

**A DECADE OF CHANGES – EASTERN CAPE WHITE COMMERCIAL FARMERS’
DISCOURSES OF DEMOCRACY**

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Abstract:

This paper deals with an analysis of the discursive accounts of Eastern Cape white commercial farmers on the subject of Democracy. Drawing on the theoretical perspectives of Social Constructionism and Discourse Analysis – which view individuals’ accounts of their realities as produced and informed by their particular social and historical context – the paper seeks to provide an analysis of the content of, and rhetorical strategies within the participants’ accounts and explanations. Such accounts of the social, historical and political circumstances in which Eastern Cape commercial farmers find themselves are thought to provide valuable insights into the manner in which the process of democratisation has been received by members of the agricultural sector. Data collection was conducted via brief, audio taped, semi-structured interviews. The participants were all white men and women, living in a commercial farming region of the Eastern Cape Province. Responses to the interviews were subjected to the Discourse Analytical procedure advanced by Ian Parker. Analyses reveal that participants are critical of the notion of democracy; utilize specific rhetorical and argumentation strategies; make use of notions and techniques of ‘Othering’; and subscribe to a colonial / patriarchal ideology which attempts to idealize pre-democratic South Africa. These findings illustrate what is in many ways still an ongoing political and ideological struggle in the rural regions of the country.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and context of the research

With the first decade of democracy in South Africa behind us, the time is ripe to begin serious and critical evaluations of the extent of the social changes that South Africa has undergone. Such an endeavour should not only focus on the macro-level of political, historical and economic change, but also needs to pay attention to the micro-level of individuals' perceptions, attitudes and actions. The research conducted for this thesis is one of a multitude of possible attempts to do just that. This thesis describes the results of a discourse analytical study conducted with white commercial farmers in the Eastern Cape province. The study aimed to elicit the farmers' conceptions of, and relationship to, the democratic social transformation that has occurred since 1994.

Before embarking upon any sort of discussion of how the participants in this study constructed their accounts of democracy and democratic change, it is necessary to provide a discussion of several key theoretical concepts and the links between them. This is to be done in order to better illustrate the logic underlying the analysis of the discursive practices employed by Eastern Cape white commercial farmers. To this end, the discussion following in this chapter focuses on attempting to provide both a definition and discussion of the concept 'democracy'. The aim is to illustrate the manner in which this idea can be variously constructed, with differing emphases and connotations. Following this, some attention is devoted to the idea of 'political culture' and a discussion of social attitudes and perceptions of particular sectors of the population is offered in order to provide further description of the broader socio-political context in which the participants in this study position themselves. Finally, the chapter draws to a close with an exploration of the ideological dimensions underlying certain kinds of construction of the concepts 'democracy', by providing a discursive examination of both 'liberalism' and 'racism', as well as providing a brief discussion of the current context in which this research has taken place.

Chapter two focuses on the methodology employed by this research and engages in a discussion of the social constructionist paradigm in which this research is located. An explanation of discourse analysis as a method of qualitative data analysis is also offered. Chapter three provides a detailed discourse analysis and discussion of the

gathered interview texts, showing the particular ideologically informed patterns of talk that participants in the research used to construct their accounts of democracy in South Africa. Finally, chapter four attempts to provide a brief summative discussion by way of conclusion and suggests some recommendations for further research.

1.1) Different views on ‘Democracy’

Defining democracy as a political system is not easy. The same holds for attempting to investigate people’s attitudes towards the process of democratic change that has been ongoing in South Africa for the past decade. Arblaster (1994, p. 3) writes “democracy is a concept before it is a fact, and because it is a concept it has no single precise and agreed meaning.” One is therefore tempted to apply a commonsense approach to arriving at a definition of this concept, and this is indeed one of the features of the research conducted for this thesis – an investigation of the ways of speaking employed by representatives of a certain sector of society in the construction of their attitudes towards democracy. Speaking of commonsense notions of democracy, Arblaster (1994) argues that people commonly assume that the concept signifies government by the people or their elected representatives. This seems at least to fit at face value. However, when paying closer attention to the details of exactly how ‘democratic’ systems of government function it appears that “democracy is a term which, whatever its precise meaning, will always signify for many a cherished political principle or ideal, and for that reason alone it is never likely to achieve a single agreed meaning” (Arblaster, 1994, p. 6).

More formal attempts at definition of the concept do of course exist. For instance, Reynolds (1999, p. 20) cites Martin Lipset’s procedural and mechanistic features of democracy as being important elements of a definition:

First, competition exists for government positions, and fair elections for public office occur at regular intervals without the use of force and without excluding any social group. Second, citizens participate in selecting their leaders and forming policies. And, third, civil and political liberties exist to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation.

Naturally, such a definition assumes the widespread popular support and consent for the system of government (Arblaster, 1994), as well as the adoption (and in most cases, constitutional protection) of certain liberal attitudes regarding individual rights and liberties. This does not mean that democracy and liberal ideology necessarily go hand in hand (and it is certainly possible to argue that they do not), but there are some domains of overlap. However, an in-depth discussion of the theory of democracy is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Defining democracy purely substantively in terms of the procedures and mechanisms by which it functions as a political system may lose sight of these popular attitudes. Similarly to Arblaster (1994), Mattes and Calland (2002, p. 4) argue, “Democracy is a principle rather than a set of procedures.” Given this view, they go on to argue that examining democracy in South Africa should not focus on the institutional or procedural form it takes, but rather should revolve around the extent to which the principle is realised (Mattes & Calland, 2002). This involves investigating the extent to which popular self-government has been achieved as well as examining the discursive sets of ideas and attitudes that constitute the notion itself.

Research concerning democratisation in Southern Africa has tended to focus on either institutional / macropolitical changes (Deegan, 1999; Reynolds, 1999), or on a quantitative audit of popular perceptions of democracy and democratic change (Graham & Coetzee, 2002). In the case of the former, attention has been paid to observing institutional indicators of democratic change, in order to establish the workings of newly founded democracies. A number of variables have been examined to determine the strength and direction of political change on a macro level. These include political stability and/or violence, electoral indicators (such as voter turnout), as well as various economic indicators such as growth and inflation rates (Reynolds, 1999). Other studies have tracked constitutional development and the impact of governmental reform policies to determine the state of democracy within South Africa (Deegan, 1999).

Regarding popular perceptions of democracy, IDASA has recently conducted a Democracy Index survey in South Africa (Graham & Coetzee, 2002). The purpose of this audit/survey was to assess popular evaluations of South Africa’s democracy

along five dimensions: 1) Consensus on and participation in popular self-government; 2) popular selection of decision-makers; 3) popular control over decision-makers; 4) protection of citizens' equality and their ability to control representatives; and 5) economic and social inequality (Mattes & Calland, 2002).

The research conducted for this thesis however, adopted a more qualitative approach to the investigation of the extent to which popular social attitudes and ideas reflect, complement or contradict the abovementioned notion of democracy as a principle. As such, it did not focus on an objective assessment of the achievement of 'popular self-government'. Instead it aimed to examine the manner in which representatives of a certain sector of South African society construct this notion, as well as their subjective experience of political transformation as articulated in and through particular discursive patterns.

As such, the notion of democracy is utilised as a rhetorical lens through which to focus participants' discussions concerning their perceptions of post-1994 South Africa. In this way it is anticipated that the use of 'democracy' as a metaphor to describe the overall political culture will serve to highlight the possible tensions that may exist between substantive understandings of democracy and ascription to liberal ideology, as well as the manners in which the participants in the research attempt to account for such conflicts.

1.2) Political Culture and Social Psychology

Naturally, any discussion of popular or commonsense constructions of perceptions of, or attitudes toward, a political dispensation must include a discussion of the notion of 'political culture'. Bluhm (1974) writes that the idea of political culture is directly related to the notion of ideology, which has, in modern times, come to designate "a system of political ideas" (Bluhm, 1974, p. 3) often expressed or used to further some end or set of values. To elaborate, Bluhm (1974, p. 4) writes, "They [ideologies] present total schemes of social, political, and economic values – a complete theory of the good life for man in society." To this end ideology not only informs our value judgements regarding ways in which we should act, but also serves to explain and justify (or in the case of revolutionary / radical ideology, to critique) the *status quo* socio-political arrangements within society (Bluhm, 1974).

Returning to the notion of political culture, it can be described as the manners in which ideology finds expression in the articulations of members of a society concerning perceptions of, attitudes toward and value judgements of the particular system of government incumbent at any given time. Bluhm (1974, p. 6) cites Samuel Beer as arguing, “Certain aspects of the general culture of a society are especially concerned with *how* government ought to be conducted and *what* it should try to do.” It thus appears apparent that the concept of ‘political culture’ has several important dimensions. Almond (1989, p. 26) thus defines political culture as “consisting of cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations to political phenomena, distributed in national populations or in subgroups.”

This conceptualisation of the notion of political culture can be further elaborated upon in terms of content, orientations and relations (Almond, 1989). Regarding the content of ‘political culture’ Almond (1989, p. 28) elaborates three subcomponents, namely “system culture, process culture, and policy culture,” all of which are germane to the research conducted for this thesis. For instance, Almond (1989, p. 28) writes:

The system culture of a nation would consist of the distributions of attitudes toward the national community, the regime, and the authorities ... These would include the sense of national identity, attitudes towards the legitimacy of the regime and its various institutions ... The process culture would include attitudes towards the self in politics and attitudes toward other political actors. The policy culture would consist of the distribution of preferences regarding the outputs and outcomes of politics, the ordering among different groupings in the population of such political values as welfare, security, and liberty.

The research conducted for this thesis provides a discursive analysis of the manner in which these very elements of ‘political culture’ are articulated through Eastern Cape white commercial farmers’ talk about democracy and the process of democratic change that has taken place in the past ten years. Almond (1989, p. 12) writes, “Social Psychology represents an effort to understand and explain how and why the attitudes and behaviour of individuals are conditioned and influenced by the presence and impact of other individuals and social groupings.” In this regard, social psychological research has been, and indeed still is an important paradigm for the generation of theoretical understanding of the dynamic interplay between individual

subjects, their group positioning, affiliations, value and belief systems, and their orientations towards various elements of the broader societal context.

As such, this thesis is very much about the ways in which representatives of a certain subgroup within South African society construct their socio-political identities in relation to the notion of democracy. It is thus important to bear in mind a few considerations regarding political culture / identity. The first is that political culture should not necessarily be conceived of as a monolithic whole (Bluhm, 1974). This point seems to be self-evident, especially if one is to consider the ‘nature’ of such social phenomena as ideologies, attitudes, value systems, culture, and even identity. At the core of many of these concepts – irrespective of the degree of stability or permanence accorded to them – lies the recognition that there is dynamism. Culture evolves, values and attitudes change, ideologies compete (Parker, 1992); identity is fluid and acquired (Preston, 1997).

Bluhm (1974, p. 11) writes, “A political culture may be a complex entity of discontinuous parts, and in a time of change this is usually the case.” This consideration is further supported in the discussion on the methodology employed by this research, which explicitly adopts the stance of examining variations, conflicting constructions and inconsistencies in order to deconstruct and expose the ideological underpinnings of individuals’ modes of speaking. This conception of the fluid and fragmentary nature of culture and identity implies that “any particular expression, any discrete identity, will be contested” (Preston, 1997, p. 5). Such contestedness is examined through an exploration of the ways in which subjects articulate ideas concerning culture and identity. A more in-depth discussion of this follows in the discussion of the methodology employed by this research.

Related to the above statement, it is argued that studying the manner in which people discursively construct their ideas concerning social change in South Africa, as well as their perceived membership of particular groups, will reveal whether purportedly outmoded ideological beliefs still constitute the bulk of particular patterns of social cognition amongst certain sectors of the population, in terms of group categorisations, biases and stereotyping (Aronson , Wilson & Akert, 2002). White commercial farmers were proposed as a study population specifically because of the manner in

which agrarian life and labour, in the largely rural Eastern Cape province, is located at the centre of several intersecting vectors of race, class and historically constituted state-supported privilege (Bundy, 1979; Beinart, Delius & Trapido, 1986; Jeeves & Crush, 1997). This makes their particular discourses of democracy of analytic interest as a means of monitoring the extent of change in social attitudes and popular discourse that is assumed to have taken place since 1994.

1.3) Ideological ways of talk – Liberalism and racism

In light of what has gone before in this discussion, it is now time to turn attention to an exploration of the interaction between the notions of democracy and political culture in order to examine more precisely the kinds of ideological assumptions that underpin commonsense constructions of these two ideas, as they apply to the particular project of this thesis.

As stated above, the notion of democracy implies the adoption of particular values, and it has also been argued that definitions of the concept tend to share the common feature that they describe a political ideal, as opposed to an actual system of government (Arblaster, 1994; Mattes & Calland, 2002). This dualism between the concept of democracy, and the actual political practice of ‘democratic’ societies has been commented on by O’Malley (1999). In discussing the results of focus group surveys concerning democracy conducted with black South African participants in 1992, O’Malley (1999) notes that respondents’ ideas about democracy displayed such a dualism. O’Malley (1999, p. 123) explains: “Democracy was widely interpreted as the antonym for apartheid. It encapsulated the opposite of apartheid ... Participants did not see democracy as a means, but an end; not as a process, but as a set of goals, accomplishments, results.”

As such, democracy was constructed not simply as an ‘ethic’ that would form the moral basis for the New South African society (in contrast to apartheid South Africa) it was understood in terms of the more tangible social norms and practices that would stem from the adoption of this ‘ethic’ (O’Malley, 1999). This kind of notion of democracy acts to reify the concept – defining it in terms of idealised end products, tangible outcomes and institutions (O’Malley, 1999).

What is perhaps more significant concerning this sort of ‘end product’ conception of democracy is the ways in which it reproduces liberal political ideology – with a focus on the individual rights to freedom and private property. Dixon (1997), in his study of Hout Bay residents’ responses to the establishment of a squatter camp in their community, identifies a liberal discourse as one that privileges and protects the ideology of the inviolability of individual liberties and rights. But it is important to remember that liberalism does not stand “apart from any particular moral and political agenda. Rather it is a very particular moral agenda (privileging the individual over the community, the cognitive over the affective, the abstract over the particular)” (Fish 1994, pp. 137-138).

At the same time one must comment on the manner in which a necessary connection between democracy and liberal values and individual freedoms is assumed to exist. To clarify, people tend to assume that democracy *must* equate with civil liberties and the protection of individual rights (more often than not, those concerned with private property). However, Richard Arneson (1993) puts forward an interesting thesis on the nature of this assumed relationship. He argues, “Democratic rights are protective. Their primary function is to safeguard other, more fundamental rights” (Arneson, 1993, p. 118). Yet different people will always have conflicting interests, and therefore there must exist a hierarchy of rights, with some being more fundamental than others (Arneson, 1993). Thus it falls to a ‘democratic’ government to regulate and safeguard this hierarchical arrangement of individual rights through its constitution and judicial process. The ‘ins and outs’ of democratic governance and law making notwithstanding (such a discussion being outside the scope of this thesis), Arneson (1993) thus views democracy as purely instrumental, and there is therefore no fundamental connection between democracy as a political system, and the realisation of individual rights and freedoms for all (Sugden, 1993).

Yet much of the rhetoric – both party-political and public – concerning democracy makes just this sort of claim and the ideological argument is that democracy as an ideal is desirable because in practice, it delivers individual rights and liberty. The opinion of this thesis is that a discussion of the constructions of democracy should examine the ideological ways of speaking that underpin these constructions, as well as pay attention to the social practices and institutions supported by such modes of

articulation. To this end it is deemed necessary to examine the manner in which liberal ideology commingles with, supports, and is in turn supported by, apparently contradictory, exclusionary and/or prejudicial ideologies and ways of talk.

This would suggest that ideology is dynamic and fluid. Fairclough (1995) argues this very point when discussing the relationship between ideology, hegemony and discourse. In order to elaborate this relationship, Fairclough argues that it is necessary to view ideology neither as a product of the underlying structures of language practice, nor as a result of fluid discursive events, but rather as a result of the interaction of both of these elements (Fairclough, 1995). This approach to understanding the nature of the relationship between ideology and discourse thus leads to a dialectical view whereby “discourse is shaped by structures, but also contributes to shaping and reshaping them, to reproducing and transforming them” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 73). This creates a dynamic view of the manner in which ideology informs and is informed by the discursive practices that individuals employ. Thus, Fairclough writes that “rather than attributing specific and fixed ideological ‘contents’ to elements, ideology is seen more dynamically as the shifting relationship of discursive practices to hegemonic (and more local-institutional) struggle” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 81). In stating this view, Fairclough (1995) draws on Foucault’s argument regarding the multiple meanings and uses of discourses. Foucault (in Fairclough, 1995, p. 81) argues the following point:

Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy; they can, on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy.

It is important to bear this argument in mind when investigating Eastern Cape white commercial farmers’ discursive constructions of the notion of democracy, particularly when such constructions appear to be vested in liberal ideological values – values that are seemingly used to support both positive and negative views towards democracy and the racial ‘Other’. Much of the discursive analysis carried out for this thesis will focus on the manner in which liberal ideology is used in the discourse of the farmers interviewed, and to what ends this ideological resource is drawn upon.

In a related vein, Wetherell & Potter's (1992) analysis of discourses of race and racism in New Zealand also addresses this issue of the variable ways in which liberal ideology is drawn upon to support both racist and anti-racist attitudes and beliefs. Their departure point is the argument that racist attitudes and beliefs are by no means monolithic or necessarily contribute to the articulation of a coherent set of discourses. Instead, Wetherell & Potter (1992, p. 176) focus on the ambivalences and inconsistencies in individual accounts and use this to argue that "racism is flexible; its manifestations change as material conditions shift and as the agenda for debate become successfully redefined through various forms of struggle." It is thus not too difficult to argue the point that liberal ideology and beliefs or ideas that are seemingly the antithesis of liberalism are in fact not really all that incommensurate. Thus, a liberal ideology incorporating notions such as "individual rights and freedoms and the importance of contracts and equality [that are] taken for granted" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 181) can be used discursively to argue for what would seemingly appear to be the precise opposite – the protection of the rights and freedoms of a few to the exclusion of true equality for all. It is this kind of ideological positioning that shall be explored in the analysis of Eastern Cape white commercial farmers' discourses concerning democracy.

If this thesis is to provide an analysis of the relationship between liberal ideology and expressions of racist attitudes, it is necessary to discuss the notion of racism in a little more detail. Wetherell & Potter (1992) provide a critique of contemporary social science investigations of racism that posit the development of a new, modern, ambivalent sort of racist attitude, as opposed to historical, more openly bigoted attitudes. This modern racism approach, according to Wetherell & Potter (1992), argues that contemporary expressions of racism and racist attitudes have become subtler and sometimes contradictory – to the point that such expressions seem to be the expression of attitudinal ambivalence toward the racial 'Other'. Such ambivalence is seen as "the outcome of a conflict between anti-black sentiments and liberal values" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 195).

Such an explanation would, at first glance, appear to have some validity when accounting for the discursive strategies employed by certain groups within a society to

express attitudes or opinions that, as a result of broad political changes, have become widely regarded as socially unacceptable. Yet, as Wetherell & Potter (1992) argue, such an explanatory account of contemporary expressions of racism ascribe to the idea that racism and racist attitudes are purely the result of psychological factors and are therefore cognitive-affective in nature. Additionally, liberal values are viewed as being diametrically opposed to such prejudice to the effect that “liberal values are seen as attenuating anti-black emotions and related cognitions to produce the conflicted phenomenon of modern racism” (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 197).

What such cognitive conflict supposedly produces is an ambivalence of attitude to the effect that openly bigoted attitudes and the expressions thereof become replaced by superficial tolerance, combined with more subtle expressions of prejudice. Whillock & Slayden (1995, p. xi) argue: “As routine expressions of hate are pushed out of public discourse, they re-emerge in more subtle and less newsworthy ways.” What this means is that even though racism has become taboo, racist attitudes and beliefs still underlie many seemingly innocuous and well-meaning attempts by whites to account for societal change.

However, this ‘weakening’ of strong racism through the widespread adoption of liberal values, and its replacement by a more subtle form of prejudice is not necessarily the case, as has been alluded to previously. Liberal values, instead of providing more ‘rational’ beliefs and attitudes (such as equality, the protection of individual rights, free enterprise, and the like) to counteract the affectively based, and therefore less rational, prejudicial attitudes associated with racism, instead provide individuals with a particular set of discursive resources that can be used to construct even the circumstances brought about by democratic political and social change in a negative light.

As such, Wetherell & Potter (1992, p. 197) argue the following:

Discourse analysis locates the conflicts and dilemmas within the argumentative and rhetorical resources available in a ‘liberal’ and ‘egalitarian’ society ... The conflict is not between a feeling and a value, between psychological drives and socially acceptable

expressions or between emotions and politics, but between competing frameworks for articulating social, political, and ethical questions.

An example of the sort of discursive practices currently being referred to has been highlighted by Dixon (1997) in his study of Hout Bay residents' responses to the emergence of informal settlements in close proximity to their homes. In their responses to Dixon's research questions, residents draw upon the liberal notion of the individual's 'inviolable' right to private property, accorded by the state, yet use this liberal idea to argue for the removal and exclusion a group of people and their property from a particular area. Residents of Hout Bay feel threatened because the very same state that accords them the right to private property is seen as threatening the sanctity of this property and this right by refusing to remove/relocate informal settlements.

And in this conflict lies the crux of an ideological dilemma between liberalism and what is commonly accepted as 'democratic change' within South Africa since 1994. The conflict arises due to the introduction of legislation pertinent to a variety of circumstances within South African society that is, strictly speaking, in conflict with an orthodox liberal ideology, encompassed by the notions of advancement – in terms of material achievements, as well as the attainment of individual rights – through either market forces (unfettered by state interventions) or through merit (likewise exempt from state interference). Yet some of South Africa's legislation flies in the face of these values and paves the way for state intervention and control in these realms – the Affirmative Action policy being a prime example of such interventions. This argument shall be returned to and elaborated upon.

Thus, the focus of the analysis that is to follow will be on attempting to elucidate the ramifications of this conflict between liberalism and 'democracy' as a metaphor for post-1994 South Africa for Eastern Cape white commercial farmers by paying attention to the various manners in which liberal discourses are employed to argue both for and against the 'democratic change' that has occurred in South Africa since 1994.

It would seem that a key feature of the variable use of liberal ideology to argue both for and against democratic change is that there appears to be an assumption (on both sides of such an argument) of the fundamentally obvious, inviolable and inarguably correct nature of liberal values. It seems to be taken for granted that the liberal rights and freedoms should be accorded to all individuals without question, and yet at the same time such a universally required application of liberal values creates a curious double bind that finds expression in individual's attitudes toward and opinions of the country's broader political culture.

The broader societal sanction of liberal values and ideology in a sense demands that individuals within that society subscribe to the same values. South Africa's democratic government has on many levels (political and economic) adopted liberal values and enshrined them within the country's constitution – individual rights and freedoms are legally protected and legally enforced. Yet, Wetherell & Potter (1992, p. 189) make an interesting point: “to define something as compulsory is, in terms of the liberal discourse of freedom and human rights, to define it negatively. Compulsion is automatically rhetorically bad.” The offshoot of this is that individuals who were previously members of a privileged sector of society may well use liberal ideology to justify that privilege, but then find that the same liberal ideology of rights and freedoms creates circumstances that threaten that selfsame privilege – as was illustrated by Dixon (1997).

This may lead to the formation and articulation of prejudiced attitudes. The taken for granted nature of previously held privilege and the expression of negative affect towards the racial ‘Other’ who seems to be threatening that privilege reflects what King (2001) refers to as ‘dysconscious racism’. King (2001, p. 296) argues that “dysconsciousness is an uncritical habit of mind that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as a given.” In this way, dysconscious racism “tacitly accepts dominant white norms and privileges,” (King, 2001, p. 297).

It is perhaps even possible to explain this habit of ‘dysconsciousness’ – a way of enabling the use of liberal discourse for seemingly diametrically opposed ends – as a corollary of Fanon's (1967) idea of the oppressed consciousness of the colonised.

Yet, white commercial farmers in South Africa are in no way ‘the colonised’. More accurately, they could be taken to represent – even today, ten years into a free and democratic country – the oppressive consciousness of the coloniser. “The colonisation of the mind is manifested in a manner in which a people’s history is denied, and they are made to feel inferior and incapable of challenging the colonial power” (Ahluwalia, 2001, p. 41). The other side to this process is that the consciousness of the oppressor is also shaped by the colonial discourse to construct and maintain an ideological subject position of power and superiority for whites.

What emerges from the above arguments is the idea that members of a previously advantaged sector of a society in which racial segregation and prejudice was a taken for granted ideological cornerstone, may still defensively draw upon racist ideas to frame their discontent with new governmental policies that conflict with an orthodox liberal ideology, commonly assumed to be synonymous with the notion of ‘democracy’.

1.4) The Current Context

With the above discussions concerning the concepts of democracy, political culture, liberal ideology and racism complete, a brief description of the current context in which this research has taken place will be offered as a means to tie the preceding discussions together into a more coherent whole.

The Eastern Cape is South Africa’s third largest province, and one of the poorest. Under the Apartheid regime, much of the Xhosa population of the province was relocated to the two Homelands of Transkei and Ciskei. Black commercial agriculture was effectively undermined and relegated to subsistence farming in the Homeland areas. Much of the African labour force was taken up into the migrant labour system and many men went off to work on the mines of the Witwatersrand, or in the agricultural and industrial areas of the Western cape. The only avenue for those remaining in the rural Eastern Cape was to work as agricultural labourers on White commercial farms.

The Eastern Cape has a long history of land appropriation under British colonial rule, most notably during the Frontier Wars of the 19th century, and the subsequent

establishment of vast areas of the province designated to be allocated to British and other colonial settlers. This trend, established in the mid- and late-1800's by British colonial government, was continued in the twentieth century by the white South African government. The net result was that a viable class of black farmers were marginalized and proletarianised by a complex web of legislation and social practice in the early twentieth century expansion of racialised agrarian capitalism (Beinart, Delius and Trapido, 1986; Bundy, 1979). Significantly, however, the bulk of this appropriation of land occurred in the 19th century (i.e. before 1913), with the result that land in much of the Eastern Cape cannot be eligible for Land Restitution claims, but only for land reform policies.

Government support for white commercial farming in the Eastern Cape came in many guises – the establishment of the two homelands of Transkei and Ciskei, favourable labour legislation that maintained early colonial labour and power relations between farmers and labourers, infrastructural support such as the construction of a vast railway and roads system through very rural areas so as to enable the transport of wool to the harbours of East London and Port Elizabeth, as well as price regulation for agricultural produce such as wool (the chief commercial agricultural product of the region). From this it can be argued that the history of twentieth century South African commercial agriculture is the history of state intervention and support (Jeeves & Crush, 1997). Interestingly, the results of the analysis show that white commercial farmers in the Eastern Cape still feel this to be the case – the only difference being that since 1994, state intervention in agriculture has been perceived as being geared towards undermining their position, and supporting an emerging class of black commercial farmers.

With Democratic change came the dismantling of this state supported privilege: the dissolution of the Homelands, fair labour legislation enforcing changes in the labour relationships between farmers and labourers, the privatisation of parastatal agencies such as Spoornet resulting in the disuse and closure of key railway lines, land reform legislation that sees farms being bought by the state and sold under favourable conditions to individuals without legislatively supported historical claims to it, changes in the treatment of labour tenants, as well as the establishment of procedural impediments to eviction of squatters under the *Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and*

Unlawful Occupation of Land Act (1998); and an increase in violent crimes committed against farmers – to name but a few of the changes in material conditions that white commercial farmers in the Eastern Cape have begun experiencing.

Thus it would appear that for Eastern Cape farmers there is a very real discrepancy between the ideal of democracy, as discussed previously, and the material effects of democratic change. Liberal ideology (assumed to underlie the principles of democracy), an ethos of individual rights and freedoms which this particular sector of South African society has always been accustomed to, and which has been taken for granted, now seems to be in conflict with so-called ‘democratic’ legislation and institutionalised policies that run counter to it.

The discourse analysis that follows in chapter three is therefore an attempt to illustrate the manner in which the white commercial farmers who participated in this research engage with this ideological conflict through an exploration of the discourses they articulate surrounding the notion of democracy. The exact manner in which this analysis has been conducted is explained in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Orientation & Research Methodology

2.1) Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

This thesis made use of qualitative research methods and aligns itself with a social constructionist paradigm. To begin with, a qualitative research approach in the social sciences has a vastly different philosophical and theoretical basis to that held by the more quantitative and experimentally based research paradigm. According to Henwood & Pidgeon (1994, p. 227), qualitative research is “based upon the search for detailed description, seeking to represent reality through the eyes of the participants and to be sensitive to the complexities of behaviour and meaning in context.” Thus, in this form of research, the individual’s subjectivity as well as the co-construction of knowledge through the relationship between the researcher and participant is regarded as highly significant.

Within this broad orientation towards research and the production of accounts of reality, there exists a great diversity of theoretical positions and approaches. One such approach (and indeed the approach adopted by this research) is that of social constructionism, which “focuses chiefly on the operations of language, not merely as a means of describing everyday social reality, but also as a means that individuals and institutions have at their disposal to actively set about constructing social reality” (Bohmke, 2001, p. 14). In this way, social constructionism would argue, “the human life-world is fundamentally constituted in language and that language itself should therefore be the focus of study” (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 149). Such a study would focus its analyses on the ways in which language is used to construct objects in the world and the material effects of such linguistic constructions (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994).

As such, the social world is regarded as “a kind of language, that is, a system of meanings and practices that construct reality” (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 151). Social constructionist investigations are therefore aimed at the identification and deconstruction of these shared systems of meanings, which are used both to construct and interpret the social world (Bohmke, 2001). Such investigations can be undertaken through the utilisation of the methodological orientation of discourse analysis, which is discussed in more detail below.

2.2) Research Questions:

The questions informing this research revolved around the attitudes towards, opinions about, and perceptions of democracy by white commercial farmers in the Eastern Cape, in order to identify how this particular strata of agrarian society: i) conceptualise the process of social and political change; ii) understand their place as subjects within the new democratic order; and finally, iii) what ideological frameworks inform their constructions of self and others. Three basic questions were posed to the participants in order to elicit their ideas concerning democracy. These questions centred on: 1) the individuals' definitions of democracy; 2) the impact that democracy had had on their lives; and 3) whether (and how) they thought that democracy was working, or not. It is important to mention at this juncture that the above research questions did not expect participants to formally theorise definitions of the concept of democracy, nor were their notions of democracy compared to already existing political theory. Instead, the notion of democracy was utilised as a useful metaphorical lens through which to focus their discussions of post-1994 South African society.

2.3) Recruitment of Participants:

Data was garnered from fifteen male farmers and their spouses in a series of thirteen brief interviews, conducted in the Emalahleni area (around the former Indwe / Wodehouse districts). These interviews were audiotaped, transcribed and analysed according to Parker's (1992) method of discourse analysis.

Participants in this research were recruited on a convenience basis. The researcher, being familiar with the area and the farmers resident there, approached prospective participants telephonically and explained to them the nature of the research question, and asked if they would be prepared to take part in the research endeavour. Once participants had assented to the research, interviews were arranged and conducted. Participants were again informed of the research question and the purposes to which the research would be put. Permission for the tape-recording of the interviews was obtained, and participants were assured that both the recordings and transcriptions would be kept confidential. It was also explained to participants that the tape recordings would be erased after a stipulated period of time (6 months).

While it is important to acknowledge the individual vicissitudes as well as regional and class differences of white commercial farmers, a relatively stable and moderately prosperous community inhabits the area in which the research was conducted. So while discourse analysis avoids claims of generalisability, it is anticipated that the discussion of the main findings that follows will resonate with other similar contexts.

2.4) Data Collection – Semi-structured Interviewing

Data collection was conducted via the use of semi-structured interviews designed to elicit participant's ideas, attitudes, perceptions and experiences of democracy as a metaphor for socio-political change. The interviews varied in length, but averaged an approximate duration of fifteen to twenty minutes. The interview schedules were developed on the basis of a review of literature on the research topic, and were to be used to provide a structured yet flexible framework for the interviews. This data collection technique was deemed best suited to the purposes of this research in that interviews provide detailed, in-depth and contextually embedded data, which can then be subjected to the discourse analytical procedure.

Constructionist research tends to take the view that interviews provide the researcher with the opportunity to explore the constructed accounts of participants' life-worlds and experiences through a dialogical process of shared meaning-making (Kvale, 1996). As regards the analysis of peoples' discourses concerning a particular topic of discussion, the interview is seen as "an arena within which particular linguistic patterns can come to the fore" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 153). What is more, the meanings created in the interview situation are "co-constructed between the interviewer and interviewee. These meanings are, moreover, not only constructed by the two people in the interview, but are products of a larger social system for which these individuals act as relays" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 153). Thus, in-depth, semi-structured interviews provided an ideal data collection technique for accomplishing the stated objectives of the research project.

2.5) Data Analysis – Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis, as an analytic perspective, is particularly suited to the sort of constructionist research that was conducted for this thesis. This is so because of the manner in which discourse analysis aims at the deconstruction of individuals'

accounts of an experience or phenomenon. As such, a study or analysis of discourses about a certain phenomenon or experience must focus on discussing people's opinions, attitudes and accounts as produced versions of reality. Therefore, "discourse analysis is concerned with the ways in which language constructs objects, subjects and experiences...Discourse analysts conceptualise language as constitutive of experience rather than representational or reflective" (Willig, 1999, p. 2). Ian Parker (1992) says of discourses that they "do not simply describe the social world, but categorise it, they bring phenomena into sight ... Discourses provide frameworks for debating the value of one way of talking about reality over other ways" (p. 5). For Parker (1992), the process of discourse analysis is valuable in that it "deliberately systematises different ways of talking so we can understand them better" (p. 5).

Discourse analysis therefore focuses primarily on texts – arguing that individual accounts of experience, agency and subjectivity are structured by systems of representation, most notably language. In this way, it is argued - somewhat counter-intuitively - that language as a social phenomenon produces and reproduces meaning independently from the intentions of the individual language user (Parker, 1994). As such, our realities and individual subjectivities are constituted and informed by the ways in which we speak them. Or perhaps more accurately, they speak us. It is thus possible to analyse our world and social phenomena as a system of texts (Parker 1994).

A further feature of discourse analysis described by Willig (1999, p. 2) is that "there is always more than one way of describing something and our choice of how to use words to package perceptions and experiences gives rise to particular versions of events and of reality."

Data analysis of the interview material was conducted using a combination of the discourse analytic procedures put forward by both Potter & Wetherell (1988), as well as those proposed by Parker (1992). Potter & Wetherell's guidelines for the analysis of discourse are aimed at providing an account of what people *do* with the language and discourses they employ. It is thus an attempt to "study language in use," (Wetherell, 2001, p. 3). This primary analytical orientation towards the uses to which language is put prompts a particular method of discourse analysis (Potter &

Wetherell, 1987). This method consists of a close reading of the interview material and the coding and classification of the collected interview material into themes on an inclusive basis. Once this is accomplished, a closer examination of the themes is to be conducted in order to analyse them in terms of *function*, *variability*, and *construction*, followed by a further discussion of the *interpretative repertoires* used (Potter & Wetherell, 1988).

Function refers to the fact that “people do things with their discourse” (Potter & Wetherell, 1988, p. 169) both intentionally (using specific discourses for specific purposes, to produce and perpetuate specific understandings and explanations) and unintentionally, in that the use of particular discourses often have wider social and ideological implications (Potter & Wetherell, 1988). But the process of analysing the function of discourses is not as straightforward as it may at first appear. It is rare, if not indeed non-existent, that individuals hold uniform and unwavering views about a phenomenon across all possible situations or contexts. Discourses can be put to differing uses.

“If talk is oriented to many different functions, global and specific, any examination of language over time reveals considerable variation,” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 33). *Variation* refers to the observation that “what people say and write will be different according to what they are doing” (Potter & Wetherell, 1988, p. 171). Potter and Wetherell (1988, p. 171) go on to state: “As variation is a consequence of function it can be used as an analytic clue to what function is being performed in a particular stretch of discourse.”

The third aspect of discourse that is subjected to analysis in this approach is that of the particular ways in which the talk is structured. The term *construction* is used to refer to the manner in which “language is put together, constructed, for purposes and to achieve particular consequences” (Potter & Wetherell, 1988, p.171). Using language for particular ends – in order to create specific accounts of reality in differing contexts – necessarily involves the construction of versions, indicated by language variations (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In this way an analysis of the specific way in which a discourse is constructed – what kind of language is used, when it is used, as well as how and with or by whom – provides clues as to the variation and the function to

which it is being put and thus provides a detailed, multifaceted approach to the analysis of the discourse. By analysing the *construction*, we are able to show how already existing linguistic resources are drawn on to inform individual accounts, we can analyse how individuals go about exercising a degree of agency in the construction of their accounts of a phenomenon and we can gain insight into the ways in which people orient their talk to do specific things (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

The above three dimensions of a discourse interact in such a way as to constitute an *interpretative repertoire* and such a repertoire incorporates patterns of interpretations and explanations that individuals utilise in their construction of their social realities (Potter & Wetherell, 1988). “Repertoires can be seen as the building blocks speakers use for constructing versions of actions, cognitive processes and other phenomena. Any particular repertoire is constituted out of a restricted range of terms used in a specific stylistic and grammatical fashion” (Potter & Wetherell, 1988, p.172). The identification and elaboration of different interpretative repertoires amounts to an integrated description of the ways in which a discourse is employed as a resource to construct an explanation, description or understanding of the social world and different objects and subjects within it (Bohmke, 2001).

In addition to Potter & Wetherell’s (1987) orientation towards function, variability and construction of discursive repertoires, it is deemed necessary to pay some attention to issues of power. Such an analysis would be implicitly related to a discussion of the *functions* to which discourses are put, as *doing* something implies the exercise of power. However, a more in-depth and explicit examination of the power – and ideological – dimensions of the discursive practices under investigation would enrich the analysis, and serve to further refine the attempt to answer the research questions stated above. In order to perform such an analysis, it is necessary – in addition to Potter & Wetherell’s method of analysis (1987) – to incorporate elements of a Foucauldian-inspired discourse analytical approach.

In order to do this, specific attention in the analysis will be devoted to elements of the discourse that relate to power, ideology and institutions. The first consideration in this regard would be Foucault’s notions concerning the interrelationship between power and knowledge. Foucault saw “knowledge as inextricably enmeshed in

relations of power because it [is] always being applied to the regulation of social conduct in practice,” (Hall, 2001, p. 75). In this way, discourses – because they exist separately from the individual who draws upon them to construct his/her accounts of reality – serve in a very real sense to delimit and regulate the manner in which people can speak about phenomena.

Additionally, discourses incorporate an ideological dimension: values, attitudes, vested interests and moral codes belonging to various producers of knowledge and discourse. It is when this ideological dimension becomes codified through widespread usage, that the discourse gains institutional and power dimensions as well. Foucault argued, “Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of ‘the truth’ but has the power to *make itself true*. All knowledge, once applied in the real world has real effects, and in that sense at least ‘becomes true’. Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practices,” (Hall, 2001, p. 76).

Parker (1992) suggests that an examination of the ways in which discourses function in terms of institutions, power and ideology is a vital element in developing an understanding of discourses as social practices. Therefore, attention needs to be paid to questions concerning the institutions that are reinforced or subverted when a particular discourse is used or not used; the power relationships involved in terms of whose voices or accounts of reality are supported or promoted and whose are invalidated by the recourse to a particular construction; and examining the manner in which various discourses function in collusion to create a version of ‘truth’, and how dominant groups make use of this to promote their particular versions as ‘truth’ (Parker, 1992).

A critical question posed by discourse analytical research regards the reproduction of power relations within individual constructions of the social world. The primacy given to language as a medium through which we construct explanations and understandings of our social realities also means that language becomes that which “constitutes who we are, constructs the positions we occupy, is the medium by which we interact with other people and understand ourselves” (Burman, Kottler, Levett & Parker, 1997, p. 7). But more than this, discourses – precisely because they are social

phenomena – extend beyond subjectivity and individual agency to reproduce existing institutions, ideologies and power relations through individual accounts (Burman, Kottler, Levett & Parker, 1997). It is this aspect of discourse analysis that Parker so adroitly explicates.

Heavily indebted to Foucault, Parker's method of discourse analysis goes beyond the discussion of the ways in which subjectivity is constructed, and examines the manner in which different discourses function, in collusion or competition, to reproduce particular power relations and ideological positions for its subjects (Parker, 1992). This in turn opens up the analysis to not only examine the dominant ideologies reproduced in talk, but also to the strategies of resistance and the interplay of power relations. Yet, regarding these ideas concerning subjectivities and ideological positioning, Fairclough, Graham, Lemke & Wodak (2004, p. 4) point out that analyses of discourse have a tendency to separate "features of text and talk from social issues and contexts, and from the social theories and research that purports to address these." To counter this problem, these authors argue that

The analysis of text and talk are never an end in themselves; that discourse is an inherently relational term for one moment of the social which has no existence except through its relation to other terms; and that discourse analysis is therefore social analysis with a focus on the moment of discourse (Fairclough et al., 2004, pp. 4-5).

However, this does still not conclusively settle the question of the validity of discourse analytical research. McKenna (2004) writes that one of the major methodological criticisms that has been levelled at critical discourse studies concerns the linkages between texts and their contexts, as well as the size and selection (representivity) of the textual material upon which the analysis is based. There are, however, four aspects of an analysis of discourse that can be used to address this concern over validity. These elements, as explained by McKenna (2004) are: 1) *convergence* (the degree of coherence between the various categories of discourse identified by the analysis); 2) *agreement* (the ability of the analysis to convince native speakers of the discourse of its validity); 3) *coverage* (the degree to which the conclusions of the analysis can be transferred to related sets of data) and finally; 4)

linguistic detail (the extent to which the analysis focuses on the linguistic structures of the text). These questions shall be returned to in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 3: Analysis & Discussion of the Findings

The following chapter of this thesis is devoted to a discussion and analysis of the responses elicited by the interview questions. The discussion is arranged thematically according to the two main interpretative repertoires that were identified in the course of the analysis. Initial expectations on the part of the researcher were that there would be a high degree of homogeneity and convergence in participant's discursive constructions of democracy. Instead there proved to be a fair amount of diversity in these accounts. cursory analysis of the gathered interview texts showed it would be possible to divide responses and participants into two broad sets – those who are broadly optimistic and positive about democracy, and those who are generally negative and pessimistic.

However, when it comes to the various discursive practices employed these two broad sets of responses are by no means mutually exclusive. Indeed, as will be shown, many of the ideological assumptions informing these accounts are strikingly similar in terms of their recourse to liberal values and ideals. The difference lies in their tenor, their formulation and the variability of the functions to which the discourses are put (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). To this end, the ensuing discussion of the discourse analysis conducted on the gathered interview texts will be arranged with reference to the underlying ideological positions and will therefore proceed by initially providing a discussion of the use of liberal values to support negative critiques of democratic change. Following this, an explication of the manner in which the same liberal ideology is utilised to positively support democratic change will be offered.

Furthermore while these differences are heuristically explored between the two poles of optimistic versus pessimistic, it is anticipated that this type of study could in future be augmented by the inclusion of data from other groupings of research participants, possibly across age cohorts, race or a rural-urban split.

3.1) Democracy: 'It's a hell of a bugger-up'

This particular interpretative repertoire, characterised by the articulation of a generally pessimistic attitude toward democracy and democratic change, clearly

displays the kind of ideological conflict that participants in this research are trying to reconcile. As mentioned earlier, individual subject positions are constrained by liberal ideology in two conflicting ways. On the one hand, the officially sanctioned discourse and ideal of liberalism that is being promoted on an ideological level by the country's government compels individuals to recognise the individual rights and freedoms of all members of society. On the other hand, the implementation of institutional reforms in the form of policies that appear to be distinctly un-liberal is threatening the selfsame individual rights of this particular sector of society. This conflict is expressed in the ways in which participants articulate their negative and pessimistic attitudes toward democracy, and in some extreme cases there is even recourse to overt expression of prejudiced attitudes.

3.1.1) Liberalism, rights and freedoms

In this first, pessimistic repertoire, participants' definitions of democracy tend to centre on individual rights and freedoms, evoking what Dixon (1997) has identified as a liberal discourse – one that privileges and protects the ideology of the inviolability of individual liberties and rights. What participants appear to be doing with the use of these discursive strategies is equating liberal discourses of rights and freedoms with the notion of democracy to create a particular argumentative framework in which democratic change and democracy, as a metaphor for post-1994 South Africa, can be critiqued. This is done through an expression of the ideological conflict inherent in this notion of 'liberal democracy' – a conflict between the protection of individual rights, and the accordance of those rights to all. The following two extracts from interview transcripts illustrate this equation of democracy with a liberal discourse of rights and freedoms:

Extract 1

I always had it that democracy is when you've got a free country, free vote, free [...] you know? That's the way I saw it.

Extract 2

I think it's people that, you know, have their own rights and can exercise their rights [...] you know, that they can feel free to [...] in a controlled atmosphere, to be able to speak their mind and be able to do, and be able to achieve things as well. And to be able to receive.

Both of these extracts, as well as other responses to the interview questions reveal a particular conception of the notion of democracy – that of individual rights and freedoms, encompassed and reinforced by a discourse of liberalism. But it is important to remember that liberalism does not stand “apart from any particular moral and political agenda. Rather it is a very particular moral agenda (privileging the individual over the community, the cognitive over the affective, the abstract over the particular)” (Fish 1994, p. 137-138).

Furthermore, this kind of substantive notion of democracy acts to reify the concept – defining it in terms of idealised end products, tangible outcomes and institutions. O’Malley (1999), in discussing the results of focus group surveys concerning democracy conducted with black South African participants in 1992, notes that respondents’ ideas about democracy also took on this form. O’Malley (1999, p. 123) explains: “Democracy was widely interpreted as the antonym for apartheid. It encapsulated the opposite of apartheid ... Participants did not see democracy as a means, but an end; not as a process, but as a set of goals, accomplishments, results.”

As such, democracy was constructed not simply as an ‘ethic’ that would form the moral basis for the New South African society (in contrast to apartheid South Africa) it was understood in terms of the more tangible social norms and practices that would stem from the adoption of this ‘ethic’ (O’Malley, 1999). Significantly, this conceptualisation finds symmetry and is echoed in the illocutions of white farmers – a class of citizens often identified with more racialised oppression than other white South Africans.

Already here, we can see the development of a tension between substantive definitions of democracy (focused on the concretely observable end products, or the minutiae of the functioning of a democratic political system) and a more ideal notion of democracy in which the values and ideals of a liberal ideology (i.e. the protection of individual rights and freedoms) are upheld. It is important to reiterate that the former does not necessarily result in the latter, and that these two may in fact be in ideological conflict.

However, the view of democracy as end result (and the very antithesis of apartheid) is seen from a slightly different perspective, as evident in the following extracts wherein the respondents claim the mantle of victim:

Extract 3

I see democracy as simply a vice versa of what happened in the past. That's how I see it and "baadjies vir boeties" doesn't work. It's not good for the country; it's not good for the people.

Extract 4

But I do feel that maybe it's just something that's turned around from the past, from the olden days, from, you know, when the whites were in power. They were suppressing - maybe you can call it, to use a hard word - suppressing the blacks in certain ways. I thought that was wrong. And I do feel that we, alternatively now, as whites are being suppressed ...

Extract 5

I want to say I had a part in apartheid during my life, I might still live that way, but my grandchildren that are running around here didn't have anything to do with it. And they are being punished. So apartheid is, the way I see it, is just something that's been turned around.

In this manner, participants are able to make sense of the ideological tension between substantive democracy and liberal values in a manner distinctive to this particular pessimistic repertoire. As a result of what appears to be an inability to reconcile the conflict between the rights and freedoms of one versus the rights and freedoms of all, as well as an 'unwillingness' to concede to the dismantling of the political and economic *status quo* to which white commercial farmers became accustomed under apartheid, the participants that draw upon this negative interpretative repertoire have recourse to a discourse of 'reverse discrimination'.

3.1.2) Democracy as 'apartheid in reverse'

This democracy as 'reverse apartheid' discourse, illustrates the contrast between liberal discourse (concerning the inviolability of individual rights and freedoms) and substantive definitions of democracy, and is used as a basis for negative and pessimistic articulations concerning democracy in contemporary South Africa. Thus, respondents rhetorically assert that democracy is not being properly implemented by the new state. Such arguments provide ideological support for lingering racist

attitudes and the continued use of prejudicial ways of speaking, as respondents argue that they are being discriminated against. This in turn reinforces a discourse of difference, an 'apartheid discourse' of race, culture, separateness and irreconcilable difference.

Extract 6

I see democracy as, let's say, a country with different ethnic groups of people, that has to hold an election – a fair one – to put a government in office to look after everyone's interests: minority groups as well as majority groups. Not just force things down people's throats – whether it's a language that you have to speak or, uh, something that you have to do. In other words, each group is entitled to their own – what do you call it? – culture, or way of living, right?

Extract 7

I'd like to phone in on these phone-in programmes, because I say that Afrikaans has been given the right to run their own radio, and they can do what they like and they can retain their own culture. We in the English, we are subjected to blacks running the radio stations. They don't speak clear English like we speak English [...] you know, those sorts of things worry me because I feel in time that's going to break down [...] I say if it's got to be like that, sure, give them their own stations, let them run their own programmes as they are running now. Let us whites also have something that retains our culture.

In these two extracts, we see the subjects drawing on notions of cultural pluralism, which should be ideologically distinguished from the ethic of multiculturalism encompassed by ideas such as the 'Rainbow Nation'. The latter seeks to foster an ideology that embraces diversity and tolerance, in which people from divergent social, cultural and political traditions can together feel part of a new and unified nation. The former, however, seeks to re-establish notions of distinctness – hearkening back to the apartheid doctrine of 'separate development'. This constitutes an obstacle to the development of an ethos of democracy, as it illustrates "a tendency to see difference as a threat and to restrict political spaces in consequence" (Friedman, 2002, p. 25). To use Reynolds' (1999) criteria for 'consolidated democracy', for these farmers, democracy is only constitutionally entrenched, without being attitudinally widely accepted or behaviourally practised.

On the other hand, however, it is important to note participants in this research appear to be articulating a position that holds the notion of a unified ‘Rainbow Nation’ as a threat, precisely because there does not seem to be any room in it for them. Participants expressing the above notion of democracy as reverse discrimination, base their argument upon the conflict engendered between a supposedly liberal democratic government, and the implementation of governmental policies that are definitely not liberal.

It is these aspects of the political culture of post-1994 South Africa that these farmers have problems with. As mentioned earlier, it is possible to discuss the notion of political culture in terms of several interrelated aspects – the “system culture, process culture and policy culture” (Almond, 1989). On the level of the “system culture” (the attitudes toward the national community, the regime and authorities) it can be argued that the rhetoric of national unity, rights and freedoms for all, and the good of democracy (voiced by the government) tends to create a picture of a socio-political situation in which liberal values are in fact vindicated through the adoption of democracy. Yet for farmers, it would appear that the “policy culture” (the outputs and outcomes of politics) of legislative changes that have impacted negatively upon them, tells a story that is far from liberal.

Under a new, democratic political hegemony, policies have been implemented that: negatively impact upon white farmers’ abilities to get land bank loans; give preference to the financial assistance of ‘emerging’ black farmers; and threaten their assets through pressure from government to sell their farms for land reform. Farmers have not simply been left alone to exist in a liberal political culture in which they persist with racist attitudes of their own accord. Instead, they find themselves in a political culture that discriminates against them, albeit to bring about an eventual positive effect for the country as a whole. There is thus a discrepancy for these farmers between the ideal “system culture” of liberal democracy, and the sometimes anti-liberal “policy culture” implemented to bring this state about.

It is therefore interesting to note that all of the interviewees frame their responses in rigid terms of ‘us’ (whites and farmers) versus ‘them’ (blacks and government). A apparent act of racial solidarity with the white male researcher – who is assumed to

empathise with these ideological views by virtue of being a member of the same racial group – this is also a classic example of the use of discourses of ‘Other’ (Riggins, 1997) which are often (if not always) to be found at the basis of prejudice and racism. The rhetorical social practice of constructing the external / social ‘Other’ can be described as the reference to “all people the Self perceives as mildly or radically different (Riggins, 1997, p. 3). Furthermore, Riggins (1997, p. 4) writes “Self and external Other may be understood as unique individuals (I and You) or as collectivities that are thought to share similar characteristics (We and They)”.

In this sense, the practice of ‘Othering’ forms an integral part of the processes of prejudice, as it involves the perception and positioning in discourse of ‘different’ social groups. In terms of this study, one of the focal points of this analysis tends to fall on the ways in which the racial ‘Other’ to the white participants is spoken of in association with the implementation of democracy, and the participants’ negative perceptions thereof. What emerges is then the construction of the racial ‘Other’ as a vengeful and persecutory entity, responsible for the systematic implementation of ‘reverse apartheid discrimination’. Yet, given the participants experience of discrimination under a “policy culture” that does not strictly adhere to a liberal ideology, such construction is perhaps understandable as a defensive subject positioning.

The above extracts illustrate this discursive manoeuvring through the creation of ideological boundaries between their constructed subject positions and the ‘Other’, based upon notions of racial and, by extension, cultural difference. It is argued, however, that these articulations of prejudice do not stem solely from an openly bigoted ideology of racial superiority, but are instead the result of a defensive positioning born out of the ideological tension created by the widespread adoption of liberal democracy, which, from the perspective of farmers, simultaneously and paradoxically appears to require the dismantling of individual privilege.

3.1.3) Things are worse for farmers

A further element of participants’ pessimism appears to derive from the fact that farmers utilise a discourse of being ‘systematically disadvantaged’ and worse off. Interviewees’ arguments make use of concrete illustrations to ‘prove’ just how much

worse off they are now, as opposed to the past. At the same time however there is a reticence around how privileged they were in the past. Yet, the occurrence of state intervention and support for commercial agriculture in the Eastern Cape has already been commented on by observers (Jeeves & Crush, 1997), and it is even possible to comment on current state intervention of a different kind today. This attitude of reticence reflects what King (2001) refers to as ‘dysconscious racism’. King (2001, p. 296) argues that “dysconsciousness is an uncritical habit of mind that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as a given.” In this way, dysconscious racism “tacitly accepts dominant white norms and privileges” (King, 2001, p 297). As such, respondents do not view “policy culture” changes instituted under ‘democracy’ as an attempt to redress past inequality, but instead see them as an assault upon the uncritically accepted ‘norms’ that were for a long time the cornerstone of landed white South African society.

Rhetorical points raised by these kind of arguments include: the collapse of infrastructure; theft of stock; problems with safety and security; labour laws; affirmative action; lack of subsidies; importing of foreign agricultural produce; increased running costs and decreased demand for produce. This litany of localized concerns may, of course, on the scale of subjective reality be constructed as possessing a degree of validity, as they could be used to illustrate some of the failures of government – particularly at provincial level – to maintain infrastructure and basic services. The factual accuracy of these arguments notwithstanding, it is less the arguments themselves than the ideological uses to which they are deployed that are of analytic interest here.

Affirmative action and employment equity is seen as being discriminatory – again calling upon the ‘reverse apartheid’ discourse. Labour laws are similarly viewed as legislation that has been ‘forced’ upon a sector of the population unable (rather than unwilling) to comply, thereby ‘showing up’ the government as being undemocratic and prejudicial to white agrarian interests. This has resulted in farmers having to ‘thin out’ their labour force, increasing unemployment, which in turn increases crime. The respondents articulate a keen sense of the social ecology of their locality wherein crime becomes the eventual by-product of the dismantling of white privilege. Similarly the new wage system for farm workers is described as exacerbating racial

tension, precisely due to retrenchments. However possibly the largest and most contentious issue for respondents is that of land reform.

Extract 8

The Land Affairs [department] are interested in buying up the ground and certain pockets of land have gone, uh, for that reason. You know, they are getting their rights [...] You know, unfortunately we are in the middle of this whole process and at this stage I can't see that, you know, there's going to be too much positive coming out of it. Because the people that have been given, allocated the land are not equipped to produce to make it viable. And the money that they're getting is money lost.

Land reform threatens their assets and is seen as a waste of money in that the black peasantry are not considered able to farm commercially. Furthermore the reform process is not being done 'efficiently'. This position draws strongly on liberal discourse concerning the sanctity of individual property. It is very similar to the kind of arguments and exclusionary discursive practices identified by Dixon (1997) in his study of the Hout Bay residents' responses to the emergence of informal settlements in close proximity to their homes. Individuals are accorded the 'inviolable' right to private property by the state, yet the very same state is threatening the sanctity of this property and this right (Dixon, 1997). The basis of this argument is the notion that the land reform process does not set about ensuring universal access to land through liberal means (i.e. through the market, or through merit), but by actually suspending the right to equality and property of farmers (if their land is expropriated), and is therefore anti-liberal.

Extract 9

The blacks believe it's their right to take back, but I mean, who paid for these farms? We've all worked very hard; we're still working hard just to keep our heads above water. So we've taken nothing from nobody. We paid for what we've got. So I mean, it's not democratic to take another person's life, it's not democratic to want to take another person's place.

It is clear in the above extracts that farmers are in fact aware of the kind of ideological tensions existing within a liberal discourse of individual rights and freedoms. Their property is constructed as theirs, by inviolable right and by hard work. It is thus the

duty of a democratic and liberal government to recognise and protect this right. Yet what these participants are experiencing is the threatening of these rights by that government in the cause of making restitution and ensuring the eventual universal access to the selfsame rights for all citizens at some point in the future. Yet, it is precisely due to the uncritical inability to reflect on the circumstances supporting their past privilege (King, 2001), together with either an inability, or an unwillingness (perhaps understandable given their experience of discrimination) to ‘buy in’ to the envisioned ideal “system culture” of liberal democracy, that participants experience this tension. The historical irony of these illocutions is that a viable class of black farmers were marginalized and proletarianised by a complex web of legislation and social practice in the early twentieth century expansion of racialised agrarian capitalism (Beinart, Delius & Trapido, 1986; Bundy, 1979).

In order to understand the nature of this discursive dilemma, respondents defensively draw upon the ‘democracy as reverse apartheid’ discourse, as well as prejudiced ideology to construct these events as unjust, and undemocratic persecution of white farmers. This is further supported by what Van Dijk (1987, p. 91) characterises as “one of the most stereotypical moves used in prejudiced talk ... which usually contains a general denial of (one’s own) negative opinions about ethnic groups, followed by a negative opinion.” This apparent denial and negation of their prejudiced attitudes serves (at least in the minds of the interviewees) to justify their indignation at their perceived persecution. Simultaneously, such utterances attempt to draw distinctions between statements performing particular ideological and positioning functions, and statements that are merely descriptive (Potter, 1996). In this case, respondents are using the disavowal of their prejudiced subject positions to attempt to construct their perceptions as ‘objectively true’ descriptions of the way things are.

Extract 10

I’m of the old school, so certainly change has been very difficult to accept [...] because you know we’ve grown up that way. It’s unfortunate that we did grow up that way. We were brainwashed too, to a certain extent. To a large degree, you know, the communities that we lived in, the people that we’ve grown up with, um, it’s just been like that. So I don’t feel I’ve got myself to blame for that. I think it’s the society that we grew up in. And, uh, yes, you

know, maybe we, maybe we were being ... the whites were being suppressive, and, uh, you know. I've never been a hard-liner, I've never been a right-winger or any of that type of thing, but certainly as things are, sometimes I get very anti- ... anti-black. And I can tell you that straight because it's, you know, there are certain things that are just not acceptable, and it's always – unfortunately when there are unacceptable things – it revolves around the blacks.

Extract 11

Look, I have nothing against that guy that's black, or this guy that's white, and this guy that's pink, and that guy that's purple. For me it's about stability.

Extract 10, above, is a perfect exemplar of the manner in which participants' 'dysconsciousness' of the machinations underpinning their past positions of privilege prevents the ideological reconciliation between the proverbial 'omelettes and eggs' of individual rights versus the rights of all. The expression of this conflict is made abundantly clear, especially if we consider that the same participant spoke of democracy as the ability to act out one's rights in Extract 2 – a particularly clear expression of democracy in terms of liberal values. Yet, there is more to this than simply an unwillingness to accept the changes in the *status quo* that are the end result of applying liberal democracy universally.

There is also an attempt to construct a subject position of righteously indignant victim through the active disavowal of both the participant's own prejudice *and* culpability for the past political dispensation as in Extract 11, where this disavowal of prejudice includes an attempt to divert attention from issues of race to focus more on the substantive living conditions experienced by farmers. In Extract 10, the participant positions himself as a more or less passive product of the social and political circumstances in which he grew up, and which he, as a mere individual agent, had (and indeed still has) no power to alter. This open denial of responsibility dis-identification with the system of Apartheid is, however, a superficial rhetorical strategy, shown by the participant's transfer of responsibility from the designation of in-group membership ("we were being suppressive") to a more neutral and distanced collectivity ("the whites were being suppressive").

What this amounts to is a defensive racism – a reactionary backlash perpetuating prejudiced ways of talk that goes hand in hand with the constructed subject position of victim. That this reaction takes the form of prejudiced ways of constructing the racial ‘Other’ is not too surprising, seeing as, at least in this sector of the population, racial modes of thinking have, at least anecdotally, been an accepted discursive tradition. These attitudes are perhaps reinforced by (not necessarily accurate) perceptions of governmental reform strategies as “entrenching racial and class divides and thus giving credence to those who think in racial terms” (Desai, 2000, pp. 3-4).

3.1.4) The old days were better

Together with the claimed mantel of victim, there is a wistful longing for the old days in which things were ‘better’: a colonial farming lifestyle, with a subservient and cheap workforce, favourable state interventions and the benevolent, patriarchal farmer.

Extract 12

Ag, I mean in the olden days – when I was younger – when your people used to come to you, you used to help them, you used to ... and you could chat to one another and ... but now you can't. They're sort of so demanding [...] and of course I believe in the old days, the people, the people on the farms – even if they didn't get much pay – they had a much better life.

This discursive position is argued to be the corollary to Fanon's idea of the oppressed consciousness of the colonised. It is the oppressive consciousness of the coloniser. In the same way as the consciousness of the colonised is constructed as inferior and subservient (Ahluwalia, 2001), the consciousness of the oppressor must be shaped by the colonial discourse to justify and maintain white privilege and liberty whilst denying black history, rights and humanity. Ahluwalia (2001, pp. 40-41) citing Fanon, argues, “A necessary part of colonialism is that the colonisers problematise the culture and the very being of the colonised, and the latter come to accept the ‘supremacy of the white man's values.’” Just as the colonised needs to be liberated from this pattern of constructing the ‘Self’ and the racial ‘Other’, so does the coloniser.

However, this liberation of the consciousness of the past oppressor – embodied in this case by the white farmer – does not seem to have happened, thereby giving credence to King's (2001) ideas concerning dysconscious racism. For, as Dixon (1997) suggests, recourse to a liberal discourse about rights and freedoms does not preclude the possibility of collusion with a discourse of racial segregation and superiority. This 'colonial discourse' and nostalgic construction of the past can be clearly discerned in the following extracts:

Extract 13

Earlier times, the worker got less as salary, but he got more in the form of food, clothes, shoes, housing, all those things. All those things. If one of my people got sick, I took my vehicle and drove him in [...] Through the years you build up a relationship with them. This servant that works here [...] she must have come to work here in '86. She's seen my sons grow up. Now, I mean, if there was a bad relationship between us, she wouldn't have stayed.

Extract 14

I had families here that had a lot of other people living with them, and which had young children. They would come on a Saturday and sweep the yard, at no 'moerse' charge. The children got sweets and cooldrink. And I didn't have to call them to come and do it – they did it because they wanted to, if they could, you know, get cooldrink, or get sweets. Those type of things. Now I'm not allowed to use them.

A key feature of these attempts to reconstruct an idyllic representation of 'the way things used to be' is that they plainly ignore the fact that the past political dispensation allowed such circumstances to develop precisely because of the gross exploitation and oppression of rural, black South African labour power – where even underage labour was used for the purposes of constructing the physical features of this idealised façade. There is even the attempt to construct the rural black South African labourer as a willing participant in the maintenance of this 'colonial-esque' system of oppression. Now, however, there is the governmentally enforced compulsion to alter these circumstances and to sacrifice their freedom to enjoy the standard of living that these farmers construct as a right earned through their *own* hard labour.

What is more, such attempts at reconstructing a better past go further than expressing a nostalgic reminiscence. These accounts also attempt to make the assertion that there has indeed been some sort of substantial (not to mention negative) change in both the relationship between farmers and their labourers, as well as in the living conditions in the rural areas. The attempt is made to argue that circumstances for farmers have been substantially reduced and irrevocably altered for the worse by the process of democratisation. This further illustrates (for the farmers themselves, as well as for outside observers) the manner in which a supposedly liberal democratic system has failed to protect the rights and freedoms of a particular sector of society.

3.1.5) Things are worse for the people, too

An extension of the above discourse constructing an idyllic colonial past, is the further argument, amongst those farmers who view democracy negatively, that ‘the people’ themselves are also worse off. Respondents argue that many of the ‘democratic’ reforms have impacted negatively on the rural poor, who make up their workforce. The same instances used to argue that they, as farmers, are worse off, are again drawn upon as anecdotal evidence here. Labour laws supposedly make it impossible to provide employment for as many people as used to be possible in the past. The farm wages legislation is blamed as the cause for farmers having to retrench workers, thereby increasing rural unemployment, and crime.

Extract 15

I get the impression they want to use legislation to drive a wedge between the farmer and his workers [...] the impression I get is that the people aren't happy with these salaries. And you also can't blame the farmer if he has thirty labourers – like this farm of ours – where you get something in, in the summer, but in the winter have to plough it in to the livestock to get them through. Can you work out what it costs that farmer to pay those workers? [...] and who's going to suffer? Not just the people – the farmer too. The reason being, if I'm hungry I'm going to steal

The manner of implementation of land reform – over and above a supposed Black inability to farm productively – is also said to make it extremely difficult for Black farmers to produce anything other than subsistence needs, to the detriment of both the people and the productive capacity of the land.

Extract 16

You can't expect 100kg of mutton from a 60kg sheep. Uh, if the ground is becoming smaller ... less ground cannot produce more food. For me, it's all about a stable country. If it ... Man, show me a country that's hungry *and* stable

While critical questions can be posed of the plight of the rural poor in the new political dispensation, the legitimacy of this questioning itself needs to be examined. Although possibly motivated by varying degrees of benign concern for the rural subaltern, these arguments are used to perform certain functions. It can be asked whether the farmers are truly speaking for the marginalized rural poor? Or is this merely discursive strategy for articulating and masking their critiques of post-Apartheid South Africa? If the former, these critiques have a degree of legitimacy in that they call into question policies implemented by the ANC government that have impacted (and not always positively) on the living conditions of people in rural South Africa. If the latter, then the argument that the people are worse off is put to the ideological use of 'proving' that the indigenous populace cannot govern, as well as to 'show' the government up as inefficient, uncaring and unresponsive. To do this, use is made of examples of what are perceived to be poor (and unfair) democratic government by blacks.

Extract 17

If I could ask the government ... I just can't understand how they would want to encourage unemployment.

Extract 18

If it's not going to go Zimbabwe's way, then it'll always be a democracy. But I mean, hey, Zimbabwe – if we're going to be sympathetic towards Zimbabwe, then we're not democratic. So then I'm afraid ... then we're just totally autocratic. And we don't want to be that way, certainly.

Extract 19

We are having to give up certain things that, I mean, we never used to have to give up and, uh, the blacks that have bought farms, that are also employing labour, are not subjected to the same laws. And to me that's not democracy. And they're not going to force those black guys to comply, I can guarantee you right now they won't [...] but they will force us [...] certainly they're going to give us a hard time.

Whilst critique of a government that is not delivering is legitimate within a democratic society – these kinds of arguments could be used as ‘evidence’ for specifically black governmental incompetence. It is interesting to note that this construction of farmers and their workforce as suffering at the hands of ill-conceived governmental policies is then contrasted with the idealised apartheid era in a kind of colonial discourse characterised by a ‘wistful longing’ for a better past.

Extract 20

We are actually worse off now than what we were [...] I think it’s like that for everybody.

3.2) Democracy: ‘It should have happened a hundred years ago’

In contrast to the reactionary pessimism of the first group of respondents, the majority of the younger participants (along with a few older ones) can be characterised as articulating what might appear to be an interpretative repertoire of diametrically opposed, forward-thinking optimism. For these farmers, the general outlook is much more positive, although as will be suggested, some of their critiques are based in similar discourse and ideology.

3.2.1) *Democracy is about rights and freedom.*

Once again, definitions of democracy revolve around individual rights and freedoms, and as previously stated, these respondents construct the notion of democracy as an end product of change rather than a means by which it can be achieved (O’Malley, 1999). Therefore, democracy is seen to work in an idealistic sense.

Extract 21

Anyone is free to voice their own opinions, to live their life the way that they wish to, to express themselves the way they wish to, to practice their religion the way they wish to, all within a safe, structured country with a reasonably good government.

Extract 22

Democracy is freedom to live a person’s life within the laws of the country. You know, government for the people by the people. No oppression. In whichever country you live in, which is a democracy, there is no oppression of one group by another. It means equality [...] we’re all equal; everyone living in a democracy is equal in terms of dignity. It’s about human dignity.

Extract 23

But democracy is not just about rights. It's a word that is supposed to mean freedom, but that freedom doesn't really exist. So it's not just rights, it's more of an attitude, like respect. Respect for people equally – skin colour doesn't matter.

The discursive occurrence that is taking place here is, similar to the first repertoire, also an attempt by participants to articulate their experience of the ideological tension between the implementation of democracy and liberal values and ideology. However, this repertoire differs from the first in that participants here seem able to reconcile this tension between the “system culture” and the “policy culture” through the use of a more ‘permissive’ mode of speaking that makes allowance for this conflict of interest. Interestingly, participants articulating this second repertoire do not make use of attempts to disavow their past positions of privilege, but instead seem to recognise it as a salient factor in the constitution of the ideological conflict that they are experiencing.

This recognition, in turn, allows for a number of things. Firstly, participants are able to reconcile the disparity between the rights of the individual versus the rights of all, thereby freeing them up to articulate a more optimistic view of democracy. Secondly, participants, in reconciling this tension to some degree, are enabled to develop a more sophisticated, and less substantively focused definition of democracy (and this is visible in their talk of attitudes, equality and dignity, as opposed to a more restricted focus on rights and freedoms).

As can be seen from the above extracts, there is a general agreement with the ‘principles’ of democracy as well as the implicit recognition that Apartheid was morally wrong. With these responses drawing heavily on the idea of rights, equality and freedom, it is easy to see that their illocutions make use of a discourse of liberalism as described by Dixon (1997). What is more – and this is what sets this group of responses apart from the former one (see extract 19) – this liberal discourse recognises the need for political and social change to have occurred, and does not make use of the notion of individual rights to argue for the protection of white privilege. At the same time there is a similar sort of denial of the privileged positions that participants occupied in the past, yet in this instance it is not used to strategically

enable participants to construct their pessimism towards democracy as a 'legitimate' defensive reaction to a threat. Instead, this distancing of the subject position from complicity with the 'Apartheid regime' is drawn upon to rhetorically support the transition towards democracy.

Extract 24

Well I mean a lot of changes have come from the old regime to the new regime. But, uh, it should have happened a hundred years ago, that's what [...] if it happened a hundred years ago, we'd be ten times better off now. Because we're at the difficult stage at the moment and I say the word 'apartheid' should have never been there.

Extract 25

I've always been free and had privileges. The changes in the country have meant having to recognise that all people have the right to these privileges and to equality. Most people now have got access to what I've had all along and have taken for granted. For many, democracy has come too late. But it has meant that I've had to take notice of other people as equals. It also means that I have had to share the privileges I've had.

Extract 26

Yes, but you see, now, we were spoiled in the past. Because when you walked in as a white, you just expected to get a job, and you got the job. Now things have changed, and we've got to adjust to that, that's all. And make the best of it. If you can't get this job, go look for something else, and that's the way it is.

Simultaneously, there is amongst these participants, the admission of some discrepancy in the manner in which democracy is being implemented. The tension between liberal ideology and substantive democracy is not completely resolved, and participants are thus required to construct explanations for their experience of this conflict in such a way as to create a subject positioning that they believe is commensurate with both their already expressed support for the implementation of democracy, as well as the liberal values that they have espoused. In order to do this, participants draw on a discursive strategy that allows them to agree with democracy in principle, yet criticise the manner of substantive implementation.

3.2.2) *Dysfunctional democracy.*

Criticisms of democracy revolve around the collapse of infrastructure, safety and security, and a sort of generalised anxiety concerning the political future of the country. No mention is made in these responses about the worsening plight of farmers or a deliberate reversal of apartheid discrimination. Instead, these criticisms of the government and of the processes of change seem to be premised upon the idea of farmers being able to maintain the standard of life that they have become accustomed to – again drawing upon liberal ideals. As long as this standard of living is not substantively threatened, respondents do not express much disquiet regarding democracy and change. This is coupled with a general sense of optimism – such that the current ‘bad’ situations are not viewed as an unending downward spiral, but merely as part of an ongoing transitional period, more akin to O’Malley’s (1999) conception of democracy as a ‘process’.

Extract 27

Well I suppose things must go down before going up.

Extract 28

It’s going to take time. Financially, the infrastructure has fallen to pieces, but I think in time it will build up again, because after the Boer war it was the same. There was no infrastructure, and it was built up again. So I see a future in the country. Uh, we’re not used to this, as being white, we’re not used to it ... it’s difficult for us to accept it.

Extract 29

In this country? Do you think democracy has been working?

Yes, not one hundred percent. I don’t think democracy works one hundred percent anywhere

Why not?

Well not everyone follows all the rules and, um, I don’t think many people even know what are and ... But I think it has to a certain extent worked more successfully here than in most places that change from different regimes to democracy. It’s been one of the more successful changeovers – has been here.

Extract 30

I think it’s definitely working. That’s why I say it should have happened a hundred years ago, not now. But it should have happened. Definitely, it had to come [...] I mean it’s going to improve year by year – it’s going to improve.

This particular discursive positioning that allows participants to ideologically support democracy, yet criticise the manner of its implementation, differs substantially from the negative and pessimistic criticisms of democracy articulated by participants using the first repertoire. Instead of constructing this critique from a defensive positioning, participants here are attempting to develop a strategy to understand and explain the process of change that incorporates the tension felt to exist between individual rights and the rights accorded to all, between the “system culture” and the “policy culture”. This, in turn, means that the optimism that participants express is ameliorated to some degree, allowing participants to reconcile the contradiction between their already expressed support for the democratic ideal, and the ‘negative’ impact that the process of democratisation has had on the substantive conditions that comprise their accustomed standard of living.

3.2.3) ‘They’ just need to adjust

However, in trying to account for the discrepancies between the ideal of democracy, as constituted by a ‘liberal discourse’, and the realities of poor governance and service delivery in the province, racial discourse is drawn upon to explain the transition, and the problems currently being experienced. However, this discourse differs from the ‘apartheid’ and ‘colonial’ discourses discussed above in that it does not actively advocate a return to a ‘better’ past where whites were in control. Instead, it operates on a more subtle level by implicitly reaffirming white superiority in terms of intellect and governmental aptitude.

This implicit prejudice in the discourse indicates the manner in which an ideology of white superiority and black inferiority has adapted to the changes that have occurred in post-apartheid South African society, and still informs white explanations and constructions of the black ‘Other’. It allows participants to preserve the old manner of subject positioning in terms of racial superiority, by according them the opportunity to construct their critiques of democracy from a position that includes patronising attitudes and understandings of the new Black government. An example of this is reflected in the idea that blacks are unable to cope with being in power and are therefore susceptible to corruption, or that they are still learning how to govern and need whites to help them. Such fundamentally ideological arguments serve to maintain the superiority of Whites.

Extract 31

Yes it works, the ideal of democracy. It has to work. It must work. But it doesn't if people seek their own gain. Maybe democracy can't work in practice if people become corrupt and greedy. It doesn't work when people only use it to look after themselves [...] I don't think democracy is working in South Africa. The new regime oppresses others as well. I don't really know why ...perhaps it's all the change that has taken place; all the sudden 'muchness' – perhaps they can't handle it.

Extract 32

Sometimes I think they don't really know how to handle the situation, quite at the moment. They must still adjust to it. And that's the excuse that you give them. They've got a long way to go [...] and if more whites just want to help them to adjust it would go better. But some are still against democracy, so they're not willing to help and, you know, tell them "look, we think if you do this" ... or "we think if you do that" ... They want to tell them "look, you *must* do that" still, and then they must do that. And you know they were so far behind in the past, now they're standing up to it, I think. And then they just think, "Well, we're going to do it our way".

Whilst such expressions of a patronisingly superior positioning of whites in relation to blacks in terms of governmental competence (not to mention moral rectitude, incorruptibility, and even intelligence) seem to be more subtle expressions of prejudice than the criticisms posed by the participants that articulated the first repertoire, both types of expressions of prejudice stem from attempts to address the ideological conflict experienced by participants in terms of the tension between the ascription to liberal ideology and the simultaneous adoption of democratic ideals. Thus, instead of the above extracts providing examples of what Whillock & Slayden (1995) conceive of as expressions of subtle racism, it is argued that all the expressions of racism and prejudice articulated by the participants in this research – both optimistic and pessimistic – illustrate two distinct rhetorical strategies for resolving what Wetherell & Potter (1992) have characterised as an ideological conflict.

3.2.4) *The future looks bright.*

Significantly, participants in this second group are very sanguine about the future of the next generation, feeling that children growing up in the democratic society will be more tolerant and accepting of each other. This is contrasted with respondents' own upbringing and relative difficulty in dealing with change. It is interesting to note that

this notion might even be vindicated simply by looking at the age characteristics of the two different sets of respondents – the older respondents generally being more negative about democracy and finding it harder to cope, ideologically, with change than the younger ones.

Extract 33

I'm quite excited for my children's future, for their school career, because it will be radically different from my own, for various reasons. And I can already see the change in my own children from the way I grew up, or was brought up.

Extract 34

For us, I mean, it's difficult to cope with what's going on. But for the little ones, for the kids – they're growing up with it now, so for them it's going to be easier.

This optimism reflects the key difference between the two interpretative repertoires identified by the analysis, and shows how the ability of this second group of participants to reconcile the ideological conflict between the values entailed in the political ideal of democracy and those of liberal ideology can result in a subject positioning vastly different to that created by the first group of participants. Instead of creating a position in which the participants defensively construct themselves as 'victims' of a hypocritical and uncaring government that is systematically subjecting them to unfair discrimination (as is achieved in the first repertoire), here, subjects are able to construct a more positive notion of their own socio-political status, and therefore are able to remain optimistic about the future development of the country.

This second position, is however (as has been elucidated above) not one of unmediated optimism. Participants' accounts still reflect that their experience of democratic change is one of an observable decline in their standard of living and the material conditions of life in the rural areas. However, these circumstances are put to the rhetorical use of positioning subjects as 'martyrs', who realise that there is a need for a levelling of the playing fields, as it were. Thus, it is possible for these participants to remain positive concerning the future of the country, as they can construe their negative experiences of democratic change as a part of the process of achieving the necessary political (and ideological) ideal of liberal democracy.

Chapter 4: Concluding Comments

4.1) Review of the findings

To conclude, let us conduct a brief review of the findings of the research. Responses to the interview questions were divided into two broad interpretative repertoires, each making distinctive use of different discursive strategies to construct the subjects in a particular way and each subtly promoting a particular ideological stance towards democracy.

The first of these two repertoires made use of a negative or pessimistic group of discursive practices. Responses falling under this category tend to adopt a substantive and liberal discourse when defining the concept of democracy, seeing it primarily as an issue of sovereign individual rights and privileges, and arguing for the maintenance of these rights. Yet participants are simultaneously unable to manage the tensions that they experience existing between these two ideals – tensions between the protection of individual liberties and rights, and the universal democratic rights of all.

This inability to reconcile the contradictions between notions of democracy and liberal discourse forms the basis for participants defensively constructing a negative and racist account of democracy in South Africa. The idea of individual rights and freedoms is used to highlight the ‘skewed’ manner in which respondents feel democracy has been implemented, providing them with a justification for feeling aggrieved at the erosion of their former political and, to a lesser extent, economic status. As such it is used to construct an account of democracy as ‘reverse apartheid’ in which the subjects (i.e. white farmers) are positioned as the ‘victims’.

Stereotypical strategies of prejudicial talk (Van Dijk, 1987) are utilised in an attempt to disavow the subjects’ own racism and to construct their ‘plight’ as unjust and unwarranted, and arguments criticising the apparent hypocrisy of the democratic government (always framed in strategies of talk that draw heavily on notions of the ‘other’) are used rhetorically to assert the validity of their criticisms.

Together with this liberal notion of democracy, and the idea that South African democracy is ‘reverse apartheid’, respondents in this category draw upon an ‘apartheid’ discourse of racial and cultural distinctiveness and separateness to

construct a notion of how they would like democracy to function. Such an idyllic notion of separateness and liberal democratic rights, in collaboration with an attempted disavowal of their own racism contributes toward a discourse of ‘dysconscious racism’ (King, 2001). This discursive strategy characterises what this paper posits as a corollary of Fanon’s ‘consciousness of the colonised’ – the consciousness of the coloniser: a discursive and ideological ‘relic’ of the old structure of South African society that is still being circulated. This discursive practice is played out in talk that expresses a wistful longing for a genteel colonial past in the rural areas.

Standing in contrast to this is the second repertoire, which encapsulates the positive or optimistic group of discursive practices. Responses in this category tend to adopt a more flexible version of the discourses of democracy and liberalism, seeing democracy as both an end product of individual rights and privileges, as well as a ‘process’ of achieving those ends. In this way, liberal discourse is not used to argue for the maintenance of the privileged position of a particular group. Instead, there is the ability of the participants in this second repertoire to reconcile the different tensions inherent in the discourses of democracy and liberalism that they draw upon in the construction of their accounts, displayed by participants’ recognition of the rights of all to the rights and privileges that they would like to see maintained.

Criticisms of the implementation of democracy are, in contrast to the first repertoire, not as rigidly framed in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’, and do not make the attempt to conjure up images of past colonial or apartheid ‘glory’. Instead, participants draw upon rhetorical positioning strategies that make use of a more subtle racist discourse based on the idea of competence and ability. Blacks are not seen as able to govern properly and competently without the aid of whites, and are constructed as easily corruptible by power. The way in which it is articulated, and the manner in which it positions its white speakers is far more nuanced than the openly prejudiced discourses of the former category. In this way, its speakers are able to ideologically maintain their superiority without blatantly (or even consciously) arguing for a return to political and economic privilege.

This, in turn, enables respondents within this second group of discourses to adopt a more optimistic and forward-looking discourse about democracy and change in South Africa, and the future political and economic development of the country, in which respondents construct themselves as individuals committed to sharing the country and political power according to the ideals of democracy.

4.2) Suggestions for further research

Naturally, this study cannot claim to have provided an exhaustive or comprehensive account of South African farmers' perceptions of and attitudes towards democracy, as articulated through various discursive strategies. It is therefore imperative that this research is regarded as an exploratory study only, and that it is recognised that the need for far more extensive and in-depth research in this subject area remains if we are to assess the widespread extent and depth to which political change in this country has successfully translated into change in the ideological belief structures of South Africans. This study has barely scratched the surface, but it will hopefully provide a useful starting point for other studies.

It is therefore suggested that further research of this nature be carried out within a larger and more varied sample population to assess whether the findings of this analysis may be borne out or transferred to other sectors of the South African population. Likewise, it may indeed be worthwhile to carry out similar studies with different sample populations, representative of other sectors of our society and to conduct a comparative analysis of the findings in order to more accurately gauge the extent of ideological change that has taken place in South Africa since 1994, as it is articulated through the manners in which individuals speak of democracy and their positions within the broader socio-political milieu.

4.3) Concerns regarding the validity of the research

Finally, it is perhaps important at this stage to address questions concerning the validity of this research. Concerns raised in an earlier section of this thesis concerning the methodology employed by the research would be useful departure points for a discussion at this stage. Yet there are many different ways in which to define and assess the notion of validity as it relates to discourse analytic research, and these may include aspects of the analysis such as rigour, detail, coherence of the

analysis, a focus on inconsistencies within the texts, quality of the interpretation, as well as others such as relevance, usefulness and application of the research (Taylor, 2001). It would be a daunting and exhausting task to attempt to address each of these different criteria for evaluation in turn.

In Chapter 2, it was mentioned that McKenna (2004) has identified four key aspects to the validation of discourse analytical research – aspects that address the extent to which the analysis remains contextually linked, as well the representivity of the textual material upon which the analysis is based. These four aspects will now be addressed in turn.

The first consideration is that of *convergence* (the degree of coherence between the various categories of discourse identified by the analysis) (McKenna, 2004). Whilst it is natural that there will always be a degree of contradiction and dynamism in individual's accounts of the social world, it is felt that the analyses of the interview texts offered by this thesis has a relatively high degree of convergence. Despite the recognition that this research cannot be characterised as conclusive or comprehensive, it is argued that the categories of discourse identified by the analysis relate to each other well enough to create an explanatory framework that is at one time both coherent and yet flexible enough to incorporate the fact that this research is very much exploratory and therefore must needs be subject to revision in the future.

Secondly, attention must be paid to the notion of *agreement* (the ability of the analysis to convince native speakers of the discourse of its validity) (McKenna, 2004). This idea is akin to Kvale's (1996) notion of communicative validity within the communities of validation, whereby qualitative research can be validated by the act of communicating it to different potential audiences. This research can therefore be validated through communication of the analysis to either the interviewees, the general public, or to the theoretical community (Kvale, 1996). As this thesis is an academic endeavour, the most appropriate audience for validation would be the theoretical community and validity would be attested by assessing "whether the theory is valid for the area studied, and whether the specific interpretations follow logically from the theory" (Kvale, 1996, p. 217). This sort of validation is sought, as

opposed to the agreement of either the participants or the general public as to the logical sense and coherence of the analysis.

Thirdly, questions of validation must address *coverage* (the degree to which the conclusions of the analysis can be transferred to related sets of data) (McKenna, 2004). At this stage it is not possible to assess the validity of the above analysis in terms of the degree to which the findings of the analysis can be transferred to other, similar contexts. As has been mentioned previously, this thesis reflects an exploratory discourse analytical study. Further research in both similar and varied contexts will be required in order to assess if the findings of this thesis are indeed transferable.

Finally, validity of discourse analytical research must be concerned with *linguistic detail* (the extent to which the analysis focuses on the linguistic structures of the text) (McKenna, 2004). As the discourse analysis conducted for this thesis was not specifically focused on the linguistic characteristics of talk concerning democracy, it is clear that there was not too much focus on the linguistic detail of the accounts produced by the participants. Yet, given that the analysis was focused more on the rhetorical strategies used by participants to construct their subject positions with regard to the processes of democratic change that have occurred in South Africa, as well as on the ideological underpinnings of these positioning strategies, a close attention to the linguistic details of interview texts was not deemed vital. To this end, it is argued that the above thesis has sufficiently satisfied the necessary criteria for an assessment of its validity.

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