminated against for their religious practices and that the school governing body laws should be consistent with this.

The principal responded via Kwa Attorneys, denying allegations of verbal abuse and racial discrimination.

The principal said: “The school’s current policy stated that religious decorations may be worn but must be covered. It prohibits religious decorations to be seen in public.”

Figure 5.2 Text of article 2

Readers know that these things happened, and still happen today in South Africa. The case has actually not been proved (at the time of going to press) against the allegedly abusive Afrikaans music teacher, and probably will not be, as *she is the school Principal’s wife*. Apart from the nepotism involved, it would be extremely difficult to prove that pejorative or racist terms were used, as the witnesses were all minors, and would either be scared to come forward, or (understandably) would hold the same cultural stereotypes as the teacher, and would support her version of events. The teacher’s behaviour is in fact stereotypical: she is presented as a racist Afrikaner verbally abusing a young Indian child and subjecting him to psychological torture.

To avoid counter-accusations of racism, the reporter has very cleverly presented the Indian parents’ side of the story as a moral tale, a “lesson” (see Table 5.12). The sense of a homily is introduced in the grimly humorous headline: but this tale is not “music to our ears”. This is reinforced in the

visual text, showing the dejected child holding his hand to his ear, with the “offending” Luxmi string clearly displayed on his wrist (see Figure C.2 in Appendix C). The cold and abstract “officialese” (e.g. “a letter was issued”) of the Education Department and Principal (the teacher’s husband) suggests that the teacher will very likely not be reprimanded, let alone dismissed, apart from the fact that attorneys have been hired to counter the accusation.

Table 5.12 Key discourse indicators in article 2

HEGEMONY	CONTEXT	SITUATION	GENRE	Don't be bullied - Abuse was not music to pupil's ears
				DISCOURSE
				Indicators in the text
				<i>Apartheid racism, including the belief that Christianity is “normal”, presented as operating in a coercive way against school child</i>
				That was the lesson Indian South African parents from Boksburg tried to instill in their son
				visual text: partial photo of unhappy child covering ear
				“bully” (repeated 4 times in various forms, and is in headline)
				tormented their son; victimisation; verbally abused
				pejorative terms: “coolie” (racist) and “deaf, dumb or stupid”
				dreaded going to school [so] smashed his hand in the car door
				a bit nervous [but] happier [after standing up to the “bully”]
				the mother, the mom
				other Indian South African parents subsequently complained about victimisation
				“We wanted our son to learn that being bullied is unacceptable”
				she hoped the music teacher would be removed and the principal replaced
				The parents complained to the principal... unbeknown to them the teacher was his wife.
				<i>The “official” response (i.e. fob off):</i>
				[Gauteng Education Department] received no other complaints
				a letter was issued to the teacher ... to allow her an opportunity to respond to the allegations... a disciplinary process will follow [only if necessary]
				investigate the whole matter
				The principal responded via Kwa Attorneys, denying allegations of verbal abuse and racial discrimination.
				Principal: “The school’s current policy stated that religious decorations may be worn but must be covered. It prohibits religious decorations to be seen in public.”
			a moral tale: “stand up against bullies”	
			depersonalised “officialise”	
		Pupil “bullied” by Afrikaans teacher for wearing Luxmi string at school		
		Wearing of religious articles at school		

One way of exposing this injustice, without incurring charges of libel, is to present it as a moral tale. In this form, it very clearly exposes the lingering hegemonic influence of colonial Christianity in Education, as a direct result of the former Christian National Education (CNE) policy. The “bullying” effect of this influence on the young child is horrifying: he “dreaded going to school [so] smashed his hand in the car door (see Table 5.12). However, the parents are shown to respond with spirit, refusing to allow the coercive behaviour of the teacher to oppress either them or their child. The “lesson” is a salutary one.

### **5.5.3 Analysis of article 3**

*The Post* reporter has used cases from South Africa and around the world (see capitalised names of cities) to expose religious intolerance (see Figure 5.1), particularly in the case of wearing Hindu religious items in the workplace or at school (although an instance of discrimination against Muslim customs is also mentioned). Reference is made to the school child who was victimised for wearing a Luxmi string (in the previous article – an example of intertextuality), and also to Sunali Pillay. In the visual text (see Figure C.3 in Appendix C) Sunali’s downcast face (with nose stud) is shown, uneasily looking to the side. The same (or similar) photograph appeared in many local and national newspaper articles, in the process, becoming for Hindus a symbol of successful resistance against religious discrimination in South African schools.

The article makes very little overt reference to hegemony (1), perhaps because the whole article reflects the effects of oppressive hegemony. There is a high factual content (17, as opposed to 6 opinions), which suggests that the reporter is letting the events “speak for themselves”. Yet emotive words are used to highlight the injustice of religious discrimination (e.g. “verbal abuse”, “violated”, “sacking”, “slammed”) as well as the occasional victories won over it (“won the right”) The reporter stresses the fact that the problems experienced are typical of a “multicultural” society (i.e. such as that found in South Africa).

## Religious Tolerance is Vital in Society

THE case of the Grade 3 pupil who became a victim of racial discrimination and verbal abuse in school for wearing a sacred Hindu red string around his wrist has once again raised the issue of religious tolerance in society.

It's not the first such case that has made headlines in recent times, and it certainly won't be the last, especially in light of the cultural diversity in our country and other parts of the world.

Here are a few examples of issues involving disputes over religious tolerance in both schools and places of work in recent months:

- IN 2007 former Durban Girls' High pupil, Sunali Pillay, won the right to wear a nose stud to school.

When Sonali was told by the school that she was not allowed to wear the stud, she took the matter to the Constitutional Court.

The three-year battle came to an end when the court found the school rule prohibiting the wearing of jewellery had the potential for direct discrimination because it allowed certain pupils to express their religious and cultural identity, while denying the rights to others.

- A HINDU policeman at the Pinetown police station was ordered to remove a red string from his wrist.

The order came from the station commander, Brigadier Owen Yamani Zama, on the basis that it violated the police dress code.

He said it was a national directive from 1977. It also applied to Black policemen who wore isiPhandla-bracelets made of goat hide.

Lieutenant Yoga Gounden, a policeman for 30 years, believed the ruling violated his constitutional rights and defied orders to remove his red string even in the face of possible disciplinary action. He has taken up his complaint with the Human Rights Commission.

- In LONDON, a Hindu woman was reinstated in her job at Heathrow Airport after she was fired for wearing a nose stud as a religious symbol. Amrit Lalji, 40, worked in the VIP lounge Terminal One for more than a year before she was fired for wearing the tiny stud. Her employers later said her sacking was a mistake based on a misinterpretation of its own regulations.

- A GERMAN court ruling that a 12 year old Muslim girl would have to put up with the sight of bare chested boys during her swimming classes, even though it was against her religious beliefs, was recently slammed by local Muslim leaders.

The ruling, made by an administrative court in Kassel, Western Germany, rejected the pupil's application to skip swimming classes because she felt uncomfortable being so close to bare-chested boys.

Her lawyer argued that according to the Quranic teaching she was not only forbidden from showing herself to boys but also from seeing topless boys. The court rejected the application and ruled she would have to wear the burkini, like many of her peers, as mixed classes were the norm in Germany.

Figure 5.1 Text of article 3



Table 5.13 Key discourse indicators in article 3

HEGEMONY	CONTEXT	SITUATION	GENRE	Religious Tolerance is vital in society
				DISCOURSE
				Indicators in the text
				<i>Introduction on religious intolerance at work and school:</i>
				the Grade 3 pupil who became a victim of <b>racial discrimination</b> and <b>verbal abuse</b> in school for wearing a sacred Hindu red string around his wrist [ <i>refers to article 2</i> ].
				has once again raised the issue of religious tolerance in society
				visual text: photo of Sunali's downcast face (with nose stud) uneasily looking sideways
				not the first such case...won't be the last
				the <b>cultural diversity</b> in our country and other parts of the world.
				<i>Sunali Pillay wearing "nose stud" to school:</i>
				<b>won the right</b> to wear a nose stud to school.
				took the matter to the <b>Constitutional Court</b> .
				<b>three year battle</b>
				direct <b>discrimination</b> ... <b>denying the rights</b> to others.
				<i>Hindu policeman wearing Luxmi string at work:</i>
				HINDU
				a policeman <b>for 30 years</b>
				<b>violated</b> the police <b>dress code</b>
				a <b>national</b> directive from 1977
				the ruling <b>violated his constitutional rights</b>
				[complaint made to] the <b>Human Rights Commission</b>
				[The rule] also applied to <b>Black</b> policemen
				<i>Hindu woman wearing nose stud to work in airport:</i>
				LONDON
				fired/reinstated/ <b>sacking</b>
				worked in the <b>VIP lounge</b> Terminal One for more than a year before she was fired
				for wearing the <b>tiny</b> stud
				a mistake based on a <b>misinterpretation</b> of its own regulations
				<i>Muslim schoolgirl obliged to attend mixed-gender swimming lessons:</i>
				GERMAN
				<b>would have to put up with</b> the sight of bare chested boys
				through it was <b>against her religious beliefs</b>
				mixed classes were the <b>norm</b> in Germany.
				<b>slammed</b> by local Muslim leaders

However, only two of the cases mentioned in article 3 (three, if we count the victimised schoolboy alluded to in the introduction) can be attributed to the lingering hegemonic influence of Christianity.

To summarise the cases: Sunali was told to remove her nose stud because of the lingering influence of the apartheid nationalist government's policy of Christian National Education in schools (combined with the British school management's intolerance of "foreign" rituals at a prestigious girls' school). The Hindu policeman was ordered to remove his Luxmi string because of outdated apartheid (i.e. Calvinistic) police dress codes, which also discriminate against African religious custom. The other two "violations" occurred in secular workplaces or schools. Britain is very "politically correct" about workplace conditions, and, in Germany, church is separated from state (see Koriath and Augsberg 2010: 322), and schools operate on secular principles.

In case number 1 (Sunali nose stud), a school run by predominantly English management of British descent appears still to be upholding Christian religious values (the legacy of CNE) in their school rules and dress codes (i.e. no "idolatrous" ornaments to be worn). However, this may owe more to insular English prejudice against "foreign" customs than to religious fervour, or may simply be an effective means of keeping learners in line. In case number 2, vestiges of the apartheid religious prejudices might well remain in police dress codes, even though the police service is now ANC-dominated, and police top management is predominantly Black African. It could take more than 20 years of political liberation to remove the last remnants of archaic racist laws and bylaws from the statutes. Besides, institutions such as the police and the army are notorious (as are schools) for using archaic and repressive regulations to enforce unquestioning obedience in the lower echelons. The hegemony behind oppressive school - and work - rules will be revisited in later analyses, with reference to the work of the educationist Clive Harber on Peace Education (Harber and Sakadi 2009).

In cases 3 and 4, Britain and Germany cannot be said to be enforcing a Christian hegemony, as secular principles apply. The Heathrow prohibition of “studs” and “piercings” in the VIP lounge was presumably aimed at banning “punk” or “Goth” jewellery, which would not be appropriate staff dress in an elite establishment. In view of this, the dismissal of the Hindu lady at Heathrow appears to have been in the nature of a genuine mistake (“misunderstanding”), with dress rules being applied without much thought by lower management. In a predominantly British culture, the nuances of Hindu religious symbols would not be common knowledge. Racial intolerance, of course, may have played a part in the dismissal, but we are not given enough detail to establish whether this was the case. The word “tiny” (in “tiny stud”) emphasises the petty nature of the dismissal offence, and we might wonder why this was suddenly seen as a cause for dismissal only after a whole year’s service.

The case of the Muslim school girl in Germany is thought to be significant to this study, as it reveals that a secular state is not necessarily the answer to a multicultural populace living (or being schooled) in harmony without religious discrimination. Enforced secularism in schools is just as offensive (if not more so) than religious hegemony, because it forces all population groups to conform to the “norms” of the dominant political group. In the case of Germany, the dominant group comprises Caucasians with European beliefs and customs (not necessarily an entirely homogenous group, but at least cohesive in the national sense). Secular policies which prohibit religious customs are particularly offensive to Muslims (who “slammed” the German court’s decision), as religious principles pervade their customs and dress to such an extent that they stand out in a western European setting far more obviously than other cultural groups. This may well make them an easy target for religious (or anti-Islamic) discrimination. Secularism in schools, then, is not necessarily the best solution for addressing the problem of religious discrimination in a multicultural country such as South Africa. More will be said about this in the analysis of the article “Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools” (see 5.5.6 below).

#### 5.5.4 Analysis of article 4

At face value, this article (Figure 5.4) involves conflict between Hindu school management and Muslim parents who are outraged that their sons have been ordered to take off their fezzes at school (or while in school uniform). The militant outrage of the Muslim parents and the not-very-interested stance of the Hindu Principal and SGB Chair seem to confirm that this is a case of one-upmanship with racist overtones (“Don’t bother us, it’s in the rules” vs. “We’ll close the school down, and then you’ll be sorry - and without jobs!”) Something in the recent SGB meeting appears to have sparked the decision to take a hard line on infringements of the school dress code. Yet why is there this obsession with school dress codes in South Africa in the first place? At least 90% of the population cannot afford to buy the expensive uniforms typical of elite private schools and the formerly privileged (i.e. for whites only) Model C schools. The repetition of words associated with “infringement of religious/constitutional rights” suggests that a deeper hegemony is operating, which may well, of course, be fuelling the surface levels of Hindu vs. Muslim conflict. Indicators of this are code frequency for references to “hegemony” (4) and the “Constitution” (5).

### Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban

Mitchell Harper

A group of angry parents, whose children were banned from wearing religious headgear at a Durban school, are demanding an explanation from the Department of Education, claiming their constitutional rights have been breached.

A group of about 30 secondary school pupils at Wingen Heights, Shallcross, were ordered to remove their fezzes allegedly by school principal Gordon Govender.

On Friday, parents marched to the school, but they were reportedly snubbed by Govender and his staff.

Parents say they were insulted by the school’s lack of respect for religious rights, especially during the fasting period.

Abdul Mohammed, whose son is in Grade 12, said: “This is unacceptable, something we least expected from a public school. If any decision on traditional attire needs to be made, it should be done after Ramadaan,” said Mohammed.

Ayob Nakooba said his son and nephews were called out of the classroom.

“The constitution allows people a right to practice whatever religion they want to. The fact the children aren’t allowed to is a clear infringement of their rights. Not to mention the fact that the child was denied his right to education, which they (teachers) are not allowed to do,” Nakooba said.

He said parents continued to encourage their children to wear the hats.

“The fact that the code of conduct does not specify on the fez is a grey area,” he said.

Nakooba said parents had been further baffled because the school’s code of conduct did not forbid the wearing of the religious hat. This is the first time that the school had objected to schoolboys wearing their fezzes.

## **Drama**

The drama unfolded when Govender, who was absent for two weeks, returned to school on Tuesday and ordered the boys to remove their hats. It is understood that after a meeting with the school governing body during the week, a decision was made to ban the hats.

But neither Govender nor the chairman of the school governing body, James Kisten, commented on the matter, referring the Sunday Tribune to the Department of Education.

Spokesman for the SA Principals’ Association Chatsworth Branch Sundrem Subramoney said that the code of conduct was the guiding light for how the school and pupils should act and look. However, where religion was involved there must be permission sought from the governing body.

“Parents have to get permission in timely fashion when it comes to the religious area. Even if it is a week or two weeks, before, there needs to be a request sent to the governing body,” he said.

“Perhaps with this case there was a miscommunication between the principal and those who were in his place about what is allowed or what isn’t. The principal has the right to carry out what is stated in the code of conduct.”

Chairman of the KwaZulu-Natal Parents’ Association Sayed Rajack said that he could not understand why the school had taken the decision to outlaw the attire, especially because of the large Muslim Community in Shallcross.

“A lot of Muslims go to Wingen Heights and the community supports the school, but if the school persists in digging its heels in, the community could turn their back on them,” he said.

“If this happens both the pupils and teachers will be affected.

“The teachers will have to be transferred - they will be out of a job because the pupils will move to different schools.”

Although Rajack said that it was a clear infringement of pupils’ religious rights, he called for the problem to be resolved as quickly as possible.

The KZN Department of Education did not comment at the time of going to print.

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Figure 5.4 Text of article 4

As Table 5.14 shows, there is no humour, tolerance or intolerance overtly displayed, but there are seven very powerful statements suggesting the

(understandable) anger and militant attitude of the baffled and outraged Muslim parents. There are open threats to close down the school by removing their children from it. There a high frequency of reported (direct and indirect) speech, but fact and opinion are fairly balanced. The avoidance to deal with the issue by school management and the Education Department, as well as the sanctimonious manner and speech (“guiding light”) of the Hindu spokesman of the SA Principals’ Association merely fuels the anger. To add insult to injury, the parents are actually being *admonished* for not understanding the implications of the school code of conduct and for not taking appropriate action through the correct channels to ensure their sons could wear fezzes to school. The suggestion that there might have been a “misunderstanding” about dress code between the Principal and the staff who carried out his instructions to ban the fezzes is the type of frustrating specious bureaucratic explanation which it is impossible to prove or disprove.

What hegemonic influences, then, underpin the South African obsession about school dress code, and the various upsets it generates? It was mentioned earlier that Clive Harber’s work on Peace Education might offer insight into the preoccupation with school rules in South Africa (and, by extension, school and work codes of conduct in other countries). According to Harber and Sakade (2009: 172-173), the majority of schools are “essentially authoritarian institutions” where relatively powerless pupils can not only have their rights neglected, but can also “be mistreated violently or be influenced by potentially violent beliefs because the dominant norms and behaviours of the wider society are shared, not challenged, by many adults in the formal education system”. Harber and Sakade (2009: 174) go on to suggest that emphasis on “proper” behaviour, dress codes, and religious observances were a means of coercing school populations into behaviour which would fit mass production and political compliance (particularly in countries dominated by colonialism). The “Christian ethos” in apartheid schools was meant to enforce conformity to the kind of western behaviour required for mass production of manufactured goods by an obedient underclass workforce after the Industrial Revolution.

Table 5.14 Key discourse indicators in article 4

HEGEMONY	CONTEXT	SITUATION	GENRE	Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban
				DISCOURSE
				Indicators in the text
				<i>Muslim parents' position on banning of fezzes at school:</i>
				Parents <b>up in arms</b>
				children <b>were banned from wearing religious headgear</b> at...school
				30 secondary school pupils <b>ordered to remove their fezzes</b>
				angry parents are <b>demanding an explanation</b> from the Department of Education
				claiming their <b>constitutional rights</b> have been <b>breached</b> .
				parents <b>marched</b> to the school
				<b>insulted</b> by the school's lack of respect for <b>religious rights</b>
				The <b>constitution</b> allows people a <b>right</b> to practice whatever religion they want to
				a clear <b>infringement of their rights</b>
				a clear <b>infringement of pupils' religious rights</b>
				[a child called out of classroom] was <b>denied his right to education</b>
				[That] the code of conduct does not specify on the fez is a <b>grey area</b>
				parents had been further <b>baffled</b>
				This is the first time ... the school had objected [to wearing of fezzes]
				<b>drama</b> unfolded
				Sayed Rajack... <b>could not understand</b> why the school had taken the decision to <b>outlaw</b> the attire
				<b>large</b> Muslim Community
				if the school persists in <b>digging its heels in</b> , the community could <b>turn their back</b> on them,"
				both the pupils <b>and teachers</b> will be affected
				teachers ... will be <b>out of a job</b> because the pupils will move to different schools
				<i>School authorities' position on banning of fezzes at school:</i>
				after a meeting with the school governing body... <b>a decision was made</b> to ban the hats.
				[parents] were reportedly <b>snubbed</b> [by the Principal and staff]
				Neither [Principal nor SGB Chairman] commented on the matter
				the code of conduct was <b>the guiding light</b> for how the school and pupils should act and look
				where <b>religion</b> was involved <b>there must be permission sought</b> from the governing body
				Perhaps with this case there was a <b>miscommunication</b>
				The principal has the <b>right</b> to carry out what is stated in the code of conduct.
				The KZN Department of Education did not comment

In present day times in South Africa, it can be seen that, with the removal of the old hegemonic order of apartheid and CNE, and with only State lip service to a secular South African constitution, a power vacuum remains. This to some extent explains the conflict currently occurring in schools in term of respecting the religious rights of learners. It also explains the preoccupation with school rules, and the conflicts raging around them, as non-Christian populations start to contest rules set in place originally to maintain colonialist domination by elitist minority groups. When “school rules” are contested, these may not overtly spell out coercive or oppressive practices, but they are the remnants of the old apartheid dogma for keeping learners in line, and have not necessarily been adjusted to cater for the new religious dispensation offered by the SA Constitution. In all fairness, the issue is complicated, which is probably why it appears to be being avoided by the Education authorities, this being left to NGOs like OGOD (5.5.8) or Equal Education (5.5.7), and interfaith exchange programmes such as the one organised by Marlene Silbert in article 11 in Appendix C). It is highly ironic, and of some concern to realise that rules set in place to uphold an unjust and oppressive Christian hegemony should lead to completely unnecessary conflict between Hindus and Muslims, groups previously disadvantaged under apartheid laws.

#### **5.5.5 Analysis of article 5**

In this article (Figure 5.5) the hegemonic power of the South African secular state comes to the fore for the first time in this cycle of texts. The Minister of Higher Education, Blade Nzimande, appears as a powerful force for defending the rights of Black African college students who have protested vehemently against (allegedly) being compelled to follow Muslim religious practices (including dress and prayers) while boarding at an Islamic dormitory. One can understand the Minister’s indignation: the students were placed there officially by their FET College, and could not afford to board anywhere else. The Minister does not waste time: an official state investigation is already under way as the news breaks.



## RULES UPSET STUDENTS

# Minister to Probe Islam Row

Leanne Jansen

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Minister of Higher Education Blade Nzimande is to launch a probe into a college, which saw one of its campuses on the south coast shut down after a protest by students who claimed that the abiding by Islamic custom and religious rules had become mandatory – irrespective of their own faith.

A row erupted at the campus of the Coastal KZN Further Education and Training College last month, as students accommodated in dormitories leased from the As-Salaam Institute demonstrated their opposition to studying the Qur'an, wearing Islamic garments and having to comply with the call to prayer, they said.

The organisation promotes Islamic education.

While a staff member denied that the students were forced to follow the religion, or that the Bible had been banned, he told The Mercury that they were obligated to attend prayers and dress "decently" as they occupied "an Islamic area".

Speaking at a press briefing yesterday, a vexed Nzimande pledged to get to the bottom of the matter, arguing that the rights of the students had been violated.

Already, a task team, of senior officials has been dispatched to meet with stakeholders including parents and the college's management.

"I also intend setting up an investigation into how an arrangement of this nature was made by the college. I wish to state that as a constitutional democracy and secular state, no student in any public institution can be forced to practise any religion, irrespective of the circumstances that might have warranted the college to enter into the accommodation arrangements with any institution. I am deeply concerned and worried by these developments and arrangements which are completely unconstitutional and in fact violate the rights of the students who legitimately registered in a public FET college."

The Jamiatul Ulama, KZN said it condemned the actions of religious institutions which compelled non-Muslims to observe Islamic practices as it would be "tantamount to mockery" of the faith.

The organisation's secretary-general, Rafiek Mohammed, said that such "**colonial-like** tactics" went directly against both the SA constitution and the fundamental principal of the Qur'an which stated "Let there be no compulsion in (following) the Faith."

Around 500 students study on the premises, and just over a week ago, more than 70 of the protesting students were evicted from the dormitory.

Their stay, and meals, are funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, and according to the beneficiaries they cannot afford to take up residence elsewhere.

Approached for comment yesterday, the college rector, Patche Tigere, said that he was not prepared to discuss the matter. Zaid Langa, who is in charge of student accommodation and Islamic studies on the campus, referred queries to the spokesman for As-Salaam institute, who could not be reached for comment.

Figure 5.5 Text of article 5

Table 5.15 Key discourse indicators in article 5

Minister to probe Islam row	GENRE	SITUATION	CONTEXT	HEGEMONY
DISCOURSE				
Indicators in the text				
<i>Response of African college students to (allegedly) being forced to adopt Muslim dress and prayers at Islamic dormitory:</i>	student protest	African college students (allegedly) being forced to adopt Muslim dress and prayers at Islamic dormitory	The right of students not to be forced to practise any religion	Hegemonic power of secular South African state
A row <b>erupted</b> at the campus [of the Coastal KZN FET College]				
<b>protest</b> by students				
Islamic custom and religious rules had become <b>mandatory</b>				
demonstrated their <b>opposition</b> to studying the Qur'an, wearing Islamic garments and having to comply with the call to prayer				
they cannot afford to take up residence elsewhere.				
	official show of strength			
<i>Minister of Higher Education Blade Nzimande's response:</i>				
is to launch a <b>probe</b> into [the] college				
a <b>press briefing</b>				
a <b>vexed</b> Nzimande pledged to get to the bottom of the matter				
the <b>rights</b> of the students had been <b>violated</b>				
a <b>task team</b> of senior officials has been dispatched				
I also intend <b>setting up an investigation</b>				
as a <b>constitutional democracy</b> and <b>secular state</b> , no student in any public institution can be <b>forced</b> to practise any religion				
I am deeply concerned and worried	orthodoxy			
...by these developments and arrangements which are completely <b>unconstitutional</b> and in fact <b>violate the rights</b> of the students who <b>legitimately</b> registered in a public FET college."				
<i>The Jamiatul Ulama KZN's response:</i>				
[It] <b>condemned</b> the actions of religious institutions which compelled non-Muslims to observe Islamic practices				
it would be "tantamount to <b>mockery</b> " of the faith.	denial			
such " <b>colonial-like tactics</b> " went directly <b>against...the SA constitution</b>				
the fundamental principal of the Qur'an ... stated " <b>Let there be no compulsion</b> in (following) the Faith."				
<i>As-Salaam Institute's position (dormitories leased from Institute):</i>	denial			
a staff member denied that the students were forced to follow the religion, or that the Bible had been banned				
they were obligated to attend prayers and dress "decently" as they occupied "an Islamic area"				
the spokesman ... could not be reached for comment.				
	denial			
<i>FET College's position on the protest:</i>				
more than 70 of the protesting students were evicted from the dormitory				
the college rector...said that he was not prepared to discuss the matter.				

Meanwhile the FET college Rector has already evicted the protesting students (which is hardly fair, unless they were causing damage), and there are conflicting accounts from the Islamic institution which leased the dormitory. The Jamiatul Ulama KZN publicly condemns “the actions of religious institutions which compelled non-Muslims to observe Islamic practices”, and cites the Qur’an in support of this view.

There is no humour and no trace of tolerance *or* intolerance in this article, unless one takes the Minister’s approach as one of extreme intolerance for abuse of students’ rights. There are numerous powerful statements (9 coded, and see the boldfaced words in Figure 5.15). These are mostly from the Minister, who repeatedly affirms the students’ constitutional right to religious freedom, which includes the right *not* to be coerced into following any one religion. The word “violate” is repeated, and there are four direct references to the Constitution. In fact, the Minister of Higher Education is shown to be doing exactly what the Minister of Basic Education is *not* doing (which is why she is being taken to court by OGOD, see 5.5.8): vigorously championing the religious rights of students “in a constitutional democracy and secular state”:

[No] student in any public institution can be forced to practise any religion, irrespective of the circumstances that might have warranted the college to enter into the accommodation arrangements with any institution. I am deeply concerned and worried by these developments and arrangements which are completely unconstitutional and in fact violate the rights of the students who legitimately registered in a public FET college.

He is protecting the powerless (with a code count of 7 for {POL}). The article is mostly factual, as it cuts straight to the chase: the students’ rights *were* violated (whether by accident or design), and this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency and prevented from ever happening again. While the Minister utters only three of the eleven statements (direct and reported) contained in the article, his statements are long, lucid, powerful, and all start with “I”: “I intend...” “I wish...” and “I am deeply concerned...” There can be

no doubt in readers' minds that the Minister is deeply "vexed", and takes this very personally.

Why, then, is there only one reference to "hegemony" in the article, as this is clearly operating very powerfully here? This is because, as in the Putin article which follows, the hegemony is not operating under the surface, but is openly expressed and publicly acknowledged. It is stated as fact in the article that South Africa is a "secular state", and violations will clearly *not* be tolerated. However, in this article, secularism can be seen to be working towards empowerment of a previously suppressed majority group (i.e. Black South Africans); in the next, it can be seen to be working towards suppression of a marginalised majority group, Muslims in Russia.

#### **5.5.6 Analysis of article 6**

It is easier to see the working of hegemonic influences outside of one's own country, and the brevity of this international report has cut the issue down to the bare bones (see Figure 5.6). Russia *is* a secular state: the Presidency is obliged to enforce this secularism, which is publicly affirmed as "good", and "the right thing to do" as it (allegedly) creates "equal conditions for all its citizens". Consequently, citizens flouting this principle must be firmly brought into line. Putin's statements are reported in the bland, de-personalised "officialesse" of public officials and ministers of state. No specifics of the "recent incident" are mentioned by Putin, nor does he refer to the alleged threat/s offered to the school principal who enforced the banning of head scarves in school for Muslim girls. The account given of Putin's "official statement" has no agents or actions: it contains statements of what must be.

A look at the coding shows that this is all Putin's opinion as to what *should* happen, a clear indication of the hegemonic underpinning to the unfolding state of affairs, and yet, as the coding shows, the underlying hegemony remains implicit. The ideology operating here is that Russia, as a secular state, "must create equal conditions for all its citizens", no matter what their religious beliefs are. The only "fact" here, apart from the fact that Russia *is* a

secular state in terms of its constitution, is the fact that Putin made these statements in public. Why should Muslim school girls not wear head scarves in school? Because it is the law, supported by the ethos of a Communist country; the Russian President Vladimir V. Putin, whose subject position is powerful, has publicly stated that the law must not be broken.

**MOSCOW**

### **Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools**

President Vladimir V. Putin has spoken out against the wearing of head scarves in Russian schools, saying in a statement Thursday that Russia is a **secular** state and must create **equal conditions** for all its citizens.

It was his first public comment on a potentially explosive issue. An estimated 20 million of Russia's 143 million people are Muslims, and they make up a majority of the population in many regions, including the oil-rich province of Tatarstan, as well as Chechnya and other North Caucasus provinces.

Mr. Putin issued the statement when asked to comment on a recent incident in southern Russia where a school principal forbade girls from Muslim families to wear head scarves at school. Their parents protested the move, and the principal said that she was threatened. (AP)

Figure 5.6 Text of article 6

But this is not the constitution or ethos of the United States, and the reporter for the *International Herald Tribune: The Global Edition of the New York Times* subtly undermines Putin's upholding of the edicts of the Russian state by baldly citing three inconvenient truths, all factual (see Table 5.16). Firstly, the Muslim population in Russia is large, and, secondly, inhabits vast territories (including "the *oil-rich* province of Tatarstan"). Finally, "Chechnya" is inserted to remind us of Russia's problems with uprisings there. The "fact attack" is signalled by the words "potentially *explosive*": the metaphor suggests that these regions of Russia are on the edge of a revolution. The text here reads like a salutary lesson in geopolitics along the following lines: "Beware, Mr Putin, you may lose these regions, *and* your oil resources as well."

Table 5.16 Key discourse indicators in article 6

HEGEMONY	CONTEXT	SITUATION	GENRE	Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools
				DISCOURSE
				Indicators in the text
				<i>Asserting and reinforcing the hegemony implicit in state control:</i>
				President Vladimir V. Putin <b>has spoken out against</b> the wearing of head scarves in Russian schools.
				Russia is a <b>secular state</b> .
				[Russia] must create <b>equal conditions</b> for all its citizens
				first <b>public comment</b>
				issued the <b>statement</b>
				<i>Contesting the hegemony prohibiting religious observance:</i>
				An estimated <b>20 million</b> of Russia's 143 million people are Muslims
				they make up a <b>majority</b> of the population in many regions
				including the <b>oil-rich</b> province of Tatarstan
				potentially <b>explosive</b>
				<b>Chechnya</b> and other North Caucasus provinces
				<i>Effects on ordinary citizens' everyday lives:</i>
				a school principal <b>forbade</b> girls from Muslim families to wear head scarves at school
				Their parents <b>protested</b> the move
				the principal said that she was <b>threatened</b>

As Table 5.16 shows, the reporter then moves into a narrative genre to recount the “incident”, in which real people *do* things, rather than politicians stating abstract policy. Real girls were ordered by an actual principal not to wear Islamic headgear. Their parents protested (they were real people carrying out real actions, not hypothetical masses living in Russian states). A real principal was allegedly threatened, which is very likely factual, but the nature of such threats is such that they cannot easily be identified or confirmed.

Whatever Putin might affirm publicly, secularisation in an attempt to “create equal conditions for all its citizens” is clearly highly offensive to some populations in Russia, and its enforcement in schools are seen as a coercive attempt to suppress religious rights. Predictably, Putin’s attempts to claim

that the hegemonic influence exerted is not only “right” and “normal” but also “fair”, are met with incomprehension and rage on the part of the disempowered, and glee on the part of a rival nation (which, presumably, claims to enjoy “true” fairness).

#### **5.5.7 Analysis of article 7**

This article, written by “centrist” Jamaican-American blogger Janet Shan, has a more humorous take on the issue of religious observances in schools (see Figure 5.7). It documents the trials of a Rastafarian schoolboy who was sent home from his Cape Town school because his dreadlocks contravened school dress policy (and, one would think, sent a message of open rebellion to other pupils who might start fancying trendy “Afro” hairstyles).

While Shan scorns the ignorance of the South African educational authorities on the subject of religious hair etiquette, she herself admits to having had her indigenous Jamaican propensities schooled out of her by the convent, so to speak. She states: “When I was a student in the Jamaican school system, we had to follow a strict code of conduct, including the dress code.” Shan understands the religious significance of the Rasta locks (being from Jamaica herself), but she clearly identifies more with the strict code of conduct inculcated in her convent schooling: “Being a Rastafarian doesn’t mean one’s hair has to look like a hot mess.” In fact, the reporter’s humour over the Rastafarian “dreadlocks” suggests that her own Jamaican roots may have been suppressed by her “drilling” on good appearance at a Catholic convent and her later US university education.

The quiet hero of this account is Equal Education chairwoman Yoliswa Dwane, whose NGO mediates between parents and achieves a resolution which satisfies both sides, allows the pupil some dignity (he is not forced to cut his hair) and ensures that he is not academically disadvantaged through having missed lessons (“a catch-up plan would be provided”).

## **South African Rastafarian Student Sikhokele Diniso Returns to School After Dust-Up Over Dreadlocks**

APRIL 12, 2013 BY JANET SHAN

Sikhokele Diniso, a 10th grade student at Siphamandla High School in Khayelitsha, South Africa, was asked to leave because of his dreadlocks. Sikhokele Diniso, who is a Rastafarian, was ordered to stay away from school until he cut his hair, the Equal Education (EE) said on Thursday. That decision has since been reversed, but it just goes to show how ignorant some people in authority can be.

The non-governmental organisation met the principal of Siphamandla High School in Khayelitsha, the school's governing body (SGB), and staff on Wednesday to discuss the pupil's grievances, said EE chairwoman Yoliswa Dwane.

"It was agreed that the learner would be allowed back into school and that a catch-up plan would be provided," said Dwane. He would not have to cut his hair.

The Cape Times reported last week that the Grade 10 pupil Sikhokele Diniso was told to leave the school last month. The education department said at the time Diniso could return to school as he had not been suspended.

Department spokeswoman Bronagh Casey said that according to the school principal, the pupil was asked to bring his parents to discuss the matter.

"The boy returned with his brother. The principal insisted on discussing the matter with the parents. "The parents eventually met the principal and agreed that the son should clean, comb, and tie his hair. The boy did not want to do this," said Casey.

When I was a student in the Jamaican school system, we had to follow a strict code of conduct, including the dress code. If Sikhokele Diniso's hair was unkempt, the school had a right to address that issue. Being a Rastafarian doesn't mean one's hair has to look like a hot mess.

Figure 5.7 Text of article 7

The discourse analysis (see Table 5.17) reveals that there is a fair amount of factual information in the article as well as opinion in this article, and sufficient reporting of direct and indirect speech to show that a variety of views on the incident have been reflected. The coding, balanced evenly between Powerful {POF}, Powerless {POL} Humour {HUM} Pro-tolerance



{PRO-T} and Intolerance {INTOL}, suggests that Shan, whatever her personal convictions about “cleanliness being next to godliness”, does indeed take a centrist view, balanced and humane, using gentle humour to make her point. However, she cannot resist taking a dig at the “dust up” (with echoes of a street gang “rumble”), and her admonitions to Sikhokele not to look like a “hot mess” have the tone of a moral lecture, similar to those delivered in the convent she attended as a child.

Table 5.17 Key discourse indicators in article 7

South African Rastafarian student Sikhokele Diniso returns to school after dust-up over dreadlocks		HEGEMONY
DISCOURSE	SITUATION	CONTEXT
Indicators in the text		
<i>Rastafarian dreadlocks seen as disobeying school dress rules:</i>	a moral tale	School dress code excludes non-Christian garb/styles
dust-up over <b>dreadlocks</b>		
asked to leave because of his <b>dreadlocks</b>		
stay away from school until he <b>cut his hair</b>		
pupil’s <b>grievances</b>		
parents ... agreed that the son should <b>clean, comb, and tie</b> his hair		
the <b>boy</b> did not want to do this		
<i>Resolution mediated by NGO Equal Education:</i>	mediation	Schoolboy sent home for wearing Rastafarian hairstyle
the learner would be allowed back into school		
a catch-up plan would be provided		
He <b>would not have to cut his hair</b> .		
parents ... agreed that the son should clean, comb, and tie his hair.		
The boy did not want to do this		
<i>Janet Shan’s “take” on the issue:</i>	a moral homily	
decision has since been reversed		
it just goes to show <b>how ignorant some people in authority can be</b> .		
When I was a student in the Jamaican school system, we had to follow a <b>strict code of conduct</b> , including the <b>dress code</b> .		
[If] hair was <b>unkempt</b>		
<b>school had a right</b> to address that issue		
Being a Rastafarian doesn’t mean one’s hair has to look like a <b>hot mess</b> .		

This article reveals more clearly the hegemonic influence of Christianity inherent in the school rules and dress codes of peoples who were colonised. Shan learned about personal hygiene and tidy dress habits in a British or

American style Christian school, a Catholic *convent*. The article also reveals how the mixing of cultures, where one is immersed in the dominant culture (e.g. first in a Catholic school system, and later in an American University), produces mixed reactions to one's own cultural heritage. Shan is distanced enough from her Jamaican roots to see how Rastafarianism might not impress Americans or South Africans of British or Dutch descent, but close enough to realise the schoolboy's predicament, and to see that it is not about naughtiness or rebellion, but about being true to his cultural beliefs. Many teachers in the South African school system have been educated in ways which have distanced them from their cultural and community roots. They may be completely unaware that, in the enforcing of archaic school dress codes derived from a coercive Christian hegemony, they are inculcating ideologies which are at odds with both their culture and their religious beliefs, and with the new secular dispensation. As Shan concludes: "it just goes to show how ignorant some people in authority can be".

#### **5.5.8 Analysis of article 8**

This article (see Figure 5.8) sums up much of what has emerged in partial and sometimes obscured fashion in the preceding articles. To some extent it explains what has actually been going on, and it also suggests that the premise on which this thesis is based is justified. The hegemonic influence of Christianity in South Africa schools *is* indeed still very powerful, and there is evidence to suggest that it leads to "abuse of pupils' rights at public schools". It is significant that the article first focuses on the outrage of Christian-oriented political parties at the thought of Christianity being "removed" from schools, and *not* the court case protesting about the abuse of pupils' religious rights.

This emphasises the "normality" of Christianity in schools and labels the suggestion that it should be removed as a deviant aberration driven by atheists (inherent in "replacing one philosophy with another"). There is wilful misrepresentation of what the Organisation for Religion, Education and

Democracy (OGOD) wants to happen. OGOB is not against Christianity, but the "burden" it places on non-Christian learners (news24 2014).

## Parties outraged at school religion case

CHRISTIAN values should remain in schools because the constitution promoted freedom of religion, the African Christian Democratic Party said yesterday.

The party's leader, the Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, said they were appalled {strong term} by calls for Christian values to be removed at schools. "Our constitution promotes the freedom of religion and not freedom from religion," he said.

Freedom Front Plus spokesman Anton Alberts said the party supported efforts to oppose a planned court case directed at prohibiting six schools from exercising Christian values.

Alberts said the reaction from church circles and social media was proof that the court action, by the Organisation for Religion, Education and Democracy, with its chairman, Hans Pietersen, was seen as a "witch-hunt on Christians".

He said the court case was aimed at replacing one philosophy with another.

"Freedom of religion is of cardinal importance in South Africa... In model C schools, the principle of parental input, management and democracy is in place," he said. "Therefore, learners who do not wish to be part of any religious action should have the right to withdraw from it."

The organisation [i.e. the Organisation for Religion, Education and Democracy] said it was taking six public schools and the ministers of basic education and correctional services to court for allowing "suppression of scientific and cultural knowledge", religious coercion and abuse of pupils' rights at public schools.

### Breach

It listed more than 60 "abuses of rights". These included requiring pupils to subscribe to a specific religion, referring to a deity in school badges, giving religious instruction and opening school assemblies with sermons or prayer:

"This will be South Africa's watershed case for religion in public schools," it said.

The six schools are Hoërskool Linden in Joburg, Laerskool Randhart in Alberton, Laerskool Baanbreker in Boksburg, Laerskool Garsfontein in Pretoria and Hoerskool Oudtshoorn and Langenhoven Gimnasium, both in Oudtshoorn.

Pietersen said the schools and departments had 20 business days to respond. -Sapa

Figure 5.8 Text of article 8

To bring this reversal of positions (i.e. oppressors claiming oppression by champions of the oppressed) into perspective, OGOB's case is dealt with first in Table 5.18.

Table 5.18 Key discourse indicators in article 8

Parties outraged at school religion case	GENRE	SITUATION	CONTEXT	HEGEMONY
DISCOURSE				
Indicators in the text				
<i>Organisation for Religion, Education and Democracy takes 6 schools and 2 education ministers to court for abusing pupils' religious rights:</i>	evidence-based legal argument	Religion, Education & Democracy Organisation's court case against 6 schools and 2 education ministers	Abuse of pupils' religious rights in public schools	Hegemonic influence of Christianity in South Africa
<b>suppression</b> of scientific and cultural knowledge				
religious <b>coercion</b>				
<b>abuse of</b> pupils' <b>rights</b> at public schools.				
<b>Breach</b> [of rights]				
more than 60 " <b>abuses of rights</b> ".				
requiring pupils to subscribe to a specific religion				
referring to a deity in school badges				
giving religious instruction				
opening school assemblies with sermons or prayer				
"This will be South Africa's <b>watershed case</b> for religion in public schools"				
schools and departments had 20 business days to respond				
<i>Response of Christian-oriented political parties:</i>	specious logic and innuendo			
[Christian] Parties <b>outraged</b> at school religion case				
<b>African</b> Christian Democratic Party				
[ <b>Afrikaner</b> ] Freedom Front Plus				
they were appalled by calls for <b>Christian values to be removed</b> at schools				
CHRISTIAN values should remain in schools because <b>the constitution promoted freedom of religion</b>				
"Our constitution promotes the <b>freedom of religion</b> and not freedom from religion,"				
<b>Freedom of religion</b> is of cardinal importance				
[planned court case directed at] <b>prohibiting</b> six schools from exercising Christian values				
the reaction from church circles and social media was proof that the court action was seen as a " <b>witch-hunt</b> on Christians"				
the court case was aimed at replacing one <b>philosophy</b> with another.				
<b>model C</b> schools				
the principle of <b>parental input, management</b> and <b>democracy</b> is in place [parents have say, majority religion decides, and school management goes along with it.]				
learners who do not wish to be part of any religious action should have the <b>right</b> to withdraw from it				

OGOD's position is that Christianity should be removed from the everyday business of public schools, so that Christian observances are not part of

“official” school life: Christianity (or any other religion) should not feature in official school assemblies, school rules or dress codes, or school uniforms or insignia (e.g. badges). OGOD sees nothing wrong with Christian values being present in schools, *but they must not form part of the official school apparatus*. Christians, along with Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Shembe, may hold services in school breaks or time set aside for personal or group prayer (or meditation, or rituals), and may have religious meetings or services after school hours, and the like, but public schools must not suggest that Christianity is the official ethos of the school. In other words, inculcation of religious beliefs must not be funded by the state: parents who wished their children to be immersed in the beliefs, values and practices of a specific religion would have to send them to private schools.

This is completely in line with the philosophy of secularism in schools, as emphasised by the Minister of Higher Education in article 5, and would prevent the abuses which so vex Blade Nzimande, as well as the over sixty abuses of pupils’ rights identified by OGOD. Note that OGOD is not only taking six Afrikaans schools to court, but also the Ministers of Basic Education (schools) and Correctional Services (prisons), for being inert and allowing relatively powerless school children and completely powerless prison inmates to be brutalised by the system.

OGOD’s court action is against “suppression of scientific and cultural knowledge”, “religious coercion” and “abuse of pupils’ rights at public schools”. It cites more than sixty abuses of rights at the schools named, and gives specific examples:

- requiring pupils to subscribe to a specific religion
- referring to a deity in school badges
- giving religious instruction
- opening school assemblies with sermons or prayer

These may not seem “abusive” at first glance, but the abuse lies not in the activities themselves (innocent enough) but in the fact that impressionable children are being led to believe that the model of religious behaviour set in

place by the school is the “right” or “natural” way to think or behave. In a secular school system, as Nzimande points out, determination of religious belief is reserved for the parents or the children themselves as they become more mature and can make their own decisions about the religion or philosophy they wish to follow. OGOD rightly sees its court action as “South Africa's watershed case for religion in public schools”, and the Christian parties’ “outrage” is understandable.

Unfortunately, it is not so easily justified as OGOD’s case, and all of their arguments are either specious or downright confused:

*Counter argument 1:*

“they were appalled by calls for Christian values to be removed at schools: OGOD did not ask for “Christian values to be removed at schools”, it asked for Christian procedures, customs, observances and emblems to be removed from being part of official school business, rules, dress or functions, which conforms to the Policy on Religion in Education.

*Counter argument 2:*

The parties argue that Christian values should remain in schools “because the constitution promoted freedom of religion”. It would follow from this “argument” that Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Shembe, and the over-five-hundred-African-Zionist religions should also be freely represented in school assemblies, prayers, badges and so on, which is clearly not feasible or even necessarily desirable.

*Counter argument 3:*

"Our constitution promotes the freedom of religion and not freedom from religion": Actually, the South African Constitution, while it does not define “religion”, protects “freedom of thought, belief and opinion”, which means that the rights of atheists and agnostics *not* to be religious are protected (Mestry 2007: 65-66).

*Counter argument 4:*

“Freedom of religion is of cardinal importance”: “Freedom of religion” is actually what OGOD is campaigning for, it is fighting for other religions besides Christianity (including atheist and agnostic beliefs).

*Counter argument 5:*

The words “witch-hunt on Christians” suggests Christians are once again to be “martyred”, which is not OGOD’s intention. This is an unfortunate metaphor, as it was the Christians who routinely burned witches, and the Christian Inquisition which systematically burned thousands of “heretics”.

*Counter argument 6:*

“The court case was aimed at replacing one philosophy with another”: here atheism is alluded to, although it is the state philosophy of neutrality which is actually being challenged as “anti-Christian” (see p. 32).

*Counter argument 7:*

That the parties should mention “model C schools” does not strengthen their argument, as these are still seen as bastions of privilege where influential parents can still call the shots. So much for “democracy”, by which they clearly mean the rule of the more powerful: the majority religion members in a school will decide “democratically”, and school management will go along with the decision (see Soudien and Sayed 2004).

*Counter argument 8:*

The parties suggest that “learners who do not wish to be part of any religious action should have the right to withdraw from it”. Any pupil who has tried to withdraw from school assembly, school prayers, or has challenged school rules or dress codes will know the utter hypocrisy of this statement.

The article includes a fair amount of direct and reported speech, so that participants could not claim that their views were not represented. There are more powerful statements made than powerless ones, but this could be expected when two strong forces are pitted against each other, rather than the cases of victimisation discussed in some of the previous articles. Very few facts are reported (frequency count 3), and while the term “Constitution”

is used by both sides, there is very little overt reference to hegemonic influence. This is because it has gone very much underground in this case. However, it is signalled indirectly by the methodical listing of abuses by OGOD (clear signs of hegemony operating) and the outraged protests of the opposition and their characterisation of Christianity as a “normal” aspect of school life “which should be retained”. The many specious arguments countering the court application and supporting the retaining of Christianity in schools are strong indicators of hegemony.

#### **5.5.9 Analysis of article 9**

The key discourse indicators in this article (Figure 5.9) illustrate how serious the offence is when the assumption that “Christianity is better” (the result of the hegemonic influence of Christianity) is foisted upon non-Christian communities with little thought for the consequences of such an assumption (see Table 5.19). Firstly, as Ashwin Trikamjee points out, it is “unlawful” (i.e. unconstitutional, at least, in South Africa) to suggest that one religion might be better (i.e. “make more sense”) than another (there are 4 overt coding references to the Constitution, which is high). Next, if this was an attempt at evangelism, and there are enough indicators in the text to confirm that it was, this was not the way to go about it, trying to “argue” people into accepting a belief (see indicators marked as “specious logic” in Table 5.19). By definition, a belief is not inspired by logic. Finally, the mismatch between Indian community culture and the Americanised “jargon” (e.g. “testament”) of the Potters House pastors (recent converts to Charismatic Christianity) is jarring. It is unlikely that the pamphlet (containing more jargon, one would expect) was actually “intended to inflame interfaith discourse and disrespect for a faith”, but this is exactly what it did.

## **CHURCH ANGERS HINDUS**

Visiting pastor’s pamphlet deemed offensive

**VERUSCHKA MUNGROO**

A VISITING US preacher has incurred the wrath of local Hindus for an “offensive”



pamphlet.

The pamphlet, titled “Christianity or Hinduism - what makes more sense?”, was an invitation to a revival service at the Potters House Church in Verulam, featuring evangelist guest priest Pastor Marcus Samuel, who was born in India and claims to have been a Hindu previously.

The discourse was to be held on Friday at the church, but was cancelled after pressure from the Hindu community.

According to the pamphlet, the meeting aimed to highlight differences between Christianity and Hinduism and, according to some of those who objected, implied it could be proved Christianity was a better religion than Hinduism.

The South African Hindu Maha Sabha released a statement this week saying it had received many complains from irate Hindus in Verulam who had been offended by the contents of the pamphlet.

The Maha Sabha said in its statement to the Potters House Church: “The pamphlet is intended to inflame interfaith discourse and disrespect for a faith. We remind you that it is not permissible in terms of our constitution, as your pamphlet is designed to denigrate one religion.

“We are surprised that, in conducting yourself in this unlawful manner, you chose to do so without consulting the Hindu faith leadership or, for that matter, inviting a debate in a manner befitting your own faith,” said Maha Sabha president Ashwin Trikamjee.

### **Testament**

The Maha Sabha called for the cancellation of the event and the withdrawal of the pamphlet, threatening legal action against the church.

In response, the church’s head, John Robinson, a missionary from New Mexico who has been in South Africa for six months, apologised to the Maha Sabha and the Hindu community. Robinson said the meeting was not intended to offend anyone.

“The meeting was not intended as a debate of the two religions or to insult Hinduism; rather, it was to be a testament from a travelling pastor with a Hindu background who found happiness in the love of Jesus,” said Robinson.

“I bear full responsibility for my actions, and feel that because of my ignorance and lack of discretion in the terminology of the advertisement I have inflamed some people and this was not my intention.

“For this I must apologise ...Pastor Samuels only teaches historical facts and personal experiences that changed his life and strengthened his faith in what he and I believe.

“In the light of these events, we have cancelled our meeting,” he said. He added that the terms used in the pamphlet had been over-zealous and his lack of knowledge of local culture had been a major cause of the misunderstanding.

“I’ve been in South Africa for only six months and am not clued up on local culture. In America, this would have not caused a problem.

“However, the bad decision I made has no bearing on the church or the Potters House organisation. It was not in the spirit of Christianity, as we love all religions. It was just my stupidity as a foreigner.”

Trikamjee said the Maha Sabha would accept the apology and trusted the incident would not be repeated.

Figure 5.9 Text of article 9

The discourse analysis outlined in Table 5.19 is structured into three “moves”: 1. the attempts to evangelise Hindus on the basis that Christianity “makes more sense”, 2. the outraged response of the Verulam Hindus delivered by the Hindu Maha Sabha, and 3. the abject apology by the head of Potter’s House Church, Pastor Robinson. The genre of the first move (evangelism) is a mixture of specious logic and jargon, shown in textual features. The genre of the Hindu Maha Sabha’s response (on behalf of the Verulam Hindus) is one of a stinging rebuke, delivered with a frigid politeness which indicates controlled fury, and expresses the intensity of the outrage far more effectively than an emotional response would have done. The threat of legal action is completely appropriate, under the circumstances. The genre of the third move, Pastor Robinson’s almost grovelling apology is delivered (appropriately) in the nature of a confession (a typically Christian practice). And the reporter documents this in detail so that his “confession” is painful, prolonged and public. This accounts for the high coding frequency of direct speech, most of which is in Pastor Robinson’s own words.

What is also interesting is the high frequency of factual *and* opinion coding in the article (see Appendix C); the offence given was real, based on real events, and the perceptions of this were multiple and sharply divided. There is also a fairly high “powerless” rating, a key indicator of hegemony operating. Finally, the repeated excuses that the offending pastor was “confused” (i.e. did not really know what he was doing) are indicators that the Christian ideology is so entrenched in the Pastor’s consciousness that he genuinely did *not* know what he was doing.

This article was chosen as the last in the series to highlight the fact that not all religious disputes are about outward appearances or religious minutiae (as in the “bunfight” article). Some disputes cut deeply into people’s sense of self-worth in their everyday community lives, causing dissent and conflict if issues are not handled sensitively.

Table 5.19 Key discourse indicators in article 9

HEGEMONY	CONTEXT	SITUATION	GENRE	Church angers Hindus
				DISCOURSE
				Indicators in the text
			specious logic/jargon	<i>Attempts to evangelise Hindus on the basis that Christianity “makes more sense”:</i>
				“Christianity or Hinduism - <b>what makes more sense?</b> ”
				the meeting aimed to <b>highlight differences</b> between Christianity and Hinduism
				Pastor Samuels only teaches <b>historical facts</b>
				revival service
				evangelist guest priest Pastor Marcus Samuel
				a testament from a travelling pastor with a Hindu background who found happiness in the love of Jesus
				personal experiences that changed his life and strengthened his faith in what he and I believe.
			frigid rebuke	<i>Outraged response of Verulam Hindus through Hindu Maha Sabha:</i>
				many complaints from irate Hindus in Verulam who had been offended by the contents of the pamphlet
				The pamphlet is intended to inflame interfaith discourse and <b>disrespect for a faith.</b>
				it is not permissible in terms of our <b>constitution</b> , as <b>your pamphlet is designed to denigrate one religion</b>
				We are surprised that, in conducting yourself in this <b>unlawful</b> manner, you chose to do so <b>without consulting the Hindu faith leadership</b> or, for that matter, inviting a debate <b>in a manner befitting your own faith.</b>
				The Maha Sabha called for the cancellation of the event and the withdrawal of the pamphlet, <b>threatening legal action</b> against the church.
				[He] <b>trusted</b> [frigidly polite] the incident would not be repeated
			confession	<i>Apology by the Potter’s House Church’s head:</i>
				the meeting was <b>not intended</b> to offend anyone
				The meeting was <b>not intended</b> as a debate of the two religions or to insult Hinduism
				this was <b>not my intention</b>
				I bear full responsibility
				my the <b>bad decision</b> I made in the terminology of the advertisement
				the terms used in the pamphlet had been over-zealous
				lack of knowledge of local culture had been a major cause of the <b>misunderstanding.</b>
				the bad decision I made
				It was just <b>my stupidity as a foreigner</b>

The article was also chosen to illustrate the growing hegemonic influence of Charismatic Christianity. While this cannot be directly attributed to the colonial past, it is also in a sense, a new “colonising” by western influences. It is a more insidious one than the colonialism of the past, as it relies on charm and popularity, and is thus a “social imperative”, a class issue, an example of the nature of true ideology, as it is implicit and thus more difficult to perceive and contest (see Table 4.1). Pastor Robinson truly “does not know what he does”, and perhaps should be forgiven.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The discourse analysis of the articles does indeed reveal evidence of the underlying hegemony of traditional forms of Christianity, which are the remnants of colonial imposition in South Africa. The analysis reveals that conflict, animosity and, often, victimisation, are the results of the hegemonic influence of colonialism on religious observances. It also gives evidence of the growing influence of the Charismatic Christian movement on Hindu communities, achieved mainly by ideological means. This is done through its persuasive influence and popularity in the western world, but also, in a sense by “piggybacking” on the lingering hegemony of traditional Christianity, so that its proponents can argue that it “makes more sense” (Mungroo 2014: 1). The more powerful Christian groups can often be seen to support arguments with logic, or “common sense”, rather than admitting to partisan or oppressive practices, and the arguments are often seen to be lacking in logic. This is because one can argue for the principle of religious tolerance, which is, in any case, a legal obligation, but one cannot argue a case for any one religion being “better”. This is because religion itself has been described as a form of ideology, that is, a belief system which transcends rational argument (Hadley 2009: [1]).

What the discourse analysis has also shown is that the current situation in South Africa, as in other parts of world, is by no means a clear-cut case of oppression by members of any one religious denomination or secular group. Christians groups are not necessarily in agreement with each

other, and members of non-Christian (including secular) groups have also been shown to abuse power and violate the rights of members of other religions. Religious groups are also not necessarily inimical to each other, however. In one notable case (article 1), Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Shembe and Rhema were seen to stand together to show solidarity against bigotry and intolerance. As mentioned in Chapter 2, secularity and the impartiality encouraged by the Constitution are not necessarily the answer, as they themselves are viewed as being offensive to fervent believers of *any* religion.

The results in Chapters 4 and 5 will be presented in the next chapter, together with recommendations as to how the problems identified might be addressed.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 6 sums up the general conclusions of this study in terms of the answers found to the research questions, which include making recommendations to address some of the problems identified. Firstly, the aims and objectives of the study are recapitulated. Next, conclusions based on the answers to research question 1 are discussed in terms of what the sample texts of hymns, prayers and observances, as well parent feedback, revealed about the reasons for the mono-religious public school approach. After this, conclusions are drawn as to what the analysis of the discourse on current religious observances in public schools revealed, in an attempt to answer research question 2. Finally, in answer to research question 3, recommendations are made for religious observances in public schools, drawing on suggestions made in the parent data and the analysis of newspaper articles, with some further suggestions added by the researcher. The chapter ends with some concluding thoughts.

### **6.2 Recapitulation of the aims and objectives of the study**

As described in Chapter 1 (p. 5) the aims and objectives of the study were as follows:

General aims of the research:

- to investigate the discourse on religious observances in public schools to establish the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances, and,
- to investigate the effect of these religious observances on the school population.

The rationale for this was to suggest suitable recommendations which could be made to schools and to the Education Department for ensuring:

- religious tolerance and freedom, and that
- groups other than Christian were not marginalised when it came to the religious observances of the school.

The specific objectives were as follows:

- to assess the extent of the influence of colonial practices on current religious observances in public schools;
- to investigate the reactions of members of the school population, both in the community and in media articles, to current religious practices in public schools, as set against their own personal religious belief systems.
- to formulate recommendations about school religious practices which might be acceptable to all role players within a multicultural school body.

The specific research questions formulated to guide the inquiry (pp.3-4) after a review of the literature (to establish what had already been done), were as follows:

1. To what extent can the influence of colonial observances be found in current religious observances in public schools?
2. What does analysis of the discourse on current religious observances in public schools reveal about the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances on school populations?
3. In view of the answers to the above, what recommendations could be made about religious observances in public schools?

### **6.3 General conclusions of the study**

The general conclusions of this study will be summed up in terms of the answers found to the research questions.

### **6.3.1 The extent to which the influence of colonial observances was found in current religious observances in public schools**

Conclusions based on the answers to research question 1 will be discussed in terms of what the sample texts of hymns, prayers and observances revealed as well as what parent feedback revealed about the reasons for the mono-religious (i.e. predominantly Christian) public school approach.

#### *a. What the sample texts of hymns, prayers and observances revealed*

The sample texts of hymns, prayers and observances collected from selected public schools showed a predominance of Christian materials, some being traditional texts from the Christian liturgy, but others being derived from later Pentecostal Christian movements. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the latter are thought to be a more powerful Christian influence, as they were adopted because they were popular, in other words, an example of true hegemony achieved by ideology. There was also the sense that the hegemonic colonial influence of traditional Christianity had been diluted by the growing popularity of the Pentecostal movements. Yet, as summed up by one parent: “we are living in a multi-cultural society but we are still following the old values of the British.” The sample texts provide evidence of the mono-religious (i.e. Christian) approach in public schools noted - and deplored - by Roux (2005) and Modipa (2014). They confirm Blumenfeld’s description of what happens when Christian hegemony dominates public life, even in “secular” democracies:

Norms of Christian privilege and marginalization of members of other faith communities and non-believers in the schools are conveyed by curricular materials (curricular hegemony), which focus upon heroes, holidays, traditions, accomplishments, and the importance of a European heritage, Christian experience (2006: 198).

#### *b. What parent feedback revealed about the reasons for the mono-religious public school approach*

Parent feedback in response to the surveys, discussions and questionnaires went some way towards explaining why the mono-religious, predominantly



Christian public school approach had been allowed to linger on in spite of the multi-faith principles enshrined in the Constitution and accompanying legislation. The parents consulted were generally not happy about this mono-religious approach, except, predictably, Christian parents. As one Hindu parent said: "Schools are very Christian orientated and a change is needed. It is felt that Christianity gets more preferences than other religions and this is totally unfair." This unfairness is described by Blumenfeld: "we can...understand Christian privilege as constituting a seemingly invisible, unearned, and largely unacknowledged array of benefits" (2006: 195). However, what is disturbing is evidence of the social conditioning which stops people from protesting about a state of affairs which has been going on for so long that it is seen as "normal". This is "cultural conditioning" of a sinister nature, it is this kind of conditioning which led one parent to claim that *The Lord's Prayer* is a "national prayer", which is not so far-fetched in terms of its actual status. While the majority were in favour of change from the current system of reciting only Christian prayers, the following factors explained why change might not be brought about that easily:

**(i) Lack of knowledge about the Policy on Religion in Education**

The picture emerging was one of confusion and to some extent apathy about the Policy on Religion in Education and whether - or how - it needed to be implemented. While it is possibly because the often confused and/or contradictory provisions of the Policy are not spelt out clearly, and are left up to the courts to decide (Mestry 2007), it was clear that parents had not been informed about either the policy or their rights (see Modipa 2014: 123-124). Clearly, "Policy on religion education has not been unpacked," as one parent stated.

**(ii) Lack of knowledge about how to uphold one's democratic rights**

Parents clearly did not realise that the power to uphold their democratic rights is contained in the provisions of the Constitution and the Policy on Religion in Education.

**(iii) Fear of being victimised at their children's school**

The nervousness parents initially showed about being interviewed indicates fear of being victimised at their children's school, or even worse, having their children victimised as a result of parent over-assertiveness about religious rights.

**(iv) South Africa's majority Christian population**

Christianity is the majority religion (at 80%) in South Africa (Index Mundi 2014), which makes it seem "normal" to have a mono-religious Christian dispensation in public schools, and pointless to contest this majority influence.

**(v) The growing popularity of Charismatic Christianity**

Another reason for parents neglecting to protest strongly (if at all) against a western religious hegemony is the growing popularity of Charismatic Christianity. Interestingly neither traditional nor Charismatic Christians appeared to feel that their faith necessarily distanced them from their own cultural (i.e. non-Christian) practices, showing a unique adaptation to and blending with factors in the local context (see Kumar 2006b: 364-365).

**(vi) Confusion over the nature of religious victimisation at work or school**

When commenting on the news articles giving examples of religious victimisation in various local and international contexts, parents appeared confused about who the actual victims were in each case (except in the article *Minister to probe Islam row*). It would be difficult for parents to identify or contest religious victimisation when unsure of exactly who is being victimised and how.

**(vii) Over-deference to authority figures**

In the news article responses there was also evidence of over-deference to authority figures such as school principals, employers and heads of state, with parents leaving it up to them to decide on "correct" behaviour at school and in the workplace. And, as Cash, Gray and Rood (2000) point out, it is

not so much that authority figures do not wish to accommodate multi-faith subordinates, but that they are confused as to how to accomplish this. Sometimes accommodation is just not feasible in terms of workplace stipulations or the rights of fellow employees.

### **6.3.2 What the analysis of the discourse on current religious observances in public schools revealed**

The key issues emerging from the analysis of news articles concerned mainly objections to the visible or outward signs of religious beliefs with respect to the wearing of religious regalia, religious dress, headgear or hairstyle, and religious observances carried out, at school or in the workplace. The resulting conflicts were seen to range from disagreement to outright aggression. Those in the victim group, whether children, young adults or adults, were all non-Christian, but not all oppressors were Christian. It is therefore evident that it is *power*, even amongst previously disadvantaged groups, which motivates religious disputes, and not colonialism per se. The articles published in South Africa all contained more violent terms than those from overseas: religious beliefs and observances are obviously highly contentious subjects in South Africa.

As stated in Chapter 5 (pp 139-140), the discourse analysis of the articles does reveal evidence of an underlying hegemony of traditional forms of Christianity, the remnants of colonial imposition in South Africa (both British and Dutch). However, a general conclusion is that there is no clear case for a “Christians vs. non-Christian” type of oppression in South Africa (i.e. as the result of a strong hegemonic force), but that the conflict is much more complex. It appears that the hegemonic influence of Christianity has, in the true sense of ideology, gone “underground”, that is, has become implicit in various social situations, as shown in Table 3.2 (p 45) in the section on Critical theory. It takes various manifestations when it becomes offensive or oppressive, which find expression in the media or courts. This confirms what the literature review has shown, that legislation cannot enforce religious

tolerance. As the Putin article shows, in a secular state (i.e. Russia) legislation may actually enforce religious *intolerance*. The conflicts in the articles are not just about Christians oppressing non-Christians: it appears to be the case that strongly held religious beliefs in *all* denominations cause non-believers to be viewed as “deviant” and “wrong”, and to be discriminated against. What is currently being taught in Religion Education does not seem to be getting the message home that diversity is acceptable, let alone desirable.

The conflicts in the news reports analysed are the result of a multi-faith population coming up against the idea that certain beliefs and observances are “normal” and that others are “deviant”. While the South African Constitution legislates for religious tolerance, as shown in Chapter 2, the news articles show how conflicts occasionally arise, most disturbingly, in the context of religious intolerance in public schools. Analysis of the news reports set in South Africa give clear evidence of the lingering vestiges of Christian National Education, as well as the growing influence of the later Pentecostal movements. Such is the influence of Christianity in South Africa that two Government ministers were “appalled by calls for Christian values to be removed at schools”, and protested that “Christian values should remain in schools because the constitution promoted freedom of religion”. There is confusion even at Government level about South Africa being a “secular state”, when in fact it is a multi-faith country with a Bill of Rights framed to ensure freedom of belief (or unbelief, for that matter).

The “hot cross bun image” (Ajam 2013: 2) emphasises the pettiness of the dispute about food labelling. However, the discourse analysis reveals the deep offence given to those with strong religious beliefs and who require food labelling to ensure correct religious observance. The discourse analysis also reveals the warped logic of the attacks on OGOD (Sapa 2014: 4), which is merely campaigning for constitutionally legislated rights to be recognised and upheld. It also reveals the deep anger of a community when it is inferred that the religion of its cultural roots, Hinduism, does not “make sense” when

compared with Christianity (Mungroo 2014: 1). These are indicators that the messages given by the Constitution and associated Policies on Religion are neither understood nor heeded.

As Modipa's (2014) study concluded, the lack of parent (including SGB) knowledge to understand and interpret Religion in Education policies, as well as failure to involve stakeholders in decision-making processes has led to a "gloomy picture" in which learners are coerced into observing religious practices which are represented as the "norm" but are in fact a violation of their constitutional religious rights (Modipa 2014: ii). The discourse analysis shows that oppression of religious freedom is not a South African phenomenon, however, and that other nations struggle with the concept of freedom of belief. A policy of secularism is shown to be just as oppressive as fervent religiosity. What, then is the answer? Recommendations to address this state of affairs will be made in the next section.

## **6.4 Recommendations for religious observances in public schools**

This section attempts to give answers to research question 3, namely, as to what recommendations might be made about religious observances in public schools, in terms of the answers to the first two questions (discussed above). These will be presented in terms of the recommendations made by the parents surveyed and interviewed, recommendations arising from the newspaper article analysis, and the researcher's own suggested recommendations.

### **6.4.1 Recommendations made by the parents**

The following recommendations as to religious practices in public schools were made by parents:

*a. Maintenance of the status quo*

Understandably, in term of the 60% national bias in favour of Christianity, many parents suggested that they were happy with the situation, and that Christian prayers and hymns should continue to be accepted practice at public schools: “There is no need for any change.”

*b. Introduction of multi-faith religious observances*

As mentioned in Chapter 4, some parents do not agree with the way in which the current assemblies are being conducted, using predominantly Christian observances: “We are living in a multi-cultural society but we are still following the old values of the British.” There was a strong response in favour of multi-faith prayers being used at school assemblies.

*c. Removal of all official school religious observances*

Although only one parent mentioned this (“No prayers should be said at school assemblies”) it was a parent recommendation, so is included here.

In assessing the parent recommendations, Option a., maintaining the status quo (i.e. using predominantly Christian observances), is just not a viable option, as it violates the rights of non-Christian *and* non-religious pupils. Option b., introducing multi-faith prayers, might turn out to be more complicated in practice than in principle, in terms of the huge variety of religions in South Africa, particularly within the 60% Christian group. It also does not address the needs of atheists or agnostics, who have a constitutional right to hold, express and practise their unbelief (and they may well hold profound spiritual beliefs which are not religious per se in character). The Organisation for Religion, Education and Democracy (OGOD) has pointed out that, constitutionally, Christian observances and ethos cannot be enforced on non-Christian pupils (Sapa 2014: 4). The same holds true of religious beliefs in general, for students who are not just non-Christian, but non-*religious*. It might be more constitutionally sound to have extra-curricular time scheduled (but not compulsory) for religious - or other - affirmations of beliefs and values, as in New Zealand (see Mestry 2007: 60-

61). Option c., having no official religious observances in public schools, is in fact on the right track in terms of being both feasible and constitutionally sound. But this is a rather drastic changeover, and might need to be softened so as to make it acceptable.

#### **6.4.2 Recommendations arising from the newspaper article analysis**

The following recommendations as to religious practices in public schools (or colleges) were taken from the content of the newspaper articles analysed. Firstly the issues will be summed up, and then corresponding recommendations arising from these will be made.

Article 1 shows that, whatever solution to religious discrimination is recommended, it needs to involve choice and fairness, and that imposition of the beliefs of any one creed is offensive to *all* religious denominations (except to those imposing, them of course, who see imposition of their beliefs as “natural” and “normal”). This is backed up by Article 3, which makes a plea for “religious tolerance” in public schools, with examples of the kinds of religious discrimination which are practised worldwide (Post Reporter 2012).

Article 2 recommends that parents and children should stand up to bullies who flout the Constitution by belittling one’s cultural or community religious practices. According to Gauteng Education Department spokesman Charel Phahlane: “the Constitution was clear that no one should be discriminated against for their religious practices and that the school governing body laws should be consistent with this” (Soobramoney 2012). However, this article demonstrates that individual legal action, while it might lead to a moral victory, as with the Sunali nose stud case (Post Reporter 2012), has a high cost in terms drawing unnecessary and unwanted attention to children. Pre-adolescents and adolescents are most vulnerable, as they are at an age where they are least likely to cope with being singled out as somehow “deviant” or “nonconformist”.

Article 4 warns against using “school rules” to enforce discrimination against religious practices in a petty, bureaucratic way, and stresses the role of the SGBs in ruling on religious observances in public schools. Article 7 echoes this in terms of showing how school systems have “a strict code of conduct, including the dress code” (Shan 2013). Bearing in mind that Janet Shan attended a *convent*, this echoes Harber and Sakade’s (2009) contention that Christian practices are often implicit in “school rules”. In the case of the ban against the wearing of fezzes (in article 5), it is not however, colonial Christian practices which are being imposed, but a petty bureaucracy which flouts students’ religious rights.

In article 5, the Minister of Higher Education, Blade Nzimande, asserts: “I wish to state that as a constitutional democracy and secular state, no student in any public institution can be forced to practise any religion” (Jansen 2012). In another article (in Figure C.10, which was not analysed, as it reports on this study) this assertion is echoed by Terence Khala, of the Department of Basic Education (DBE), who declares, rightly, that schools (i.e. *public* schools) are not religious institutions:

We live in a secular country that guarantees the rights of all religions. Schools must accommodate diverse religious practices and beliefs in a tolerant, compassionate and equitable manner.

These sentiments (while not entirely based on fact, as South Africa is a multi-faith country) are echoed in an overseas context in Putin’s insistence that Russia “is a **secular** state and must create **equal conditions** for all its citizens” (New York Times Reporter 2012).

Article 8 spells out that many routine school practices which are taken for granted are in fact violations of pupils’ religious rights, namely, “requiring pupils to subscribe to a specific religion, referring to a deity in school badges, giving religious instruction and opening school assemblies with sermons or prayer” (Sapa 2014: 4). The arrogance of the Christian ministers in claiming that Christianity in public schools is “normal” is echoed in Pastor Robinson’s



assumption (in Article 9) that what is “normal” in America must be “normal” in Verulam: “I’ve been in South Africa for only six months and am not clued up on local culture. *In America, this would have not caused a problem*” (Mungroo 2014: 1, my emphasis). Article 8 also highlights the need for class action as a more effective means of protesting against the general and widespread violation of religious rights in South Africa than individual legal action, as described in some of the other articles.

To sum up, recommendations for religion in public schools made in or suggested by the newspaper article analysis are as follows:

*a. Importance of tolerance in decision-making*

Tolerance is an all-important factor in decision-making and how disputes are treated, to avoid arousing the animus of those whose religious convictions are ignored, disparaged or flouted.

*b. Inclusion of stakeholders in decision-making processes*

Stakeholder inclusion is critical in key decision-making processes.

*c. Checking of school rules for religious discrimination*

School rules need to be checked rigorously to see that they do not favour any one religion or (even by default) discriminate against multi-faith beliefs or practices.

*d. Clear procedures for school or parent objections*

Procedures for school or parent objections need to be laid down clearly and need to be seen to be observed. The analysis of the newspaper articles reveals wide divergences and inconsistencies in following provisions which were supposedly legally set in place by bills of rights and policies.

*e. Removal of all official school religious observances*

No matter what the majority school population (or community) religious preferences are, religious observances should not form part of official school

business, practices, regalia or other official school trappings (e.g. mottos, insignia, or lyrics of school songs).

*g. Class action as a means of redress*

Class action may well be needed to expose and rectify the current situation of widespread constitutional violations of religious freedom in South Africa. This highlights the weakness in critical theory in that critique on its own is not sufficient to bring about emancipation, and that disempowered groups must actively lobby for change (see p. 49).

All of the above measures are well supported by the factual evidence and arguments provided in the newspaper articles.

#### **6.4.3 Researcher's recommendations**

In addition to the above recommendations, apart from those which are not considered feasible or equitable (a. and b. of 6.4.1. above), the researcher would like to add the following:

*a. Briefing of parents (including SGBs) on religious rights*

Parents, including those in SGBs, need to be properly informed about their children's religious rights and how these are to be upheld in public schools. In terms of parents who are not on SGBs, this recommendation is supported by the points in 6.3.1 b. As for parents in SGBs, these need to be fully involved in this issue, as, according to the Chair of the Natal Parents' Association, Sayed Rajack, it is "the responsibility of school management and *governing bodies* to ensure that all religions were acknowledged in schools" (Maluleka 2010: 19, my emphasis). This implies that SGBs have a key role in briefing parents and including them in decision-making.

*b. Extra curricular time scheduled for voluntary religious observances*

To accommodate to school population's or the community's constitutional right to engage in religious observances on school premises, extra-curricular time (i.e. outside of the official school curriculum) should be scheduled for

staff, learner and the public's *voluntary* participation. In the researcher's opinion, this is the only feasible solution for carrying out the parents' recommendation that multi-faith observances should take place at public schools (see 6.4.1 b. above).

*c. Time frame required for implementation of necessary changes*

In view of the entrenched nature of Christian domination in South Africa, and the fact that it has been supported in the past by oppressive legislation, and closer to the present, by popular adoption (i.e. of Pentecostal style), any sudden or drastic change to uphold pupils' constitutional rights to religious freedom would be inadvisable. It is therefore very important to set out a time frame for any implementation of changes to the actual practice of religious observance in public schools so that all stakeholders can be informed, consulted and included in decision making.

*d. Encouragement of voluntary student inter-faith groups*

The setting up of voluntary student groups such as the Ishmael Isaac Society (Jones 2014: 6) should be encouraged and assisted with advice and support.

## Sharing to build bridges of religious tolerance

Michelle Jones

PUPILS from two Cape Town schools - one Jewish and the other Muslim - have come together to form an after-hours organisation promoting religious education and tolerance.

The Ishmael Isaac Society was launched by pupils from Herzlia High and Islamia College late last year and has more than 120 members. Its founders had taken part in a two-year interfaith exchange programme organised by Marlene Silbert, to "promote understanding between pupils of different faiths.

Silbert said the pupils decided to keep in touch by forming the society. "It brings them together so they can talk and have meaningful dialogue."

Pupils from other schools had expressed interest in joining the society and it was "expanding exponentially". They planned to meet twice a term and arrangements were being made to visit a church, mosque, synagogue, temple and other places of worship.

Figure 6.1 Extract from article on the Ishmael Isaac Society

This would promote inter-faith understanding and respect in young learners at public schools. An extract from the article describing this initiative is shown in Figure 6.1, while the full article is included in Appendix C (p. 253). The formation of voluntary student groups might assist to promote religious education and tolerance at grass-roots level. This would be better than relying only on top-down instruction in a subject for which the necessary teacher support systems may not be in place (Roux 2005: 305).

## **6.5 Concluding thoughts**

The researcher was born in the apartheid era, and upon attending school as a child from Grade R to Grade 12, was allowed to recite only prayers which were Christian. Although the school population consisted of mainly Hindu learners, the school prayers did not cater for the Hindu faith, but no one at that point questioned why this was so. The parents accepted this because it was the “law” (i.e. apartheid law) that the school follow the Christian ethos. I promised myself that, one day, I would make a change to that state of affairs, and twenty-five years later I was given the opportunity to research this topic, which I felt passionate about from the first year of my study. Even so, today, as a teacher, I witness on a daily basis how children who do not belong to the Christian faith shy away from the Christian prayer when it is being recited. These children do not mean any disrespect, but it is not in keeping with their faith or culture to be saying a Christian prayer, unlike the Christian pupils, who are (understandably) very eager to vocalize the tenets of their faith. There is no fairness in this. Teaching respect and tolerance for the fascinating array of beliefs world-wide is the only way, finally, to contribute to a more unprejudiced, magnanimous and peaceful world. It is hoped that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) will pay some heed to the recommendations made in this chapter.

# Appendix A: Samples of Prayers, Hymns and Religious Observances Used in Public Schools

## 1. Christian prayers commonly used in public schools

The following are some of the Christian prayers commonly used in the South African public schools chosen for this research. As can be seen, different versions of common prayers such as “The Lord’s Prayer” are used in different schools.

### 1.1 The Lord’s Prayer (traditional, *King James Bible*, Matthew 6:9-13)

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever  
and ever. Amen.

### 1.2 The Lord’s Prayer (traditional, *The Gospel of Luke*: Ch.11 2-4)

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come,  
Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread and  
Forgive us for our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass  
against us  
And lead us not into temptation;  
But deliver us from evil;  
For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory,  
For ever and ever. Amen.

### 1.3 Our Father (more modern version, *New Testament*: Matthew 6:9-13)

Our Father, in Heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom  
come,  
Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us for our sins as we  
forgive those that trespass against us,  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the  
kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

#### **1.4 Our Father (modern version)**

Our Father who lives in heaven, your name is Holy  
May your Kingdom come and may your will be done on Earth as it  
is in Heaven,  
Give us the food we need and pray forgive us all the wrongs we do  
and say,  
Keep us from wanting to rejoice, Guard us from things that are  
evil, for all that is strong and true, and truly yours, forever and ever.  
Amen.

#### **1.5 Father, we thank thee**

Father, we thank thee for the night and for the morning light  
For rest and food and loving care  
For all that makes the world so fair,  
Help us to do the things we should  
In all we do and all we say – Amen

#### **1.6 The Joy of Sharing**

O, God, the Giver of all good things, help us to be ready to share  
our possessions with other people. Teach us to give gladly, with  
no thought of what we are going to receive in return. May we  
remember that You, our Heavenly Father, gave everything to us  
so that we may use it for the extension of Thy glory, May we  
realise that greater love hath no man than a man lay down his life  
for his friends. If sometimes we have to give things that are very  
precious to us, help us to make the sacrifice cheerfully.

#### **1.7 Assembly prayer (public school, Verulam, Reverend Francis Bland Tucker, 1895-1984)**

Father, we thank thee, for the night  
And for the pleasant morning light.  
For rest and food and loving care,  
And all that makes the world so fair.  
Help us to do, the things we should,  
To be to others, kind and good.  
In all we do, in all we say,

To grow more loving, every day.  
Amen.

### **1.8 Morning prayer**

O God, we praise you for the morning.  
We thank you for the golden sunshine  
That warms the earth.  
Thank you for the playful winds  
Rustling through the trees.  
Thank you for the songs of the bird  
That make such merry music.  
Thank you for this lovely world for us  
In which we live in.  
Thank you, O God, for all your goodness.  
Please come and live in our hearts as we praise you.  
Amen

### **1.9 End of year prayer**

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the joys of the year that is ending. We praise You for the lessons we have learnt and for the games we have played. Forgive us for the times we have been lazy, sulky and quarrelsome, and please help us to do better in the future.

Be with us now, as we start our holiday. Guide us wherever we go, and help us to be loving, kind and fearless. Make us cheerful and willing to help in our homes and show us how to make life happier for our parents and our friends.  
Amen

The above prayers habitually give praise to the “Father” and end with “Amen”, which signifies that they have a Christian influence. Very few other forms of prayers are being used at schools throughout the year and hence the learners are subjected to reciting these Christian-based prayers on a daily basis. No consideration is given to learners from the other religious backgrounds.

## **2. Christian hymns commonly used in public schools**

The following are some of the Christian hymns commonly used in the same South African public schools which used the prayers selected above. It can be seen that, while some hymns are traditional Christian hymns from the liturgy, there are also the more modern charismatic Christian hymns.

### **2.1 My life is in you, Lord (Daniel Gardner, 1986)**

My life is in you Lord, my strength is in You, Lord, my hope is in You Lord, in You, it's in You. I will praise you with all my strength with all of my life, with all of my strength, all of my hope is in You.

### **2.2 Shine, Jesus, shine**

Lord the light of your love is shining,  
In the midst of darkness, shining.  
Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us,  
Set us free by the truth You now bring us.  
Shine on me, shine on me.

CHORUS:

Shine, Jesus, Shine,  
Fill this land with the Father's glory,  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire,  
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy,  
Send forth your word, Lord,  
And let there be light.

Lord, I come to your awesome presence  
From the shadows into your radiance,  
By the blood I may enter your brightness,  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness,  
Shine on me, shine on me (Chorus)

As we gaze on your kingly brightness,  
So our faces display your likeness,  
Ever changing from glory to glory,  
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story  
Shine on me, shine on me (Chorus)



### **2.3 Responsorial Psalm 145** (Missal Reference page 841)

I shall bless your name forever my king and my God.

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,

Slow to anger, abounding in mercy.

How good is the Lord to all,

Compassion to all his creatures,

All your works shall thank you Lord,

And all your faithful ones bless you

They shall speak of glory of your reign and declare your mighty deeds, they shall make known your mighty to the children of men, and the glorious splendour of your reign. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, your rule endures for all generations. I will bless your name forever my king and my God.

### **3. Procedures observed at school assemblies**

The learners will form straight lines in their class groups. The assembly master for the morning will greet the learners and then say “Bow your heads and Let us Pray”. The prayer will then be said by all the learners in the school assembly. The assembly master will choose one line from the prayer and explain to the learners about how righteous they must be while at school and if they go against the school prayer, which means that they are going against “Lord Jesus Christ.”

The above has been, and still is, the practice in the many of the school assemblies throughout South Africa, and the religion of Christianity pervades throughout. From a Christian point of view, the hymns are wonderful, but the needs of the learners from other religious backgrounds are not considered.

## **Appendix B: Questionnaires and Interviews**

Appendix B contains examples of questions asked and data collected during questionnaires and interviews on the influence of colonial religious observances, with different parent groups participating.

### **1. Preliminary questionnaire**

The preliminary questionnaire collected data about the participants' demographics, the religious practises currently taking place at their children's schools, and their feelings about this. This was so as to establish a kind of "base point" for the interview discussions which were to follow with the same participants.

1. What religion do you belong to?
2. Do you and your family attend religious services in your community?
3. If you have answered yes to the above question what type of religious service do you and your family attend?
4. Are you aware that there is a national policy on religion education?
5. If you have answered yes to the above question, what are your views on this policy?
6. In your opinion, has the school governing body of [NAME] Primary School implemented this policy at school assemblies?
7. Why do you think this is so?
8. Why do you think that the learners of are still reciting Christian prayers during the morning assemblies?
9. Do you think that there is a need to change the type of prayers which the learners say at school assemblies?
10. If yes, what type of prayers should be said by the learners?
11. Do you have any other comments or concerns to add?

## ***Responses to the preliminary questionnaire:***

### **Participant 1**

1. What religion do you belong to? **Hindu.**
2. Do you and your family attend religious services in your community? **Yes.**
3. If you have answered yes to the above question what type of religious service do you and your family attend? **Prayer group services.**
4. Are you aware that there is a national policy on religion education? **Yes.**
5. If you have answered yes to the above question, what are your views on this policy? **It [the policy] is not necessary.**
6. In your opinion, has the school governing body of [NAME] Primary School implemented this policy at school assemblies? **No.**
7. Why do you think this is so? **Lack of interest.**
8. Why do you think that the learners of are still reciting Christian prayers during the morning assemblies? **Policy on religion education has not been unpacked.**
9. Do you think that there is a need to change the type of prayers which the learners say at school assemblies? **Yes.**
10. If yes, what type of prayers should be said by the learners? **A prayer which respects the different cultures should be said on different days.**
11. Do you have any other comments or concerns to add? **I would love to have a change in school assemblies because in this way everyone's religious values will be respected.**

### **Participant 2**

1. What religion do you belong to? **Hindu.**
2. Do you and your family attend religious services in your community? **Yes.**

3. If you have answered yes to the above question, what type of religious service do you and your family attend? **Services at the local temple.**
4. Are you aware that there is a National Policy on religion education? **No.**
5. If you have answered yes to the above policy what are your views on this policy?
6. In your opinion, has the school governing body of [NAME] Primary School implemented this policy at school assemblies? **No.**
7. Why do you think this is so? **There was no reason to.**
8. Why do you think that the learners of [NAME] Primary School are still reciting Christian prayers during the morning assemblies? **It is a national prayer.**
9. Do you think that there is a need to change the type of prayers which the learners say at school assemblies? **Yes.**
10. If yes, what type of prayers should be said by the learners? **A prayer for each and every religious group.**
11. Do you have any other comments or concerns to add? **No.**

### **Participant 3**

1. What religion do you belong to? **Muslim.**
2. Do you and your family attend religious services in your community? **Yes.**
3. If you have answered yes to the above question what type of religious service do you and your family attend? **Men attend mosque.**
4. Are you aware that there is a national policy on religion education? **No.**
5. If you have answered yes to the above question, what are your views on this policy?
6. In your opinion, has the school governing body of [NAME] Primary School implemented this policy at school assemblies? **No.**
7. Why do you think this is so? **It does not apply to them.**

8. Why do you think that the learners of [NAME] Primary School are still reciting Christian prayers during the morning assemblies? **It has always been said at morning assemblies.**
9. Do you think that there is a need to change the type of prayers which the learners say at school assemblies? **Yes.**
10. If yes, what type of prayers should be said by the learners? **A prayer for each individual religious group.**
11. Do you have any other comments or concerns to add? **Since democracy, we need to evoke a change in the way school assemblies are conducted.**

#### **Participant 4**

1. What religion do you belong to? **Christian.**
2. Do you and your family attend religious services in your community? **Yes.**
3. If you have answered yes to the above question what type of religious service do you and your family attend? **Church services on a Sunday.**
4. Are you aware that there is a national policy on religion education?  
**Yes.**
5. If you have answered yes to the above question, what are your views on this policy? **It shows a respect for all other religions.**
6. In your opinion, has the school governing body of [NAME] Primary School implemented this policy at school assemblies? **No.**
7. Why do you think this is so? **There was no reason to because the parents did not come forward with regards to changing the way prayers were said at the school assemblies.**
8. Why do you think that the learners of [NAME] Primary School are still reciting Christian prayers during the morning assemblies? **This prayer has always been said.**

9. Do you think that there is a need to change the type of prayers which the learners say at school assemblies? **No.**
10. If yes, what type of prayers should be said by the learners? -
11. Do you have any other comments or concerns to add? **There is no need for any real change... um, yeah, change *is* needed.**

### **Participant 5**

1. What religion do you belong to? **Christianity.**
2. Do you and your family attend religious services in your community? **Yes.**
3. If you have answered yes to the above question what type of religious service do you and your family attend? **Church services, which are held at the Hermon Temple.**
4. Are you aware that there is a National Policy on religion education? **No.**
5. If you have answered yes to the above question, what are your views on this policy? -
6. In your opinion, has the school governing body of [NAME] Primary School implemented this policy at school assemblies? **There are no changes in the school assemblies.**
7. Why do you think this is so? **Parents are in the dark about any changes to religious policies.**
8. Why do you think that the learners of [NAME] Primary School are still reciting Christian prayers during the morning assemblies? **It has always been recited and it promotes my religious values.**
9. Do you think that there is a need to change the type of prayers which the learners say at school assemblies? **No.**
10. If yes, what type of prayers should be said by the learners? –
11. Do you have any other comments or concerns to add? **There is no need for any change.**

## Participant 6

1. What religion do you belong to? **Muslim.**
2. Do you and your family attend religious services in your community? **No.**
3. If you have answered yes to the above question what type of religious service do you and your family attend? **n/a**
4. Are you aware that there is a national policy on religion education? **No.**
5. If you have answered yes to the above question, what are your views on this policy?
6. In your opinion, has the school governing body of [NAME] Primary School implemented this policy at school assemblies? **No.**
7. Why do you think this is so? **Not enough info to get started.**
8. Why do you think that the learners of [NAME] Primary School are still reciting Christian prayers during the morning assemblies? **The school has not effected any changes.**
9. Do you think that there is a need to change the type of prayers which the learners say at school assemblies? **Most certainly.**
10. If yes, what type of prayers should be said by the learners? **Different religions should be respected. I would love to have a day in assembly when the Muslim prayer could also be recited.**
11. Do you have any other comments or concerns to add? **All religions should be respected and not only Christianity.**

## 2. First interview session

After the results of the preliminary questionnaire were analysed, open-ended interviews were held with a different group of participants to probe further the reasons for the answers to the questionnaire. Transcripts of the interviews are given below.

### **Participant 1**

My personal feelings about the school assemblies being biased is that, the learners are not being exposed to various other types of prayers. The only prayer which they would recite is the Christian prayer. I am totally against this, because when my child comes home instead of standing in front of the lamp and saying our (Hindu mantra), he is saying a Christian prayer, which to me eventually leads to my culture, slowly becoming eroded by Christian morals and values. When I try to educate my child, it is often met with rebellion, because now, questions arise as to why the school is wrong and we are right. This conflict often happens and if my child was exposed to the different types of prayers, then he would begin to understand that what we are saying at our home prayer is equally important and the every effort then would be made to respect the prayer which is being said. I as a parent feel rather helpless and clueless as to how I can salvage the situation. Maybe, if the findings of this study could be sent to the Department of Education, any small effort would hence help to make school assemblies embrace the other religions.

### **Participant 2**

Why do we need to change? I just feel that the school prayer which is being recited by the learners, for many years is apt and just. It is easy to say and it has universal meaning. If you go to the other countries of the world, morning assemblies are not a big issue. So as long as the learners say a prayer irrespective of what prayer it is, that is important. If we are going to change, there is going to be more confusion, than anything else. Some learners, may be teased or mocked at because, to other learners it may seem, that their type of prayer is funny to say. This is the truth of the matter. Children can be very cruel if they want to be. This may cause learners to feel unhappy and de-motivated every time that the assembly is conducted in their mother tongue and instead of saying the prayer with pride, they would feel humiliated. Leaving the assembly prayers as it is will certainly save the other learners from feeling bad. I repeat, there is certainly no need for change.



### **Participant 3**

Gosh, change is certainly overdue. It would be a great idea, to have a multi-faith assembly. Learners will hence slowly begin to recite prayers from the other religions. This may take a while to implement, but it is certainly worth a try. Learners may also feel it rather difficult to pronounce certain phrases from the prayers but, they will certainly adapt and accept. Often with repetition, they will become used to saying the other prayers and when they begin to understand the meaning of these prayers, they will realize how rich in meaning these prayers are. Hence they will show total respect to the prayers when it is being said. South Africa, after all is a multi-cultural society and we should start educating our learners to respect each others culture and religious beliefs. I will certainly be happy, when my child can come home and recite a Tamil, Urdu and Zulu prayer. It shows that my child is able to associate with the different religious groups which will lead him to live in harmony with his fellow friends.

### **Participant 4**

It is in my belief that school assemblies need a change. For far too long it has just been only Christian centred and no amount of respect has been given for the other religious groups. We, as parents, would like our children to learn the various other prayers which are being recited by the other religious groups. This will allow our children to also respect one another's religion. I will say it again that I believe there is a need for change and this must take place and not be left for too late. Christianity is just one of the religions at school so why must Christianity gain more preference over the other religions.

### **Participant 5**

I will never allow my child to recite any prayer besides the one which is based on Islam. Even though Christian prayers are being said at school, my child does not recite this prayer because it is not right. I believe that my child's only prayer should be recited from the Holy Koran and nothing else. My child cannot be forced to say any other prayer. Even if schools change the way

assemblies are being conducted, I would still not allow my child to say the other prayers. If the other learners learn the Urdu prayer, then that will be great. The Islamic belief is that the greatest religion is Islam, and that only will I teach my child. The reason I have not sent my child to an Islamic school is that it is far away from home. I still send my child close by, for afternoon Madressa classes, which teaches my child about the Holy Koran. It is against the teachings of Islam, for my child to come home and recite to me any other forms of prayers which he has learnt at school.

### **Participant 6**

My belief is that the prayer should not be included at school assemblies. In many countries of the world, religion tends to divide people. If we are going to introduce the various prayers then, learners are going to become confused and may also not be able to recite these prayers properly. There is certainly no confusion now with these prayers so why go and create a confusion. I certainly do not belong to any religious sector and do not follow any particular religious teaching. My child is quite comfortable with the recitation of the "Our Father" prayer and so as long as he is not complaining, then the prayer should remain as it is. Why pray? Even if my child does not say any prayer at school, that is perfectly fine with me, because in my home, there is not focus on prayer and rituals. We live a life based on the non-existence of God. When my child comes home, not recitation of school prayers are said, because it is left at school. I strongly feel that even if school assemblies just carry out daily announcements, then that works fine for me. I will not encourage my child to make the extra effort to go and learn a new prayer because I myself does not pray. The existence of God, in our home lives, does not exist. We live a comfortable life and there is not debates about religion and why we do not pray. Our lives do not revolve around pleasing other people, because we aim to please ourselves first.

### **Participant 7**

Being part of the Zionist movement, I have found that my child is put at a disadvantage. The Christian prayers should be said but only once, a month.

My child can go before the assembly and recite his prayer with pride, so that the other learners can learn our prayer and this will ensure that each and every child is blessed for the day ahead. Our prayer is a little difficult to say, but if it is said often, the children will learn it. A English explanation will also be given as to what the meaning of the prayer is. I would also like for my child to learn the other children's prayers. This will teach my child to show respect for the other prayers. This is a good idea for change. Christianity is not only supposed to be given first choice as a prayer. When my child comes home, I would like for my child to be able to say the different prayers with pride. In this way my child is becoming educated, not only about lessons at school, but also about each other's religious prayers. I hope the change will come soon.

### **3. Second questionnaire**

The first round of questionnaires and interviews revealed issues which the researcher wished to probe further, in particular issues, which arose out of the discourse analysis of newspaper articles. For this reason, a second questionnaire was administered, with the following questions:

1. Do you attend religious services? Why/Why not?
2. How has the policy on religion and education been implemented at your school? [Explain the policy to them first, and ask them their reaction to the policy first.]
3. Would you say that you as a parent have been workshopped/empowered with regards to this policy? Why/why not?
4. Do the current prayers/hymns which are recited/sung at school fit in with (1) your religious beliefs (2) the policy. If "no" to either (1) or (2), why do you think they have not been changed?
5. What suggestions can you make towards making the school assembly (1) more in harmony with your own religious beliefs and (2) more in tune with the beliefs held by all in the school community?

## ***Responses to second questionnaire:***

### **Participant 1**

1. Do you attend religious services? Why/Why not? [Not] **No time.**
2. How has the policy on religion and education been implemented at your school? **The national government has imposed the prayer.**
3. Would you say that you as a parent been workshopped/empowered with regards to this policy? Why/why not? **No. No notification from school has come to us.**
4. Do the current prayers/hymns which are recited/sung at school fit in with (1) your religious beliefs (2) the policy. If “no” to either (1) or (2), why do you think they have not been changed? **No. Yes. The school did not suggest a change.**
5. What suggestions can you make towards making the school assembly (1) more in harmony with your own religious beliefs and (2) more in tune with the beliefs held by all in the school community? **Incorporate the various religious prayers in the assembly.**

### **Participant 2**

1. Do you attend religious services? Why/Why not? [No] **Get home late from work.**
2. How has the policy on religion and education been implemented at your school? **It has not been implemented.**
3. Would you say that you as a parent have been workshopped/empowered with regards to this policy? Why/why not? **No. It has not been discussed at school governing body meetings.**
4. Do the current prayers/hymns which are recited/sung at school fit in with (1) your religious beliefs (2) the policy. If “no” to either (1) or (2), why do you think they have not been changed? **Yes.**

5. What suggestions can you make towards making the school assembly (1) more in harmony with your own religious beliefs and (2) more in tune with the beliefs held by all in the school community? **Morning assemblies should include multi-faith prayers.**

### **Participant 3**

1. Do you attend religious services? Why/Why not? [Not] **I am a shift worker**
2. How has the policy on religion and education been implemented at your school? [Explain the policy to them first, and ask them their reaction to the policy first.] **Some learners learn their vernacular, while others do not.**
3. Would you say that you as a parent have been workshopped/empowered with regards to this policy? Why/why not? **No. School has not informed us about it.**
4. Do the current prayers/hymns which are recited/sung at school fit in with (1) your religious beliefs (2) the policy. If “no” to either (1) or (2), why do you think they have not been changed? **Yes.**
5. What suggestions can you make towards making the school assembly (1) more in harmony with your own religious beliefs and (2) more in tune with the beliefs held by all in the school community? **Different types of prayers should be said to include all religious beliefs.**

### **Participant 4**

1. Do you attend religious services? Why/Why not? **I do attend religious services.**
2. How has the policy on religion and education been implemented at your school? [Explain the policy to them first, and ask them their reaction to the policy first.] **No. this policy was never discussed**

3. Would you say that you as a parent have been workshopped/ empowered with regards to this policy? Why/why not? **No. There has no discussion with regard to this policy.**
4. Do the current prayers/hymns which are recited/sung at school fit in with (1) your religious beliefs (2) the policy. If “no” to either (1) or (2), why do you think they have not been changed? **The school has been slow to implement this type of change.**
5. What suggestions can you make towards making the school assembly (1) more in harmony with your own religious beliefs and (2) more in tune with the beliefs held by all in the school community? **Allow for the different religious faiths in the school assemblies to be respected.**

#### **Participant 5**

1. Do you attend religious services? Why/Why not? **I hold down two jobs in a day.**
2. How has the policy on religion and education been implemented at your school? **I read about this type of policy on the internet but never really gave it any thought.**
3. Would you say that you as a parent have been workshopped/ empowered with regards to this policy? Why/why not? **No. I have educated myself about this policy.**
4. Do the current prayers/hymns which are recited/sung at school fit in with (1) your religious beliefs (2) the policy. If “no” to either (1) or (2), why do you think they have not been changed? **Certainly not. We are living in a multi-cultural society but we are still following the old values of the British.**
5. What suggestions can you make towards making the school assembly (1) more in harmony with your own religious beliefs and (2) more in tune with the beliefs held by all in the school community? **School assemblies**

**should not favour one type of belief system. Include all the other faiths in the current school assemblies.**

#### **Participant 6**

1. Do you attend religious services? Why/Why not? **I do not attend service because I work 7 days a week.**
2. How has the policy on religion and education been implemented at your school? **No, I had no idea such a policy existed.**
3. Would you say that you as a parent have been workshopped/ empowered with regards to this policy? Why/why not? **No. the school did not call upon any meetings to discuss this policy.**
4. Do the current prayers/hymns which are recited/sung at school fit in with (1) your religious beliefs (2) the policy. If “no” to either (1) or (2), why do you think they have not been changed? **No. It is very Christian orientated and I feel that it needs to be changed.**
5. What suggestions can you make towards making the school assembly (1) more in harmony with your own religious beliefs and (2) more in tune with the beliefs held by all in the school community? **Allow for the learners to recite a different prayer everyday, eg. On one day a Muslim Prayer, second a Hindu prayer, etc.**

#### **4. Second interview**

Charismatic Christian participants from a cultural background where the traditional religion would be Hinduism or Islam were interviewed. This was done to gain insights into the adoption of Christianity through reasons other than its dominance through colonial influence and legislation (i.e. by reason of the attraction to the Charismatic movement). However, two traditional Christians were also included in the group for possible comparison/contrast. The following questions were asked:

1. What religious denomination do you belong to?
2. What caused you to follow this type of worship (i.e. rather than traditional Indian religions)?
3. What does it do for you that traditional Indian/Muslim/etc. religions do not?
4. What about traditions such those in weddings – are you not losing out on Indian//Muslim/etc. culture?
5. [If relevant] Why did you choose a religion which has western origins?
6. How does your choice of religion fit in with your notion of Indian/Muslim/etc. culture?
7. Is there any role that traditional Indian religions still play in your life?
8. As far as schooling for your children is concerned, do you have any preferences about the religious observances which are carried out at public schools?

### ***Responses to the second interview:***

#### **Participant 1**

1. What religious denomination do you belong to? **Christianity.**
2. What caused you to follow this type of worship (i.e. rather than traditional Indian religions)? **Jesus Christ and how he gave his life for us. Spiritual life is not just “religion”. It is a relationship with God.**
3. What does it do for you that traditional religions do not? **In Christianity it is to be born again is to undergo a “spiritual rebirth” (regeneration) of the human soul or saint from the “Holy Spirit).**
4. What about traditions such as weddings? **No, being a Christian, we also have special events such as baptism, weddings and Christening of a new born baby.**



5. Why did you choose a religion which has western origins? **Life and teaching of Jesus Christ e.g. miracles of Jesus, which are as follows: He walked on water, healed the sick, turned water into wine, etc.**
6. How does your choice of religion fit in with your notion of Indian culture? **Marriage, death, cremation, burial are all done but in different ways. In Christianity there is no specific food or clothing that one has to use.**
7. Is there any role that traditional Indian religions still play in your life? **Yes, wearing an Indian outfit.**
8. As, far as schooling for your children, do you have any preferences about the religious observances which are carried out at public schools? **Yes, at our school we have many observances, e.g. religious holidays for Diwali, Ascension Day, Eid, etc. Before Diwali festival a small programme is hosted to entertain learners. Before Christmas, indigent learners are given a special lunch.**

## **Participant 2**

1. What religious denomination do you belong to? **Christianity.**
2. What caused you to follow this type of worship (i.e. rather than traditional Indian religions)? **Christianity is not a religion. It is a way of life. It has taught me about Christ, his death on the cross for my sins. Once I was a sinner, but now I have been saved by the precious blood of Christ Jesus. I am not saved by animals, but of God's own son, Jesus.**
3. What does it do for you that traditional Indian religions do not? **It has given us hope, peace and joy and the assurance that when we die on earth, it is not the end. We will live forever.**
4. What about traditions such as weddings - are you not losing out on Indian culture? **No.**

5. Why did you choose a religion which has western origins? **Christianity does not have its origins from the west. It is not a Western Religion. It has originated from Israel.**
6. How does your choice of religion fit in with your notion of Indian culture? **It is not my choice, but God chose me, before the foundations of the earth.**
7. Is there any role that traditional Indian religions still play in your life? **No, because we do not follow any.**
8. As far as schooling for your children is concerned, do you have any preferences about religious observances which are carried out at public schools? **No, we are secure in our faith and is not deterred by whatever religious observances that are carried out by the school**

### **Participant 3**

1. What religious denomination do you belong to? **Christianity.**
2. What caused you to follow this type of worship (i.e. rather than traditional Indian religions)? **I was born in a Christian home.**
3. What does it do for you that traditional Indian religions do not? **I have evidence that my prayers have been answered and my faith helps me to see beyond the natural.**
4. What about traditions such as those in weddings - are you not losing out? **Absolutely not.**
5. Why did you choose a religion which has western origins? **I was born as a Christian and that is the only religion that I understand and know.**
6. How does your choice of religion fit in with your notion of Indian? **We respect other religions.**
7. Is there any role that traditional Indian religions still play in your life? **Yes, being that I like the Indian attire such as the Punjabi and the Sarie.**
8. As far as schooling or your children is concerned, do you have any

preferences about the religious observances which are carried out at public schools? **Yes, my preference being the teaching of the Christian Doctrine.**

#### **Participant 4**

1. What religious denomination do you belong to? **Catholic.**
2. What caused you to follow this type of worship (i.e. rather than traditional Indian Religions)? **Nothing is being “followed”. [The reason was] my grandparents from my mother’s side.**
3. What does it do for you that traditional religions do not? **They are the same.**
4. What about traditions such as those in weddings - are you not losing out on Indian culture? **No. half my family are Hindus. We celebrate Christmas and Diwali.**
5. Why did you choose a religion which has western origins? **It was an easy philosophy.**
6. How does your choice of religion fit in with your notion of Indian culture? **Same, because both religions are respected.**
7. Is there any role that traditional Indian religions still play in your life? **Yes, I attend all ceremonies and functions.**
8. As far as schooling your children, is concerned do you have any preferences? **No, I respect all religious denominations.**

#### **Participant 5**

1. What religious denomination do you belong to? **Anglican Christian.**
2. What caused you to follow this type of worship? **I did not see the need to follow Hinduism because I did not understand the scriptures and hence I found being an Anglican much more easy to understand.**
3. What does it do for you that traditional Indian religions do not? **It gives**

**me a sense of direction in my life and I am able to understand the teachings of the bible easier than reading the Holy Scriptures from the Hindu books.**

4. What about traditions such as those in weddings – are you not losing out on Indian culture? **No. Although I have converted to an Anglican Christian, I still do enjoy going to traditional Hindu ceremonies, but I do not participate in the rituals observed.**
5. Why did you choose a religion which has western origins? **It has a lot of meaning to me and also it is recognised world wide.**
6. How does your choice of religion fit in with your notion of Indian culture  
**I still interact with Indians. I attend cultural events organised in the community.**
7. Is there any role that traditional Indian religions still play in your life? **No.**
8. As far as schooling for your children is concerned, do you have any preferences about religious observances which are carried out at public schools? **Yes, my children attend morning assemblies which have Christian hymns recited. I prefer this being done because it gives them a spiritual upliftment and a sense of grounding.**

#### **Participant 6**

1. What religious denomination do you belong to? **Christian.**
2. What caused you to follow this type of worship (i.e. rather than traditional Indian religions)? **I clearly understood what was expected of me and why I had to do certain things. Christ died to free me from my sins. He re-united me with God the Father.**
3. What does it do for you that traditional Indian religions do not? **I am thankful to God for sending his Son in human form, to die on the cross for my sins so that I am forgiven.**
4. What about traditions such as those in weddings – are you not losing out on

Indian culture? **No, Christians have their own culture which also allows us to fuse with the Indian culture, e.g. wearing Indian clothes.**

5. Why did you choose a religion which has western origins? **As the Indian culture emanated from a foreign country, I find truth in my belief as a Christian. I fully understand what I believe in. Most Indians do not even know why they do certain rituals, they do it because their parents have passed it down to them.**
6. How does your choice of religion fit in with your notion of Indian culture? **We cook Indian foods, curries and wear Indian outfits. Culture is what we do daily.**
7. Is there any role that traditional Indian religions still play in your life? **None whatsoever. My lifestyle is that of a Christian, portraying the character and qualities of Jesus. Most traditional Indians are moving away from their culture for convenience and time. They even shorten certain rituals to suit their own needs.**
8. As far as schooling for your children is concerned, do you have any preferences about the religious observances which are carried out at public schools? **No, but I wish that, like, Tamil/Hindi is offered in school. Christianity as a teaching should also be considered. Although I understand that Tamil/Hindi are languages and English is already offered.**

## **5. Third interview**

In a third interview session, parents were asked to read six of the newspaper articles used for the critical discourse analysis, and to respond to the following questions for each article:

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly?
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why?
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation?

4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why?
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case?
6. In your opinion, is there any bias in the way that this incident is being reported?

### **Participant 1**

#### **Article 1: Christians in bunfight over food labelling**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Christianity has a direct influence in this article.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The victims are seen as the other religious groups because they do not know if the product respects their religious values.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The Christians.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right of the other religious groups who feel that the food products should be labelled.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **Instead of this matter going to the High Court for a ruling, the various religious groups should have consulted with one another and come to a solution.**

#### **Article 2: Don't be bullied**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Christianity has a direct influence in this article.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The victim is the learner who attended Parkdene Primary School. He had been subjected to racial discrimination and verbal abuse.**

3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The parents of the pupil.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right of the Hindu learner to wear his religious red string to class. He had been instructed by the teacher to remove this string.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The parents should have empowered the school as to the significance of the red string and explained to the school community that there was not harm being caused to anyone by the learner wearing this string to school.**

### **Article 3: Religious tolerance is vital in society**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **Sunali Pillay, the Hindu policeman, Amrit Lalji and the Muslim girl.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The victims in each case who had been subject to racial discrimination.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **Their right to wear their religious items. They were victimised because they saw the need to wear their religious regalia to their place of work/school.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The management should have empowered themselves with the reason behind the learner wearing the red string and not been so harsh in the way the situation was handled.**

#### **Article 4: Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The group of learners who wanted to wear their religious headgear to school. The principal of the school however had ordered them to remove their headgear and had hence showed no respect towards the learners during their fasting period.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The parents of the learners.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The constitutional right of the learners to wear their religious item to school.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The code of conduct and dress policy of the school should have included the wearing of the fez to school and this was left out of the school policy.**

#### **Article 5: Minister to probe Islam row**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The Christian students because they had to abide by what the Muslim authorities had stipulated in terms of their occupation at the hostel. They had to hence follow Islamic code of conduct and were not allowed to practise their own type of worship.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The Christian students.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The Christian way of life, because the Christian students were not allowed to practise their way of worship.**



5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The authorities should have consulted with parents of the students and reached a solution to the problem.**

#### **Article 6: Putin protests the wearing of head scarves to schools**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The Islamic students.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The Russian President, Vladimir V. Putin.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The rights of the Muslim girls to wear their head scarves to school.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The girls should respect the laws of the country.**

#### **Participant 2**

##### **Article 1: Christians in bunfight over food labelling**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Direct influence.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The different groups who are opposing the ban.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The Hindu people.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The different groups who are opposing the ban.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **A meeting should have been called and the matter should have been discussed.**

## **Article 2: Don't be bullied**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Because the school has a Christian ethos, it is trying to force it to the pupils.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The pupil.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The parents.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right of the Hindu learner to wear the Luxmi string to school.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case reported? **Allow the child to practise his religious freedom.**

## **Article 3: Religious tolerance is vital in society**

1. What part (if any) does Christianity play, directly or indirectly, in this? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The principal, the Brigadier (Owen Yamani Zama), the Employers at London Heathrow Airport and the management at the German school.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The principal, the Brigadier (Owen Yamani Zama), the Employers at London Heathrow Airport and the management at the German school.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right to have Christianity enshrined as a universal religion.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The victims should have accepted the decisions made by the various role players and moved on with their lives.**

## **Article 4: Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**

2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The principal of the school.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The principal of the school.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The principal's right to uphold the school code of conduct.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The parents should have respected the principal's views.**

#### **Article 5: Minister to probe Islam row**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The students.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The students.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right to practise Christianity instead of Islam.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case the way that this? **The students should not be victimised.**

#### **Article 6: Putin protests the wearing of head scarves to schools**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The girls.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **Mr Putin.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The Christian Faith.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **Respect the law of the country.**

### **Participant 3**

#### **Article 1: Christians in bunfight over food labelling**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Not directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The Christians.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The Muslim community.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right to have products certified according to our religious values.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **This Christian group should have some knowledge as to what is happening in other cultures and not just impose their values onto others.**

#### **Article 2: Don't be bullied**

1. What part (if any) does Christianity play, directly or indirectly, in this? **Christianity has a direct influence.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The teacher.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The teacher and the principal.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? **The right of the school to enforce the Christian doctrine at the school.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The learner should follow school rules and not wear the string to school.**

#### **Article 3: Religious tolerance is vital in society**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **Sonali, the Hindu policeman, Amrit Lalji, and the Muslim girl.**

3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The victims.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right of all of the above victims to practise their own religions.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The courts should always uphold the constitution and that is to ensure that the various religions are respected. The management should have empowered themselves with the reason behind the learner wearing the red string and not been so harsh in the way the situation was handled.**

#### **Article 4: Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The principal.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The principal.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right of the Muslims.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The principal and the governing body should have come to a compromise.**

#### **Article 5: Minister to probe Islam**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The students.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The students.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **Christianity.**

5. What in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case. **The students should not be forced to practise in a faith iether than their own.**

#### **Article 6: Putin protests the wearing of head scarves to schools**

1. What part (if any) does Christianity play, directly or indirectly, in this? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **Russian school.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The President.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right to uphold a secular state.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case. **Respect the fact that all cizitens are treated equally**

#### **Participant 4**

##### **Article 1: Christians in bunfight over food labelling**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why **The Christians.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The Christian group.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right of the Christian group so as not to have any labelling onto foods.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The other groups should respect what is being said here.**

## **Article 2: Don't be bullied**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The learner.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The parents.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right of the Hindu learner.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The child should be allowed to wear the string to school.**

## **Article 3: Religious tolerance is vital in society**

1. What part (if any) does Christianity play, directly or indirectly, in this? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The four different individuals in the article.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The law or courts.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **.The right to practise Christianity as a modern religion.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The victims must realise that Christianity is taking over the world and all other religions are not going to enjoy the respect that Christianity experiences.**

## **Article 4: Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The Muslim boys.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The parents**

4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The Islamic Faith.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The Muslim boys should have been allowed to wear the fez to school.**

#### **Article 5: Minister to probe Islam row**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The students.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The Students.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **Christianity.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The organisation has no right to enforce Islam upon Christian students.**

#### **Article 6: Putin protests the wearing of head scarves to schools**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The girls.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The President.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The Islamic Faith.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **Allow the girls to wear their scarves to school.**

#### **Participant 5**

##### **Article 1: Christians in bunfight over food labelling**



1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The Muslim people.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The Muslim community.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right of our people to know if the food being sold is halaal or not.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The Christian group should have agreed to have signs on all food packaging.**

#### **Article 2: Don't be bullied**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The Hindu child.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The Hindu parents.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **Hinduism is not allowed to be practised at the school because the management does not respect Hindu symbols as part of the school dress code.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The school should embrace change and allow for the various religious symbols to be worn to school.**

#### **Article 3: Religious tolerance is vital in society**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The various people mentioned in the articles.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The courts.**

4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **Hinduism and Islam.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **Each victim has the right to fight for their own religious values and beliefs.**

#### **Article 4: Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Indirectly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The Muslim boys.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The parents.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **Islam.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **It should have been ruled that fez should be worn to school.**

#### **Article 5: Minister to probe Islam row**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The Christian students.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The students who want their religion to be respected.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right of the students to practise their own religion.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The students could have found other accommodation.**

#### **Article 6: Putin protests the wearing of head scarves to schools**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**

2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The Muslim girls.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The President.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The Christian faith.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The girls should respect the dress code of the school.**

### **Participant 6**

#### **Article 1: Christians in bunfight over food labelling**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? Indirectly.
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The Hindu people.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The Hindu community.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right of the Hindu community to know if a product contains pork or not and this can only be done if it their is a label that says so.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The Christian group should have realised that they are coming up againsts opposition from other groups and they should have left the labels on.**

#### **Article 2: Don't be bullied**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The teacher.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The teacher.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right to have Christianity as the only religion respected at school.**

5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The school should embrace change and allow for the various religious symbols to be worn to school.**

### **Article 3: Religious tolerance is vital in society**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The individuals mentioned in the article.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The people who have complained**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right for these individuals to practise their own religious beliefs and values.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **Each and every individual should have been given the right to exercise their own religious belief system.**

### **Article 4: Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The learners of the school.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The parents.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right of the learners to practise their own freedom of religion**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The principal should have been more understanding of the situation and allowed the learners to wear the fez to school.**

#### **Article 5: Minister to probe Islam row**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The students.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The students.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/trampled upon? How/why? **The right to respect the students.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The students should have moved out and found other accommodation.**

#### **Article 6: Putin protests the wearing of head scarves to schools**

1. Does Christianity play any part in this, directly or indirectly? **Directly.**
2. Whom do you see as the victim/s here? How/why? **The Muslim girls.**
3. Who comes across as most sensible in this case/situation? **The Russian President.**
4. What religious right is being challenged/tampled upon? How/why? **The Christian Faith.**
5. What, in your opinion, should have happened in this situation/case? **The girls should respect the dress code of the school.**

# Appendix C: Newspaper Texts and Coding

## Code used for discourse analysis

The text was coded for discourse analysis as follows:

Hegemony vs. legislation:

Hegemony {HEG} (i.e. hegemonic influence evident)

Constitution {CON} (i.e. reference to the Constitution)

Subject positions:

Powerful {POF} (i.e. coming from a position of power)

Powerless {POL} (i.e. coming from a powerless position)

Attitudes:

Humour {HUM} (i.e. humour is used)

Pro-tolerance {PRO-T} (i.e. evidence of tolerance)

Intolerance {INTOL} (i.e. evidence of intolerance)

Fact/opinion:

Factual {FACT} (i.e. presented by reporter as fact)

Opinion {OPIN} (i.e. presented by reporter as opinion)

Reported speech (of role players):

Direct speech {REPT-D}

Indirect speech {REPT-I}

Main role players include:

- Press
- School personnel
- Public
- Education authorities
- Religious groups

Subject positions (e.g. strong, submissive, conciliating) taken up by various role players were indicated in brackets { }. Any signs of overt or covert conflict and/or aggression were also noted (but not coded).

## **1. Christians in bunfight over food labelling - Many faiths join to oppose group's court application**

PRESS ARTICLE: *The Independent*, 19 January 2013

A Christian group objects to food labelling, i.e., religious certification and signs on food packaging, claiming that unreasonable expense is incurred by those who do not hold these beliefs (e.g. in halaal, kosher).

### **Overall**

"A Christian group": wants foods not to be labelled as fit for consumption by various religious groups, e.g. being marked "kosher", "halaal", "Om" or with other religious labels: the group claims it is "unconstitutional" to have religious labelling; also, there should be alternative foods without labelling see Figure C.1). In terms of the hegemonic influence of Christianity: It is interesting that it is a Christian group (not even a majority group) that is making the objection, which is taken so seriously by other religious groups (including Christian) that they take the trouble to make formal replies/statements in the interests of freedom of observance.

### **Press**

Kahiefa Ajam (female, Islamic) {PRO-T}

Headline: "Christians in bunfight over food labelling" is humorous, "punning" on the term "hot cross *buns*" (typical Easter fare for Christians). Is there a perhaps hint of condescension from the Islamic writer? The headline also suggests that Christians are an unruly rabble, squabbling over something others might see as trivial (has connotations of a teenage "food fight", hurling buns at each other).

Byline: "Many faiths join to oppose group's court application" – sounds neutral, unbiased – more like "news" reporting.

# Christians in bunfight over food labelling

## Many faiths join to oppose group's court application

KASHIEFA AJAM

**A** CHRISTIAN group that wants religious certification and signs on food packaging to be banned, faces an uphill battle against Muslims, Jews, Hindus and millions of members of Christian churches who are opposing the application in the Pretoria High Court.

The National Association and Coalition of Christian Groups and Individuals for Practical Equality and Protection of Constitutional Rights filed papers asking that the court declare that the religious certification of food, which excluded the Christian faith, was unconstitutional.

The group objects to the fact that a wide range of food products is religiously labelled, such as those carrying the halal, Hindu or Jewish signs, indicating the product is suitable for consumption by these groups. It says there should be alternative products available without these labels.

The coalition launched the application against the ministers of health, and trade and industry, and the National Consumer Tribunal.

Philip Groenstein, a member of the group in Pretoria who brought the application, says the main religious group in South Africa are Christians, with 80 percent. Muslims make up less than 2 percent, and Jews, Hindus and Buddhists make up the rest.

He contends that it is unfair that the majority of people in the country should bear the brunt of costs imposed when food is religiously certified.

"The RSA public is mostly uninformed that more than 98 percent of (consumers) pay for about all the Muslim certification costs... and that they effectively finance Muslim activities and spreading of their influence in this respect."

Rafiek Mohamed, secretary-general of the United Ulama Council of SA, which has been admitted as an intervening party, said none of the religious certifying bodies in South Africa imposed their certifying process on suppliers. It was in fact the suppliers who voluntarily approached the bodies, because this brought value to their products.

"People who disapprove of the religious signs can simply abstain from purchasing such a product," he said.

"The real nature of the (application) is based on religious rivalry, jealousy and defeatist resentment. Such antagonism should not be dressed up as a legal issue... This case demonstrates the urgent and compelling need for religious tolerance."

Darren Sevitz, chief executive of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues of SA (UOS), denied that religious certification of foodstuffs had any significant effect on the price paid by consumers. The UOS is the second intervening party.

Sevitz approached several manufacturers regarding their policies and found that the cost of religious certification was not passed to consumers.

Kraft Foods SA and Africa Spice Limited have both deposited affidavits, saying religious certification of their products is paid for out of sep-

arate budgets.

Meanwhile, several churches have distanced themselves from the application.

Pastor Ray McCauley, on behalf of Rhema Church, Rhema Family churches and the International Federation of Christian Churches, with a combined membership of two-and-a-half million members, also deposited an affidavit in support of the intervening parties.

"The church and its members do not have any objection to the certification of food products."

"We do not regard the certification of food products as any infringement of religious rights and do not see any need for the relief sought by the applicant."

In another affidavit, Landile Shembe, of the Shembe Church, which has five million members, concurred.

Professor Billy Gundelfinger, acting on behalf of the UOS, said that although he could not comment on the case, something positive had emerged, in that Muslims, Hindus and Jews were supporting each other in a common cause.

"Notwithstanding the fact that a Christian group had launched the application against them, other Christian churches, whose combined membership exceeded 10 million, were supporting the Muslims, Jews and Hindus in opposing the application."

"The Muslim and Jewish communities, often perceived as being antagonistic towards one another, were standing shoulder to shoulder in defence of their religious rights," Gundelfinger said.

Figure C.1 Christians in bunfight over food labelling



**Ajam's (reporter's) subject position:** She suggests that the Christian group is being unreasonable, and are actually attempting religious discrimination through legal action by having food *not* marked with religious labelling. She appears to be acting as mediator between conflicting positions in terms of giving a balanced report and ending on a positive note, but showing that different religious groups can in fact agree on the principle of religious rights being upheld, in spite of differing religious beliefs. She does this by means of whom she quotes and what they say: shows it as emerging from public consensus. The Press is shown as supporting religious tolerance.

## **Public**

### **Anti-labelling group**

Conflicting groups: one “unreasonable group” (pro-Christian, anti-other religions) wants to remove religious food labels – but labels are shown to stand for important beliefs). Philip Groenstein [Christian group]: The majority (80%) Christian taxpayers are funding Islamic food labelling, as well as the non-Islamic public (98%) are funding Islamic activities and “spreading [their] influence...”

### **Moderate groups (supporting religious tolerance = let the labelling stay)**

Rafiek Mahomed [Islamic group]: “intervening party” – presented as neutral? – claims legal action motivated by “religious rivalry, jealousy and defeatist resentment – advises “religious tolerance”.

Darren Sevitz [Jewish group]: claims labelling did not add significantly to the cost of food (cost “not passed to consumers”).

Other groups (only two mentioned) “distance themselves” from application by Christian group: they support the opposing group:

Rhema – Ray McCauley

Shembe – Landile Shembe

Hindus and Buddhists are mentioned by Professor Billy Gundelfinger (UOS – Jewish): it is “good” they are “supporting each other in a common cause” (i.e. want food labelled) – defending religious rights. **Praises moderate groups.**

### **Press**

Gives overall message that various religious practices (even food labelling) are an important part of religious observance, and there should be tolerance by other groups with different beliefs. The reporter’s humour dismisses excessive religious fervour without being offensive – a relaxed way of dealing with a contentious emotional issue.

## **Christians in bunfight {HUM} over food labelling**

Many faiths join to oppose group’s court application {FACT}

KASHIELA AJAM *{As an Islamic reporter, she has dealt sensitively with the topic, giving other people’s opinions supported by factual information.}*

A Christian group that wants religious certification and signs on food packaging to be banned, {HEG} {FACT} {POF} faces an uphill battle {OPIN} against Muslims; Jews, Hindus and millions of members of Christian churches who are opposing the application in the Pretoria High Court. {FACT} {POF}

The National Association and Coalition of Christian Groups and Individuals for Practical Equality and Protection of Constitutional Rights filed papers {FACT} {POF} asking that the court declare that the religious certification of food, which excluded the Christian faith {HEG}, was unconstitutional {CON}.

The group objects to the fact that a wide range of food products is religiously labelled, such as those carrying the halaal, Hindu or Jewish signs, {HEG} indication the product is suitable for consumption by these groups {FACT}. It says there should be alternative products available without these labels. {HEG} {OPIN} {POF}

The coalition launched the application against the ministers of health, and trade and industry, and the National Consumer Tribunal. {FACT} {POF}

Philip Groenstien, a member of the group in Pretoria who brought the application, says the main religious group in South Africa are Christians, {HEG} with 80 percent. Muslims make up less than 2 percent and Jews, Hindus and Buddhists make up the rest. {FACT} {POF}

He contends {POF} that it is unfair that the majority of people in the country should bear the brunt of costs imposed when food is religiously certified. {OPIN} {CON}.

“The RSA public is mostly uninformed {OPIN} that more than 98 percent of (consumers) pay for about all the Muslim certification costs...and that they effectively finance Muslim activities and spreading of their influence in this respect.” {HEG} {REPT-D}

{PRO-T} *{Reporter cites many tolerant statements by spokespeople from other religions, but starts with the Islamic view.}*

Rafiek Mohamed, secretary-general of the United Ulama Council of SA, which has been admitted as an intervening party, said none of the religious certifying bodies in South Africa imposed their certifying process on suppliers. {REPT-I} {FACT} {POF} It was in fact {POF} the suppliers who voluntarily approached the bodies, {FACT} because this brought value to their products. {REPT-I} {OPIN}

“People who disapprove of the religious signs can simply abstain from purchasing such a product,” he said. {PRO-T} {REPT-D}

“The real nature of the (application) is based on religious rivalry, jealousy and defeatist resentment. {OPIN} {REPT-D} Such antagonism should not be dressed up as a legal issue... {REPT-D} {POF} This case demonstrates the urgent and compelling need for religious tolerance.” {REPT-D}

{PRO-T} *{Reporter cites many tolerant statements by spokespeople from other religions, now Jewish.}*

Darren Sevitz, chief executive of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues of SA (UOS), denied {REPT-1} the religious certification of foodstuffs had any significant effect on the price paid by consumers. {OPIN} The UOS is the second intervening party.

Sevitz approached several manufacturers regarding their policies and found that the cost of religious certification was not passed to consumers. {PRO-T}

Kraft Foods SA and Africa Spice Limited have both deposed affidavits, {FACT} {POF} saying religious certification of their products is paid for out of separate budgets. {FACT} *{Factual, but who pays for each cost?}*

Meanwhile several churches have distanced themselves from the application. {FACT} {PRO-T} *{Reporter cites many tolerant statements by spokespeople from other religions, now Rhema church.}* Pastor Ray McCauley, on behalf of Rhema Church, Rhema Family Churches and International Federation of Christian Churches, with a combined membership of two-and-a-half million members, also deposed an affidavit in support of the intervening parties. {PRO-T} {FACT}

“The church and its members do not have any objection to the certification of food products. {PRO-T} {POF} {REPT-D}

“We do not regard the certification of food products as any infringement of religious rights and do not see any need for the relief sought by the applicant.” {REPT-D} {PRO-T} {POF} *{Reporter cites many tolerant statements by spokespeople from other religions, now Shembe church.}*

In another affidavit, {FACT} Landile Shembe, of the Shembe Church, which has five million members, {FACT} {POF} concurred. {PRO-T} {POF} *{Reporter cites many tolerant statements by spokespeople from other religions, now Jewish.}*

Professor Billy Gundelfinger, acting on behalf of the UOS, said that although he could not comment on the case, **something positive had emerged, {OPIN} in that Muslims, Hindus and Jews were supporting** each other in a common cause. {REPT-I} {OPIN}

“Notwithstanding the fact that a Christian group had launched the application against them, other Christian churches, whose combined membership exceeded 10

million {FACT} were supporting the Muslims, Jews and Hindus {OPIN} in opposing the application. {FACT} {REPT-D}

“The Muslim and Jewish communities often perceived as being antagonistic towards one another, {OPIN} were standing shoulder to shoulder in defence {image suggests warfare} of their religious rights,” {POF} {OPIN} {REPT-D} {PRO-T} Gundelfinger said.

Table C.1 Code frequency in article 1

<b>Christians in bunfight over food labelling</b>	
Hegemony vs. legislation:	
Hegemony {HEG} (i.e. hegemonic influence evident)	6
Constitution {CON} (i.e. reference to the Constitution)	2
Subject positions:	
Powerful {POF} (i.e. coming from a position of power)	16
Powerless {POL} (i.e. coming from a powerless position)	-
Attitudes:	
Humour {HUM} (i.e. humour is used)	1
Pro-tolerance {PRO-T} (i.e. evidence of tolerance)	10
Intolerance {INTOL} (i.e. evidence of intolerance)	-
Fact/opinion:	
Factual {FACT} (i.e. presented by reporter as fact)	18
Opinion {OPIN} (i.e. presented by reporter as opinion)	12
Reported speech (of role players):	
Direct speech {REPT-D}	9
Indirect speech {REPT-I}	1
Main role players include:	
• Press	X
• School personnel	-
• Public	X
• Education authorities	-
• Religious groups	X

## 2. Don't be bullied - Abuse was not music to pupil's ears

PRESS ARTICLE: *The Post*, 16-20 May 2012.

A specific case is reported where a Hindu student was allegedly bullied by an Afrikaans female music teacher for wearing a sacred red string (known as a “Luxmi string”) while at school in school uniform (see Figure C.2).

## Overall

In terms of **the hegemonic influence of Christianity**, this is a remnant of the colonial (British and Dutch) focus on Christianity. An Afrikaner music teacher is reported as “bullying” a Hindu pupil for wearing a “Luxmi string” (i.e. religious regalia), and, in the process, used verbal abuse and racial discrimination. The Principal allegedly supported her actions when the parents complained, but the parents would not transfer the child (citing zoning regulations) and asserting the people must resist bullying. In this case, an Afrikaner school is still seen to be retaining the ethos and practices of CNE, and is not respecting the pupil’s constitutional right, although the Education Department took the complaint seriously and asked the teacher and principal to respond to the allegations.

## Press

Candice Soobramoney (female Hindu, **subject position:** defender of the child who is being “bullied”). Yet the byline “Abuse was not music to pupil’s ears” is humorous, as the bullying took place in the music lesson. The humour softens the complaint, by adding a wry comment. However, the term “abuse” is strong: it suggests child abuse, which it borders on. One would expect “music” to be harmonious and gentle, so that the term “abuse” is shocking in this context by contrast.

## School staff

An Afrikaner music teacher (presumably NGK, but not necessarily) is reported as “bullying” a Hindu pupil for wearing a “Luxmi string” (i.e. religious regalia). She used racist terms, e.g. “Coolie”, called him “deaf, dumb and stupid”, and ordered the removal of the string.

The Principal supported her actions when the parents complained, stating that the school’s policy was that religious “decorations” could be worn (at school) but must be concealed from public view.

# DON'T BE BULLIED

## Abuse was not music to pupil's ears

### CANDICE SOOBRAWMONEY

DO NOT allow others to bully you.

That was the lesson Indian South African parents from Boksburg tried to instill in their son, who suffered racial discrimination and verbal abuse allegedly by his white Afrikaaner music teacher for the past three years.

The parents, who cannot be named as it would identify their minor child, claimed the female teacher at Parkdene Primary School insisted the grade three pupil remove his red Luxmi string from his wrist.

Hindus believe the string, customarily tied at the beginning of a religious ceremony, serves as a blessing or form of protection.

They say the teacher often tormented their son and at one stage provided him with scissors to cut the string in her presence.

The teacher allegedly also called the boy a "coolie" in front of classmates.

The parents complained to

the principal about the alleged victimisation - at first unbeknown to them the teacher was his wife.

They were told their son should hide the string under a jersey.

"My son dreaded school so much so that when dropped off in August he smashed his hand in the car door to avoid going," said the mother.

She said the last straw was when the teacher called the child "deaf, dumb or stupid".

### Verbally abused

This happened after his father complained again to the principal that the teacher verbally abused the boy.

The parents subsequently filed a complaint with the Gauteng Department of Education. The mother said since the case was being investigated her son's attitude had changed.

"He has become happier. He seems eager to do his homework unlike before when he was fearful."

On Monday the boy came face to face with the music

teacher after reports were published last week about his victimisation.

His dad said: "He was a bit nervous as he did not know what he was in for but she put a movie on for the pupils to watch during the lesson. I assume this was her way of avoiding him."

### Zoning rules

The mother said due to them living five minutes away from the school, the zoning rules stipulated he attend Parkdene Primary.

Asked why they did not insist their son be transferred, she said they did not run away from bullies.

"We wanted our son to learn that being bullied is unacceptable. We told him, and continue to tell him, that whatever happened to him was not his fault and that he should not be scared anymore."

She said she hoped the music teacher would be removed and the principal replaced.

The mom said there were other Indian South African

parents who subsequently complained about victimisation.

But Gauteng Education Department spokesman Charles Phahlane said they received no other official complaints.

He said a letter was issued to the teacher last week to allow her an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

Once this is done a disciplinary process will follow.

Questioned on whether the principal's action would be probed, Phahlane said they would "investigate the whole matter."

He added the Constitution was clear that no one should be discriminated against for their religious practices and that the school governing body laws should be consistent with this.

The principal responded via Kwa Attorneys, denying allegations of verbal abuse and racial discrimination.

The principal said: "The school's current policy stated that religious decorations may be worn but must be covered. It prohibits religious decorations to be seen in public."



The Parkdene Primary School pupil who was mistreated by his principal because of his sacred red string known as the Luxmi string

Figure C.2 Don't be bullied - Abuse was not music to pupil's ears

## Education Department

The Gauteng Education Department took the complaint seriously, said it would be investigated, and asked the teacher and principal to respond to the allegations.

## Parents

The Hindu child's parents would not transfer the child, citing zoning regulations, and asserting that people must resist bullying.

## Attorneys

Kwa Attorneys were called in by the principal to refute the allegations of verbal abuse and racial discrimination.

**DON'T BE BULLIED** {POF} *{powerful subject position: direct command (imperative mood)}*

**Abuse was not music to pupil's ears** {HUM}

**CANDICE SOOBRAMONEY** {female Hindu}

The byline "Abuse was not music to pupil's ears" is humorous, as the bullying took place in the music lesson. The humour softens the complaint, by adding a wry comment. However, the term "abuse" is strong: suggests child abuse, which it borders on. One would expect "music" to be harmonious and gentle, so that the term "abuse" is shocking in this context by contrast.

DO NOT allow others to bully you. {OPIN} {POF} *{powerful subject position: direct command - imperative mood. Passive resistance is a principle which pervades Hinduism. What the reporter may be doing is advising readers that, while Hindus are generally viewed as peaceful and passive, it must not be thought that they will not defend their religious beliefs assertively.}*

That was the lesson {humour? School "lesson"?} Indian South African parents from Boksburg tried to instill {OPIN} *{“instill” strong, but softened by “tried”}* in their son, who suffered racial discrimination and verbal abuse {HEG}*{very strong: in defence of the victim, whose constitutional rights are being encroached on – note also*

*“verbal” qualifies “abuse”}* allegedly {hearsay: not proven in court – comes very late, so that we find out only now that these are allegations only} by his white Afrikaner {Afrikaners are stereotyped as being racist, and “white” brings

to mind a stereotype of “racist whites”, biased against the Indian child: suggests motive; also suggests to the reader that the teacher must be guilty as she is racist} music teacher for the past three years. {Ongoing – arouses sympathy}

The parents, who cannot be named as it would identify their minor child, **claimed** {hearsay: while it’s all actually hearsay – the likelihood is very high, as there is discrimination} the female teacher {what happened to the “white Afrikaner”? More neutral now} at Parkdene Primary School insisted {POF, strong – teacher is powerful} the grade three pupil remove his red Luxmi string from his wrist.

Hindus believe the string, customarily tied at the beginning of a religious ceremony, serves as a blessing or form of protection. {FACT} {POF} {Strong statement of belief.}

They say {REP-I} the teacher often tormented {OPIN} {HEG} {very strong – suggests sadism} their son and at one stage provided him with scissors to cut the string in her presence. {public humiliation: too strong}

The teacher allegedly {hearsay} also called the boy a “coolie” {pejorative racist term} in front of classmates. {It’s obvious that the teacher is in a very strong position – principal’s wife.} The parents complained {FACT} to the principal about the alleged victimisation {HEG} – at first unbeknown to them the teacher was his wife {FACT}. They were told their son should hide the string under a jersey.{sounds helpful – but what about summer? Impractical solution (so take it off).}

“My son dreaded going to school {OPIN} so much so that when dropped off in August he smashed his hand in the car door to avoid going,” {REPT-D} {self-abuse (psychological disorder) violent effect: echoes violence done to the child} said the mother. She said the last straw was when the teacher called the child “deaf, dumb or stupid”. {REPT-I} {degrading comments, when the child is just standing up for his religious rights. What is “normal” for him is an aberration for her}

## Verbally Abused

This happened after his father complained again to the principal {FACT} that the teacher verbally abused the boy. {POF} {Strong: retribution on child for parent’s protest.}

The parents subsequently filed a complaint {FACT} {POF} {strong – suggests a legal case} with the Gauteng Department of Education. The mother said since the case was being investigated her son’s attitude had changed. {REPT-I} {strong – suggests challenging a bully makes the victim feel more powerful.}

“He has become happier. {OPIN} He seems eager to do his homework {OPIN} unlike before when he was fearful.” {REPT-D} {stresses the psychological effect of the bullying}

On Monday the boy came face to face {POF} {strong: face the bully} with the music teacher after reports were published last week {FACT} about his victimisation.

His dad said: “He was a bit nervous {OPIN} as he did not know what he was in for but she put a movie on for the pupils to watch during the lesson. I assume this was her way of avoiding him.” {OPIN} {REPT-D} {OPIN} {in his opinion the “bully” backed down.}



## Zoning Rules

The mother said due to them living five minutes away from the school, the zoning rules stipulated he attend Parkdene Primary. {FACT} {REPT-I} *{Cannot back off – has to face the problem.}*

Asked why they did not insist their son be transferred, she said they did not run away from bullies. {REPT-I} *{strong: contradicts the pacifist stereotype of Hindus}*

“We wanted our son to learn that being bullied is unacceptable. {OPIN} We told him and continue to tell him, that, whatever happened to him was not his fault {OPIN} and that he should not be scared anymore.” {REPT-D} *{strong: contradicts the pacifist stereotype of Hindus}*

She said she hoped the music teacher would be removed and the principal replaced. {REPT-I} *{understandable, but a weak position – the opposition’s position is too strong}*

The mom *{softer: not aggressive}* said there were other Indian South African parents who subsequently complained about victimisation. {HEG} {REPT-I} *{evidence that they were telling the truth: opened a space for other victims to complain}*

But Gauteng Education Department spokesman Charel Phahlane *{black official – powerful, theoretically neutral, but could be expected to deny allegations}* said they received no other official complaints. {REPT-I} *{complaints did not become official.}* He said a letter was issued to the teacher last week to allow her an opportunity to respond to the allegations. {REPT-I} *{the other side: teacher given a chance to reply}*

Once this is done a disciplinary process will follow. *{the other side: teacher given a chance to reply}*

Questioned on whether the principal’s actions would be probed, Phahlane said they would “investigate the whole matter.” *{official fob-off - nothing will be done, go through motions}* {REPT-I}

He added the Constitution {CON} was clear that no one should be discriminated against for their religious practices and that the school governing body laws should be consistent with this. {OPIN} *{weak - official position - pro-Constitution, but does not appear interested in Indian problems}*

The principal responded via Kwa Attorneys, denying allegations of verbal abuse and racial discrimination. {FACT} *{weak – uses lawyers to deny abuse}*

The principal said: “The school’s current policy stated that religious decorations may be worn but must be covered. It prohibits religious decorations to be seen in public.” {REPT-D} *{weak: just states the school’s policy without acknowledging problems. Focuses on rules and not people’s problems.}*

Table C.2 Code frequency in article 2

<b>Don't be bullied</b>	
Hegemony vs. legislation:	
Hegemony {HEG} (i.e. hegemonic influence evident)	4
Constitution {CON} (i.e. reference to the Constitution)	1
Subject positions:	
Powerful {POF} (i.e. coming from a position of power)	6
Powerless {POL} (i.e. coming from a powerless position)	-
Attitudes:	
Humour {HUM} (i.e. humour is used)	1
Pro-tolerance {PRO-T} (i.e. evidence of tolerance)	-
Intolerance {INTOL} (i.e. evidence of intolerance)	-
Fact/opinion:	
Factual {FACT} (i.e. presented by reporter as fact)	8
Opinion {OPIN} (i.e. presented by reporter as opinion)	12
Reported speech (of role players):	
Direct speech {REPT-D}	5
Indirect speech {REPT-I}	9
Main role players include:	
• Press	X
• School personnel	X
• Public	X
• Education authorities	X
• Religious groups	-

### 3. Religious tolerance is vital in society

PRESS ARTICLE: *The Post*, 17-21 October 2012.

#### Overall

A selection of different cases (local and international) relating to religious intolerance is reported, showing that religious customs, dress and regalia are not respected in both schools and the workplace (see Figure C.3). Reference is made to the “bullying” described in 2. Above {*intertextuality*}. The “Sunali nose stud” case is mentioned again in Case 1 {*intertextuality*}, indicating the public interest in the case.

# Religious tolerance is vital in society

THE case of the Grade 3 pupil who became a victim of racial discrimination and verbal abuse in school for wearing a sacred Hindu red string around his wrist has once again raised the issue of religious tolerance in society.

It's not the first such case that has made headlines in recent times, and it certainly won't be the last, especially in light of the cultural diversity in our country and other parts of the world.

Here are a few examples of issues involving disputes over religious tolerance in both schools and places of work in recent months:

■ IN 2007 former Durban Girls' High pupil, Sunali Pillay, won the right to wear a nose stud to school.

When Sunali was told by the school that she was not allowed to wear the stud, she took the matter to the Constitutional Court.

The three-year battle came to an end when the court found the school rule prohibiting the wearing of jewellery had the potential for indirect discrimination because it allowed certain pupils to express their religious and cultural identity, while denying that right to others.

■ A HINDU policeman at the Pinetown police station was ordered to remove a red string from his wrist.

The order came from the station commander, Brigadier Owen Yamani Zama, on the basis that it violated the police dress code.

He said it was a national directive from 1977. It also applied to black policemen who wore

isiPhandla – bracelets made of goat hide.

Lieutenant Yoga Gounden, a policeman for 30 years, believed the ruling violated his constitutional rights and defied orders to remove his red string even in the face of possible disciplinary action. He has taken up his complaint with the Human Rights Commission.

■ IN LONDON, a Hindu woman was reinstated in her job at Heathrow Airport after she was fired for wearing a nose stud as a religious symbol. Amrit Lalji, 40, worked in the VIP lounge of Terminal One for more than a year before

she was fired for wearing the tiny stud. Her employers later said her sacking was a mistake based on a misinterpretation of its own regulations.

■ A GERMAN court ruling that a 12-year-old Muslim girl would have to put up with the sight of bare chested boys during her swimming classes, even though it was against her religious beliefs, was recently slammed by local Muslim leaders.

The ruling, made by an administrative court in Kassel, western Germany, rejected the pupil's application to skip swimming classes because she felt uncomfortable being so close to bare-chested boys.

Her lawyer argued that according to the Quranic teaching she was not only forbidden from showing herself to boys but also from seeing the topless boys. The court rejected the application and ruled she would have to wear the burkini, like many of her peers, as mixed swimming classes were the norm in Germany.



SUNALI PILLAY

Figure C.3 Religious tolerance is vital in society

## **Press**

*The Post* reporter (not named), appears to be taking a stance against religious intolerance, showing that it exists worldwide for Hindus and Muslims, although more cases with Hindus are mentioned.

## **Case 1**

Sunali Pillay, a pupil, was allegedly victimised for wearing a nose stud in school (Durban Girls' High). The South African Constitutional Court ruled that the school's rules were potentially discriminating in allowing some pupils, but not others, "to express their religious and cultural identity".

## **Case 2**

A Police Station commander (African) ordered a Hindu policeman wearing a Luxmi string to remove it, as it contravened the dress code. African staff members were also ordered to remove religious regalia, so the application was fair, on the surface. The complaint was taken up with the Human Rights Commission (outcome pending).

## **Case 3**

A Hindu woman working at Heath Row was fired for wearing a nose stud as religious regalia. Employers admitted to the "mistake" as they had "misinterpreted" their own regulations.

## **Case 4**

A Muslim school girl was denied her request not to do swimming lessons with bare-chested boys (she felt uncomfortable at showing herself to or seeing boys, according to the Quranic teachings). The court rejected the application, as the "norm" in Germany is mixed swimming classes.

# **Religious Tolerance is Vital in Society**

*{includes cases involving discrimination mainly against Hindus}*

*{The Post reporter – unknown. However, the readers of the The Post are predominantly Indian}: approaches topic very carefully. It may be to suggest neutrality. The name, which would show culture, is omitted.}*

THE case of the Grade 3 pupil who became a victim of racial discrimination {OPIN} and verbal abuse in school for wearing a sacred Hindu red string around his wrist has once again raised the issue of religious tolerance in society. {*intertextuality: the writer refers to previous text/s which provide the context for this text: starting point of article. Also makes her case on the basis of old reports.*}

It's not the first such case {FACT} {*emphasises continuity*} that has made headlines in recent times, and it certainly won't be the last, especially in light of the cultural diversity in our country and other parts of the world. {OPIN} {*suggests it is inevitable in a multicultural society*}

Here are a few examples {5 are mentioned – *playing it down?*} of issues involving disputes over religious tolerance {FACT} {*doesn't say "intolerance" but it's implied*} in both schools and places of work in recent months:

- IN 2007 former Durban Girls' High pupil, Sunali Pillay, won the right {FACT} {POF} {*Strong subject position*} to wear a nose stud to school.

When Sonali was told by the school that she was not allowed to wear the stud, she took the matter to the Constitutional Court {CON} {FACT} {POF} {*strong*}.

The three-year battle {*strong word, suggests conflict*} came to an end when the court found {FACT} the school rule prohibiting the wearing of jewellery had the potential for direct discrimination {OPIN} because it allowed certain pupils to express their religious and cultural identity, while denying the rights to others. {*rule possibly racist? More likely suppressive of women by Christianity*}.

- A HINDU {*emphasises religion*} policeman at the Pinetown police station was ordered to remove a red string from his wrist. {FACT}

The order came from the station commander, Brigadier Owen Yamani Zama {FACT}, on the basis that it violated {*strong*} the police dress code {OPIN}.

He said it was a national directive from 1977 {REPT-I}. {REPT-I} It also applied to Black policemen who wore isiPhandla-bracelets made of goat hide. {REPT-I} {*not discriminatory against Hindus*}

Lieutenant Yoga Gounden, a policeman for 30 years, believed {OPIN} the ruling violated {*strong*} his constitutional rights {CON} and defied {*strong*} orders to remove his red string even in the face of possible disciplinary {*strong*} action {FACT}. He has taken up his complaint with the Human Rights Commission {FACT}.

- In LONDON {*emphasises place – world problem?*}, a Hindu woman was reinstated {*strong*} in her job at Heathrow Airport after she was fired {*strong*} for wearing a nose stud {*intertextuality – Sunali article*} as a religious symbol {FACT}. Amrit Lalji, 40, worked in the VIP lounge Terminal One for more than a year {FACT} {*why emphasise the period? Suggests they have double standards.*} before she was fired for wearing the tiny stud {*"tiny" suggests over-reaction or pettiness of employers*}. Her employers later said her sacking was a mistake based on a misinterpretation of its own regulations. {REPT-I} {*weak: sounds like they backed down after being challenged.*}

▪ A GERMAN {*emphasises place*} court ruling that a 12 year old Muslim {*only one which is not Hindu*} girl would have to put up with the sight of bare chested boys {*humorous?*} during her swimming classes, even though it was against her religious beliefs {FACT}, was recently slammed {*violent word*} by local Muslim leaders {FACT}.

The ruling, made by an administrative court in Kassel, Western Germany, rejected the pupil's application to skip swimming classes because she felt uncomfortable being so close to bare-chested boys {FACT}.

Her lawyer argued {FACT} that according to the Quranic teaching she was not only forbidden from showing herself to boys but also from seeing topless boys {OPIN}. The court rejected the application {FACT} and ruled she would have to wear the burkini, like many of her peers, as mixed classes were the norm in Germany. {FACT} {HEG} {*decision rules on conforming to the German "norm" – it is "normal" or "natural".*}

Table C.3 Code frequency in article 3

<b>Religious tolerance is vital in society</b>	
Hegemony vs. legislation:	
Hegemony {HEG} (i.e. hegemonic influence evident)	1
Constitution {CON} (i.e. reference to the Constitution)	2
Subject positions:	
Powerful {POF} (i.e. coming from a position of power)	2
Powerless {POL} (i.e. coming from a powerless position)	-
Attitudes:	
Humour {HUM} (i.e. humour is used)	-
Pro-tolerance {PRO-T} (i.e. evidence of tolerance)	-
Intolerance {INTOL} (i.e. evidence of intolerance)	-
Fact/opinion:	
Factual {FACT} (i.e. presented by reporter as fact)	17
Opinion {OPIN} (i.e. presented by reporter as opinion)	6
Reported speech (of role players):	
Direct speech {REPT-D}	-
Indirect speech {REPT-I}	-
Main role players include:	-
• Press	-
• School personnel	X
• Public	X
• Education authorities	X
• Religious groups	X
• Government	X
• Employers	X

## 4. Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban

PRESS ARTICLE: *Sunday Tribune*, 21 August 2011.

# Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban

**MITCHELL HARPER**

A GROUP of angry parents, whose children were banned from wearing religious headgear at a Durban school, are demanding an explanation from the Department of Education, claiming their constitutional rights have been breached.

A group of about 30 secondary school pupils at Wingen Heights, Shallcross, were ordered to remove their fezzes allegedly by school principal Gordon Govender.

On Friday, parents marched to the school, but they were reportedly snubbed by Govender and his staff.

Parents say they were insulted by the school's lack of respect for religious rights, especially during the fasting period.

Abdul Mohamed, whose son is in Grade 12, said: "This is unacceptable, something we least expected from a public school. If any decision on traditional attire needs to be made, it should be done after Ramadan," said Mohamed.

Ayob Nakooba said his son and nephews were called out of the classroom.

"The constitution allows people a right to practise whatever religion they want to. The fact the children aren't allowed to is a clear infringement of their rights. Not to mention the fact that the child was denied his right to education, which

they (teachers) are not allowed to do," Nakooba said.

He said parents continued to encourage their children to wear the hats.

"The fact that the code of conduct does not specify on the fez is a grey area," he said.

Nakooba said parents had been further baffled because the school's code of conduct did not forbid the wearing of the religious hat. This is the first time that the school had objected to schoolboys wearing their fezzes.

### Drama

The drama unfolded when Govender, who was absent for two weeks, returned to school on Tuesday and ordered the boys to remove their hats. It is understood that after a meeting with the school governing body during the week, a decision was made to ban the hats.

But neither Govender nor the chairman of the school governing body, James Kisten, commented on the matter, referring the *Sunday Tribune* to the Department of Education.

Spokesman for the SA Principals' Association Chatsworth branch Sundrem Subramoney said that the code of conduct was the guiding light for how the school and pupils should act and look. However, where religion was involved there must be permission sought from the governing body.

"Parents have to get per-

mission in timely fashion when it comes to the religious area. Even if it is a week or two weeks before, there needs to be a request sent to the governing body," he said.

"Perhaps with this case there was a miscommunication between the principal and those who were in his place about what is allowed or what isn't. The principal has the right to carry out what is stated in the code of conduct."

Chairman of the KwaZulu-Natal Parents' Association Sayed Rajack said that he could not understand why the school had taken the decision to outlaw the attire, especially because of the large Muslim community in Shallcross.

"A lot of Muslims go to Wingen Heights and the community supports the school, but if the school persists in digging its heels in, the community could turn their back on them," he said.

"If this happens both the pupils and teachers will be affected."

"The teachers will have to be transferred – they will be out of a job because the pupils will move to different schools."

Although Rajack said that it was a clear infringement of pupils' religious rights, he called for the problem to be resolved as quickly as possible.

The KZN Department of Education did not comment at the time of going to print.

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Figure C.4 Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban

### Overall

One case of alleged discrimination against Islamic headgear is reported, where school pupils were asked to remove their fezzes by a Hindu school principal during the Muslim fasting period (see Figure C.4)

**Press**

White male: suggests neutrality.

**Parents**

A group of angry Muslim parents complained that their children banned from wearing fezzes (religious headgear) by the school Principal. The parents wanted the Department of Education to look into this matter as they felt that their children's constitutional rights were being violated.

**School**

The Hindu Principal, Mr Gordon Govender, had instructed the Muslim boys to remove their fezzes.

**Education Department**

KZN Education Department did not comment (at time of going to press).

**SA Principals' Association**

Spokesperson, Sundrem Subramoney, conceded that school code of conduct had to be followed, and Principal has the right to enforce this. Stated that for any exceptions to be made on religious grounds (e.g. wearing of fezzes), the Governing Body had to give permission. Claimed Principal's actions were based on a misunderstanding.

**KZN Parents' Association**

Chairperson: Sayed Rajack (Muslim) "could not understand" why the school had taken the decision to "outlaw" the fezzes, as there were a number of Muslim learners at the school. {REPT-I} He threatened that the community would stop supporting the school (i.e. by enrolling their students) and that the school would lose pupils and staff as a result.



## Parents up in arms {POF} {suggests warfare} over religious headgear ban

The *Sunday Tribune* reporter is a white male, reporting on the banning of Islamic headgear at school: supposedly neutral.

Mitchell Harper

A group of angry {POF} {strong word} parents, whose children were banned from wearing religious head gear at a Durban school, are demanding {POF} {strong word} an explanation from the Department of Education, claiming their constitutional rights {CON} have been breached {POF} {strong word, suggests images of violence.} {FACT} {i.e. that they complained} {OPIN} {i.e. that their constitutional rights had been violated}

A group of about 30 secondary school pupils at Wingen Heights, Shallcross, were ordered to remove their fezzes allegedly {FACT} {that the allegation was made is factual, careful to avoid slander} by school principal Gordon Govender. {Mentions **name**, which indicates Hindu male principal, and suggests culture clash}.

On Friday, parents marched {POF} {strong word: militant} to the school {FACT}, but they were reportedly {careful} snubbed {HEG} {OPIN} {emphasizes rudeness} by Govender and his staff. Parents say {REPT-I} {careful} they were insulted by the school's lack of respect {HEG} {rudeness} for religious rights {CON} {OPIN}, especially during the fasting period {disrespect for Islamic observances}. Abdul Mohammed {Islamic name give an ethnic slant, also makes it more personal}, whose son is in Grade 12, said {REPT-D}: "This is unacceptable {OPIN}, something we least expected from a public school. If any decision on traditional attire needs to be made, it should be done after Ramadaan, {OPIN} {religion make beliefs would make discussion difficult at that time: plea for latitude on this}" said Mohammed. {REPT-D} {might be seen as aggressive by the principal.} {Islamic name give an ethnic slant, also makes it more personal: emphasizes the rights of the individual.}

Ayob Nakooba said his son and nephews were called out of the classroom. {REPT-I}

"The constitution allows people a right to practice whatever religion they want to. {REPT-D} The fact the children aren't allowed to is a clear infringement of their rights. {CON} {REPT-D} {emphasizes the rights of the individual.} Not to mention the fact that the child was denied his right to education {CON}, {emphasizes the rights of the individual.} which they (teachers) are not allowed to do," {OPIN} {REPT-D} Nakooba said.

He said parents continued to encourage {parents supporting defiance of principal} their children to wear the hats. {REPT-I}

"The fact that the code of conduct does not specify on the fez is a grey area," {REPT-D} {makes quibbling sound genuine} he said.

Nakooba said parents had been further baffled {HEG} {REPT-I}, {OPIN} {opinion, but journalist reports it as fact} because the school's code of conduct did not forbid the wearing of the religious hat. This is the first time that the school had objected to schoolboys wearing their fezzes. {REPT-I}

## **Drama** {emphasises the heightened tension}

The drama {OPIN} unfolded when Govender, who was absent for two weeks, returned to school on Tuesday and ordered the boys to remove their hats {FACT} {sounds arbitrary: no consultation}. It is understood {careful - allegation} that after a meeting with the school governing body during the week, a decision was made {passive voice - neutral} to ban the hats {FACT?} {not confirmed as fact}.

But neither Govender nor the chairman of the school governing body, James Kisten {Hindu male – makes him sound prejudiced}, commented on the matter, referring the Sunday Tribune to the Department of Education. {FACT}

Spokesman for the SA Principals' Association Chatsworth Branch Sundrem Subramoney {Hindu male – makes it sound as if they are ganging up on Islamics} said that the code of conduct was the guiding light {metaphor makes it sound very moral and "correct" – justifies principal's action} for how the school and pupils should act and look. {REPT-I} However, where religion was involved there must be permission sought from the governing body {REPT-I} {parents were out of line: didn't ask for permission for fez to be worn}.

"Parents have to get permission in timely fashion when it comes to the religious area. Even if it is a week or two weeks, before, there needs to be a request sent to the governing body," {REPT-D} {Islamic parents ignored the rules} he said.

"Perhaps with this case there was a miscommunication {HEG} between the principal and those who were in his place about what is allowed or what isn't. {Subramoney offers the excuse of miscommunication} The principal has the right to carry out what is stated in the code of conduct." {REPT-D} {i.e. rights exist on both sides.}

Chairman of the KwaZulu-Natal Parents' Association Sayed Rajack {male Islamic} said that he could not understand why the school had taken the decision to outlaw {POL} {strong: suggests fezzes were being criminalised} the attire, especially because of the large Muslim Community in Shallcross. {REPT-I} {strong: suggests fezzes were being criminalised}

"A lot of Muslims {POF} {not a minority group} go to Wingen Heights and the community supports the school {i.e. suggests they are respectable, law-abiding community members}, but if the school persists in digging its heels in {metaphor: obstinacy}, the community could turn their back on them," {metaphor: rejection} {REPT-D} he said. {REPT-D}

"If this happens both the pupils and teachers will be affected. {POF}

"The teachers will have to be transferred - they will be out of a job because the pupils will move to different schools." {POF} {REPT-D} {Sounds like a thinly disguised threat to close the school down.}

Although Rajack said that it was a clear infringement {misdemeanour} of pupils' religious rights {CON} {stresses "religious rights" aspect}, he called for the problem to be resolved as quickly as possible {REPT-I} {makes him sound reasonable}.

The KZN Department of Education did not comment at the time of going to print. {FACT} {makes them sound indifferent – official reaction = no reaction}

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Table C.4 Code frequency in article 4

<b>Parents up in arms over religious headgear ban</b>	
Hegemony vs. legislation:	
Hegemony {HEG} (i.e. hegemonic influence evident)	4
Constitution {CON} (i.e. reference to the Constitution)	5
Subject positions:	
Powerful {POF} (i.e. coming from a position of power)	7
Powerless {POL} (i.e. coming from a powerless position)	1
Attitudes:	
Humour {HUM} (i.e. humour is used)	-
Pro-tolerance {PRO-T} (i.e. evidence of tolerance)	-
Intolerance {INTOL} (i.e. evidence of intolerance)	-
Fact/opinion:	
Factual {FACT} (i.e. presented by reporter as fact)	6
Opinion {OPIN} (i.e. presented by reporter as opinion)	8
Reported speech (of role players):	
Direct speech {REPT-D}	9
Indirect speech {REPT-I}	9
Main role players include:	
• Press	X
• School personnel (and school parent bodies)	X
• Public	X
• Education authorities	X
• Religious groups	X

## 5. Minister to probe Islam row

PRESS ARTICLE: *The Mercury*, 5 June 2012.

### Overall

Report about protest by students who claimed that abiding by Islamic custom and religious rules had become mandatory at a dormitory leased from an Islamic institute (see C.5).

### Press

Leanne Jansen, reporter

RULES UPSET STUDENTS

# Minister to probe Islam row

Leanne Jansen  
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**M**INISTER of Higher Education Blade Nzimande is to launch a probe into a college, which saw one of its campuses on the south coast shut down after a protest by students who claimed that abiding by Islamic custom and religious rules had become mandatory – irrespective of their own faith.

A row erupted at the campus of the Coastal KZN Further Education and Training College last month, as students accommodated in dormitories leased from the As-Salaam Institute demonstrated their opposition to studying the Qur'an, wearing Islamic garments and having to comply with the call to prayer, they said.

The organisation promotes Islamic education.

While a staff member denied that the students were forced to follow the religion, or that the Bible had been banned, he told *The Mercury* that they were obligated to attend prayers and dress "decently" as they occupied "an Islamic area".

Speaking at a press briefing yesterday, a vexed Nzimande pledged to get to the bottom of the matter, arguing that the rights of the students had been violated.

Already, a task team of senior officials has been dispatched to meet with stakeholders including parents and the college's management.

"I also intend setting up an investigation into how an arrangement of this nature was made by the college. I wish to state that as a constitutional

democracy and secular state, no student in any public institution can be forced to practise any religion, irrespective of the circumstances that might have warranted the college to enter into the accommodation arrangements with any institution. I am deeply concerned and worried by these developments and arrangements which are completely unconstitutional and in fact violate the rights of the students who legitimately registered in a public FET college."

The Jamiatul Ulama KZN said it condemned the actions of religious institutions which compelled non-Muslims to observe Islamic practices as it would be "tantamount to mockery" of the faith.

The organisation's secretary-general, Rafiek Mohamed, said that such "colonial-like tactics" went directly against both the SA constitution and the fundamental principle of the Qur'an which stated "Let there be no compulsion in (following) the Faith".

Around 500 students study on the premises, and just over a week ago, more than 70 of the protesting students were evicted from the dormitory.

Their stay, and meals, are funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, and according to the beneficiaries they cannot afford to take up residence elsewhere.

Approached for comment yesterday, the college rector, Patche Tigere, said that he was not prepared to discuss the matter. Zaid Langa, who is in charge of student accommodation and Islamic studies on the campus, referred queries to the spokesman for the As-Salaam institute, who could not be reached for comment.

Figure C.5 Minister to probe Islam row

## **South African Government**

Blade Nzimande, the Minister of Higher Education, launched a probe into a college because students protested that they had to abide by Islamic customs and rules while boarding at an Islamic Institute. They were also denied their own religious practices (e.g. reading the Bible).

## **The Coastal KZN Further Education and Training College**

**Students** studying at the Coastal KZN Further Education and Training College (but the Dept had leased dormitories at As-Salaam Institute) protested on the grounds that their rights were being violated. The Rector of the college: “Had no comment”.

## **As-Salaam Institute**

The As-Salaam Institute allegedly enforced this rule.

A staff member denied reading the Bible had been banned: the only requirement was to attend prayers and dress decently

## **The Jamiatul Ulama, KZN**

Secretary General, Rafiek Mohamed, said they rejected Islamic institutions which obliged non-Muslims to follow Islamic practices, and it “made a mockery of the [Islamic] Faith”: “let there be no compulsion in following the Faith”

## **RULES UPSET STUDENTS**

# **Minister to Probe Islam Row**

Leanne Jansen

[Leanne.jansen@inl.co.za](mailto:Leanne.jansen@inl.co.za)

Minister of Higher Education Blade Nzimande is to launch a probe {POF} {*implies misconduct*} into a college {FACT}, which saw one of its campuses on the south coast shut down after a protest by students {FACT} who claimed that the abiding by Islamic custom and religious rules had become mandatory {OPIN} {POF} {*strong word: enforced compliance*} – irrespective of their own faith.{POL} {*students cannot keep to own “faith”*}

A row erupted {POF} {*strong word: violent*} at the campus of the Coastal KZN Further Education and Training College last month, as students accommodated in dormitories leased from the As-Salaam {*Islamic name*} Institute demonstrated their opposition {POF} {FACT} {*strong word: violent*} to studying the Qur'an, wearing Islamic garments and having to comply {POL} with the call to prayer, they said {REPT-I} {*allegations*}.

The organisation promotes Islamic education {FACT}. {*seems to support their claim*}

While a staff member denied {FACT} {*seems strong*} that the students were forced {*strong*} to follow the religion {POL}, or that the Bible had been banned {REPT-I} {*strong: alliteration*}, he told The Mercury that they were obligated {POF} {*strong*} to attend prayers and dress “decently” {*“decent” for whom?*} as they occupied “an Islamic area” {POF} {REPT-I} {*strong: territorial, as if they were in and Islamic country or embassy*}.

Speaking at a press briefing yesterday, a vexed Nzimande pledged to get to the bottom of the matter, arguing that the rights of the students had been violated {POL} {CON}. {REPT-I} {*strong word: violent*}

Already, a task team {POF} {*strong: military connotations*}, of senior officials has been dispatched {*strong: speed, urgency*} to meet with stakeholders including parents and the college's management {FACT}.

“I also intend setting up an investigation {POF} {*implies misconduct*} into how an arrangement of this nature was made by the college. {REPT-D} I wish to state that as a constitutional democracy and secular state {CON} {*constitutional rights: South African Government omits concept of “God”*}, no student in any public institution can be forced {*strong: violent*} to practise any religion {POL}, irrespective of the circumstances that might have warranted the college to enter into the accommodation arrangements with any institution. {REPT-D} I am deeply concerned and worried by these developments and arrangements which are completely unconstitutional and in fact violate {POL} the rights of the students who legitimately registered in a public FET college.” {CON} {REPT-D} {*constitutional rights violated*}.

The Jamiatul Ulama {*Islamic defence*}, KZN said it condemned {POF} the actions of religious institutions which compelled non-Muslims to observe Islamic practices as it would be “tantamount to mockery” of the faith. {REPT-I} {OPIN} {*irreligious*}.

The organisation's secretary-general, Rafiek Mohammed, {*Islamic name emphasises that they do not approve of this kind of behaviour*}, said that such “colonial-like tactics” {HEG} {*strange choice of term: “colonial” = bad*} went directly against both the SA constitution {CON} {*agrees with Nzimande*} and the fundamental principal of the Qur'an which stated “Let there be no compulsion in (following) the Faith.” {*not only un-constitutional, but un-Islamic*} {REPT-I}

Around 500 students study on the premises, and just over a week ago, more than 70 of the protesting students were evicted {*suggests apartheid*} from the dormitory. {FACT}

Their stay, and meals, are funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, and according to the beneficiaries they cannot afford to take up residence elsewhere. {POL} {FACT} {*emphasises hardships of students.*}

Approached for comment yesterday, the college rector, Patche Tigere, said that he was not prepared to discuss the matter {REPT-I} {official fob off}. Zaid Langa {Afro-Islamic male}, who is in charge of student accommodation and Islamic studies on the campus, referred queries to the spokesman for As-Salaam institute, who could not be reached for comment. {REPT-I} {official fob off} {FACT} {i.e. that he could not be reached.}

Table C.5 Code frequency in article 5

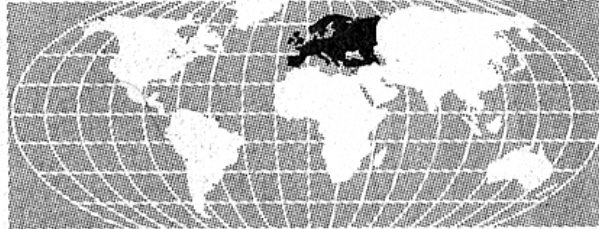
<b>Minister to probe Islam row</b>	
Hegemony vs. legislation:	
Hegemony {HEG} (i.e. hegemonic influence evident)	1
Constitution {CON} (i.e. reference to the Constitution)	4
Subject positions:	
Powerful {POF} (i.e. coming from a position of power)	9
Powerless {POL} (i.e. coming from a powerless position)	7
Attitudes:	
Humour {HUM} (i.e. humour is used)	-
Pro-tolerance {PRO-T} (i.e. evidence of tolerance)	-
Intolerance {INTOL} (i.e. evidence of intolerance)	-
Fact/opinion:	
Factual {FACT} (i.e. presented by reporter as fact)	9
Opinion {OPIN} (i.e. presented by reporter as opinion)	2
Reported speech (of role players):	
Direct speech {REPT-D}	3
Indirect speech {REPT-I}	8
Main role players include:	
• Press	X
• School (and hostel) personnel	X
• Public	X
• Education authorities	-
• Government	X

## 6. Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools

PRESS ARTICLE: *International Herald Tribune: The Global Edition of the New York Times*, 19 October 2012, p3 (Source: the researcher found this article in a newspaper offered as recreational reading on a flight to an International Conference).

BRIEFLY

## Europe



MOSCOW

### **Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools**

President Vladimir V. Putin has spoken out against the wearing of head scarves in Russian schools, saying in a statement Thursday that Russia is a secular state and must create equal conditions for all its citizens.

It was his first public comment on a potentially explosive issue. An estimated 20 million of Russia's 143 million people are Muslims, and they make up a majority of the population in many regions, including the oil-rich province of Tatarstan, as well as Chechnya and other North Caucasus provinces.

Mr. Putin issued the statement when asked to comment on a recent incident in southern Russia where a school principal forbade girls from Muslim families to wear head scarves at school. Their parents protested the move, and the principal said that she was threatened. (AP)

Figure C.6 Putin protests the wearing of headscarves in schools

#### **Overall**

A global news report about President Vladimir V. Putin speaking against the wearing of head scarves in Russian schools, which is against Russia's "secular" school policy (see Figure C.6). The reporter is not identified.



## Russian Government

President Putin criticised the wearing of head scarves in Russian school, on the basis that “Russia is a secular state and must create equal conditions for all its citizens”.

## Muslims

There are 20 million Muslims in Russia’s 143 million people, and they are a majority in many regions.

## School

A school principal “forbade girls from Muslim families to wear head scarves at school”, and said she was threatened when the parents protested.

## Parents

The parents protested against the instruction, and the principal said that she was threatened.

## MOSCOW

# Putin protests the wearing of head scarves in schools

{Alliteration}

President Vladimir V. Putin has spoken out {POF} {forthright: sounds sincere} against the wearing of head scarves in Russian schools, saying in a statement Thursday {REPT-I} that Russia is a **secular** state {FACT} and must create **equal conditions** for all its citizens.{OPIN} {CON} {emphasises national custom – “secular”, and civic fairness.} {REPT-I}

It was his first public comment {FACT} on a potentially explosive {sounds violent} issue. An estimated 20 million of Russia’s 143 million people are Muslims {FACT}, and they make up a majority {sounds powerful} of the population in many regions {FACT}, including the oil-rich {key resources} province of Tatarstan, as well as Chechnya and other North Caucasus provinces.

Mr. Putin {why “Mr?” Suggests he is not that important: elected by people OR over-polite?} issued the statement when asked to comment {FACT} on a recent incident in southern Russia where a school principal forbade girls from Muslim families to wear head scarves at school. {REPT-I} {Note that he does not comment specifically on the incident: makes a general statement instead.} Their parents protested the move {POF} {FACT} {there might have been violent protests?}, and the principal said that she was threatened. {REPT-I} (AP) {Threats to religious observances are reported as prompting aggression}

Table C.6 Code frequency in article 6

<b>Putin protests the wearing of headscarves in schools</b>	
Hegemony vs. legislation:	
Hegemony {HEG} (i.e. hegemonic influence evident)	-
Constitution {CON} (i.e. reference to the Constitution)	1
Subject positions:	
Powerful {POF} (i.e. coming from a position of power)	2
Powerless {POL} (i.e. coming from a powerless position)	-
Attitudes:	
Humour {HUM} (i.e. humour is used)	-
Pro-tolerance {PRO-T} (i.e. evidence of tolerance)	-
Intolerance {INTOL} (i.e. evidence of intolerance)	-
Fact/opinion:	
Factual {FACT} (i.e. presented by reporter as fact)	6
Opinion {OPIN} (i.e. presented by reporter as opinion)	1
Reported speech (of role players):	
Direct speech {REPT-D}	-
Indirect speech {REPT-I}	4
Main role players include:	
• Press	X
• School personnel	X
• Public	X
• Education authorities	-
• Government	X

## 7. South African Rastafarian student Sikhokele Diniso returns to school after dust-up over dreadlocks

PRESS ARTICLE: *Hinterland Gazette*, 12 April 2013

U.S. based blogger reports on South African schoolboy's exclusion from school through Rastafarian dreadlocks.


### Overall

In this example, a reporter with a Jamaican background appears to show solidarity with the South African school authorities in criticising Rastafarian-style dreadlocks as an inappropriate hairdo for a pupil attending school. For this reporter, it is not so much an issue of religious discrimination, but conforming to rules laid down by the school code of conduct. In view of her

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AFRICAN RASTAFARIAN STUDENT SIKHOKELE DINISO RETURNS TO SCHOOL AFTER DUST-UP OVER DREADLOCKS

South African Rastafarian Student Sikhokele Diniso Returns to School After Dust-Up Over Dreadlocks

APRIL 12, 2013 BY JANET SHAN — LEAVE A COMMENT

3

Tweet

Sikhokele Diniso, a 10th grade student at Siphamandla High School in Khayelitsha, South Africa, was asked to leave because of his dreadlocks. Sikhokele Diniso, who is a Rastafarian, was ordered to stay away from school until he cut his hair, the Equal Education (EE) said on Thursday. That decision has since been reversed, but it just goes to show how ignorant some people in authority can be.

"The non-governmental organisation met the principal of Siphamandla High School in Khayelitsha, the school's governing body (SGB), and staff on Wednesday to discuss the pupil's grievances, said EE chairwoman Yoliswa Dwane.

"It was agreed that the learner would be allowed back into school and that a catch-up plan would be provided," said Dwane. **He would not have to cut his hair.**





The Cape Times reported last week that the Grade 10 pupil Sikhokele Diniso was told to leave the school last month. The education department said at the time Diniso could return to school as he had not been suspended.

Department spokeswoman Bronagh Casey said that according to the school principal, the pupil was asked to bring his parents to discuss the matter.

"The boy returned with his brother. The principal insisted on discussing the matter with the parents. "The parents eventually met the principal and agreed that the son should clean, comb, and tie his hair. The boy did not want to do this," said Casey. [Source](#)

When I was a student in the Jamaican school system, we had to follow a strict code of conduct, including the dress code. If **Sikhokele Diniso's** hair was unkempt, the school had a right to address that issue. Being a Rastafarian doesn't mean one's hair has to look like a hot mess.

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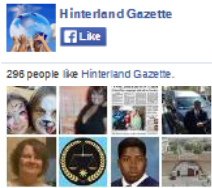
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Figure C.7 South African Rastafarian student Sikhokele Diniso returns to school after dust-up over dreadlocks (inset: Janet Shan's profile)

Afro-American demographic and cultural background sympathetic to Rastafarianism, Janet Shan cannot be considered racist. While she might be considered to have adopted WASP values during her American college attendance, she states: “When I was a student in the Jamaican school system, we had to follow a strict code of conduct, including the dress code”.

### **Press**

Janet Shan (female, Afro-American, of Jamaican descent). States that she takes a “centrist” (i.e. moderate) view in her reporting {*PRO-T*}, and focuses on issues which affect people’s daily lives (see <http://hinterlandgazette.com/about-us>).

Headline: “South African Rastafarian Student Sikhokele Diniso Returns to School After Dust-Up Over Dreadlocks” – “dust-up over dreadlocks” sounds mildly humorous – uses alliteration, perhaps to defuse the tensions and put the situation in perspective {*HUM*} – “fuss about nothing”. Focuses on pupil conforming to school dress code, suggests it’s petty to make a fuss, and now things are returning to “normal”. Yet her view is balanced (i.e. centrist): we need to discriminate between “religious discrimination” and the need to observe school rules in the interests of orderly conduct. It is also a very long year clear title, which avoids cheap labelling or concentrating the meaning so as to over-simplify the issue in racist/religious terms. The headline is presented as factual: “boy goes back to school”, yet the humour shows bias in suggesting that an excessive fuss was made (“dust-up”), and the “dust” has settled (also suggests the hair was “dirty”). The reference to race is descriptive: in the name “Sikhokele Diniso” (i.e. indigenous African). “Rastafarian student” appears to be factual (names religion), but derogative terms are used {*INTOL*}. The term “dreadlocks” is humorous, and apparently tolerant, but “dread” suggests something dire connected with devil-worship and voodooism: pagan religions. {*INTOL*}

Janet Shan’s **subject position**: She suggests that the parents are being unreasonable. The Press is shown as supporting a middle (centrist) view in

being reasonable in accepting the need for pupils observing school rules, including dress codes.

### **Parents and child**

Rastafarians: Sikhokele Diniso (child), Parents, Brother (who represents child instead of parents)

### **School authorities**

Principal, Governing body (SGB), Staff

### **Government**

The Education Department, Department spokeswoman Bronagh Casey

**Non governmental organizations (NGOs)** (Moderate groups: supporting religious tolerance = let Rastafarian children wear dreadlocks to school)

Equal Education (EE), Chairwoman Yoliswa Dwane

### **Press**

Janet Shan, *The Cape Times*

### **Other groups**

The Jamaican school system: pro-following rules

The Catholic school attended by Janet Shan: “obedience” and “orderliness” as Catholic (Christian) values.

### **Press: overall message**

Janet Shan’s message appears to be that the parents overreacted on the grounds of religious discrimination, and that the school had a right to insist on a dress code which resulted in an orderly, clean appearance. She also implies that too much fuss was made over a relatively minor issue. The school did, however, recant under pressure, and allowed the boy to return without having to cut his hair. The reporter’s humour over the Rastafarian “dreadlocks”, which she dismisses as a “hot mess”, suggests that her own

Jamaican roots have been suppressed by her “drilling” on good appearance at a Catholic school and her later US university education. In her attempt to provide a middle-path, reasonable (i.e. centrist) view, she is perhaps overlooking the need for mutual respect and tolerance, particularly in post-liberation South Africa, where cultural and religious sensitivities are still strong.

## South African Rastafarian Student Sikhokele Diniso Returns to School After Dust-Up Over Dreadlocks {HUM}

APRIL 12, 2013 BY JANET SHAN

Sikhokele Diniso, a 10th grade student at Siphamandla High School in Khayelitsha, South Africa, was asked to leave {POL} because of his dreadlocks {FACT} {INTOL}. Sikhokele Diniso, who is a Rastafarian, was ordered to stay away from school until he cut {POF} his hair, the Equal Education (EE) said on Thursday.{REPT-I} That decision has since been reversed {FACT}, but it just goes to show how ignorant some people in authority can be. {HEG} {OPIN}

The non-governmental organisation met the principal of Siphamandla High School in Khayelitsha, the school’s governing body (SGB), and staff on Wednesday to discuss the pupil’s grievances, {FACT} said EE chairwoman Yoliswa Dwane. {REPT-I}

“It was agreed that the learner would be allowed back into school and that a catch-up plan would be provided,” {PRO-T} {REPT-I} said Dwane. He would not have to cut his hair. {FACT}

The Cape Times reported last week that the Grade 10 pupil Sikhokele Diniso was told to leave the school last month. {REPT-I} The education department said at the time Diniso could return to school as he had not been suspended.{POF} {REPT-I}

Department spokeswoman Bronagh Casey said {REPT-I} that according to the school principal, the pupil was asked to bring his parents to discuss the matter. {PRO-T} {*reasonable request.*}

“The boy returned with his brother. {REPT-D} {FACT} The principal insisted on discussing the matter with the parents. {FACT} “The parents eventually met the principal and agreed that the son should clean, comb, and tie his hair. {REPT-D} {FACT}. *All reported as fact, but by the Department spokeswoman Bronagh Casey, who could have edited or selected*

events. The boy did not want to do this,” said Casey. {REPT-D} {OPIN} *We don’t really know what the boy wanted: we are not told what he said.*

When I was a student in the Jamaican school system {FACT}, we had to follow {POL} a strict code of conduct, {HEG} including the dress code. *Stated as fact, but suggests they had no choice, which gives Janet a powerless position as a child.* If Sikhokele Diniso’s hair was unkempt {INTOL} *suggests Rastafarian dreadlocks are the result of poor grooming, not cultural custom,* the school had a right to address that issue. {OPIN} It’s a reasonable opinion, but suggested as being a natural consequence of the social order. Being a Rastafarian doesn’t mean one’s hair has to look like a hot mess. {HEG} {OPIN} {HUM} *The term “hot mess” is humorous, but insulting – suggests hair is unhygienic, with dirt and germs breeding in the hair; equates Rastafarian hair with dirt and disorder.*

Table C.7 Code frequency in article 7

<b>South African Rastafarian student Sikhokele Diniso returns to school after dust-up over dreadlocks</b>	
Hegemony vs. legislation:	
Hegemony {HEG} (i.e. hegemonic influence evident)	3
Constitution {CON} (i.e. reference to the Constitution)	-
Subject positions:	
Powerful {POF} (i.e. coming from a position of power)	2
Powerless {POL} (i.e. coming from a powerless position)	2
Attitudes:	
Humour {HUM} (i.e. humour is used)	2
Pro-tolerance {PRO-T} (i.e. evidence of tolerance)	2
Intolerance {INTOL} (i.e. evidence of intolerance)	2
Fact/opinion:	
Factual {FACT} (i.e. presented by reporter as fact)	8
Opinion {OPIN} (i.e. presented by reporter as opinion)	4
Reported speech (of role players):	
Direct speech {REPT-D}	3
Indirect speech {REPT-I}	6
Main role players include:	
• Press	X
• School personnel	X
• Public	X
• Education authorities	X
• Government	X
• Religious groups	-

## 8. Parties outraged at school religion case

PRESS ARTICLE: in *The Mercury*, 3 September 2014, p4.

### Overall

The Organisation for Religion, Education and Democracy (OGOD) is reported to be taking six public schools and the ministers of Basic Education and Correctional Services to court for “allowing ‘suppression of scientific and cultural knowledge’, religious coercion and abuse of pupils’ rights at public schools”. The court action is being opposed by Christian-oriented political parties. The focus of the article (in terms of structure) is on the *opposition* to the court action by the Christian groups (OGOD’s case is mentioned last,.

### Press

Reporter unknown: “Sapa”. The headline focuses on the Christian political parties’ outrage at attempts to remove Christianity from public schools/

Byline: “Many faiths join to oppose group’s court application” – sounds neutral, unbiased, more like “news” reporting.

### Groups

The Organisation for Religion, Education and Democracy (OGOD) intends to take six public schools and the ministers of basic education and correctional services to court. This is because the former enforced Christian observances and ethos on non-Christian pupils, and that the latter were remiss in allowing this to happen. OGOD is not anti-Christian, but views the imposition of Christianity on non-Christian pupils as being oppressive and unconstitutional (scientific subject knowledge is also being withheld because Christian fundamentalist principles are applied in lessons).

The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) intends to oppose this court action, and claims that the retaining of Christian values in schools is “constitutional” because the Constitution promotes freedom of religion.



# Parties outraged at school religion case

CHRISTIAN values should remain in schools because the constitution promoted freedom of religion, the African Christian Democratic Party said yesterday.

The party's leader, the Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, said they were appalled by calls for Christian values to be removed at schools. "Our constitution promotes the freedom of religion and not freedom from religion," he said.

Freedom Front Plus spokesman Anton Alberts said the party supported efforts to oppose a planned court case directed at prohibiting six schools from exercising Christian values.

Alberts said the reaction from church circles and social media was proof that the court action, by the Organisation for Religion, Education and Democracy, with its chairman, Hans Pietersen, was seen as a "witch-hunt on Christians".

He said the court case was aimed at replacing one philosophy with another.

"Freedom of religion is of cardinal importance in South Africa... In model C schools, the principle of parental input, management and democracy is in place," he said. "Therefore,

learners who do not wish to be part of any religious action should have the right to withdraw from it."

The organisation said it was taking six public schools and the ministers of basic education and correctional services to court for allowing "suppression of scientific and cultural knowledge", religious coercion and abuse of pupils' rights at public schools.

## Breach

It listed more than 60 "abuses of rights". These included requiring pupils to subscribe to a specific religion, referring to a deity in school badges, giving religious instruction and opening school assemblies with sermons or prayer.

"This will be South Africa's watershed case for religion in public schools," it said.

The six schools are Hoërskool Linden in Joburg, Laerskool Randhart in Alberton, Laerskool Baanbreker in Boksburg, Laerskool Garsfontein in Pretoria and Hoërskool Oudtshoorn and Langenhoven Gimnasium, both in Oudtshoorn.

Pietersen said the schools and departments had 20 business days to respond. – Sapa

Figure C.9 Parties outraged at school religion case

The Freedom Front Plus sides with the ACDP in intending to oppose the court action, as it sees OGOD's actions as an attempt to demonise Christianity and replace it with atheism.

### **Government Departments**

Ministers (to be taken to court): Basic Education and Correctional Services.

### **Public schools**

Six public schools are identified by OGOD as abusing students' religious rights by imposing Christian observances (all Afrikaans schools): Hoërskool Linden in Joburg, Laerskool Randhart in Alberton, Laerskool Baanbreker in Boksburg, Laerskool Garsfontein in Pretoria, Hoerskool Oudtshoorn in Oudtshoorn and Langenhoven Gimnasium in Oudtshoorn.

## **Parties outraged at school religion case**

*{expression of extreme indignation}*

CHRISTIAN values should remain in schools {OPIN} because the constitution {CON} promoted freedom of religion *{the logic of this statement is unclear}*, the African Christian Democratic Party said yesterday. {REPT-I}

The party's leader, the Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, said they were appalled *{strong term}* by calls for Christian values to be removed at schools. {REPT-I} "Our constitution {CON} promotes the freedom of religion and not freedom from religion," {REPT-D} *{playing with words}* he said. *{According to OGOD, the schools flout the pupil's rights to hold non-Christian beliefs.}*

Freedom Front Plus spokesman Anton Alberts said the party supported efforts to oppose {POF} a planned court case directed at prohibiting six schools from exercising Christian values. {REPT-I} *{The court case was against Christian values being forced on non-Christians, not against Christians exercising their own values.}*

Alberts said the reaction from church circles and social media was proof {HEG} that the court action, by the Organisation for Religion, Education and Democracy, with its chairman, Hans Pietersen, was seen as {OPIN} a "witch-hunt on Christians" {REPT-I} {POF} *{image suggests persecution, Christians being demonised, burnt at stake.}*

He said the court case was aimed at replacing {POF} one philosophy with another. {REPT-I} {OPIN}

"Freedom of religion {CON} is of cardinal importance in South Africa... In model C schools, the principle of parental input, management and democracy is in place," {OPIN} {REPT-D} he said. *{the same principles OGOD is promoting.}* "Therefore, learners who do not wish to be part of any religious action should have

the right to withdraw from it." {REPT-D} {PRO-T} {OPIN} *{Illogical: exactly what the 6 schools are **not** allowing, and why they are being prosecuted by OGOD.}*

The organisation *{i.e. the Organisation for Religion, Education and Democracy}* said {REPT-I} it was taking six public schools and the ministers of basic education and correctional services to court for allowing "suppression {POF} of scientific and cultural knowledge", {REPT-D} religious coercion {POL} and abuse of pupils' rights {CON} {POL} at public schools.

### Breach {POF} *{suggests "breach of contract"}*

It listed more than 60 "abuses of rights" {CON} {POL}. These included requiring pupils to subscribe to a specific religion, referring to a deity in school badges, giving religious instruction and opening school assemblies with sermons or prayer: {FACT}

"This will be South Africa's watershed {OPIN} case for religion in public schools," {REPT-D} {POF} it said.

The six schools are Hoërskool Linden in Joburg, Laerskool Randhart in Alberton, Laerskool Baanbreker in Boksburg, Laerskool Garsfontein in Pretoria and Hoerskool Oudtshoorn and Langenhoven Gimnasium, both in Oudtshoorn. {FACT}

Pietersen said the schools and departments had 20 business days to respond. {REPT-I} {FACT} -Sapa

Table C.8 Code frequency in article 8

<b>Parties outraged at school religion case</b>	
Hegemony vs. legislation:	
Hegemony {HEG} (i.e. hegemonic influence evident)	2
Constitution {CON} (i.e. reference to the Constitution)	5
Subject positions:	
Powerful {POF} (i.e. coming from a position of power)	7
Powerless {POL} (i.e. coming from a powerless position)	4
Attitudes:	
Humour {HUM} (i.e. humour is used)	-
Pro-tolerance {PRO-T} (i.e. evidence of tolerance)	1
Intolerance {INTOL} (i.e. evidence of intolerance)	-
Fact/opinion:	
Factual {FACT} (i.e. presented by reporter as fact)	3
Opinion {OPIN} (i.e. presented by reporter as opinion)	6
Reported speech (of role players):	
Direct speech {REPT-D}	5
Indirect speech {REPT-I}	7
Main role players include:	
• Press	X
• Schools	X
• Government	X
• Religious groups (political parties)	X
• Rights organisations	X

## **9. Church angers Hindus – Visiting pastor’s pamphlet deemed offensive**

PRESS ARTICLE: *Sunday Herald*, 20 July 2014, p1

A case of Hindus in Verulam being offended by a pamphlet written by a visiting Christian pastor is reported.

### **Overall**

An attempts by an overseas pastor and the Head of Potters House (both converts from Hinduism) to invite Hindus to a Charismatic Christian church service are seen as going against the SA Constitution in not respecting other religions besides Christianity (i.e. Hindus are implicitly regarded as “pagans” needing conversion). The Hindus who received the pamphlet in Verulam are reported as regarding this as highly offensive. The offence was not necessarily given deliberately, but was based on the implicit assumption that Christianity is a better option than Hinduism: this is true hegemony, where the power relations are not explicit. Also the ideology, that Christianity is a better option than Hinduism, is implicit – “ideology as an insidious force”.

In terms of the hegemonic influence of Christianity: It is interesting that it is a Christian group (not even a majority group) that is making the objection, which is taken so seriously by other religious groups (including Christian) that they bother to make formal replies/statements in the interests of freedom of observance.

### **Press**

Veruschka Mungroo (female, Hindu)

Headline: “Church angers {strong term} Hindus” is stated as factual, in sweeping terms; suggests it was a major insult to the Hindu community, accusatory as to Christians being offensive: strong animus against being patronised.



# CHURCH ANGERS HINDUS

Visiting pastor's pamphlet deemed offensive

VERUSCHKA MUNGROO

**A** VISITING US preacher has incurred the wrath of local Hindus for an "offensive" pamphlet.

The pamphlet, titled "Christianity or Hinduism – what makes more sense?", was an invitation to a revival service at the Potters House Church in Verulam, featuring evangelist guest priest Pastor Marcus Samuel, who was born in India and claims to have been a Hindu previously.

The discourse was to be held on Friday at the church, but was cancelled after pressure from the Hindu community.

According to the pamphlet, the meeting aimed to highlight differences between Christianity and Hinduism and, according to some of those who objected, implied it could be proved Christianity was a better religion than Hinduism.

The South African Hindu Maha Sabha released a statement this week saying it had received many complaints from irate Hindus in Verulam who had been offended by the contents of the pamphlet.

The Maha Sabha said in its statement to the Potters House Church: "The pamphlet is

intended to inflame interfaith discourse and disrespect for a faith. We remind you that it is not permissible in terms of our constitution, as your pamphlet is designed to denigrate one religion.

"We are surprised that, in conducting yourself in this unlawful manner, you chose to do so without consulting the Hindu faith leadership or, for that matter, inviting a debate in a manner befitting your own faith," said Maha Sabha president Ashwin Trikamjee.

## Testament

The Maha Sabha called for the cancellation of the event and the withdrawal of the pamphlet, threatening legal action against the church.

In response, the church's head, John Robinson, a missionary from New Mexico who has been in South Africa for six months, apologised to the Maha Sabha and the Hindu community. Robinson said the meeting was not intended to offend anyone.

"The meeting was not intended as a debate of the two religions or to insult Hinduism; rather, it was to be a testament from a travelling pastor with a Hindu background who found happiness in the love of

Jesus," said Robinson.

"I bear full responsibility for my actions, and feel that because of my ignorance and lack of discretion in the terminology of the advertisement I have inflamed some people and this was not my intention.

"For this I must apologise... Pastor Samuels only teaches historical facts and personal experiences that changed his life and strengthened his faith in what he and I believe.

"In the light of these events, we have cancelled our meeting," he said.

He added that the terms used in the pamphlet had been over-zealous and his lack of knowledge of local culture had been a major cause of the misunderstanding.

"I've been in South Africa for only six months and am not clued up on local culture. In America, this would have not caused a problem.

"However, the bad decision I made has no bearing on the church or the Potters House organisation. It was not in the spirit of Christianity, as we love all religions. It was just my stupidity as a foreigner."

Trikamjee said the Maha Sabha would accept the apology and trusted the incident would not be repeated.

Figure C.8 Church angers Hindus – Visiting pastor's pamphlet deemed offensive

Byline: “Visiting pastor’s pamphlet deemed offensive” {FACT} – gives more insight into the actual cause of the “anger”; is phrased more carefully and specifically, and uses “deemed” to show that offence was not necessarily intended.

## **Groups**

### **The South African Hindu Maha Sabha**

The South African Hindu Maha Sabha organisation “released a statement this week saying it had received many complaints from irate Hindus in Verulam who had been offended by the contents of the pamphlet”. {FACT} More specific detail is given about the specific problem and which people where were offended by what.

Ashwin Trikamjee - Maha Sabha president (also (Secretary-General of National Religious Leaders Forum) mentions invitation is “unconstitutional” (therefore “unlawful”).

### **“Irate” Hindus in Verulam**

Originators of the complaint to the South African Hindu Maha Sabha, and who were offended by the pamphlet.

### **Potters House Church – Charismatic Christian organisation**

John Robinson, “a missionary from New Mexico who has been in South Africa for six months” – source of the pamphlet, Head of Potters House Missionary Movement.

Pastor Marcus Samuel, an “evangelist guest priest..., who was born in India and claims (suggests it might not be true) to have been a Hindu previously”.

**Article focus:** Six paragraphs are given from Pastor Robinson apologising. Why does Mungroo quote him so much - to emphasise that he was in the wrong? Or to appease the Verulam community that justice has been done?

# CHURCH ANGERS HINDUS {FACT}

*{Suggests direct opposition or conflict between Christians and Hindus, encroachment on Hindus' constitutional rights.} {Lettering size echoes the extent of the offence.}*

Visiting pastor's pamphlet deemed offensive {FACT} *{However, more detail is given to show the specifics of the offence to Hindus, and even more as the article unfolds.}*

## VERUSCHKA MUNGROO

A visiting US preacher has incurred the wrath of local Hindus for an "offensive" pamphlet. {FACT} *{“wrath” is strong and has religious connotations, e.g. “divine wrath”, “offensive” – using quotation marks is hedging, as Pastor Robinson claims that no offence was intended, i.e. implicit.}*

The pamphlet, titled “Christianity or Hinduism - what makes more sense?” {INTOL} *{Suggests direct opposition or conflict between the Christian and Hindu religions, and implies that one must be better than the other; “sense” suggests one group must be stupid to reject the “right” religion.}*, was an invitation {FACT} to a revival service *{suggests Charismatics, also suggests conversion}* at the Potters House Church in Verulam, featuring evangelist *{Suggests conversion}* guest priest Pastor Marcus Samuel, who was born in India and claims to have been a Hindu previously {FACT}. *{suggests conversion to Christianity makes more “sense”}*

The discourse *{“talk” - very neutral word}* was to be held on Friday at the church, but was cancelled after pressure from the Hindu community. {FACT}

According to the pamphlet, the meeting aimed to highlight differences between Christianity and Hinduism {FACT} {PRO-T} *{no accusation by the reporter}* and, according to some of those who objected, implied it could be proved Christianity was a better {HEG} religion than Hinduism {OPIN}. *{but it's clear that the “revival meeting” by two “reformed” Hindus was intended to show this.}*

The South African Hindu Maha Sabha released a statement this week {FACT} saying it had received many complaints from irate Hindus in Verulam who had been offended by the contents of the pamphlet. {REPT-I} {FACT} *{Many Hindus had complained and were clearly offended.}*

The Maha Sabha said in its statement to the Potters House Church {FACT}: “The pamphlet is intended to inflame interfaith discourse and disrespect for a faith. {REPT-D} {OPIN} We remind you that it is not permissible in terms of our constitution {CON}, {REPT-D}{CON} {FACT} as your pamphlet is designed to denigrate one religion. {OPIN} {REPT-D}

“We are surprised that, in conducting yourself in this unlawful manner {OPIN} {CON} {POF} *{strong – suggests pastor is a criminal}* {OPIN}, you chose to do so without consulting the Hindu faith leadership or, for that matter, inviting a debate in a manner befitting your own faith,” {REPT-D} {INTOL} *{highlights intolerance of Christians}* said Maha Sabha president Ashwin Trikamjee {REPT-D}. {FACT} *{i.e. that he said it.} {The tone of this statement is angry and accusatory, but it highlights the two key areas which gave offence:*



1. Any proposed “debate” between the merits of Hinduism vs. Christianity should have been cleared with the Hindu faith leadership in that area.
2. Any fair debate (i.e. in the western tradition) should have included Hindu religious leaders (pundits) or priests.}

### Testament

The Maha Sabha called for the cancellation of the event and the withdrawal of the pamphlet, threatening legal action {POF} against the church. {FACT}

In response, the church’s head, John Robinson, a missionary from New Mexico who has been in South Africa for six months, apologised to the Maha Sabha and the Hindu community. {FACT} Robinson said the meeting was not intended to offend anyone. {REPT-I}

“The meeting was not intended as a debate of the two religions or to insult Hinduism; *{a retraction of the meaning of: “Christianity or Hinduism - what makes more sense”}* rather, it was to be a testament *{Charismatic jargon – meaningless to Hindus}* retraction from a travelling pastor with a Hindu background who found happiness in the love of Jesus,” {REPT-D} *{rephrases the “conversion” aspect so that it sounds innocent}* said Robinson. {POL}

“I bear full responsibility for my actions, and feel that because of my ignorance and lack of discretion in the terminology of the advertisement I have inflamed some people and this was not my intention. {REPT-D} *{ Stated as fact, but it is still a retraction of the offensive message, pleading ignorance.}* {POL}

“For this I must apologise ...Pastor Samuels **only** teaches historical facts {OPIN}, *{debatable}* and personal experiences that changed his life and strengthened his faith in what he and I believe. {REPT-D} {POL} *{Ignores the fact that it might offend people with different beliefs.}*

“In the light of these events, we have cancelled our meeting,” he said. {REPT-D}{FACT} He added that **the terms used in the pamphlet had been over-zealous** {OPIN} **and his lack of knowledge of local culture** had been a major cause of the misunderstanding. {POL} {REPT-I} *{Still excusing, but definitely has misunderstood the local context.}* {conciliatory}

“I’ve been in South Africa for only six months {FACT} and am not clued up on local culture. {POL} {REPT-D}{*How long should this take?*} In America, this would have not caused a problem. {CON} {OPIN} {REPT-D} *{ Very likely – this is the problem: America has a **Christian** Constitution.}* {HEG}

“However, the bad decision {OPIN} {POL} I made has no bearing on the church or the Potters House organisation. {REPT-D} *{Takes blame.}* It was not in the spirit of Christianity {HEG}, **as we love all religions.** {OPIN} {REPT-D} *{Why does it make more “sense” to be Christian, then?}* It was just my stupidity as a foreigner.” {OPIN} {REPT-D} *{Takes blame.}*

Trikamjee said the Maha Sabha would accept the apology and trusted the incident would not be repeated. {POF} {REPT-I} {FACT}



Table C.9 Code frequency in article 9

<b>Parties outraged at school religion case</b>	
Hegemony vs. legislation:	
Hegemony {HEG} (i.e. hegemonic influence evident)	2
Constitution {CON} (i.e. reference to the Constitution)	4
Subject positions:	
Powerful {POF} (i.e. coming from a position of power)	3
Powerless {POL} (i.e. coming from a powerless position)	6
Attitudes:	
Humour {HUM} (i.e. humour is used)	-
Pro-tolerance {PRO-T} (i.e. evidence of tolerance)	1
Intolerance {INTOL} (i.e. evidence of intolerance)	2
Fact/opinion:	
Factual {FACT} (i.e. presented by reporter as fact)	17
Opinion {OPIN} (i.e. presented by reporter as opinion)	11
Reported speech (of role players):	
Direct speech {REPT-D}	14
Indirect speech {REPT-I}	4
Main role players include:	
• Press	X
• School personnel	-
• Public	X
• Education authorities	-
• Religious groups (political parties)	X

## End of coded discourse analysis

The coded discourse analysis ends here. However, the texts of two further articles are provided below in terms of what their content can add as supporting evidence to the conclusions (and subsequent recommendations) reached in the discourse analysis.

## 10. Teacher calls for religious tolerance in schools

In *The Post*, 18-22 August 2010 p19 (see Figure C.10).

**Teacher calls for religious tolerance in schools**

**SLINDILE MALULEKA**

PUBLIC schools should do more to accommodate pupils from different religious backgrounds.

This was the subject of a paper Verulam teacher Loshni Govindsamy recently presented at an annual education conference in Greece. Her trip was funded by the Durban University of Technology, where she is completing the final year of her PhD.

The Everest Heights Primary School teacher chose to research this topic because during her 17 years as a teacher she had experienced many incidents of religious intolerance among pupils.

**Apartheid**

During her study, Govindsamy found that at assembly, schools recited a common prayer, which she said was Christian-based.

She argued that public schools now had pupils from a number of religious denominations, but some were still practising what had been instilled in the apartheid era.

An extract from her research reads: "Even after political liberation in South Africa, a mismatch exists between the principles of freedom of religious observance taught in religion education and the actual religious observances in public schools.

"Anglican hymns, prayers and observances are still being used in schools where the religious ethos has changed from one of Christianity to include Hinduism and Islam, as well as Shembe and Zionist religions."

Her dissertation has been published in a social science journal in Athens.

Govindsamy was one of five people representing South Africa at the conference.

She was the only one from KwaZulu-Natal.

Terence Khala, of the Department of Basic Education, said schools were not religious institutions.

"We live in a secular country that guarantees the rights of all religions. Schools must accommodate diverse religious practices and beliefs in a tolerant, compassionate and equitable manner."

"All religions are taught in life orientation as part of the curriculum."

The South African Schools Act says religious observance may be conducted at a public school under rules issued by the governing body if such observances are conducted on an equitable basis, and attendance of them by pupils and members of staff is free and voluntary.

National Religious Leaders Forum secretary-general Ashwin Trikamjee said the issue of multi-religions had been raised in the past by other religious associations.

He said single religions should not be "over-emphasised" when there were different religions in a school because this could lead to religious intolerance.

"Other religions, no matter how small they are, should be accommodated during prayer," Trikamjee said.

Sayed Rajack, KwaZulu-Natal Parents' Association chairman, said it was the responsibility of school management and governing bodies to ensure that all religions were acknowledged in schools.



**RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE:** Loshni Govindsamy, who is doing her PhD in education at the Durban University of Technology, conducted a study on education and religion, which she recently presented in Greece during an education conference.

Figure C.10 Teacher calls for religious tolerance in schools

## 11. Sharing to build bridges of religious tolerance

In *The Mercury* (South Africa); July 24, 2014 p6 (see Figure C.11).

### Sharing to build bridges of religious tolerance

Michelle Jones

PUPILS from two Cape Town schools – one Jewish and the other Muslim – have come together to form an after-hours organisation promoting religious education and tolerance.

The Ishmael Isaac Society was launched by pupils from Herzlia High and Islamia College late last year and has more than 120 members. Its founders had taken part in a two-year interfaith exchange programme organised by Marlene Silbert, to promote understanding between pupils of different faiths.

Silbert said the pupils decided to keep in touch by forming the society. "It brings them together so they can talk and have meaningful dialogue."

Pupils from other schools had expressed interest in joining the society and it was "expanding exponentially". They planned to meet twice a term and arrangements were being made to visit a church, mosque, synagogue, temple and other places of worship.

The society is named after the prophet whose name is Ishmael in Arabic and Isaac in Hebrew, and whose story is told in

Islam and Judaism.

Islamia College teacher Achmat Marcus said he had facilitated the first society meeting this year and encouraged pupils to say how much they knew about the others' religion.

"There are so many similarities, yet there is so much we don't know. We have a lot to learn from each other."

Grade 12 Herzlia High pupils Shannon Pincus and Zena Kruss van der Heever said they had enjoyed learning about the differences and similarities between the religions.

"We discussed the impor-

tance of the Ishmael Isaac Society and the importance of having that space," said Van der Heever.

Silbert started the twinning and exchange programme with 15 pupils from five schools across Cape Town in 2011.

At first pupils met once a week and got to know each other's faiths before introducing interfaith clubs and societies in their schools. In the second year, they tutored younger children at Siyazingisa Primary School in Gugulethu.

About 60 pupils have taken part.

Figure C.11 Sharing to build bridges of religious tolerance

## Appendix D: Letter of Consent and Ethical Clearance



Dear Participant

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study entitled: *An analysis of the discourse on religious observances in public schools to establish the hegemonic influence of colonial religious observances and their effect on school populations.*

The researcher undertakes to assure you of the following:

- To maintain your confidentiality;
- To protect your rights and welfare, i.e. to ensure that no harm comes to you as a result of your participation in this research;
- No manipulation or withholding of information is involved in this study;
- To present information and transcripts used in this research in such a way as to maintain the participant's dignity, and if in doubt to first consult with you;
- To make available to you the final copy of this research publication; and
- The participant is free to withdraw from this research process at any time, if the need should so arise.

I acknowledge your sacrifice in volunteering to add to a body of academic knowledge and your perseverance in carrying out this research to its completion.

Yours sincerely

---

Loshini Govindsamy  
Doctor of Technology Student  
Student Number 19052420

To: Dr D.D. Pratt, Research Coordinator,  
Faculty of Arts and Design

From: Chair, Research Ethics Committee

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2010

RE: FACULTY OF ARTS AND DESIGN, PROPOSALS SUBMITTED FOR FULL ETHICS APPROVAL BY  
ROUND ROBIN TO THE IRC

This serves to inform you that the following proposals submitted have now been granted full  
ethics clearance:

- Miss Phumzile Jean Shange, MTech: Graphic Design (Student No 20400125)
- Mrs Loshini Govindsamy, DTech: Language Practice (Student No 19052420)
- Mrs Vasantha Reddy, DTech: Language Practice (Student No 20927233)

I would like to take this opportunity to wish the students every success in their research  
endeavours.

Yours sincerely,



Prof S Moyo

Director – Research Management and Development (Acting)

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