**CHAPTER ONE:    INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

## 1.1    INTRODUCTION

"For the first time, I think, in the history of this great continent, leaders of purely African states which can play an independent role in international affairs … For too long in our history Africa has spoken through the voice of others. Now what I call an African personality in international affairs will have a chance of making its proper impact and will let the world know it through the voices of Africa's own sons". (Kwame Nkrumah [1958] in Watson and Thompson, 2000:43)

Globalisation has without doubt reshaped the way in which a state and its institutions of governance are structured. National policies continue to be formulated either in response to global challenges or in line with acceptable international norms. Barston (1997:9) argues that the organization of central foreign policy has been affected by the expansion of issues that it attempts to address and the increasing number of actors that need to be engaged to realise the set objectives. State sovereignty to initiate, develop and implement national policies has also been curtailed to an ostensibly subordinate level, especially in the so-called developing countries, because of increasing complex foreign policy agenda (Barston, 1997:9). South Africa, like some other developing countries, is affected by the decisions taken by both bilateral and multilateral organizations of which it is a member. In many instances its domestic policies have to comply with the country being a signatory to treaties and international agreements in order to respect its international obligations. Countries engage in bilateral and multilateral relations in an attempt to pursue their own national interests, be they economic and/or political.

In dealing with the challenges of international relations, countries formulate a public policy to pursue their national interests and to guide foreign interactions.

This is called a foreign policy. Foreign policy, as a government policy, must be implemented by public administrators who are expected to grapple with the challenges of execution in the international arena, through the institution of the Foreign Service (FS). Public administrators are responsible for overseeing the implementation of a country's foreign policy through a process termed 'diplomacy' (Barston, 1997:23). The diplomatic process has its own uniform rituals and protocols to which each country must adhere. Individuals who are employed by their governments to coordinate, facilitate and implement foreign policy are called 'diplomats'.

The South African government, as with any other government, has its own foreign policy organization; this has undergone tremendous change since the early 1990s. The changes were as a result of the demise of apartheid and the coming into power of the previously marginalized black majority through a democratic process. Due to its status as a pariah state during the apartheid years, the apartheid government's foreign policy and its implementation structures were never given an equal footing in international relations (Geldenhuys, (1984:15). The level of representation, at both bilateral and multilateral organizations, was very limited and this in the long term was not sustainable for a government which was condemned for its policies at every international forum. When the new government came into power, through a democratic process, its role in international affairs broadened immensely in a very short space of time. The new government never disappointed in this regard and responded positively to world expectations by quickly restructuring its institution of foreign policy administration to fully coordinate and implement its new foreign policy.

Unlike the previous apartheid government which some countries had denied the setting-up of diplomatic representation to pursue its foreign policy, the new government responded to the challenge by increasing its representation abroad, by transforming its foreign affairs structures, by opening new missions or

embassies and by appointing foreign relations public administrators (diplomats) to fulfil this function in many countries. South Africa's diplomats are expected to be conversant in a variety of topics such as; politics, economics, trade, human rights, aid, peace, culture, science, arms control and also to promote South Africa's status in multilateral organizations. As the British statesman Salisbury observed, 'there is nothing dramatic' about a diplomat's work: it consists 'of a judicious suggestion here, of an opportune civility there, of a wise concession at one moment and a far-sighted persistence at another; of sleepless tact, immovable calmness and patience that no folly, no provocation, no blunders can shake' (Geldenhuys, (1984:15). In addition to this observation, is the ever-increasing globalisation process. There is far greater exposure and competition between countries than ever before for limited political and economic development resources. In promoting and defending the interests of a country to the outside world, a diplomat requires the relevant public administration skills to effectively plan, implement and evaluate their respective mission's objectives against the government's overall foreign policy objectives. South Africa currently has about 100 missions under its institution of foreign policy administration across the world whose task it is to implement its foreign policy objectives.

This study focuses on a particular component of the foreign policy administration of the Republic of South Africa, namely the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). The DFA is the government's ministry of foreign policy administration and is responsible for the facilitation, formulation and implementation of South Africa's foreign policy objectives. Since the management of foreign policy and relations has links with other governments in order to promote the image of a country; tourism, trade, investment and global peace and security are relevant public administration skills that are required for its implementation. Today, the government is focused on expanding its public administrators' representation in both bilateral and multilateral organizations; this is because of the extensive impact the current evolving global economic and political order has on the country's foreign policy objective.

Most decisions on foreign relations are endorsed by treaties and agreements at both bilateral and multilateral levels and therefore these have been found to have serious implications for a country's full participation in ensuring that its international interests are fulfilled. In addition, the ever increasing complexities of foreign policies have resulted with different ministries in government having differing stakes, interests and perspectives from those of the ministry of foreign affairs (Barston, 1997:9). Furthermore, these fragmented responsibilities result in drawn-out bureaucratic disputes and divisions within cabinet, which leads to poor ministerial coordination and implementation (Barston, 1997:10). This has also resulted in high level representations in the diplomatic arena that have become a major challenge for any country's foreign policy administration, this is in order to coordinate positions and influence whatever agreement or treaty is endorsed as binding under international law, to reflect their national and international interests.

Melissen (1999:xv) is of the view that multiple changes in the official diplomatic environment have placed more emphasis on the acquisition of skills necessary to ensure effective management, co-ordination and mediation between different players within governmental diplomacy, as well as skills for lobbying and dealing with the media. This has demanded that countries appoint public administrators in their institutions of foreign policy administration who are equipped with the relevant public administration skills to plan, manage and evaluate the implementation of foreign policy in their respective missions. In South Africa the democratic government, realizing the challenges for building relevant capacity of public administrators, re-orientated the structure and functions of the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) to offer a relevant in-house training programme. The objective of the FSI is to develop the required administrative capacity to support and execute South Africa's foreign policy objectives abroad (DFA, 2003).

Given the international role South Africa has assumed to reassert the position of the developing countries (especially in Africa) in international affairs, the question

can be raised as to whether South Africa has achieved the necessary capacity to fulfil this role, through the FSI training programmes. This question is raised because of the general understanding in balance of power in international relations where developing countries show that their full participation in global affairs often fall short of their expectations. This failure is blamed on poor representation in international affairs due to the lack of public administration skills required for the successful implementation and management of South Africa foreign policy by its diplomatic corps.

This study focuses on establishing whether South Africa's diplomatic corps possess the relevant public administration leadership and management skills to successfully execute their foreign policy mandate. This study is set in the context of South Africa's current international political and economic obligations and the available capacity in its institution of foreign policy administration to execute its foreign policy. This study focuses mainly on one specific aspect of diplomacy, that is, capacity to participate in diplomatic interaction at both bilateral and multilateral levels in safeguarding South Africa's interests at an international level. This research project seeks to generate new insight on how the government can better equip the public administrators in its diplomatic corps to fully participate and successfully influence multilateral and bilateral policies to reflect and contribute to its national and international interests.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research project has the following six objectives:

1. to describe South Africa's foreign policy since 1994 in brief;
2. to determine to what extent changes in government's international relations priorities had an effect on the recruitment, selection and training of its diplomats;
3. to explore the impact of globalisation on the structures of global

diplomatic corps with emphasis on South Africa's diplomats;

4.    to uncover current challenges or difficulties faced by South Africa's diplomats in implementing South Africa's foreign policy at both the multilateral and bilateral levels;

5.    to explore the availability of the required public administration skills for the management of South Africa's foreign policy obligations; and

6.    to uncover, through case study, the nature of training offered by other institutions and South Africa's FSI, with special focus on establishing its relevance to the challenges a diplomat faces in the global context.

## 1.3    PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The South African government has assumed full responsibility for its international affairs and continues to play a very active role in achieving its national interests. More specifically, South Africa's role in Africa within the African Union (AU) and New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and in Southern Africa within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), has created a greater capacity challenge to its institution of foreign policy administration (DFA, 2003). This role and other international relations commitments have placed a greater demand on South Africa's diplomatic corps to possess the relevant public administration skills in order to successfully execute their mandate. In the process of implementing foreign policy, public administrators are expected to demonstrate leadership and policy management skills in mediating international conflicts and undertaking activities that promote economic development.

In dealing with the capacity problem of creating an efficient and effective institution of foreign policy administration, the government has embarked on a programme to appoint qualified individuals in the public service and thereafter train them for diplomatic posting. The FSI was re-orientated to provide the necessary training programmes (DFA, 2005). This research seeks to establish

whether the re-orientation and enhancement of the FSI structure and programmes have been positive in providing relevant public administration training to build the required capacity for public administrators tasked with the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy.

To date, limited academic discussions or papers have been generated on the effects of the democratic dispensation since 1994 on the national institution of foreign policy administration in South Africa, especially in regard to its diplomatic capacity. According to Melissen (1999:xiv) the increasingly labyrinth-like nature of modern diplomacy is very challenging for both the academic observer and practitioners, alike. De Magalhaes (1988:5) also acknowledges that there is lack of teaching and research material on the subject of diplomacy, explaining and analyzing how the diplomatic process works and why it works badly or well in particular cases. Despite the limited academic research on the impact of the new global order on public administration training, with special focuses on foreign representation. South Africa has a diplomatic corps that is expected to execute its foreign policy at both bilateral and multilateral levels in order to serve its national and international interests, and to contribute to the creation of better South Africa, Africa and the world.

This study serves, in part, to fill the academic void by determining, through research, to what extent the FSI training programme is relevant to the challenges facing South Africa's diplomats. This study also establishes, through analysis of South Africa's foreign policy objectives and diplomatic training programme, the existing gaps in public administration capacity to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the institution of foreign policy administration.

Given the findings, recommendations on future policies that relate to the recruitment and training of highly multi-skilled diplomats with portable skills are made. Areas are also identified for future research in the field of human resource development for South Africa's diplomats. This research also contributes to the study of public administration because new concepts and theories that are

relevant for the enhancement of the discipline will be generated and developed.

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question which drives this study is:

*To what extent is the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) training programme relevant to the challenges facing a South African diplomat in the global context?*

The study further investigates the following sub-questions:

1. What constitutes South Africa's institution of foreign policy administration and its policy objectives?
2. What constitutes the practice of diplomacy?
3. What challenges are faced by diplomats in a global context?
4. What training is offered to diplomats in a global context?
5. What are the relevant public administration skills for diplomats?
6. What training programmes are offered by the FSI to build South Africa's diplomatic capacity?

## 1.5 SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS

This study is limited to South Africa's institution of foreign policy administration, the DFA and its training agency AND the FSI. The study investigates the relevance of the FSI training programmes for public administrators responsible for implementing South Africa's foreign policy. The primary source of information for this study are individuals involved in the development and implementation of the FSI training programmes as well as practising diplomats who have attended the FSI training programmes. Developers and implementers of the FSI training programmes have a perspective on how to design relevant training programmes and are able to describe what challenges individual South African diplomats will encounter in their careers. Practising diplomats who have undergone training at

the FSI provide an informed overview by relating the benefits of the FSI training experience to their work.

## 1.6 CHAPTER OUTLINE

### Chapter One: Introduction and Background to the Study

Chapter One sets the context to establish why the research is important for government policy makers and what contribution will be made to the field. This chapter deals with the discussion of the research problem and its setting which are elaborated on in detail. In addition, the organization, objectives and purpose of the study are presented. To set the context under which the study was undertaken, the research question, scope and delimitations are also discussed.

### Chapter Two: Research Methodology

Chapter Two discusses the methodology used to gather the relevant data that is used in drawing conclusions. Arguments are presented to motivate why the qualitative research method was chosen as the ideal methodology for this study. Primary and secondary data collecting techniques used in this research are explained, together with methods used to analyse the data. The methodology used in gathering the primary data and the process followed is detailed in this chapter. This chapter also presents the overall research approach, the research design, the data collection method and the analysis procedures.

### Chapter Three: Review of Related Literature

This Chapter reviews the relevant literature and considers the role of public administration in governance, it also gives a brief history of the evolution of the art of diplomacy up to and including its current form and its impact on the profession of diplomacy. This chapter focuses, in brief, on the general principles

of public administration, the origins of diplomacy and diplomatic training, and challenges faced by diplomats practising their profession in a global environment. Furthermore, this chapter discusses issues that have influenced South Africa's current foreign policy objectives since the first democratic elections. Selected countries and multilateral organizations, in which South Africa has full representation, are also discussed to highlight the challenges that the field of international relations presents to the country's diplomatic capacity. The chapter also presents the issues that South African diplomats need to contend with in the implementation of its foreign policy within the context of regional (SADC) and continental (AU and NEPAD) political and economic activities. South African organization responsible for the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy, the DFA, is also discussed in this chapter, including its structure and the staffing of its missions.

## Chapter Four: Pedagogic Approach: A Curriculum Overview

Chapter Four explores the current government legislation and policies geared towards strengthening capacity in government agencies to effectively implement its policies and programmes. This chapter places special emphasis on the DFA's human resources development policies that inform the FSI training programmes. An extensive presentation is made on the FSI training programme and two case studies on diplomatic training, offered by the Canadian Foreign Service Institute and the University of Malta.

## Chapter Five: Analysis of Findings

Chapter Five presents a summary of the research findings for each question asked relating to the relevance of the FSI training programme to the challenges South African diplomats encounter when implementing or facilitating the implementation of its foreign policy. This chapter also includes confirmation of the methodology used in data gathering and the size of the sample. Views expressed

by the majority or minority of respondents are quoted and used as a means to confirm or verify the conclusions that have been made on each question as a requirement of the research methodology.

**Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

Chapter Six presents a summary of the study. Following the summary are conclusions that were reached, based on the findings on the relevance of the FSI training programme to the challenges faced by South Africa diplomats. Lastly, recommendations are made on how the FSI training programme could be enhanced to build the required capacity for the effective implementation or facilitation of the implementation of South Africa foreign policy.

**CHAPTER TWO:   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## 2.1    INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a brief overview of the Research Methodology applied to this study in addressing the research problem presented in Chapter 1. The qualitative research method was chosen as the ideal methodology for this study. Qualitative methodology, according to Morse and Mitchan (2002), has two goals, namely to develop concepts in order to better understand the phenomenon they represent and to develop general and valid theories. Unlike other research methodologies, qualitative research allows for flexibility in design and implementation to ensure congruence between question formulation, literature, data collection strategies and data analysis required for the phenomenon being investigated (Smaling, 2002:3). The methodology allows for information seeking dialogue or interview, in which the researcher has the goal of finding information by identifying when to continue, stop or modify the research process in order to achieve the desired reliability and validity to ensure rigour (Smaling, 2002:3).

Gummesson (1991) maintains that because human beings in any situation are unique there is a high likelihood that existing theory generated by qualitative research maybe inadequate for investigation. Morse and Mitchan (2002), in support of Smaling's (2002:2) view, argue that the qualitative inquiry begins at its inductive process by deconstructing all the implicit assumptions, building from a carefully inspected base by an informed researcher. McCotter (2001) adds that research that aims to deconstruct has some emancipatory elements in it that resists existing labels and structures and seeks instead, alternatives that do not currently exist by reconstructing or recommending the creation of new structures. Edelsky (1994:12) argues that such an approach in research is political, potentially transformative and profoundly hopeful.

Potter (1996:50) states that the predominant qualitative methodologies are ethnography, ethnomethodology, reception studies, ecological psychology, symbolic interactionism, cultural studies and textual analysis. The qualitative methodology chosen for this research is ethnography because enthnographic data techniques are most suitable for the nature of the phenomenon under investigation. This methodology type also allows for qualitative rigour which has a legitimate place in the social sciences through its respect for and contribution to knowledge.  Van Maanen (1988:3) defines ethnography as the search for culture, where 'culture' refers to knowledge that informs, embeds, shapes and accounts for the routine activities of a given group. Ethnographic methodology allows the researcher to study people in their natural settings, and thus allows the documentation of the world they inhabit in terms of the meanings and behaviour of the people in it (Walsh, 1998:220). The arguments indicate clearly that the core features of ethnography make it applicable in a study of this nature.

Ethnographic techniques allow for the development of trust between the researcher and the researched which results in access to more political and personal data being granted to the researcher by the respondent during interviews (Connell, Lynch and Waring, 2001). This methodology caters for the need to understand the social processes that involve covert beliefs and practices, through observation and continual refinement of theoretical propositions (Connell *et al.*, 2001). Ethnographic methodology questions the variables which quantitative research analyses, arguing instead for the examination of socio-cultural constructions (Walsh, 1998:220). In examining socio-cultural constructions, ethnography does not follow the sequence of deductive theory tested in quantitative research, because it is during the process of research itself that research problems come to be formulated and studied (Walsh, 1998:220). In fulfilling this function, the methodology allows the researcher to create a dialogue with the respondent through communicative symmetry, open-mindedness and open-heartedness, responsivity, mutual trust and respect in order to encourage honest responses (McCotter, 2001 and Smaling, 2002:3).

In arguing for the use of ethnography in a study of this nature, Walsh (1998:221) points out that this methodology is distinctive from other methodologies in the following three ways: first, there are no distinct stages of theorizing, hypostudy construction, data gathering and hypostudy testing thus allowing the research process to be a constant interaction between problem formulation, data gathering and data analysis. Secondly, this methodology allows for the use of different techniques of inquiry involving attempts to observe things that happen, listening to what people say and questioning people in the setting of the investigation. Lastly, the researcher, who is the observer, is the primary research instrument and determines the extent of the field to be covered, establishes field relations, conducts and structures observations and interviews, writes field notes, undertakes audio and visual recordings, reads documents, records and transcribes and documents the research findings.

This aspect is essential for this type of the study because theory will be generated rather than only being tested. The arguments, in support of ethnography, clearly demonstrate that for a study of this nature, ethnography is the most appropriate methodology. Since ethnographic research takes place among real human beings, there are a number of special ethical concerns that a researcher must be aware of before beginning. To avoid the ethical concerns, the researcher was able to make the research goals clear to the respondents and gained the informed consent of their willingness to participate in the research beforehand.

## 2.2    DATA GATHERING

Miles and Huberman's (cited in Batelaan, 1993:207) advice on research strategy for data gathering was employed to gather data at the beginning of the process. According to the authors, a qualitative researcher decides at the beginning of data collection, what things mean and notes regularities, patterns, explanations,

possible configurations, causal flows and propositions. Ethnographic techniques used in data gathering included document analysis, participant observation, interviews administered through a structured questionnaire and informal discussions with a selected number of respondents.

The data gathered is classified under primary and secondary data. Primary data is data collected from interviews, participant observation and informal discussions. Secondary data is collected through the analysis of relevant documentation that relates to the subject of the study.

### 2.2.1 Primary Data

The gathering of primary data, three methods were employed, interviews, informal discussions and participant observations.

### a) Participant Observations

The researcher was fortunate to be a participant observer because of his posting in the embassy of the Republic of South Africa in the People's Republic of China as an Agriculture Counsellor. Even though the researcher has not had the privilege of attending the FSI training programme due to his secondment from the Department of Agriculture, he was able to be part of and participate in the activities of the group that was being studied. This privilege provided the researcher with the opportunity to observe the target group in action. Potter (1996:98) defines the participant observer approach as a technique of gathering data through direct contact with an object, usually another human being. Monette, Sullivan and De Jong (1990:234), in support of the participant observation approach, point out that public service professionals should seek out opportunities to undertake this type of study as a way of fully understanding a particular group culture and/or subculture. Supporters of this approach also argue that it is the only system that provides a researcher with access to a particular

type of data referred to as 'subjective experiences of those under study' (Monette *et al.*, 1990:234).

Weber (1957), in illustrating the importance of the participant observer, argues that in order to understand human behaviour, a researcher must study not only what people do or say, but also how they think and feel and their subjective experiences. In concluding his argument on this approach, Weber (1957) proposes the method of *verstehen* which refers to subjective understanding or the participant observer's effort to view and understand a situation from the perspective of the people being observed themselves. In guarding against the positivist questioning of whether the subjective interpretations of the *verstehen* method have any scientific validity in a study of this nature, Monette *et al.* (1990:240-2) support utilization of this approach in a study of this nature. Monette *et al.* (1990:240-2) argues that the participant observation approach is suitable to supplement interviews and informal discussions. Monette *et al.* (1990:240) further argues that a participant observer is able to gain comprehensive understanding of the values, perceptions, and other subjective elements of a particular group.

Before embarking on participant observation as an approach to gather primary data, four steps proposed by Monette *et al.* (1990:240-2) are used as a reference to determine its applicability. The first step is to decide which group is to be studied and whether such a group would be accessible to the researcher as a participant observer. The second step is to establish whether the researcher will be granted entry to the target group as a participant observer. The third step is to establish whether a researcher, as a participant observer, will be able to develop a rapport and trust with the target group to ensure that they serve as useful and accurate sources of information. The final step requires the participant observer to determine whether the target group to be studied will provide the necessary environment for observation and the recording thereof (Monette *et al.*, 1990:240-2). All the steps were easily complied with since the researcher was posted to the Beijing Mission to support all South African embassies across East Asia in

representing South Africa's interests in agricultural development and trade matters. The researcher was able to interact with the target group at various missions while executing his assignments, during state visits and also at multilateral meetings. All the observations that were made were recorded and filed as supplementary data for analysis purposes.

## b)   Informal discussions

Given the challenges that South Africa is experiencing in implementing its foreign policy and its foreign obligations, the target group was keen to participate in discussions that relate to their work and training, they saw the research as a means of making an input to policy makers on the development of capacity for the DFA. During visits to various missions in East Asia and during conferences and official visits by high level delegations, the researcher was able to initiate discussions that were centred on this study to elicit views and comments from the target group. The researcher routinely informed the participating individuals on the objectives of this study and guaranteed them anonymity on any views that they may have expressed that could be relevant to this study. There was also a sense of eagerness from participating individuals to share their understanding of the issue under study and also at the same time make recommendations that they felt will improve the relevancy of the FSI training programmes. They identified with the research easily because they saw it as a mechanism to make their input into the policy processes that guide the development of the FSI curriculum. Through interactions on matters related to diplomatic work and training, a favourable environment was presented for the researcher to document information that was relevant to this study (Monette *et al.*, 1990:240-2).

## c)   Structured interviews

Twenty five FS representatives were chosen to represent the large group of about 1000 diplomats. According to Monette *et al.* (1990:131), sampling allows a

researcher to study a workable number of cases from a large group, in order to arrive at the results that are relevant to all the members of the group. They further argue that the quality of information drawn carefully from the sampled group can even be more reliable than information that could be obtained from the entire group (Monette *et al.*, 1990:131). It is therefore important that this requirement is taken into consideration to ensure that the validity and accuracy of research results are not compromised (Monette *et al.*, 1990:131).

In drawing the sample, recommendations by Monette *et al.* (1990:132) in ensuring representativity, were taken into consideration. The authors argue that the sample will be regarded as a representative sample if it reflects the distribution of relevant variables of the targeted group (Monette *et al.*, 1990:132). In this study, the relevant variables that were considered in deciding on the sample were participation in the FSI training, and being posted to represent South Africa abroad. Only individuals who have completed the first cycle of posting and are either currently in their next posting or have returned to head office after posting were identified as part of the target group.

The sample was drawn focusing on evaluating the effectiveness of the FSI programme by gathering data from participants who had attended the programme and had had the opportunity to practically apply the knowledge gained during their posting. A proportionate stratified sample was used to ensure that the sample used is proportionate to the strata present in the given population. Thirty two percent of the samples are individuals who have completed one or more postings and have returned to head office. The remainder (sixty eight percent) of the sample comprises those individuals who have been posted more than once and are currently at posting. Individuals who fall in to the above two strata were identified as a stratified sample because every requirement in the targeted group has a known chance of being represented in the sample. Individuals with all the requisite elements were invited to form part of the sample, either verbally or through written communication.

According to Monette *et al.* (1990:151) an availability sample or convenience sample is normally used when it is very difficult or impossible to develop a complete sampling frame. Given that South Africa's foreign missions are across the world and in more than 100 countries, it would have been a difficult and expensive exercise to develop a complete sampling frame. Monette *et al.* (1990:151), in support of the utilization of availability samples, argue that an availability sample is one of the common forms of sample used in public service research, because it is less expensive and also because it is sometimes difficult to develop an exhaustive sampling frame. Availability of respondents who had all the required variables was used as a measure to draw the sample. Annexure 1 is the covering letter sent to potential respondents inviting them to participate in the study and explaining what the study seeks to achieve.

Open-ended questionnaires were used in the interviews. In support of the utilization of open-ended questions rather than closed questions, Monette *et al.* (1990:169) argue that the former is relevant in an exploratory study in which the lack of theoretical development proposes that limited restrictions should be imposed on respondents' answers. The questionnaire was structured along a number of key themes informed by the research question, respondents' preliminary views and the literature review. In short, the themes centre on the DFA policies, including understanding of foreign policy, and the impact of the FSI programme on human resource development for the execution of South Africa's foreign policy. As recommended by May (1997:111) the thematic structure and the terms of the researcher allowed respondents to answer questions on their own terms rather on the terms of the researcher. The open-ended questionnaire is an appropriate data gathering tool because it allows the researcher to get more information that relates to participants personal beliefs, considered opinions and insights unhindered (May, 1997:111). Schein (1983:112) supports this approach arguing that only a joint effort by insider and outsider can decipher the essential assumptions and their patterns of interrelationships. The open-ended

questionnaire used is attached as Annexure 2. The questions asked were simple and direct, and express only one idea.

Those individuals targeted for the sample who responded positively to the invitation, were contacted telephonically to confirm their preparedness to complete the questionnaire once it was emailed or faxed to them. According to Monette *et al.* (1990:182), structuring of questions in interviews is relevant in ethnographic studies because it provides a degree of freedom for the interviewer and respondents in conducting the interview and the answering of questions. The structured questionnaire allowed the researcher, in his capacity as a diplomat, to ask respondents particular questions and allow respondents to respond freely in an informal atmosphere.

Two sequences of interviews were undertaken with eight individuals out of a sample of twenty five, after consent was obtained. The first sequence of interviews were conducted through a non-structured questionnaire and was conducted either face to face or telephonically with the eight respondents. The first sequence of interviews served three purposes. The first purpose was to introduce the researcher and the subject of the research to a section of the targeted sample. The second purpose was to gain an understanding of the practices and policies that inform and guide the development of the diplomatic training programme of the DFA. The third purpose was to preliminarily establish whether the data collection tool (questionnaire) provided the depth, range and quality of information required, and whether the respondents shared this view (Monette *et al.*, 1990:182). The structure of the dialogue allowed for in-depth conversation between the researcher and the respondents, probing, rephrasing of questions and also allowed for varying the order of questions to fit a particular interview. The respondents were able to trust the researcher and did not feel threatened in anyway during dialogue.

The interviews were undertaken in conjunction with documentary analysis about the organizational structure, practices and policies that guided the developing of the FSI training programme and formed the basis for finalization of the questionnaire. According to Connell *et al.* (2001) the deliberations in the first sequence of interviews are important because they provide the respondents an opportunity to enhance the study through informed comments and criticism, and the researcher then has the opportunity to be exposed to themes and issues that they may have ignored when compiling the questionnaire. After the first sequence of interviews, some questions were rephrased, one question was deleted because all the respondents felt that it was too similar to a question already asked and three additional questions were added. The questionnaire was then finalized.

The second sequence of interviews included in-depth interviews conducted through a structured questionnaire. Marshall and Rossman (1989:82) argue that qualitative in-depth interviews are much more like conversations than formal structured interviews because they allow the researcher space to explore and uncover the participant's meaning and for perspective. In support of this approach, May (1997:111) argues that the thematic structure of the questionnaire should allow people to answer more on their own terms than the standardized interview permits. Questionnaires were emailed to respondents, some were completed through either telephonic or face-to-face interviews. Where environment permitted, telephonic or face-to-face interviews were recorded. After the completed emailed questionnaires were received, telephonic follow-ups were made to clarify some of the responses to the questions. The telephonic follow-ups with the respondents are essential in order to correct misinterpretations of responses by the researcher (Schein, 1983:112). Through the follow-up, internal validity checks are immediately undertaken (Schein, 1983:112). Walsh (1998:223) supports Schein's (1983) argument and points out that the follow-ups add to the strengths of ethnography because of the open-ended nature of the process when compared with other research methodologies.

Once all the questionnaires were received, the process to validate, analyse and summarise into descriptive notes commenced. Monette *et al.* (1990:187), argue that with an open-ended questionnaire, an experienced researcher is required to accurately identify high points, correctly condense these high points and summarise all the responses. This researcher undertook all the follow-up interviews, analyses and consolidation of responses personally, all the high points were correctly condensed and summarised descriptively for easy analysis.

## 2.2.2  Secondary Data

According to Walsh (1998:223), in order to start any research process an ethnographer needs to review relevant secondary sources on the problems and issues under consideration for the proposed research. The secondary sources may include allied research monographs and articles from journalistic materials, autobiographies, diaries, novels, and so on (Walsh, 1998:223). According to Potter (1996:88) documents are important to researchers who have to also interview respondents because such documents may provide confirmatory evidence and strengthen the credibility of interviews, informal discussions and participant observations. The criterion recommended by May (1997:190) was used in evaluating the quality of the evidence available through analysis of documentary sources. The criteria include authenticity, credibility, representativeness and importantly the establishment of the meaning of the document and its contribution to the issues a researcher is hoping to illuminate.

Also included in the related literature review is an analysis of existing government policies on human resource development, and literature on the subject and case studies on diplomatic training programme. Topics of the related literature reviewed as presented in Chapter Three include: public administration organisations which are responsible for formulating and implementing

government policies; the origin of the concept of diplomacy as an instrument to implement foreign policy; and the impact of globalisation on the profession and process of diplomacy and the challenges diplomats of today and tomorrow will have to grapple with to promote and defend their country's foreign policy in a globalised environment. The literature also provides an in-depth argument about issues that inform South Africa's foreign policy and the challenges faced by DFA in implementing South Africa's foreign policy. The structure of South Africa's bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations is also presented to demonstrate the capacity challenges South African diplomats face in executing their mandate.

Government legislation and policies are central to the work of its agencies and are developed and implemented in accordance with established public administration routines, it is therefore essential to subject them to a critical review in answering the research question. Chapter Four presents a review of the relevant acts, regulations and policies to establish the basis that informs human resources development strategy of any government department, including the DFA, namely: the Skills Development Act, 1998; the White Paper on Public Service, Training and Development, 1997; the Employment Equity Act, 1998; The National Skills Development Strategy for South Africa, 2001; South African Qualification Authority, 1995; the National Qualification Framework, 1995; the Labour Relations Act, 1995; the White Paper on Human Resources Management, 2001; the Macro-Economic Strategy for Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), 1996; the White Paper on Restructuring and Development Programme (RDP), 1995; and the Human Resource Development Strategy for the Public Service 2002-2006. The review of these policies and legislation was crucial because they form the basis from which the FSI training programmes are developed.

Chapter Four also includes three comparative case studies on FS training programmes: The South African FSI training programme of 2004 and 2005, the Canadian FSI training programme, and the University of Malta diplomatic training

programme. The comparison is important to demonstrate how different countries or institutions respond with relevant training programmes to developing the relevant human capacity for the FS as such capacity is crucial for the effective and efficient implementation of a country's foreign policy. The case studies also assist in the evaluation of the gaps that exist between South Africa's FSI training and other diplomatic training offered elsewhere.

## 2.3    DATA ANALYSIS

After the process of data gathering, the collected data needs to be analysed and conclusions drawn that answer the research questions. Monette *et al.* (1990:216) point out that data analysis may also be referred as 'content analysis. The authors argue that the content or the data analysis process is a form of measurement broadly defined as a measurement of aspects of data gathered during interviews (Monette *et al.*, 1990:216). According to Monette *et al.* (1990:217) *validity of data analysis* refers to whether the categories the researcher develops and the aspects of the content coded are meaningful indicators of what is measured. They define *reliability of data analysis* as the ability of the developed measure used in a study to yield the same results each time it is used (Monette *et al.*, 1990:218). In analyzing data this researcher ensured that important elements that fulfil the requirements of validity and reliability were implemented.

According to Walsh (1998:229) when using ethnography, the analysis of data can be said to begin in the pre-fieldwork phase with the formulation and clarification of research problem. The process of data analysis requires the researcher to seek relationships or patterns between various themes that have been identified and categorise them (Lacey and Luff, 1998:3). Hancock (1998:9) points out that in ethnography analysis of data concentrates on understanding and describing the situation from the perspective of the culture or subgroup under study. In this context, data analysis means the description and presentation of the responses

generated by participant observations, informal discussions and interviews (Lacey and Luff, 1998:3).

The process of data analysis that was applied to this research followed the following steps, as recommended by Lacey and Luff. (1998:3-4): familiarization with data through review, reading, listening and so on; transcription of tape recorded material; organization and indexing of data for easy retrieval and identification; making anonymous of sensitive data; identification of themes; development of provisional categories; exploration of relationships between categories; refinement of themes and categories; development of theory and incorporation of pre-existing knowledge; testing of theory against data; and finally report writing. Chapter five presents the findings of data analysis.

The familiarisation with data process involved the researcher reading and re-reading the responses to the questionnaire and whatever additional information that was recorded from observation and follow-up interviews. This process assisted the researcher in familiarising himself with the data and at the same time facilitated the writing of brief memos and summaries that would assist in transcribing the collected data. Data were then organized so that each respondent was assigned a code rather than using their name to abide by the ethical code of research and the guarantee of anonymity given to respondents. At the same time a secure file, which linked the respondent to their response was filed in confidential file during analysis and writing of research findings. Any names of places or materials in the data that could be used to identify the source of the data were removed from the questionnaire. The narrative data were numbered by paragraph so that the researcher could easily trace back to the original text any unit of text that he needs to use in the analysis and findings.

According to Pidgeon and Henwood (1996:87), the documentation of data will result in the generation of a variety of concepts, categories and theoretical

observations which will provide the building blocks for subsequent theorising. According to Connell *et al.* (2001), the mechanism of analysis includes breaking it down, examining it, conceptualising it and categorising it. Dey (1993:96) points out that developed categories must be meaningful internally to ensure that data are the understood in context of the research questions and meaningful externally by ensuring that data are understood through comparison. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:34) the process of constant comparison of data will stimulate thinking that will lead to the development of descriptive and explanatory categories. The technique to categorise data as recommended by Monette *et al.* (1990:219) and Lincoln and Guba (1985:339) are utilized in this research for data analysis.

The categorisation recommended by Monette *et al.* (1990:219) compels a researcher to consider the following factors when categorising data: presence and absence of an element; frequency of occurrence of an element; amount of time devoted to an element and intensity of expression. Presence and absence of an element category mainly focused on whether the respondents made reference to certain subjects that are informative to the study (Monette *et al.* (1990:219). Frequency of occurrence of an element category was concerned in ensuring that the frequency with which statements made by respondents of various values appear on data to be analysed (Monette *et al.* (1990:219).   Amount of time devoted to an element category is composed of those issues during the interview that the respondents spent more time on which may be more informative to the study (Monette *et al.* (1990:219). Intensity of expression category is mainly concerned with identifying those issues in the interview that the respondents talked strongly about as issues that need attention and also those issues that the respondents responded too softly to as a means of showing that they were of no concern to them (Monette *et al.*, 1990:219).

Lincoln and Guba (1985:339) recommend categorisation to researchers. This entails: first, comparing incidents from the questionnaire data applicable to each

category; secondly, integrate categories and their properties; thirdly delimit the theory and lastly writing the theory. Goetz and LeCompte (1981:58) in support of Lincoln and Guba (1985:339) argue that as new events are constantly compared with previous events, new typological dimensions as well as new relationships may be discovered. This aspect emerges in the process of data analysis for this research. For the purpose of analysis, relevant collected data were categorised and analysed and potential regularities, patterns and explanations were flagged and placed in their relevant categories that are conceptually linked to the thematic guides. All categories that were popular were then used to draw conclusions from respondents views on a particular issue raised in the questionnaire.

Monette *et al.* (1990:217) argue that for data analysis to be regarded as having attained validity, categories that the researcher develops and the aspects of the data coded must be meaningful indicators of what is to be measured. In order to maintain inductive thrust and this validity during data analysis, checks and balances to control or counter validity threats and ensure reliability are implemented accordingly in data analysis. Lacey and Luff (1998:22) point out that the validity of data analysed will be judged by the extent to which an account seems to fairly and accurately represent the data collected. According to Lacey and Luff (1998:22), to present the validity of data analysis, it must meet the following: consistency of the findings; extent to which the researcher represents all relevant views; and adequate and systematic use of original data. Lather (1986:78) suggests that for minimum expectations of validity to be met in research designs for results interpretation, the following criteria have to be utilized: reflexive subjectivity – which involves some documentation of how the researcher's assumptions have been affected by the data; face validity – which entails the process of recycling categories, analysis and conclusions back through respondents; catalytic validity – availing some documentation that the research process has led to insight and, ideally, activism on the part of the

respondents; and triangulation – utilization of multiple methods, data sources and theories in the research process.

Walsh (1998:231) argues that ethnography has produced two suggested forms of validation, namely respondent validation and triangulation. For the purpose of ensuring rigour in data analysis, Walsh (1998:231) and Lacey and Luff (1998:23) recommended technique of demonstrating reliability and validity in ethnography through triangulation and respondent validation was found suitable for the study. They further recommend a technique for respondent validation that allows the ethnographer to show findings of their research to the respondents and allowing the respondents to verify whether the presentation of the findings is authentic (Walsh, 1998:231 and Lacey and Luff, 1998:23). They continue to argue that it is important to undertake respondent validation because involving respondents in the whole research process addresses concerns about the researcher having the sole power over interpretation of results (Walsh, 1998:231 and Lacey and Luff, 1998:23).

The researcher, in undertaking respondent validation, employed follow-up interviews to share the conclusions reached after data analysis with respondents where possible. The exercise was successful as most of the respondents agreed with consolidated conclusions of their views in the findings. A few respondents felt that their responses, even though presented, were not presented in a satisfactory manner. They felt that the terms used failed to emphasise their strong views on certain issues. These respondents then made additional inputs to address these shortcomings.

To further ensure rigour, the triangulation technique was utilized to compliment the validation technique which enhanced the reliability and validity of the data. The triangulation technique refers to the process of gathering and analysing data from more than one source to establish whether respondents corroborate one another to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation under study (Walsh,

1998:231 and Lacey and Luff, 1998:23). Triangulation was undertaken by the researcher as a participant observer in the operation of the FS in action, and verifying data gathered against these observations. The observations enabled the researcher to gain further insights on the subjects being studied in the same situation. The researcher was then able also to participate in a number of state visits, high-level visits and multilateral conferences over a period of four years in East Asia, this provided an opportunity to apply the triangulation technique through informal discussions. Informal discussions were held with some of the target group members who did not form the sample group to get their views on some of the issues raised in the research questionnaire. Most of the issues arising from observation and views expressed through informal discussions corroborated data already gathered through interviews.

## 2.4    INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Through its verification process, ethnography allows for the researcher to argue theoretically because ideas emerging from data can be reconfirmed in new data and can easily be developed into new theories (Spiers, 2002). Through interpretation of data, new theory is developed as an outcome of the research process. Chapter Five discusses the interpretation of the data in the form of a detailed analysis of findings. Strong views that were expressed by a number of respondents on issues that relate to the FSI training programme are presented in summarised form and in some categories, views expressed are quoted verbatim. This was used to accurately present respondents' views on the issues covered in the research questionnaire. Through the conclusions and recommendations of Chapter 6, elements of a new theory emerge. This approach to qualitative research methodology is valid because it meets all the objectives of the study which is ultimately to reach a conclusion which can be easily deemed reliable and valid; to influence the policy process and to generate new knowledge in the training of South African diplomats.

## 2.5    SUMMARY

This chapter has presented, in detail, the methodology used in this research study and why ethnography was chosen as the appropriate methodology for a research study of this nature. The technique used in the gathering of the primary and secondary data has also been presented in detail. It has been pointed out that three approaches, which include participant observations, informal discussions and interviews, conducted through a structured questionnaire, were used in primary data collection. All the steps that were undertaken in identification of the sample group, formulation of questionnaire, conducting of interviews and analysis of data are explained. The chapter also explains the accessibility of the respondents to the researcher through telephonic contacts, visits to various missions in East Asia and also participation at multilateral meetings

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