

***Because the country says they have to change:***

**An analysis of a diversity intervention in a  
South African Police Service (SAPS) station**

**A report for Diversity and Equity  
Interventions in Southern Africa  
(DEISA)**

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Widening Circles, Case Study 2.

*Because the country says they have to change: A diversity intervention in a South African Police Service (SAPS) station.*

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**Series editor: Melissa Steyn**

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## **Abstract**

The shift from apartheid to a constitutional democracy in South Africa brought with it a plethora of questions concerning ideas of nationhood, citizenship, and organisational transformation. Integrally caught up in the revolution, the South African Police Service (SAPS) faces transformative challenges on scales far larger than most other organisations in the country. From being the strong arm of the oppressive elite, it has had to restructure and re-articulate its function while simultaneously attempting to maintain law and order. Like many other corporations and organisations, the SAPS has engaged in interventions aimed at aiding the fluidity of this process. This report is an analysis of one such intervention. It attempts to ascertain the extent to which members are changing as a result of particular diversity workshops conducted in a region of the Western Cape. The analysis focuses on members at one particular station.

Research took the form of eight days and a night spent as a uniformed observer and participant in two diversity workshops at the selected station and Area headquarters. Twenty-one semi-structured interviews and three focus groups were conducted, involving twenty-seven members.

Analysis and observation revealed an intervention that will look good on paper but has had little organisational or individual impact at the station. The organisational culture is one in which Xhosa-speaking African members struggle to survive, caught between animosity from an unsympathetic Afrikaans-speaking public, and an Afrikaans-saturated work environment. Recruited from outside the province, they are seen as a threat to the futures of bodies deemed as belonging to that space. Members' struggles with new intersections of race and class are highlighted in their battle to come to terms with the presence of a white cleaner. Job functions at the station are stratified along gender lines with both men and women having internalised traditional roles. While policies supporting diversity exist, they are selectively applied, most notably in relation to language for which a final policy has not yet been formed. Structures supporting diversity are thus lacking.

While members at the station are changing, this has little to do with the diversity workshops being conducted there and far more to do with the gradual re-articulation of nationhood being propagated in other forms throughout the country. This work brings together an under-examined intersection of diversity and police cultural theory in South Africa, and highlights the importance of greater attention to these issues.

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# Glossary of Terms

## **Area**

At the time of research the SAPS jurisdictional spheres were broken into national, provincial, metropole, area and station zones. The 'Grootland Area', or in this report simply 'Area', refers to the jurisdictional zone into which the study station of Hemel falls. It is also used in conjunction with other nouns to describe organisational positioning, for example 'Area Director' or 'Area Headquarters'. I have capitalised the word in the body of the text to remind the reader of its fuller meaning.

## **Bantustan**

Territories or 'homelands' designated for African occupation by the apartheid government. Each of the ten bantustans was designated to a different cultural group as part of the white government's policy of 'separate development'.

## **Boertjie**

Afrikaans word which is the diminutive of *boer*, literally meaning 'farmer', but could be used in an affectionate or derogatory manner, depending on the tone of the speaker. In this report it is used to refer to white Afrikaner men.

## **Coconut**

In popular discourse, this term used by a SAPS member in the study, refers to someone who is considered physically black but culturally or habitually white.

## **Diversity**

Used in a number of ways in this study. As a description of a body of people I adopt Nkomo & Stewart's (forthcoming) definition of 'a mixture of people with different group identities within the same social system'. 'Diversity intervention(s)' refer to projects that aim to engage social challenges, equity and power disparities emerging in such groups, particularly in the work environment. 'Diversity workshops' refer to the training conducted by the SAPS in its attempt to conduct a diversity intervention.

## **Dominee/s**

Afrikaans word for 'clergyman' or 'religious minister'.

## **Equity**

A state in which individuals and groups are free from oppression including that based on race, gender, language or religion. In this report the word is used to refer to

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measures and structures aimed at creating an equitable work environment and society.

### **Humanism**

A philosophy or paradigm that privileges the shared human experience over other axes of identity.

### **Imagine(d)**

In this work 'imagined' relates to Anderson's (1983) theory on national and community formation as being largely imagined. This is to say that while 'imagined' spaces and communities are real, perspectives and understandings – 'imaginings' – can be re-articulated and viewed very differently from how they are commonly understood. In this report the word is used to highlight the manner in which spaces and groups are imagined so as to include and exclude 'others'.

### **Race**

I treat race as a social construct. It is understood as having no biological basis in reality while having real effects on our lives through the manner in which individuals, groups and societies give meaning to, and mobilise around biological features.

### **Reservist/ Reserves**

The South African Police Service has in place a system of 'Reserving' where citizens can become fully qualified but unpaid volunteer policemen and women. These volunteers are known as 'Reserves' or 'Reservists'.

### **Swart Gevaar**

An Afrikaans term rooted in apartheid nationalist discourse. The term literally means 'black threat' and refers both to a threat of physical violence as well as political takeover from the African population.

### **Volk**

Afrikaans for 'nation' or 'people' but used by right-wing Afrikaans groups to refer to a chosen (Afrikaner) people as in 'die volk' – *the nation*.

### **Shift/ Unit**

SAPS stations are divided into departments commonly referred to as 'shifts' or 'units'. 'Shift' is usually used to refer to frontline, uniformed members who work shift, rather than office hours, regardless of which unit they are in. 'Unit' or 'department' refers to the function of members within that group. While there is a difference between the two terms, they are sometimes used interchangeably in the SAPS simply as a way to refer to one's close colleagues.

### **Uniformed Members**

The terms 'uniformed members' usually refers to the frontline or shift workers most often involved in engagements with the public. Detectives and some administrative and management staff, though issued with uniforms, are not often required to wear them. At the time of the research, uniformed members generally worked twelve hour shifts, two day shifts and two night shifts, with three days' rest after every four shifts. With the introduction of sector policing at the time of writing, the shift system is undergoing changes.

### **List of Acronyms**

- CPU - Crime Prevention Unit
  - CSC - Community Service Centre
  - DEISA - Diversity and Equity Interventions in Southern Africa
  - EAS - Employee Assistance Services
  - EE - Employment Equity (generally used in conjunction with 'Committee' or 'Plan')
  - HQ - Head Quarters
  - HR - Human Resource(s)
  - IBA - Independent Broadcasting Authority
  - INCUDISA - Intercultural and Diversity Studies of Southern Africa
  - SABC - South African Broadcasting Commission
  - SANPAD - South African Netherlands Partnerships for Alternatives in Development
  - SAP - South African Police (force)
  - SAPS - South African Police Service
-

CHAPTER ONE

**Introduction**

ten states to the African population, occupying thirteen percent of South Africa's land (Williams 1996).

In 1994 the ANC led government inherited a state without a nation (Valji 2003). Thabo Mbeki's 1996 'I am an African' speech, as a central symbol of the move to create an all inclusive national discourse, stands in stark contrast to previous notions of a South African nation. In it he claims an all inclusive African identity drawing on cultural, linguistic and ethnic groups commonly seen as having played a role in the nation's history. Important reference is made to the fact that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white ... It rejoices in the diversity of our people and creates the space for all of us voluntarily to define ourselves as one people' (Mbeki 1996).

Human diversity has existed since the Garden of Eden (if only as a metaphor for a beginning) where Adam and Eve represented different sexes and genders. Diversity is everywhere, including the most ethnically homogenous societies where class, gender, age and ability differentials, to name only a few, contribute to group formation and politics. Human diversity related issues affect everybody. Through millennia of recorded histories from cave paintings to the internet, to the formation of academic disciplines like anthropology and sociology, and of organised political activity from communities of two, to the United Nations, humanity has grappled with notions of human difference.

A glance at the international section of daily papers tells of the ethnic-based refugee crises in Sudan; class, race and nation based violence over perceived oil exploitation in Nigeria; US bewilderment at a Hamas victory in Palestine, and messages from the void relating to the war on terror/classism/capitalism/religious exploitation or any number of other interpretations, delivered by the enigmatic Osama Bin Laden.

Local papers include commentary on voting along ethnic lines in recent elections, news on the slaughter of three ANC councillors in the IFP stronghold of KwaZulu-Natal, and a letter to the editor by a young, white Afrikaner who is losing his hope that he will be able to contribute to the growth of the country after repeated affirmative action-based rejections of job applications.

It is clear that after millennia on earth, humans continue to struggle with group dynamics. Of course perceptions of difference need not be negative. Central to the new articulation of the South African nation is a celebration of the country's human diversity. Multiculturalism thus represents for some a body of unlimited human potential and for others an annoying burden.

Regardless of individual or group impressions, it can realistically be surmised that future decades and centuries will bring with them increased human movement and trans-national migration with an inevitable increase in overlap between different ethnicities, cultures and national origins. With state, ethnic, religious and other nationalisms, imagined or real communities and allegiances unlikely to dissolve in the foreseeable future, a need for increased tolerance, accommodation and understanding, indeed a globe wide paradigm shift is paramount.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

While we all self-identify according to various criteria, placing ourselves in groups, often choosing to spend time with those who similarly identify, the workplace is a space in which agency with regards to choice of interaction is restricted. Importantly the workplace is increasingly identified as a space of centrality in modern life (Deetz 1992) as well as one in which individuals receive a secondary socialisation (Berger & Luckman 1966; Foucault 1977; Harro 2000).

In South Africa, where the legal framework for employment policy has undergone massive revision over the past decade in an attempt to redress primarily race, class and gender stratification in both the workplace and society as a whole, both employers and employees are increasingly engaging with members of groups from whom they were previously isolated. While it is seldom referred to as such, South Africa has undergone a social revolution since the early nineties. Government discourse has shifted from one in which the separation and hierarchising of races was upheld as supreme, to one in which a humanist equality is marked as the keystone of a peaceful and successful nation. With bodies previously foreign to various workplace spaces and positions displacing those for whom such positions were previously reserved, minds are inevitably struggling to adapt to the shifts in work space and nationally affected discourse.

In a Foucauldian sense security forces have always been integral to the formation and maintenance of national discourse through the control of bodies within national space (Foucault 1991). Yet security forces too, require reordering and re-articulation if the discourse within which a nation is framed is to truly change. Inspector Smith, quoted above, is responding to just such an attempt to re-articulate meaning within the minds of security force members by diversity training.

The following report relates to this diversity training conducted in Hemel, in the Grootland district of the Western Cape. It attempts to answer the questions:

- 1) What activities were initiated around working with diversity
- 2) What was their purpose?
- 3) Who initiated them?
- 4) At whom were they directed?
- 5) What issues did they deal with and
- 6) How is the intervention linked to organisational goals?

Additionally, if Inspector Smith is to be believed and South African citizens are changing 'because the country says they have to change', it becomes tempting to say there isn't a need to conduct diversity related interventions. But who is 'the country' and how are they telling the citizenry to change? If the answer is government then the police are part of that answer, and yet from where are they receiving the signals of change? Ultimately then, the question central to this report is: What lessons might be learned from an analysis of this intervention which might help us understand if, how, and why individuals are changing and whether this intervention is necessary and/or adequate.

## The SAP/S

The South African Police force (SAP)<sup>3</sup> was the bastion of the apartheid state. Racially diverse yet structurally lopsided, the force was the strong arm of the political elite, oppressing both those to whom citizenship of the country was denied, as well as those within its ranks whose skin was not the chosen white of the *volk*<sup>4</sup>. While black officers worked within the force, their orders carried no weight with ranked subordinates whose skins were whiter than their own, nor did they garner respect from those whom they policed. The organisation was dominated by a masculine, patriarchal culture in which women and people of colour struggled.

On the policing side, human rights was an often foreign concept to the SAP with random arrests, torture and assassination common at times. In many respects the SAP was more of an army than a police force, engaged in a low level, partially secret war against an often invisible enemy (Shaw 2000).

Apart from the SAP, South Africa's ten homelands each had their own pseudo-autonomous police forces. Ultimately all were accountable to the SAP, but as the country shifted towards democracy with the 1990 release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of political parties, an amalgamation of these forces, as well as a blending of the military and resistance (previously 'terrorist') forces, became inevitable. Men and women who had been indoctrinated to wage war against one another were told to unite and bear their weapons against the new threat to the fragile democracy: political, property and violent crime. In 1994 the 'force' became the 'service': the South African Police Service (SAPS).

The SAPS of the mid-nineties had a mammoth task on its hands. In addition to suppressing the rise in violent crime and preventing violent political backlashes to the national transformation, the organisation required major internal reflection and restructuring. Post 1994, orders uttered by black officers *did* carry weight with white subordinates, African managers occupied positions previously unheard of in the organisation and room for more African appointees needed to be made. Many of the most powerful and high ranking SAP officers were persuaded to retire with favourable retrenchment packages.

Apart from a need to restructure the human makeup of the organisation, the SAPS was faced with converting to a human rights based police service. As one of South Africa's few academic police experts notes, history was not on their side, 'There is, as yet ... no clear case of any society in transition being able to build a legitimate police agency in the post conflict stage' (Shaw 2000:38).

3. Police forces in British colonies were based on the military and usually armed, rather than the community style policing operating in Britain at the time. Liberation struggles inevitably came up against the police force.
4. An Afrikaans word literally meaning 'nation' or 'people' but used connotatively to suggest 'chosen people'.

## Diversity management and the SAPS

Considering its history, the SAPS makes for a potentially fascinating site for the study of diversity and transformation management in South Africa. One of few national police organisations in the world, the SAPS is an example of a vast, nationally centralised bureaucracy with a particular hierarchy of power. As a government body in the public gaze, it has since 1994 been in the government's best interests to transform the police into a service representative of, and catering to the entire population. But the process has been hard. A 1999 SAPS report concluded that racism is institutionalised in the structure, practices and procedures of the organisation, and reinforced in the informal relationships, communication and attitudes of members (Ntuli 2001). In 2000 the SAPS's organisational complexities were brought to the world through the release of a video depicting white dog squad members using racist language and encouraging their animals to attack suspected illegal African immigrants.

While it is not possible to engage in detail with every strategy employed by the SAPS in relation to diversity management and transformation since 1994, I shall draw attention to some shifts at a national level before focusing on the intervention rolled out in the Grootland Area.<sup>5</sup>

Requests for the SAPS to identify a diversity intervention to be assessed proved difficult. National administration passed the task on to provincial administration, who returned without a site. After weeks of miscommunication it became evident that most SAPS management were not aware of there having been any kind of diversity intervention in the organisation in recent years. Eventually it was a manager from the provincial training office, Captain Van Vlaanderen, along with the provincial employee assistance services (EAS)<sup>6</sup> there, who were able to provide a sketch of recent grapplings with diversity.

According to Captain Van Vlaanderen, the SAPS sent a task team to various countries in 1996 to assess the manner in which other police organisations managed diversity. It was felt that few lessons could be learnt from the USA, Australia and

5. The SAPS is currently undergoing a structural shift towards 'sector policing'. This major change initiated at the end of the data gathering process will do away with many of the spacial and management hierarchies previously implemented in the management of the organisation. However, at the time of writing the SAPS was broken into national, provincial, Area and station districts. A medium to large South African city might be broken into four Areas, each encompassing approximately thirty to fifty police stations. Area zones in rural parts of the country would cover far greater spaces and were likely to include a greater number of stations than urban areas.
6. EAS is made up of chaplains (*dominees*), social workers, pyschometrists (psychologists with a three rather than four year degree) and one psychologist. The office consists of 16 staff who provide daily training at stations in the Grootland Area. Standard SAPS courses provided by EAS employees include HIV information and testing, training on money management issues, colleague sensitivity (but not with a focus on diversity issues), and other life skills.

Britain where the political and economic elite represented an ethnic majority and where diversity related to management of minorities (Capt. Van Vlaanderen, personal interview, 7/7/05). Malaysia, where huge disparities exist between rich and poor and where religious diversity echoes the racial and linguistic diversity of South Africa, eventually proved interesting to the SAPS. Next, the organisation decided it needed its own home-grown intervention and commissioned an independent diversity provider to conduct a 'train the trainer' course for the organisation. The captain told me the course was a disaster which ended in the SAPS and provider suing one another. Mr. Ntini from the diversity providers told me the police hadn't been ready for the process at the time (Mr. Ntini, personal telephone communication, 8/7/05) while a SAPS member, who was trained in the programme told me it was a great success (Capt. Bezuidenhout, personal interview, 18/7/05). Regardless, it doesn't seem the trainers were ever put to use. In Captain Van Vlaanderen's words, there hadn't been enough 'seriousness' from senior members of the SAPS at the time (Capt. Van Vlaanderen, personal interview, 7/7/05).

In the Western Cape, the provincial training office decided to implement station level diversity training workshops throughout the province. In 1997 workshops were completed at the provincial offices and at three stations. The project was dissolved halfway through the fourth station level workshop.

A 1999 Human Rights Commission enquiry into allegations of racism at a Vryburg police station recommended the restructuring of management and the need for improved accountability, all the way to a provincial level (Pityana et al. 1999). A more structured diversity intervention wasn't considered.

Around 2002 diversity training workshops were introduced in one of Cape Town's Areas, independent of the provincial offices. Training was provided by a local Holocaust museum, highlighting the manner in which difference was manipulated and worked with in Nazi Germany. Small groups of individuals were nominated for the course from stations within the Area. Despite rave reviews of the programme by members involved, an assessment by provincial command found it to be overtly emotive and Eurocentric. An attempt to tailor the course to reflect the South African experience by bringing in a South African political history museum and a therapeutic debriefing component failed when a Muslim member complained about being forced to enter the Holocaust museum. The programme was abandoned almost as soon as it had begun (Cpt. Van Vlaanderen, personal interview, 7/7/05).

No other diversity initiatives were introduced within the province, nor at a national level (most provincial management believed there hadn't been any in the country, though a few contradictory testimonies emerged during the course of the fieldwork) until this year.

Though few managers at the provincial offices know about it, the Area director of Grootland, a vast, largely rural police zone comprising over sixty towns and police stations, had given an instruction to provide diversity training to every member in his Area within a six month period. Since the town of Hemel houses the Grootland Area's offices, and a court house, it seemed apt to conduct this study there.

## Limitations and Scope

The research on which this work is based was conducted before the completion of the SAPS's proposed six month diversity roll out. This was necessary due to my participation in an exchange programme with a foreign institution. While this meant issues were fresh in the minds of members it also means this work is not a fully retrospective analysis of an intervention.

Because access to the site was granted only weeks before my departure from the country, the Area Director of Grootland could not find time to meet with me at such short notice. While I had a number of detailed conversations with the Hemel station commissioner, a sudden heart attack resulting in his passing halfway through my fieldwork meant I was unable to engage with him in a formal interview setting. Additionally, while the SAPS granted me access to almost anything I requested, I was barred from accessing disciplinary records for the Grootland Area.

Due to the size of the SAPS, it is not possible to take research conducted in one station and generalise it to a national level. However, while organisational cultures will inevitably differ from station to station, the regularity with which members are transferred between stations, the national nature of the policies that drive the functioning of the organisation, as well as the literal and figurative uniformity of the job, nationwide, means that differences between stations aren't as great as they might be in other industries. One might hope then, without appearing foolhardy, that inferences could be made between the example of Hemel and those of other stations – especially those with similar diversity profiles.

## Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2 of this report provides an overview of literature relating to theory on secondary and workplace socialisation, the management of diversity, and the relationship between identity and space with reference to how discourses alter the articulations of nation. An overview of the study of police culture is also offered.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodologies used in the data gathering and writing up process, and provides an introduction to the context in which this study was conducted, focusing on the manner in which census data provide a particular imagining of the area.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the findings and analysis of this work. The formation and goals of the intervention are assessed, along with members' views of it in Chapter 4. Particular attention is given to an analysis of the organisational culture at the station with a focus on intersections of language, race and space in the dominant discourse there. Attention is also given to gender, class and (dis)ability. National SAPS policies and other structures supporting diversity are covered in Chapter 6.

Chapter 7 provides a synreport of the previous four chapters, emphasising their main findings.

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## CHAPTER TWO

# Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of literature relevant to this report. It begins by with an overview of works pertaining to secondary socialisation in the workplace and institutional environment. It then provides an introduction to core diversity management theory and analysis before touching on work relating to the relationship between space and identity. This links to an introduction to literature on nationalism, followed by an overview of some important local and international academic police literature with a focus on the culture of such organisations.

## Workplace Socialisation

Berger and Luckmann (1966) draw attention to the manner in which we receive our primary socialisation during early childhood but receive a secondary socialisation later in life when we enter institutions of learning and work. While we are one thing at home (a son, a brother, a soccer player, a handyman, a breadwinner, a symbol of security) we become something entirely different in the workplace (black, Xhosa speaking, adult, male, machinist). O'Hara-Devereaux & Johansen (1994:38) define culture as

an integrated system of learned behaviour patterns that is characteristic of the members of a society, the underlying patterns of thinking, learned, not inherited.

It follows that work-specific lessons thus evolve into an organisational culture of shared beliefs.

Harro (2000) has referred to this secondary socialisation as 'institutional socialisation' where the norms taught at work, in temples and other institutions, both contradict and equate to our primary socialisation to varying degrees. Hardiman and Jackson (2000) refer to 'institutional oppression' as the manner in which the laws of the workplace and institution serve as constraints to individual agency. Institutional oppression is thus central to institutional or secondary socialisation.

Foucault understands workplace socialisation and control of power as administered through punitive systems. Workplaces and other organs, from schools to nation states, are governed by rules. Failure to abide by these rules, be they official policy or unspoken cultural dominance, results in penalties ranging from social ostracism to formal dismissal. This structure

differentiates individuals from one another [creating a norm] as an average to be respected or as an optimum towards which one must move. It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchises in terms of value the abilities, the level, the 'nature' of individuals ... The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions, compares, differentiates, hierarchises, homogenises, excludes. In short, it normalises (Foucault 1977:182).

Although he was not writing in relation to the workplace alone, Foucault's analysis is particularly pertinent in that context. His allusion to an unnamed Eurocentrism is clear. Deetz (1992) and Kersten (2000) have highlighted the corporation (or employer) as having become the dominant institution in the modern world, exceeding family and temple in terms of importance in our lives. While the two focus on the corporation, their sentiments are equally applicable to other employers, particularly large, complex organisations such as the SAPS. They stress the manner in which employee agency might be repressed and hierarchies of inequality upheld in striving for ideals of organisational coherence.

If one accepts the above views on the power of employers in shaping individuals' world outlooks, one might equally accept that the same corporations and employers provide governments an opportunity to re-socialise previously schooled populations. As Deetz notes, the dominance of the corporation in our lives is such that states turn to them to educate and instil value in their citizenry.

## **Diversity in the Workplace - the Theory**

In recent decades, both within South Africa and other heterogeneous nations, the concept of 'diversity' in the workplace, or 'diversity management' has drawn increasing attention (Adler 1997; Ferdman & Brody 1998; Lorbiecki & Jack 2000; Smit & Cronje 2000). The result of predictions (and manifestations) around the changing nature of global and local workforces, diversity management is integrally linked to organisational culture.

Nkomo and Stewart (forthcoming) define diversity as 'a mixture of people with different group identities within the same social system' (forthcoming:1). They trace the manner in which organisational theory originally treated employees as members of a homogenous mass. This began to change with diversity related uprisings in the United States and Western Europe in the 1960s. Out of this attention to diversity in the management and social sciences began to develop.

Development of the field occurred in two forms: individual prejudice reduction and organisational responses such as affirmative action and other policy research. Although in recent years discourses on the management of diversity have been criticised for suggesting diversity is a problem needing to be controlled, by and for the benefit of, white males (Lorbiecki & Jack 2000), most social thinkers would still advocate attention to equality issues in the workplace and society as a whole.

Within liberal societies today, the dominant model is one of formal equality in which unjustified discrimination is overcome, and yet where the competitive individual is celebrated (Cooper 2004). One challenge is thus to strike a balance between individuality and the groups with which we identify while developing and retaining respect and empathy for others (Pharr 2000; Hill Collins 2000). Numerous authors have championed attention to diversity issues in the workplace with various motivations for this work being put forth, central to which are the moral imperative, the legal imperative and the business case for diversity (Roosevelt Thomas 1996; O'Hara-Devereaux & Johansen 1994; Hayles & Russell 1997; Kersten 2000; Thomas 1990; Smith 1999; Adler 1997; Ferdman & Brody 1996; Lorbieckl & Jack 2000; Dupper 2004).

The moral imperative stems from a liberal discourse of equal rights and opportunity on an individual level. Within such a discourse it is unjust to have a workforce unrepresentative of a national population, or a workforce which is stratified along race, gender, or other lines.

The legal imperative applies to countries like South Africa, where legislation exists, dictating to some extent, the demographic makeup of a workforce. The legal imperative becomes the link between the moral and business imperatives. In that legislation backed by punitive threats has, since its origins, been at the fore of nation-states' management or control of citizenry (Foucault 1977 1991) it makes sense that multicultural democratic societies introduce laws aimed at undoing damage done by previous laws. In South Africa, the pinnacle law driving the legal imperative for diversity management and interventions is the Employment Equity Act (1998).

With legally enforced diversification of people and cultures comes new management challenges but also new ways of doing and seeing. This makes up the business case to which the majority of related literature points. The case argues that a well managed, diverse workforce is a happy, creative and dynamic workforce offering a range of skills, perceptions and talents, as well as access to new markets (Hicks-Clarke & Iles 2000). In this vein Smith (1999) asserts that good diversity work aims to develop the best in everybody. By reducing group and individual tensions in the workplace, diversity enables workers are more productive. Smith points out that companies with good reputations with regard to multicultural environments attract and retain the best qualified 'minorities'.

Adler (1997) suggests that a management approach that listens to all sides (and groups) and adopts an approach which transcends them all will reap the most business success. She notes that while most managers tend to focus on diversity as a negative, it is those who choose to see it otherwise who benefit most from a diverse workforce.

A number of authors have developed models through which to monitor the progress of diversity and diversity management within organisations, many working with phases of organisational evolution (Hayes and Russell 1997; Roosevelt Thomas 1990). The successfully managed diverse organisation aims first to get the numbers right by diversifying its employee body, replacing this as soon as possible with a

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culture based on merit (Roosevelt Thomas 1990). In order to reach this point however, it is important that an intense focus is placed on recruitment and training of designated groups so that change is not perceived as reverse discrimination. Successful companies create an environment free of oppression in which employees are knowledgeable, aware and understand one another, and where they are encouraged to develop interpersonal skills in relation to perceived differences (Ferdman & Brody 1996; Driver 2003; Hayles & Russell 1997).

Kersten (2000) warns of the possibility of assimilatory projects launched under the guise of diversity management. These risk assuming social equality while failing to challenge institutional power imbalances. For her, companies must change for people, not the other way around. Similarly Pharr (2000) notes that while diversity work that aims to make all employees feel included is important, it fails if it doesn't grapple with the power dynamics of difference. For Johnson (1997) this means addressing the meanings attached to group and biological difference and how they are used to include or exclude.

Koopman (1997) sees the only effective change management as adopting an organisation wide paradigm shift in which all members are critical of, and work against systems that reinforce imbalances of power. Hayles and Russell (1997) warn that a diversity intervention or management approach that is too general risks missing the most obvious oppressions such as those linked to race and gender. They reiterate that there are times when not everyone can be treated equally for such treatment does little to correct past injustices. As Roosevelt Thomas highlights (1990), a workforce needs to be diverse and representative *before* a meritocratic culture can replace one favouring previously disadvantaged people. In South Africa where equality is symbolically listed as the first right in the constitution, its application is substantive, meaning that it exists within a cognisance of structural and historical inequality. This is publicly (in the media) and privately (emerging in research such as this) one of the greatest obstacles to the acceptance of the new national discourse by groups like white males, identified as having historically benefited from their group status. Hochschild (1997) suggests that opposition to affirmative action is one of the only ways whites can attempt to openly subjugate blacks in a liberal society. There are likely many who would claim evidence of this view throughout the South African economy. Steyn (2001) refers to such oppositional discourses as 'white talk'.

Van Dijk (1997) points out that discourse lies at the heart of racism (and other *isms*), through the ways the elite discuss and thus shape the lives of everyone else. From his perspective it is those at the top in all spheres, from government to heads of schools, who need to change in order for the discourse to change. In South Africa this process formally began with the first democratic elections in 1994 and the coming to power of the ANC government.

## **Identity and Space**

In this report I employ the view that identity and physical space are integrally connected. Keith and Pile (1993) refer to this symbiosis of space and the social as 'spatiality'. Attached to particular pieces of land, areas, neighbourhoods and buildings are ideas about language, culture, function and bodies. These are subsumed under a range of terms aiming to encapsulate the inhabitants of those spaces from South African to Egyptian, Zulu to Afrikaner, rich to poor, and law abiding to criminal. Perhaps the most pervasive form of this space-identity link is the citizenships we assign and identify with in relation to the borders of nation-states and the bodies within them. Solidified concepts of particular spaces serve to help negotiate the world in the same way that we have traditionally asked race to help us navigate our realities. However, as Anthony Appiah (1985:33) reminds us, 'The truth is that there are no races: there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask "race" to do for us'. The same argument could be made for gender, citizenship and a host of other stereotypes. Accepting this perspective, both space and identity need to be interrogated together.

The South African history of spatiality is a fascinating one, from apartheid Bantustans with their related ethnic labelling, to Thabo Mbeki's 'I am an African' speech with its poetic re-articulation of a geographically specific identity in which all South Africans can share. In an attempt to redress the harm done to the landscapes of geographical, urban and citizen space in recent centuries, the new democratic government continues to attempt to effect the peopling of space in post-apartheid South Africa, particularly the peopling of the workplace, as is the case with the SAPS. In the process, notions of nationality and nation are re-articulated.

## **Shifting National Discourse and the Re-articulation of Nation**

In writing about the decolonising state, Fanon (1966) posited that truth is the property of the national power. He believed that colonising powers (governments) aimed to exploit the colonised as peacefully as possible in order to keep capital markets steady for the enrichment of the mother country. In his view, the new nation united against poverty and illiteracy following independence but soon crumbled to regional interests. His solution was the betterment of work conditions: 'If conditions of work are not modified, centuries will be needed to humanise this world which has been forced down to animal levels by imperial powers' (Foucault 1966:78). This view supports that of diversity theories and their relation to the workplace, particularly in postcolonial, post-apartheid South Africa.

Drawing on notions of institutional socialisation already mentioned, Wallerstein (1991:84) believes that 'peoplehood', the manner in which we label and group individuals 'is a major institutional construct of historical capitalism'. Under apartheid

South Africa this was clear through the manner in which individuals were formally classified within a racial hierarchy that largely defined their access to rights, work and freedoms, but how it plays itself out in post-apartheid South Africa is less clear.

While the old political elite and their isolationist doctrines have changed, the dominant workplace discourse remains heavily racialised, though in a new articulation. Now it most often manifests in relation to affirmative action or counting race, seen by some as a maintainer of racist essentialism (Mare 2001; Nobles 2000). Thus Wallerstein's critique of the racist nation-state rings true for the ostensibly anti-racist nation-state. Here too, peoplehood becomes a manipulable tool for capitalist growth, albeit in a democratic society.

In tracing the history of, and shifts in power around nation-states and governance, Foucault (1991) similarly argues that while early forms of government in Western Europe appeared, in contrast to the feudal state, to have their subjects' interests at heart, ultimately interests were focused around the stability of the population in order to increase the wealth of the governing elite. He also argued that during the classical period the introduction of schools, workshops and barracks led to an era of 'biopower' through which states sought to systematically socialise and control the bodies within their populace (Foucault 1978). This control aimed to develop a capitalist system in which the insertion of bodies into the industrial machine could be closely monitored and controlled to the benefit of the elite. From a cynical Foucauldian perspective then, diversity management, particularly that which aims to assimilate or ignore structural imbalances, serves to pacify a population to the continued benefit of the elite. Of course Foucault's critique of governance provides only one lens through which to view populations.

For Anderson (1983) we gain our sense of community and nation through imagined connections to strangers, largely developed through the consumption of texts such as newspapers and other print publications. From a contemporary perspective the same could be said of any text from television news to country and language specific Google search engines.

Under apartheid, the media were controlled far more stringently than they are in the democratic South Africa. Whereas pre-1993 the government-run South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) held a near monopoly over broadcasting, and newspaper registration was restricted by financial prerequisites, the Independent Broadcasting Authorities (IBA) act 153 of 1993 ended this. Among other things, the Act states that a diverse range of sound and television broadcasts should be available, catering to all language and cultural groups and that broadcasts should cater to 'public interests' (Barker 1998). Additionally, there are no longer any legal barriers to newspaper publishing.

A national space in which ideas around diversity management, interventions and thinking could flourish has only been able to open up in post-apartheid South Africa. Previously, to be a member of the national citizenry one had to be classified as white. While the new articulation of the South African nation is arguably more humane, its new nationalist discourse is not without fault. Balibar (1991) writes that racism is

Inherently linked to nationalism. While racism is not an inevitable consequence of nationalism, nationalism can't exist without the presence of latent racism. By this Balibar doesn't strictly refer to skin-based oppression, but to the underlying system of oppression based on notions of group identity on a large scale. Hesse (2004) calls this 'racism's double bind'. While liberal democratic nations extol anti-racism in their national discourses, their nation-ness can only exist through the othering of those considered outside of the national population, even if the colours of skins across international borders are the same. In South Africa the manifestation of this double bind has reared its ugly head in violence against those perceived as foreign to the nation, most notably African foreigners, and often by the military and police (Peberdy 2001; Valji 2003).

I would not contest that South Africa is a politically and socially more liberal and sound nation-state today than it was twenty years ago, nor that the progress achieved through the unifying strategies of government is without immense worth. What I aim to highlight through the inclusion of this literature on nationalism is the voice of the critical observer of nation-states in relation to the intervention process. By contrasting it with the idea of diversity interventions and management as integral to the nation building process, the important need for cognisance of their role in nation building by the diversity provider is highlighted. Providers and those who legislate and oversee them are working with the clay of national consciousness and identity. Their work is not something to be taken lightly or left to chance. This literature reminds us that one must remain critical of both diversity intervention and nationalist motives in the manner in which they attempt to alter the minds of populations.

## **Police Culture**

One of South Africa's few producers of ethnographic police research, Marks (2002, 2003), refers to the field of police studies as not particularly innovative. In South Africa, though, it continues to lack in the rich, qualitative data collected in other countries. A vast portion of ethnographic studies on police abroad has focused on the 'social organisation of policing' (Manning 1997:182), the idea of a 'working personality' (Skolnick 1976:217) or a 'sub-culture' often described as 'canteen culture' for the manner in which it manifests in the canteen environment (Waddington 1999:288). Another North American, Crank (1998), writes that if critics of police and advocates for change fail to recognise the importance of organisational culture in the police, they will continue to be surprised by their failure to bring about any real transformation. Manning (1997) defined this culture as the 'backstage' of policing, while he sees interactions with the public on the 'front stage'. The challenge for researchers has been to access this backstage in order to bring about lasting change in the culture of the organisation.

Across virtually all literature on American and British police culture, themes of solidarity, suspicion, racism, sexism, machismo and power abound (Skolnick 1976; Reiner 1985; Brogden, Jefferson & Walklate 1988; Brown & Campbell 1994; Manning

1997; Crank 1998). Much of this research asks questions around how issues like racism and sexism affect the operational capabilities of the police organisations. Notably however, the South African Police Service (SAPS) has a history and structure fundamentally different from the police organisations in the UK and USA around which most literature is produced.

South African university library stacks are filled with these books on foreign police organisations, suggesting they are equally relevant to the South African context. While strong parallels between militarised organisational cultures can be drawn around the world, it is unfortunate that the South African literature lacks in this area.

One of few South African ethnographic studies is Marks's (2002) study of the Durban Public Order Police. Over three years, Marks consulted, patrolled and hung out with members of the unit. Her study sought to ascertain the extent to which the behaviour of members towards the public has changed as a result of new training and policy. She concluded that while 'mechanical change' was easily achieved, basic assumptions held by members about their work was more difficult to change (2002:iii). She also found that the unit 'continued to be plagued by deep racial and gender divisions' (2002:iv). Another study on perceptions of race in a SAPS station conducted in 2002/03 concluded that the majority of members continue to hold onto racially constructed stereotypes, nearly all of which reflect badly on members of colour (Buntman & Snyman 2003). Additionally, my own work based on a hundred hour ethnography of a suburban SAPS station in Cape Town, found that the intersections of race and language and how they are understood and worked with by members, continues to lend itself to the continued white, Afrikaans hegemony within the organisation, creating a space in which African members in particular struggle to adapt (Faull 2004). The only other published participatory research conducted within the SAPS has been by Altbeker (2004) and Wardrop (2001).

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## CHAPTER THREE

# Methodology and Context

This chapter begins with a theoretical positioning of the researcher from an ethnographic perspective. It then elaborates on the methodologies employed during the interview and data collection processes, and discusses the value of the case study as research method. It ends by providing contextual and demographic data on Hemel, contrasting it with that of a nearby township and the country, and noting the discourse creating power of the census process.

## Positioning the Researcher

Having been an active reservist member in the SAPS for a year prior to conducting this research, and having conducted ethnographic research within a different SAPS station over a three month period in 2004 (Faull 2004), I once again buttoned myself up in blue to conduct this fieldwork. My presence as a researcher with some participatory police experience need not have played a major part in this study, had it not been that Superintendent Dippenaar, the station commissioner at Hemel, requested I conduct the research in uniform. He believed it would make me more easily identifiable and would assist me in my negotiation of the station space which is quite vast (Supt. Dippenaar, personal communication, 13/07/05).

Researching in uniform was both an advantage and a hindrance. I could move around the station freely where members of the public could not. I could peruse official books in the community service centre (CSC) without members unfamiliar with my presence thinking it strange. On the other hand, I could claim to relate at some levels to a general experience of policing.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand my uniformed presence required that I stress to members the independent and anonymous nature of the research and that I was not there as an employee of the SAPS. Though I don't believe

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7. Although police reservists have the same powers as permanent members when on duty and although they work closely with permanent members, some tensions exist between the two groups. Permanent members often don't take reservists seriously, seeing them as inexperienced, policing as a hobby rather than to put food on the table. At the same time, station management and permanent members in general are at times exceedingly grateful for the additional manpower supplied by reservists during special operations or times of unrest.

it materialised, the risk existed that senior members would not respect me due to my low rank in the organisation.

Researching in uniform, I intended to carry out part of this study as a participant observer, partaking in police duties at the Hemel station. Soon after entering the field, however, it became apparent that this wouldn't be possible. While I spent time behind the counter in the community service centre (CSC) and helped members of the public with the menial provision of commissioner of oath signatures and stamps, I felt unable to do any more due to the language barrier. Most clientele at Hemel speak Afrikaans. While my understanding of the language is quite sufficient, my conversational skills are less developed. Despite this obstacle, data gathering methods used, particularly my participation in HIV and Diversity workshops, as well as station level observations while dressed in police blue, informal conversations and formal interviews with subjects on the job, all echo the data gathering methodology of ethnography. As such I have found it useful to theorise my position as researcher through the lens of the ethnographer.

The accuracy of ethnographic fieldwork has been questioned (Dewalt, Dewalt & Wyland 1998). While human subjects may choose and succeed in misleading the researcher, he or she still determines the manner in which testimony and behaviour is represented. The ethnographer chooses what constitutes representation and what doesn't. It is thus the researcher's message rather than that of the subject that appears in the text. Gubrium (1988:73) points out that ethnography is a 'field of signs, of things or events and what they represent ... [as such] the meaning of things and events is a product of the interpretive work of those concerned'. While such a view may appear to render ethnographic approaches useless, Gubrium goes on to note that it is the responsibility of the researcher to apply his or her interpretation and analysis, to 'some degree, ignore what people actually say, just as they do, and attend to what they could be telling each other and us' (1988:74). Similarly, Gibbons (1987) refers to what he calls the 'hermeneutics of suspicion', stating that actors within a study may be so entrenched within their world that they fail to understand the fundamental intricacies at play there. This is where work such as this attempts to uncover something new. While it can be agreed that in most group contexts, an outsider will be more sensitive to certain dynamics than the members of the group will be, it is also important to be aware of the potential arrogance inherent in the 'hermeneutics of suspicion'. While the researcher may be able to understand certain aspects of organisational culture in a different light and against a different (theoretically informed) background to that of most SAPS members, it is important to recognise its subjectivity as well.

In my work I attempted to access what Scott (1990) calls the 'public' and 'hidden' transcripts, or Manning's (1997) front— and backstage in police culture discussed above. Scott refers to the possible contrast in visible and invisible discourse, and thus meaning, as understood within groups. Police sub-culture, perhaps more so than any other in the public service, is seen to be made up of distinct public and private faces. Brogden, Jefferson & Walklate (1988) write of the pressure on police to

remain aloof in public engagements, even beyond the work environment. In their view, onwards from the moment a recruit enters the force techniques of impression management are developed. Competence is demonstrated by fitting appropriate appearances to the appropriate situations. It is in glimpsing the world beyond this impression management that better understandings of police culture are thought to be gleaned.

As a South African volunteer policeman researching full-time members of the SAPS, all of whom were South African, I moved in and out of the paradigm of stranger-as native-as stranger defined by Frankentell in her research of Jewish Israeli immigrants in Cape Town (Frankentell 1998). I also moved in and out of a paradigm of stranger-as stranger. On the one hand I shared a citizenship, country, language (though not a first language), and some affinity to the organisation, with my subjects. I also shared with them a common understanding of race as it is generally understood in public discourse throughout South Africa. On the other hand, I was separated from most members by huge class and privilege gaps, I came from a major urban centre while they lived in a medium sized town and its surrounding countryside. I was attending a leading university while the majority of SAPS members never will. I am white, a minority in Hemel and the country, but one imbued with privilege and very particular meaning. Inevitably I represented something foreign to almost everyone there. As one young, white, Afrikaans woman referred to me during a diversity workshop, I was 'high English', I didn't belong.

## **Methodology**

### **Elements of the Case Study**

It has been noted that the term 'case study' is ambiguous and that virtually every social science study could be considered as such (Ragin 1992). For this work I stress Yin's (1994) focus on context as definitive of a case study. He defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomena in their real-life context when the boundaries of those phenomena are not clearly defined. It deals with technically distinctive situations where there are more variables of interest than data points and thus rely on multiple sources of evidence. Yin stresses two factors in addition to the 'how' and 'why' questions that best suit this form of research. For him, when the researcher has limited control over the behaviour of the subject and when the focus is on contemporary rather than historical events, the case study becomes a preferable research method. He advocates the use of the method for research that intends to assess and explain the results of specific interventions, as well as for theory building. Both of these latter points are of a central focus to the DEISA project which aims to assess interventions and develop good practice guidelines out of its assessment.

For this study, fieldwork was conducted over a two week period. Most of the first week was spent as a plainclothes researcher and reservist, interviewing and spending time with the EAS staff. I partook in two diversity workshops and interviewed four facilitators, including the programme manager. The EAS offices are about a kilometre from the Hemel station and were my base for the first four days. Towards the end of the first week, and throughout the second week, I met with members at the actual station. In total, four days were spent with members of EAS and four days and one night were spent in the station.<sup>8</sup> Research was conducted through twenty-one formal interviews and three focus groups, covering twenty-seven members in all. I have also made reference to informal conversations and observations with additional members during my time in the station and have referenced these in the text as well as in Appendix A. Informal interactions are referenced as 'personal communication' while formal interactions are referenced as 'personal interview' or 'personal focus group'. Observations from workshops, station management and detective unit meetings, as well as an HIV/AIDS awareness and testing workshop held in the station which I attended, are similarly referenced as 'personal communication'.

Despite repeated requests for assistance in arranging interviews with members, the station commissioner left the responsibility in my hands, stressing that I should not interfere with their work. While some members declined my requests, I tried to keep my sample representative of the race, gender and rank breakdown at the station. Others, like the HR manager, were specifically sought out. Due to the difficulty of interviewing members in the middle of their work day / night without authoritative assistance, I was unable to consciously construct focus groups based on specific criteria. Rather, focus groups are based on members working in the same office or shift, except focus group 2 where the members happened to be in the same space at the time of the interviews.

While all questions were asked in English, some members chose to answer questions in Afrikaans. This did not prove problematic because my understanding of the language exceeds my ability to speak it.

Although the vast majority of members were interviewed in the station, there were those who were interviewed elsewhere. As a regional centre, Hemel is home to both the SAPS Area administration for the Grootland area, as well as a court-house and police training college. Each of these buildings lies less than a kilometre from the Hemel station. Because, for instance, Area HR management oversees the hiring and promotion of members at any one station in its vast jurisdiction, it was inevitable that dealings with members outside of the Hemel station would be necessary. Likewise, discussions and informal interviews with members of the provincial office were necessary to gain access at an area level. The majority of interviews were of a semi-structured nature and focused on gauging members' knowledge, experience and views of the diversity workshop and the station environment.

8. The decision to conduct research at night was made in an attempt to gauge possible differences in organisational culture and mood between the day and night contexts.

'the country says they have to' and not because they went on a four-hour workshop (Inspt. Smith, personal interview, 15/7/05).

Time spent in each location was also used to make observations, particularly at the Hemel station where special attention was given to the physical layout and arrangement of the station. While attempts were made to observe members' interactions by spending time in and around the CSC, sitting in tea rooms and wandering the halls, observation was hindered by the division of the station into five floors, each comprising roughly thirty offices. This division of space made it difficult to observe the interactions of office workers.

Station demographics, an Area Employment Equity (EE) plan, SAPS policies and station level EE Committee minutes were provided by Human Resource (HR) staff at the station and Area levels. It was decided not to pursue a questionnaire survey due to the failure of this method during the DEISA pilot study.

### **Interviews, transcripts, quotations and approach**

Wherever possible interviews were recorded. Understandably not all members were comfortable having interviews recorded and with those I took detailed notes. Note taking was also used in my observation of diversity workshops and in my participatory observation and casual conversations within the station.

While some contexts, such as workshop participation, allowed me time to record direct quotes in my notebook, I have chosen to distinguish recorded from unrecorded quotes in my write-up. Where I haven't paraphrased such quotes, I have italicised them within inverted commas. All non-italicised quotes are recorded in audio form and can be retrieved from the DEISA archives at INCUDISA along with transcripts of interviews.

I conducted my own transcription of interviews, noting dominant themes relating to the research questions as I did so. Once transcription was complete I reread the narratives, copying and pasting relevant extracts into thematically ordered sections of a new document, adding initial thoughts and comments in italicised font. I then re-coded the new document, noting intertextual references across themes, and the manner in which they related to one another. I also created a quick reference sheet based on a key system relating to dominant themes in the transcripts.

In accordance with the ethnographic case study approach, I treated interviews anthropologically-historically (Wengraf 2001). I thus took into account the manner in which Wengraf notes the interviewer and interviewee weigh one another up, particularly in relation to the historical context. This was pertinent at Hemel considering my status as geographical and cultural outsider, and the history of the SAP(S). Interview analysis was based both in grounded theory and a deeper analysis of discourse. The former in order to recognise and respect the testimonies of those to whom I spoke, and the latter to probe and try to understand the layers of meaning, and the matrix of power in which members operated.

## Context

### Hemel - a stratified town

This study was conducted in the Hemel police station in the town of Hemel, in Grootland. The station is named after the town in which it is situated which lies seventy kilometres north of Cape Town in the Western Cape. Its southern suburbs touch one of the country's two national roads which link Cape Town in the south-west with Johannesburg in the north-east. The town stretches northwards from this point. Nestled between two walls of granite that make up the Hemel Valley, the town is the third oldest European settlement in the country and home to South Africa's flourishing wine industry. The surrounding landscape stretches north, out of the valley through hundreds of kilometres of rolling wheat and vine-covered fields which contribute to a local economy dominated by agriculture and tourism ([www.paarlonline.co.za](http://www.paarlonline.co.za), Accessed 07/11/2005).

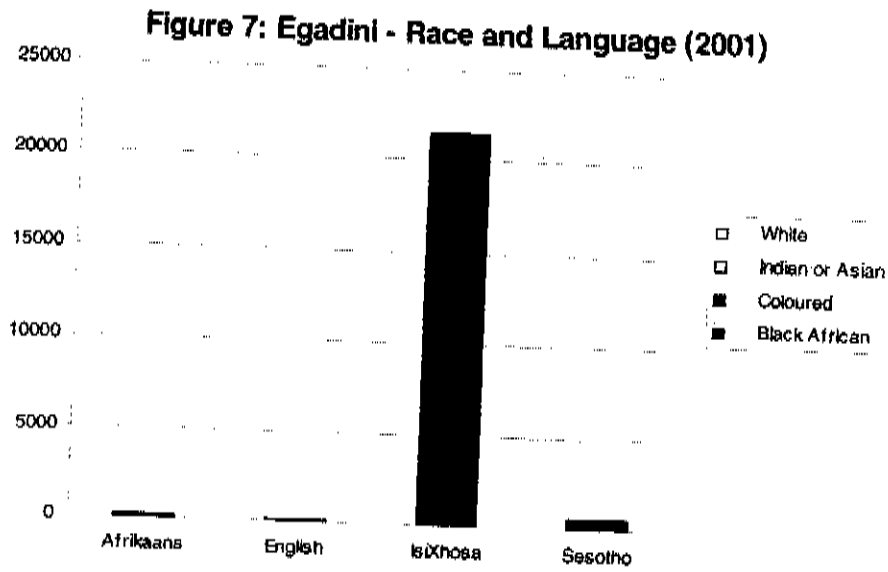
The town proper boasts the longest main road in the country, at 12km, and is lined with Cape Dutch and Victorian architecture pressed up against vineyards at the western foot of the valley. Growth has thus followed a northward and eastward pattern.

The police station is positioned in a carefully planned administrative centre which includes a courthouse, a prison, the city council offices and the fire and traffic departments, all built in close proximity to a central traffic circle. North of this lies a shopping and commercial district, above which begin the outer, relatively affluent suburbs which in turn merge into prosperous wine farmland. East of this administrative centre is a north-south running river which separates a third of the town from its original core in the west. On the east bank of the river lies an industrial district which is in turn surrounded by further middle and upper-middle class housing. The outer eastern and north-eastern rim of the town is made up of government housing and caters for the lower and working class population. Additionally, just south of this housing is an informal settlement. A number of informal settlements exist along the eastern rim of the town.

A few kilometres north of Hemel is a second informal (though partially developed) settlement, Egadini, housing over 20 000 Xhosa-speaking Africans (Statistics South Africa 2003). This settlement is serviced by its own police station but residents likely flow in and out of Hemel daily. Additionally, Cape Town, home to over four million South Africans, lies 70 kilometres south of Hemel. Despite its proximity to the town, only wealthy farmers or truck drivers are likely to make regular trips between the town and city.

At last count in 2001, Hemel was home to 82 709 people, 56 094 of whom identified as coloured, 378 as Indian, 17 533 as white and 8 704 as black African (Statistics South Africa 2001). It is important to be aware of the informal race/class stratification system still easily identifiable throughout South Africa and often

Figure 7



When examined separately, these two settlements appear racially, culturally and linguistically polarised. Their close geographical proximity to one another makes it worth combining the two data sets.

Figure 8 below shows the racial breakdown of the two areas combined, while Figure 9 reveals the race / language breakdown of the combination (Statistics South Africa 2003). Notably this combination highlights the African, Xhosa-speaking presence in the area:

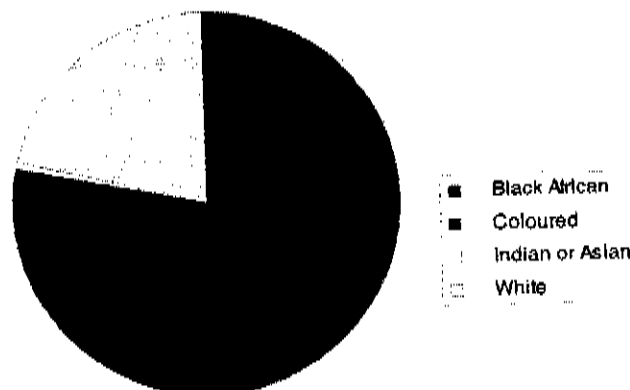
highlighted in small towns like Hemel, where 1 751 out of 2 454 (71%) African families surveyed lived in informal structures compared with only 30 out of 5 870 (0.5%) in the white population and 1 292 of 11 739 (9%) in the coloured. Additionally, 1 178 of 2 414 (48%) African families did not have a toilet on their plot compared with 45 of 5 900 (0.7%) white families and 611 of 11 749 (5%) of coloured. While 8 558 of 17 551 (49%) whites regularly travelled by private car, only 533 of 8 699 (6%) of Africans and 7 418 of 56 066 (13%) of coloureds did. These figures illustrate that while basic living conditions like shelter and sanitation are met among the white and coloured population, only the white population has enough expendable income to allow ownership of private vehicles. Much of the African population is left out on all counts. While the wealthier, white suburbs remain less densely populated, population density and poverty increase in the outer, poorer areas of the town, peaking in the informal settlements.

### Population, police, language and discourse

According to the 2001 census, 86% of the Hemel population speak Afrikaans as a first language, 9% isiXhosa, 4% English, with the remaining percentile made up of the other eight official languages (Statistics South Africa 2003). Figure 1 (Statistics South Africa 2003) highlights the dominance of coloured residents in the area:

Figure 1

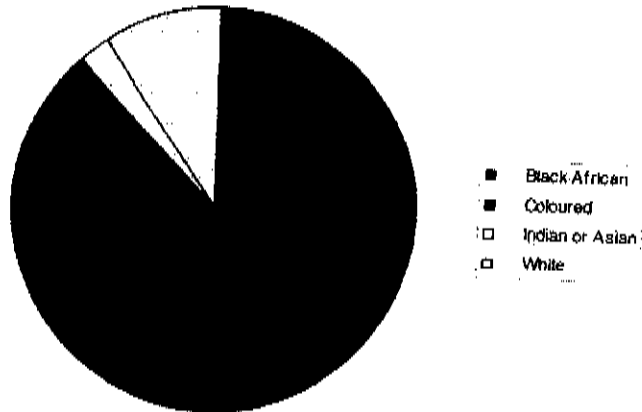
Figure 1: Hemel - Race (2001)



These demographics contrast with those of the national population illustrated in Figure 2 (Statistics South Africa 2003):

**Figure 2**

**Figure 2: South Africa - Race (2001)**



Figures 3 and 4 (Statistics South Africa 2003) similarly contrast the race/language intersections between Hemel and the nation, highlighting the dominance of Afrikaans in Hemel:

Figure 3

Figure 3: Hemel - Race and Language (2001)



Figure 4

Figure 4: South Africa - Race and Language (2001)



Importantly Hemel's census data excludes Egadini which is counted separately. Figures 5, 6 and 7 (Statistics South Africa 2003) similarly highlight the race / language exclusivity of that area.

**Figure 5**

**Figure 5: Egadini - Race (2001)**

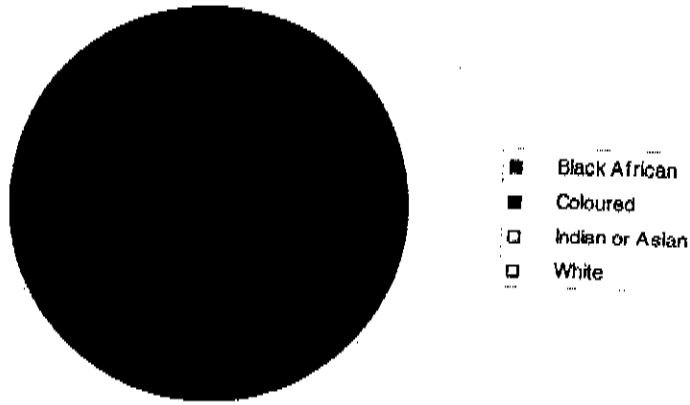
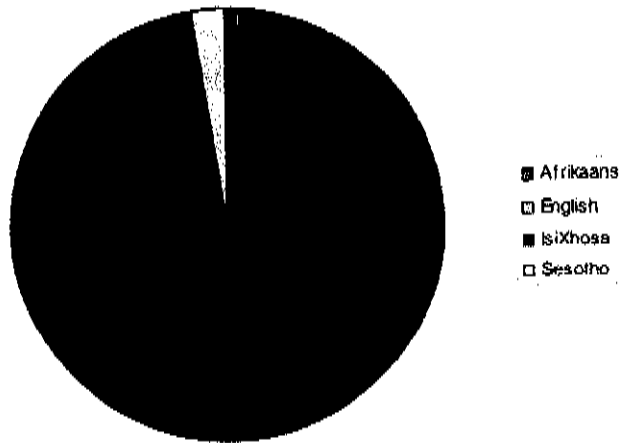
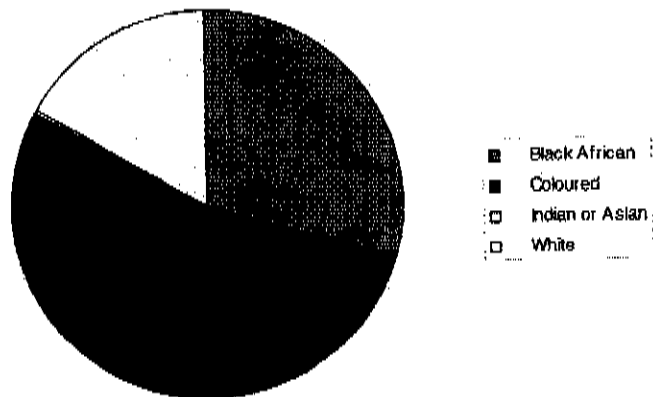
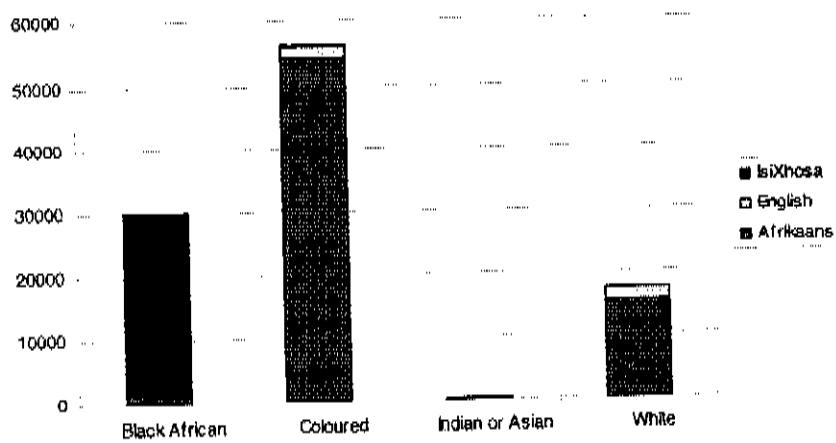


Figure 6

Figure 6: Egadini - Language (2001)



**Figure 8****Figure 8: Egadini & Hemel - Race (2001)****Figure 9****Figure 9: Egadini & Hemel - Race and Language (2001)**

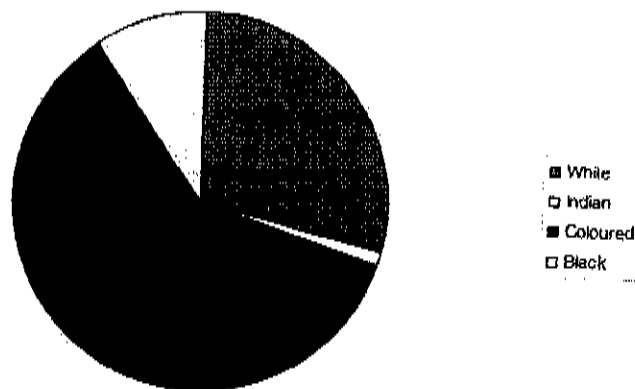
These data sets stand in contrast to data gathered in earlier censuses. A 1936 census which counted by race revealed a significantly smaller population of 18 579 residents divided into the categories of English, Afrikaans, Eng / Afr, German, Yiddish, Netherlands and Other, with the vast majority of the population falling under Afrikaans (South African Census Office 1938).

These data serve as important indicators of the shifts in official discourses on demographics within the country. The conceptual shift between 'Natives' and 'Black African', 'European' and 'white', 'Asiatic' and 'Indian / Asian' is worth noting in that it reveals that shifts in peoplehood are conceptualised. Nobles (2000) writes that counting by race suggests there is something there to be counted. The act of counting is thus an act of naming and reinforcing notions of identity and situating them within a particular discourse. In this vein, the absence of African languages in the 1936 census speaks to the government's idea of a Europeanised nationhood in contrast with the 2001 notion of pluralist Africanism. From a contemporary perspective counting using the categories African, white, coloured and Indian / Asian in the 2001 census, suggest a national population made up of four body types. While arguably necessary, such a system risks perpetuation of essentialist notions of race in the country.

Hemel SAPS's breakdown of station demographics in Figure 10 below (Hemel SAPS HR plan 2005), similarly counts race without reference to the languages traditionally spoken by different race groups. Important assumptions are thus being made, or details ignored in the ordering of this workforce. Notably, the white component of the station proportionally exceeds the town's demographics while the African component is under-represented.

Figure 10

Figure 10: Hemel SAPS - Race (2005)



In that coloured members make up the majority of the workforce, most shifts or units are dominated by this group, particularly among uniformed members who have the most contact with the public. Most interaction with the public occurs in the station's CSC due to the SAPS's ongoing shortage of vehicles and other resources required for the maintenance of a constant street presence. My policing experience suggests that street level policing remains based on ideas of race/class and space, where individuals who do not fit notions of how particular spaces are peopled, tend to be those most often stopped and questioned. As such, SAPS members in Hemel are most likely to initiate contact with poor, Afrikaans-speaking coloureds and Xhosa-speaking Africans walking in wealthy suburbs, for example. In recent years SAPS members of all races have been accused of biased policing of bodies based on the idea that African foreign-ness is identifiable through dark skin, body shape or inoculation marks, and that foreign Africans are criminals (Valji 2003; Landau 2005). In the Hemel CSC on the other hand, members engage with a cross-section of the community. It might be surmised, however, that non-Afrikaans speakers, particularly those who are neither confident speaking English nor Afrikaans, might not visit the station for minor complaints simply due to the hurdle and intimidation of communication.

Hemel became the subject of this research because Grootberg is the only region in the country in which the SAPS is implementing diversity training. The perceived need for such work grew out of an increase in requests by African members to transfer out of the Area, an increase in suicide attempts by African members and an increase in complaints of racism in the area (Supt. De Swardt, personal interview, 11/07/05 and Supt. Stirk, personal interview, 22/07/05). A cynical view of the diversity training might thus be to see it as an attempt to assimilate African members into the local SAPS, while a more positive view would be that it creates an environment that is supportive of all groups.

## The Intervention

This chapter offers the first findings and analysis through attention to the processes leading up to the implementation of the diversity workshops. It also engages the workshop structures, their goals, and members understandings of their goals. To aid fluidity at relevant points, themes in the following three chapters have been divided into separate descriptive and analytical sections.

### Formation and goals

Ascertaining exactly how and why the diversity workshops were started was not as easy as one would expect. For most members, knowledge of the order to implement, instruct or attend the workshops extended as far as their immediate superior.

#### *... sensitivity between each other ...*

The instruction to conduct diversity workshops in the Grootland Area was given by the Area director to the human resource manager for the Area, Superintendent Stirk (Supt. Stirk, personal interview, 22/07/05). The instruction was included in the Grootland Area Equity Plan 2005-2006 which stated the aim of the workshops being to 'sensitise' members (SAPS Area 'Grootland' Employment Equity Plan 2005-2006). It was to be rolled out to all 4 559 members at over sixty stations over a period of six months. Supt. Stirk, a woman in her late thirties, explained that due to budgetary restrictions she had been unable to employ external diversity providers. A social worker by training and a previous manager of the Hemel area's EAS office, she looked to EAS as a resource of trained professionals to take the programme forward. She was aware that the SAPS had some members trained as diversity trainers between 1995 and 1996 but explained that they had been unavailable to take on the programme. She managed to track down one of the trainers, Capt. Bezuidenhout, at the Hemel training college and requested that he provide the EAS staff with training so that they could take the project further. While Supt. De Swardt, head of social work at EAS, suggested that EAS staff were 'trained' by Capt. Bezuidenhout (Supt. De Swardt, personal interview, 11/07/05), Capt. Taljaard, also of EAS, clarified that training simply consisted of a meeting at which potential workshop materials were presented by the trained member, following which the untrained (in terms of diversity training)

EAS staff selected exercises which they thought might suit their goals (Capt. Taljaard, personal interview, 11/07/05). The material was drawn from a three day workshop which the SAPS trainer had been taught to instruct. However, EAS had not been given any additional budget to run the programme, nor would they be able to remove members from work for three day periods. Instead the three day workshop was broken into a 'two day' workshop to be presented to senior management, and a 'one day' workshop which would be presented to remaining members and employees (Supt. Stirk, personal interview, 22/07/05). I managed to attend two of the one day workshops during my fieldwork. One was three and a half hours long, the other four and a half, including at least three short breaks in both workshops.

The social worker in charge of EAS's management of the programme, Capt. Olivier, said the director had proposed it by saying that 'the whole purpose of this ... [is that] there's a need to learn more about differences'. In his own words, the manager said the workshop aimed to break down the 'us and them' thinking among SAPS members, with specific reference to the manner in which the transformation of the organisation has caused tension between members (Capt. Olivier, personal interview, 21/07/05). The diversity material provider, Capt. Bezuidenhout, saw the workshop as aiming to '[create] sensitivity between the different cultures, to understand things better, to make room for each other. Also to delay judgement a little bit' (Capt. Bezuidenhout, personal interview, 18/07/05), while another EAS facilitator saw the workshop as 'not trying to change people but [to] motivate people to appreciate each other, to appreciate our differences' (Insp. Mabele, personal interview, 20/07/05).

Members of Hemel station who had attended the workshop believed it aimed to 'bring members together and to share their difference so we can make it together. You see, that's very important' (Insp. Plaatjie, personal interview, 18/07/05); '*dat ons mekaar kan verstaan dat almal, die swart man, die wit man, die bruin man, dat ons mekaar se agtergrond kan verstaan* [That we can understand each other, the black man, the white man, the brown man, that we can understand each others' backgrounds]' (Capt. Hartzenberg, personal interview, 20/7/05); 'to create a platform for [SAPS] employees to be exposed ... in order for colleagues to have a better understanding ... of one another' (Cnst. Bruiners, personal interview, 19/7/05); '[explain how] you do things in different ways and we have to get along and the result make people to see, this is how black people do stuff, this is how white people do stuff and this is the coloured culture' (Cnst. Maasdorp, personal interview, 15/7/05); and '*Ek dink dis om dinge uit te sorteer* [I think it's to sort things out]' (Ms. Krog, personal interview, 20/7/05).

Many perceptions of the motivation of the workshops centred around the *space* of human relations. Answers such as to teach us that we can 'live together, respecting each other' (Mr. Blom, personal interview, 21/7/05); 'that we can understand each others' cultures more and understand each other's way' (Insp. September, personal focus group 1, 21/7/05); 'they want to let us know that we are all one, that we are not different because of the old South Africa' (Insp. Sanders, personal communication,

21/7/05); 'bringing people together, different races, whatever gender' (Cnst. Skrikker, personal interview, 20/7/05); and 'to see how we ... work together and fit together in the different races' (Insp. Pleterse, personal interview, 18/7/05) are examples of this workshop.

From upper management's point of view, Supt. Stirk at Area HR explained that the training and equity measures in general aimed to make the service more accessible and reflective of the community it serves (Supt. Stirk, personal interview, 22/7/05). She and members of the EAS office also drew attention to struggles with the management of equity targets in the Grootland area. According to these members the SAPS had been forced to recruit African members from outside the province due to the local African population not meeting SAPS qualification requirements (Capt. Taljaard, personal interview, 11/7/05 and Supt. De Swardt, personal interview, 11/7/05). Similarly, though in far smaller numbers, Indian members were recruited from outside the province. According to Capt. Taljaard, both groups had immense trouble adjusting to the new environment where Afrikaans is the dominant language. Supt. Stirk at Area HR and Capt. Taljaard at EAS both referred to a prevalence of sick leave taking and prevalence of suicide attempts by new African constables attributing it to an inability to adjust to a job in the Grootland, removed from family, friends, and cultural and linguistic familiarity (Supt. Stirk, personal interview, 22/7/05 and Capt. Taljaard, personal interview, 11/7/05).

While the plan was to have trained all members within the region within a six month period, by the time I left the field towards the end of the third month, only about 1500 had been trained. This slow pace is despite the fact that seven workshops were being run each working week.

Each half-day workshop generally catered to between fifteen and thirty members drawn from two to five stations. While at least one member interviewed felt the workshop should be conducted at a station level (Cnst. Skrikker, personal interview, 20/7/05), the choice to combine personnel from different stations was a conscious one. As the head of the programme explained, the rationale was that exposure to new people would allow an open space in which to share, as well as an opportunity to be exposed to a greater number of diversities (Capt. Olivier, personal interview, 21/7/05).

Depending on its size, an average of three to five members at a time were nominated to attend the workshops. There are also practical reasons for not training a whole station at once, the most obvious being that the SAPS does not close for business and thus requires at least part of the workforce to be on duty at any one time. It is clear however, that there are numerous weaknesses in this training system, not least the single rather than multi-pronged strategy being used.

### **Inertia of racialisation**

Arrendo's (1996) blueprint for successful diversity management initiatives outlines an extremely detailed, thorough and long-term strategy for researching, designing and implementing diversity intervention initiatives. Central to her strategy is:

- 1) Educating leadership around diversity issues and allocating part of senior management to oversee the intervention.
- 2) Creating vision and mission statements relevant to the intervention.
- 3) Building knowledge by assessing diversity related needs in the workplace.
- 4) Developing goals and strategies based on needs.
- 5) Implementing strategies.
- 6) Educating and Training.
- 7) Evaluating progress and change, identifying enablers and pitfalls.
- 8) Modifying strategic plans.

Holding this blueprint up to the genesis of the Grootland Area's intervention, one finds most stages missing. No evidence exists suggesting the Area director or station's senior management engaged in any kind of quest for knowledge around diversity issues prior to the workshop roll-out. While the general goal of sensitising members was articulated in the EE plan, there were no specific, measurable strategies or goals formally linked to the intervention. Members were not consulted prior to the intervention in any attempt to find out what they thought might be useful to the organisation, nor was a pilot workshop run. While feedback on impressions of the workshop was obtained at the end of each training session, no other evaluation of its effects was conducted, nor was it modified. The only clear component of Arrendo's blueprint which the SAPS intervention meets is the training and education of members. Arrendo (1996:126) warns against this type of intervention stating that

Training is but *one* strategy in a diversity initiative. Stand-alone education and training programs without other concurrent strategies to address organisational culture and systems change will have a low impact.

Additionally, she stresses the importance of training being context specific. It follows that in a police environment training should be tailored to each station and related to its organisational environment. She warns against what she calls 'off-the-shelf' training methods and emphasises the need for training to be long-term.

At face value the Hemel programme was *less than* off the shelf. It was taken off the shelf after ten years and broken down to meet time constraints. The resulting programme makes no attempt to address the function of institutional power in the organisation (Harro 2000; Hardiman & Jackson 2000), to address disparities of power across groups (Pharr 2000), to tailor objectives towards the culture of the station or SAPS culture as a whole (Crank 1998), or to integrate legal and service delivery objectives into its framework (Roosevelt Thomas 1996; O'Hara-Devereaux & Johansen 1994; Hayles & Russell 1997; Kersten 2000; Thomas 1990; Smith 1999; Adler 1997; Ferdman & Brody 1996; Lorbleckl & Jack 2000; Dupper 2004).

Members' ideas around workshop goals highlight a shared understanding around human connectedness and separateness. They see race groups as fundamentally different, an impression linked to the race/space separations, as well as notions of peoplehood and nation created under apartheid. Answers thus reflect the influence of the pre and post-1994 nation building projects on the minds of members. There is a simultaneous appeal to inherent differences as well as a tentative acceptance of a philosophy of humanism and sameness and a need to bridge old divides.<sup>9</sup>

## Workshop Structure

The first of the two workshops I attended was in a small town about a hundred kilometres outside of Hemel and catered to other small towns in the vicinity. The second was in Hemel at the Area's training college. A number of Hemel members and employees attended this workshop, along with members from other stations in towns nearby.

## Engaging with diversity

At both workshops the race/gender ratios were similar with about 50% coloured representation, 35% white and 15% African. One Indian member attended the second workshop, as well as one blind white male. Men made up about 70% of the workshops. EAS facilitators explained to me that they try to make the groups as diverse as possible in relation to race, gender, rank, language, age and other controllable characteristics, despite nine of the sixteen EAS staff being white (Supt. De Swardt, personal interview, 11/7/06 and Capt. Taljaard, personal interview, 11/7/06).

Each workshop was facilitated by two trainers. Both my experience of the two workshops, as well as interviews with members of the Hemel station, highlighted the manner in which workshops differed depending on the facilitators involved. While specific exercises had been selected by the EAS facilitators during their initial consultation with Capt. Bezuidenhout, the trained SAPS diversity trainer, it seemed discretion was still available to them to decide what to present on the day. While there was a general overlap and consistency between the two workshops, exercises which were repeated differed slightly, while one or two exercises were unique to each workshop. As might be expected, ice breakers and other exercises designed to encourage participation differed between the groups and from facilitator to facilitator.

The first workshop was facilitated by two trainers who hadn't worked together before. One facilitator took a light-hearted approach in which participants were encouraged to loosen up through spontaneous activities like song, while the other was more serious and traditional in his instruction. During a later interview, the more

9. In this report I refer to 'humanism' as a philosophy or paradigm that privileges the shared human experience over other axes of identity.

casual of the two facilitators stressed to me the manner in which he had differed in approach to his colleague. It seemed that he hadn't been all that impressed with his partner's approach (Insp. Mabele, personal interview, 20/7/05).

In all interviews with facilitators it was felt that the most successful part of the workshop was that which dealt directly with stereotypes. Two of the most popular exercises among these were ones in which members stood in a row or circle and stepped forward if they were the first born, an inspector, a father, a Christian, and so forth.<sup>10</sup> The exercise was designed to stress commonality beyond race and gender. The other popular exercise involved breaking the participants into groups and asking members to write down stereotypical ideas about other race groups or genders. Groups were then rearranged by race (a division over which there was no contestation) with each group given a chance to respond to the stereotypes. While instructors and Hemel station members stressed the importance and success of this latter exercise, one might posit that it lends itself to an essentialisation of race, threatening to concretise rather than challenge stereotypes. A worrying example is that of a white male facilitator at one of the workshops I attended who came to my white group to contribute his view that taking initiative is part of who whites are (Supt. Schmidt, personal communication, 12/7/05).

Other activities involved getting to know a stranger in the group and introducing them to others, establishing workshop rules (e.g. respect others) and goals (e.g. support and manage diversity), a lecture on the Batho Pele<sup>11</sup> document and its role in the SAPS, and a discussion about what 'diversity' means.

Levels of engagement by members differed between the two workshops and concentration levels fluctuated along with the language of instruction. Lack of interest was also suggested through members' attention to time. At one of the workshops lunch was skipped through group consensus, in order to end the day earlier. This said, there was definitely a willingness to engage by some members at both workshops. Members who chose to stay silent were allowed to do so as facilitators didn't attempt to draw them out or balance voices.

### **Things left unchallenged**

My own struggle with concentration, and one which I've found to be applicable in the daily culture of the SAPS (Faull 2004, unpublished), came in relation to bilingualism. As a traditionally Afrikaans organisation, the SAPS continues to struggle in its shift to

10. All but one member of the group, a Hindu, claimed to be Christian. When I stood forward to claim the label "agnostic" I was met with what I felt was a communal gaze of disbelief by almost everyone. After the exercise I was approached by a member who couldn't believe that I might not believe in God. Christianity pervades almost all aspects of daily life at the Hemel SAPS and will be discussed later (Sec 4.2.2 Posters, Paraphernalia and Christianity).

11. 'People First' - A Government White Paper (1997) on transforming public service delivery.

an English dominant multilingual environment. While one of the workshops succeeded in maintaining an English dialogue, the other constantly shifted between English and Afrikaans making it difficult for less proficient speakers of Afrikaans like myself, to remain focused. Interviews with Hemel members later revealed that fears over incompetence in certain languages often prevent members from speaking out in any public context (See chapter 5, *Language, Race and Space*, and *Language Perspectives* below).

The divergent presentation styles of presenters at the first workshop, as well as the fact that the two workshops employed different exercises, suggests a lack of uniformity in the training. While presenter styles will inevitably differ, interviews with Hemel members suggested that the workshop was a success for participants depending on who presented the workshop, and how they did so (Cnst. Beyleveld, personal interview, 15/7/05 and Ms. Hendricks, personal communication, 15/7/05).

The manner in which finite, objective racial (and gender) identities are assumed by members, and left unchallenged (and reinforced) by facilitators in dividing the participants up is worrying, as is the ignorantly racist assumption by the facilitator that white people take initiative. The manner in which race is mobilised in the organisational culture at Hemel will be discussed in more detail below (See *Race Scripting* below).

## **Member Feedback and Views**

At the end of each workshop facilitators handed out feedback forms in an attempt to gauge the success of the session.

### **What has changed?**

A summary of feedback from one workshop included the following comments.

Things appreciated:

- 1) Respect among each other
- 2) About how to communicate with others
- 3) Learnt to respect the perception of other people of other cultures
- 4) Learnt to work with other racial groups
- 5) Expose to talk about my culture to other races.

Things to do differently:

- 1) We must learn more about other cultures
- 2) Deep discussions on racism in the workplace
- 3) Put all opinions on the table.

What you might tell a friend:

- 1) It was worth to attend a Diversity workshop
- 2) It was very fascinating and I want him to attend the same workshop

- 3) *Was baie leersaam. Verstaan my kollegas, veral die van 'n ander ras, nou baie beter* [Was good learning. I now understand my colleagues of other races much better].
- 4) *Dat ons met mekaar mag verskil maar nog steeds mekaar moet respekteer* [That we can disagree but must still respect each other].

While this feedback appears positive, contradictions appeared when questions around the success of the workshop were asked during the interview process. While some interviewees believed the workshop had been a success (Capt. Hartzenberg, Ms. Krog, Insp. Salie, Insp. Heymans, Insp. Plaatjie) none could identify any change at an organisational, interpersonal or personal level which was directly or indirectly attributable to it. Those members who elaborated on these points, including the Area HRM, Supt. Stirk, almost always returned to the view that diversity issues are very personal and that in the end it is up to an individual to change themselves (Supt. Stirk, personal interview, 22/7/05). Others didn't believe the SAPS could bring about a change through training (Cnst. Beyleveld, Cnst. Maasdorp) while some believed that if the workshop were repeated more frequently it might bring about change within the organisation (Srgt. Diedericks and Cnst. Julies, focus group 1, 21/7/05).

No member interviewed believed they had changed as a result of the workshop though some acknowledged they had learned something new. The majority of members believed they personally didn't have a problem with their colleagues or with race or culture, though just under half suggested there were members in the station who were racist or needed to change. I will suggest later that all members appear locked in a somewhat essentialist understanding of race and that further training around race thinking would be beneficial (See chapter 5, *Race Scripting* below).

### **Not going deep enough**

Most significant among the written feedback examples above are those listed under 'Things to do differently', and their direct relation to those listed under 'Things appreciated'. The two are very similar allowing an inference that while topics covered were beneficial, they were not dealt with thoroughly or deeply enough for members' needs. Additionally, while most comments seem positive, important points on the comment collecting process should be made. I have mentioned that while data was collected it was not analysed nor used to alter the workshop structure. Although most written feedback is positive, it is not necessarily genuine. In my experience of filling out the forms I observed members huddling in groups, flustered and nervous at the prospect of giving feedback, looking to each other for ideas and copying from one another's questionnaires.

While the honesty or accuracy of such feedback may or may not be accurate, many interviews contradicted the optimistic statements offered on the feedback forms. Interviewees' awareness of limited change among individuals without consciously linking that change to the diversity workshops, adds credence to the words of the Insp. Smith, quoted at the start of the report. Perhaps members *are* changing because

## **Organisational Culture**

This chapter presents findings and analysis of issues relating to the organisational culture at Hemel. Focus is on intersections of language, race and space at Hemel, and their contribution to a discourse around the imagining of the town and workforce. It also examines issues of gender, disability and class within the station.

Organisational culture encompasses the broad values and beliefs which pervade an organisation (Hicks-Clarke & Iles 2000). These beliefs lead to assumptions about clients, employees, missions, products and activities. They also lead to assumptions about things that have worked well in the past which are translated into norms of behaviour, expectations about what is legitimate, and desirable ways of thinking and acting (O'Hara-Devereaux 1994). Some organisational cultures may be rigid and expect newcomers to adopt dominant views, while others might see adaptation and accommodation of new staff as a growth mechanism. Organisational cultures are often seen as complex when employee and client bodies are culturally heterogeneous.

Most police organisations, but particularly one as large and centralised as the SAPS, function with strict hierarchical flows of power. Behaviour is ostensibly regulated through strict behavioural codes. Members are physically marked through a uniform which informs colleagues of their rights and position of power in the organisation. This kind of organisational culture suggests an extreme attempt at what Foucault (1977) saw as the normalising function of organisations.

Police academies and training colleges attempt to socialise and assimilate recruits before they begin work (Holdaway 1983). In South Africa recruits are based at a college for four to six months before spending an additional six months in a station, working and learning as student-constables. However, British and American literature suggests that the real organisational socialisation only occurs when members begin street level policing. It is there that meaning and authority is re-articulated by frontline workers ordained with immense discretionary powers and often working unsupervised (Holdaway 1983).

### **Physical and Conceptual Divides**

The physical environment at Hemel is segregated. Different units are unlikely to have much contact with members outside their own unit, or those with which they overlap, as groups such as CSC shifts, crime prevention shifts, detectives, human resource

staff, and administrative staff all work in different parts of the main five storey block. Additionally, court and mortuary officials are located in buildings separate from the main Hemel station.

Interviews with members highlighted a conceptual divide between these groups that mirrors the physical divide. This is not to say that it is physical segregation alone which has led to this conceptual separation. Frictions exist between detective and uniformed members, between management and frontline workers as well as between different shifts. These 'us' and 'them' mentalities link closely to the themes of solidarity and secrecy in international police literature (Skolnick 1976; Reiner 1985; Brodgen, Jefferson & Walklate 1988; Brown & Campbell 1994; Manning 1997; Crank 1998). Shifts and units tend to remain loyal first and foremost to their immediate colleagues.

During the fieldwork period this kind of solidarity made it difficult to gauge how well individuals in each unit got along, particularly in the shifts where an average unit would be made up of twelve members, ten of whom would be coloured men. Despite, or possibly because of, this imbalance, women, African and white members didn't express any concerns or problems about members in their units. Rather, reports of being undervalued were targeted at management who were seen as simply dishing out impractical orders from above. Conversely, interviews with management did not reveal complaints about lower ranking members, nor of impractical orders from area management.

## **Ordering the Space**

My first encounter with Christianity during the diversity workshop in Hemel is better understood in relation to the physical space at Hemel SAPS.

### **Posters, paraphernalia and Christianity**

Hemel police station is large and impressive. The CSC is clean, spacious and attractive compared to some other stations in the country. A large, shiny new SAPS star marks the public entrance to the building with 'Community Service Centre' written in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. Similar tri-lingual signs mark points of queuing at the counter. An impressive display of HIV / AIDS awareness pamphlets and posters cover a table and wall opposite the entrance. Along with plaques of achievement awarded to the station and a painting on the remaining walls, other posters inform the public and members about children's rights, steps being taken towards ending domestic violence, express support for people with HIV / AIDS, pledge support to the country's farming community and outlining the ethical principles of the SAPS.

Beyond the electronically locked door through which only SAPS members may pass is a elevator foyer with a big blue notice board on the wall directly opposite the lifts. The board holds important station notices including Identikits for wanted

suspects, notices about voluntary HIV / AIDS testing, a list of members through which the Grootland employment equity plan can be accessed and a copy of the Batho Pele principles on which SAPS members are supposed to act. Posters on the wall around the notice board include a summary of the Employment Equity Act and a poster proclaiming that the 'SAPS embrace disability'.

Working one's way up to other levels of the station, there isn't much conformity among notices on the different floors. It's as though they weren't made by individuals working in a single organisation, but by a number of organisations that employ different languages and styles. Fire exit maps differ in format and language use, shifting between a dominance of English, Afrikaans and English-Afrikaans bilingualism while none offer an African language.

A perusal of official books in the CSC, such as the ever-present occurrence book in which all shift actions are recorded, reveals a tendency to record information in English. This is in line with a national instruction that all formal correspondence within the SAPS be conducted in English. Some Afrikaans is still used however.

Grootland appears to be an area dominated by Christianity, as does the Hemel station where Christian paraphernalia abounds. The trauma room and CSC computer room, among others, boast posters with detailed illustrations of the sins and saintly acts one might take on a road to heaven or hell. A sign on a hotel on the road to hell reads, 'get AIDS here'. Christian prayers are stuck above telephones in the CSC while a tearoom table houses bibles. Though I was informed that a Muslim man worked on one of the shifts, I was never able to interview him on his impressions of work in this Christianity saturated environment. As a non-Christian myself, I felt somewhat uncomfortable surrounded by the constant words and imagery during my fieldwork. When interviewing the SAPS diversity trainer at the college I was awed by entire walls covered in hundreds of bible quotes. At another time during a casual conversation about language use with the station commissioner, he explained to me, proudly, how he had done an exercise with his subordinate managers in order to make a point about language. He explained that he had taken three bibles to a management meeting, one isiXhosa, one English and one Afrikaans. He had asked the only Xhosa manager to read a passage from the Xhosa bible. Nobody else understood its meaning, he told me. He then asked someone to read the same passage from the English bible, everybody understood almost everything. He then read the passage from the Afrikaans bible and, ostensibly, everyone understood. To the commissioner, the bibles had proven the point that at Hemel station there was far more room for English and Afrikaans than there was for Xhosa (Supt. Dippenaar, personal communication, 14/7/05).

### **In the corridors ...**

Beyond the trilingual notices and posters in the CSC, the inner SAPS-only corridors of the station seem to cater only to English and Afrikaans (often only one at a time) members. If organisational culture is a manifestation of learned thinking patterns

within an institution (O'Hara-Devereaux 1994; Hicks-Clarke & Iles 2000), and if organisations strive to create a norm among employees (Foucault 1977) then the manner in which language is used in public and private spaces in the Hemel station suggests important ideas about the imagined community *in contrast with the imagined workforce*. While posters in the CSC are trilingual suggesting a recognition of client diversity, the mono- and bilingual notices within the SAPS-only section of the station highlight assumptions about workforce makeup and language that contradict the actual station demographics. It can be postulated that such paraphernalia reinforce particular concepts of homogeneity of culture and bodies to those who identify with the languages while alienating those who don't.

The same applies to the manner in which Christian prayers are positioned above the telephone and on the walls on the members' side of the CSC counter. Any member working in that space is confronted with Christian paraphernalia, regardless of their personal faith.

While shared religion no doubt provides a powerful core around which any group might find common ground, it is in no way a bond that is free from politics. The station commissioner's exercise reveals dangerous assumptions about members' faiths, as well as lack of sensitivity towards the topic. It also suggests the use of Christianity to meet personal ends, in this case, to enforce a personal language preference. Indeed, language is perhaps the greatest obstacle to the smooth running of a diverse SAPS, as is evident in the voices of the member discussed below.

## **Language, Race and Space**

Intersections of language and race, and their relation to space (both workplace and national) form some of the most complex challenges facing the SAPS and the nation as a whole.

### **From elsewhere**

Census data for Hemel suggests that most residents are white and coloured Afrikaans speakers. Similarly, the majority of Hemel police stations members are white and coloured Afrikaans speakers. On my second day at the station an inspector who'd worked at the station for ten years, believing me to be a permanent member exclaimed her surprise at my presence. She told me that in her ten years at the station she'd never seen an English policeman there (Insp. Smith, personal interview, 15/7/05).

Of course not all members at the station are first language Afrikaans speakers, particularly not the African members. The woman's words don't literally mean she's never met an English speaking policeman at Hemel but rather an English speaking *white* policeman.

Hemel, to most members of the SAPS there, is a place populated by coloured and white South Africans who speak Afrikaans. While a glance at census data appears to validate this belief, both the census data (through the manner in which it delineates whom is counted under which place name) and SAPS voices neglect the over 20 000 Africans living only kilometres from the town limits.

Interviews revealed tension between the town of Hemel, its surrounding farmlands, and the Eastern Cape. This has grown out of the SAPS's recruitment drive for Xhosa members from that province which encompasses a former homeland with very different demographics. In the Eastern Cape over 95% of the population are African and Xhosa speaking in comparison with less than 30% in the Western Cape where coloured Afrikaans speakers account for half the population (Statistics South Africa 2003). Regardless, this thirty percent is largely absent in the voices of Hemel members.

Supt. Stirk and Capt. Taljaard's statements above about the isolation of African members leading to despondence, ill health and suicide are better understood when framed by the words of a young coloured constable who stated that 'this is *our* home. They are all from different provinces'. (Cnst. Maasdorp, personal interview, 19/7/05), and when a white diversity trainer asked an African workshop participant, 'Every time you go home to **your people** you're happy, right?' (Supt Schmidt, personal communication, 12/7/05). While these comments suggest a conceptual contradiction between African bodies and the Hemel area, a discourse in which such bodies are needed is also present. Paraphrasing the Area Director, Capt. Taljaard stated 'just forget about it, you need to stay here. You are African. We need Africans ... you need to be here, you cannot go' (Capt. Taljaard, personal interview, 11/7/05). Similarly Hemel's HR manager stated that '*Ons moet swart mense hê, ons moet [We must have black people, we must]*' (Capt. Hartzenberg, personal interview, 20/7/05). Supt. Stirk, HR manager for the Grootland Area, added her voice stating that while there was a service delivery component to affirmative action policies, in the end it was about getting the numbers right (Supt. Stirk, personal interview, 22/07/05).

The voices of African members simultaneously highlighted and downplayed these contradictory discourses. While no African members admitted to their being mistreated on the grounds of race, they did draw attention to the problem of language. In the words of a constable who'd recently transferred to Hemel to take up an affirmative action promotion:

Send me to home where I can work with people who I can understand, they can understand my language and I can understand their language. Why don't it be like that. Then I can leave the people here alone. The people they want someone who's to say in Afrikaans (Cnst. Dlamini, personal interview, 19/7/05).

The constable's words suggest that he feels more pressure and negativity from the community than from his colleagues:

No one can say, 'No, no. I don't want to talk to you, I want someone who can talk Afrikaans'. You see ... they think SAPS is for those people they can speak Afrikaans. Uh-uh-uh, it's not right, especially in the Western Cape.

Another more senior African member, Supt. Mtuze of the detective unit who'd transferred from the Eastern Cape seven months prior to the interview, explained how he sometimes had difficulty reading dockets which were compiled in Afrikaans, although he said people were learning to write their dockets in English if they were to be assigned to him. He also said African members from the Eastern Cape were often perceived as a threat:

Some they even say that 'these people are coming to take our posts'. I mean even some African people here in the Western Cape ... who started their careers here ... if they don't get the post, they will blame you from the Eastern Cape, 'You fly from the Eastern Cape, come and take our posts here' (Supt. Mtuze, personal interview, 20/7/05).

During a focus group with a coloured and African constable and their senior coloured sergeant, the coloured voices largely silenced that of the African member. The African constable told me that he'd confront anyone who expressed a racist attitude towards him to which his coloured colleague chuckled and retorted, 'No, he must accept it because he's the minority' (Cnst. Julies, focus group 1, 21/7/05). While this most likely was framed as a joke, it probably reflects a real dynamic. Earlier Cnst. Julies had said of his African colleague, 'We work on a daily basis together, so there's no need to treat him differently because he's *one of us*'. While this suggests camaraderie among members, it also insinuates that this African colleague might be an 'other', *one of them* if he didn't work in an almost exclusively coloured shift. This unnamed 'them' is imbued with negative meaning and hints at there being something different about the African colleague.

The African constable, Cnst. Dlamini, claimed Afrikaans wasn't a problem for him, despite his colleagues admitting to laughing at him when he tried to speak the language. For Cnst. Dlamini, 'I can understand, the problem is I can't talk back with them in Afrikaans. Here and there I can speak, so I don't have any problem with Afrikaans' (Cnst. Dlamini, focus group 1, 21/7/05).

Cnst. Julies and his coloured superior, Sgt. Diedericks, hinted at a resentment with affirmative action policies in the station, particularly among white and coloured members.

Sometimes [we joke] but this is not in a bad way ... one of them [white members] will come in and say, 'Yup, we *boertjies* we are really getting screwed here'<sup>12</sup> (Sgt. Diedericks, focus group 1, 21/7/05).

At which point Cnst. Julies jumped back in:

The Coloureds will also get involved and we'll end up by saying, 'No man, the blacks get all the nice jobs. We get the shit end of the stick.' That's when we're sitting in the parade room and everybody will laugh about it.

But humour can only do so much to hide power imbalances and perceptions of threat.

12. *Boertjies*: Literally, 'young farmer' in Afrikaans, but here referring to White Afrikaans men.

### 'Us' and 'them'

Insp. Smith's reference to my English presence in the Hemel SAPS shows how language has become a signifier of belonging, linked to ideas of spatiality (Keith & Pile 1993).

Her words contrast my race, language, accent and uniform in contrast with the town. The former four markers become mutually exclusive of the latter. English and whiteness are linked to a space outside of Hemel.

Similar tensions around the peopling of space are evident in Supt. Stirk and Capt. Taljaard's references to African members' struggles to adapt at the station (Supt. Stirk, personal interview, 22/7/05, and Capt. Taljaard, personal interview, 11/7/05), and in Cnst. Maasdorp and Supt. Schmidt's references to African members' homes being in different provinces (Cnst. Maasdorp, personal interview, 19/7/05, and Supt. Schmidt, personal communication, 12/7/05).

While management is aware of the challenges faced by African members, for equity reasons it is accepted that their presence is a necessity. Thus an official SAPS discourse on affirmative action and quota requirements overshadows an unofficial one that disagrees with national policies. Grootland and Hemel managers don't necessarily believe there is a need for African members, rather they are aware of the need to meet quotas.

Cnst. Radebe's feelings of community ostracism (Cnst. Radebe, personal interview, 19/7/05) and Supt. Mtuze's comments about job stealers (Supt. Mtuze, personal interview, 20/7/05), suggest the marker 'African', when combined with 'Xhosa-speaking' and 'from the Eastern Cape' is seen as at once alien to Hemel and a threat to its structure. This threat is felt most strongly by those bodies deemed by the dominant group to belong to the space – white and coloured.

Srgt. Diedericks and Cnst. Julies's comments about affirmative action additionally mark the African body as a threat (Srgt. Diedericks and Cnst. Julies, focus group 1, 21/7/05). In researching the effects of affirmative action in the United States, Hochschild (1997) found that far more people were affected by the *fear* of affirmative action than were harmed by it. While the sergeant made it clear that he felt he had missed a promotion due to his colour and sex, the constable's comments suggest an acceptance of an organisational myth which as yet hasn't influenced him personally. This fear of demographic transformation might be seen as one of the learned ways of thinking that characterises the organisational culture at Hemel, as is the African members' awareness of their presence as unwanted. (O'Hara-Devereaux & Johansen 1994; Hicks-Clarke & Iles 2000).

Bearing in mind the way members mobilise around intersections of race and language rather than race alone, it is useful once again to refer to Anderson's (1997) *theory of nationalism*. For Anderson, 'there was and is no possibility of man's general linguistic unification' and yet he stresses the manner in which it is through pockets of linguistic unification that the seeds of nations are planted (Anderson 1997:49). In this sense the group frictions based on race/language intersections evident in the Hemel

SAPS, potentially pose a significant challenge, both in terms of building both a unified workforce and a unified nation.

## Language Perspectives

Language was the single topic every member at Hemel had something to say about, underpinning its centrality in their work lives.

### Resistance

The challenge of functional linguistic unification is evidenced in the words of the station commissioner who chuckled during the management meeting, 'This new English is a bad language, this is our diversity [laughs and indicates the only African member at the meeting]' (Supt. Dippenaar, personal communication, 15/7/05).

The following summary further highlights the sensitivity and complexity of the topic:

- An EAS social worker stated that in some parts of the Grootland area members of the community 'only speak English 'for self defence', in very extreme situations. Otherwise they will only speak Afrikaans (Capt Taljaard, personal interview, 11/7/05).
- At a diversity workshop a white facilitator stated to participants that 'We will use English and Afrikaans in order to be diplomatic' (Supt. Schmidt, personal communication, 12/7/05). There was no offering of Xhosa or other languages.
- The commissioner's secretary, a coloured woman, refuses to do meeting minutes in English, despite the national instruction ordering her to do so, because 'our people' are in the meeting (Ms. Hendricks, personal communication, 15/7/05).
- For a white male inspector, the police blue indicates a family which uses English as a good middle-ground through which to communicate (Insp. Pieterse, personal interview, 18/7/05).
- A coloured inspector believes members must make it a point to teach themselves new languages (Cnst. Bruiners, personal interview, 19/7/05).
- A white captain feels Afrikaans people at the station are too scared to speak English. She believes they are afraid of looking stupid if they make mistakes (Capt. Hartzenberg, personal interview, 20/7/05).
- An African superintendent believes Afrikaners are proud and afraid of losing their culture. He too feels there is a fear attached to not speaking Afrikaans, only his is a more complex impression (Supt. Mtuze, personal interview, 20/7/05).
- A white Afrikaans cleaner was pleased when given the chance to work with an African, Xhosa-speaking man because it meant he could teach her English (Ms. Krog, personal interview, 20/7/05).

- A white, blind switchboard operator believes members should learn to speak Xhosa rather than everyone learning Afrikaans or English (Mr. Blom, personal interview, 21/7/05).
- A coloured inspector with more than sixteen years in the station believes African members must learn to speak Afrikaans (Insp. Salie, personal interview, 22/7/05).

### **Language and dominant culture**

The commissioner's comment at the management meeting suggests English is a hindrance to members at the meeting and that Xhosa has no place there. It infers that the absence of the African / English / Xhosa body would allow for a more fluid meeting environment. Similarly, the diversity trainer's choice of English and Afrikaans as 'democratic' languages suggests a limited understanding of democracy. The second diversity workshop was run exclusively in English, despite both workshops having instructors who could speak English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. These examples reveal members in power using their influence to maintain hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion, through their choice of language.

The same applies to the commissioner's secretary who, though not in a particularly powerful position, uses her discretion during minute-taking, to exclude both current and future members of the SAPS from accessing those records. Each of these three examples suggests a fixed, stagnant understanding of SAPS workforce demographics in the minds of the decision makers.

Inspector Pieterse, who is aware of language tensions among his colleagues, has accepted the official SAPS view that English, as a widely spoken second language, is the most practical medium for general communication in the organisation. In contrast, constable Bruiners, also a first language Afrikaans speaker, believes it is up to members to make sure they are educated in multiple South African languages to aid organisational function. This view is impractical and fails to address formal language use in the organisation. Ms. Krog, the Afrikaans cleaner on the other hand, recognises rather than denies the linguistic diversity within the organisation and sees it as a means to better herself, in relation to the official English only SAPS discourse. Mr. Blom's view that members should learn Xhosa is important in that it suggests a conceptualisation of the area as peopled in a manner that contrasts with the popular perception at the station. Inspector Salie's view that African members should learn Afrikaans reflects the dominant understanding of Afrikaans linked to white and coloured bodies, with African, non-Afrikaans bodies presenting an obstacle to organisational fluidity.

These views highlight the complexity of language issues within the Hemel SAPS, and the SAPS as a whole. While consideration must be made to the community in which the station is placed, the station must also be understood as part of a matrix that makes up a national organisation in which effective communication is vital to service delivery and employee satisfaction.

## **Racism and Organisational vs Community Culture**

No African members named, nor hinted at racism at the station. As far as these members were willing to tell me, it was language that posed the greatest problem. This should be considered in light of Erasmus and De Wet's findings that African medical students, though denying exposure to racism, find themselves marginalised at university (Erasmus & De Wet 2003). Denial of racism does not mean racist mechanisms aren't at work.

### **Serving the community**

While for the Supt. Mtuze quoted above, language posed a challenge in communicating with his colleagues, for Cnst. Radebe, the problem arose when dealing with the public. His plea to be transferred to the Eastern Cape is less about communicating with his colleagues than it is about communicating with, and being respected by the public. This view is again highlighted when he expresses his thoughts on demographic transformation:

... maybe by next year in one shift maybe plus-minus five Africans, African guys ... It's just my opinion, maybe it can be like that. It would be nice. Then we can see the equity is working now. But the one, one per shift or two, it's not enough. Then the community they are going to see, this is equity now, you see. It'd be nice ... Because the community they must know if they are going to find maybe those people there in front [in the CSC] maybe Xhosa speaking people they are going to be forced to speak English. There's no way they are going to get help now, you see. Then they know they must accommodate us so it'll be alright. (Cnst. Radebe, personal interview, 19/7/05).

A conversation over tea with an African constable stationed at a rural station in the Grootland Area during one of the diversity workshops revealed similar attitudes. While the constable said relations amongst the members at his station were civil ('We used to have problems when we [Africans] first arrived at the station. Everything was in Afrikaans but we've persuaded them to use English and now everything is fine.') it was the community with whom he had a problem and the community who needed to change. 'Sometimes they get drunk and still use those old names', he told me, 'It's the community that needs this training'. Despite the problems the constable had with the community he told me he would stick out the next four years of his contract at the rural station before applying for a transfer, 'because that's what the SAPS asks' (Cnst. Ngazimbi, personal communication, 12/7).

While reference to racism by white members was rare and never directly named by African members, coloured members were more vocal on the issue. Cnst. Skrikker explained her impression of race relations in the station where whites think they are superior and don't need to change, Africans simply refuse to do certain things when

asked, and coloureds are the 'bitchy type' causing problems 'with their mouths' (Cnst. Skrikker, personal interview, 20/7/05).

During the focus group with Cnst. Jules and Cnst. Dlamini along with Srgt. Diedericks, the sergeant explained that racism is particularly alive and well between African and white members in the station (Srgt. Diedericks, focus group 1, 21/7/05). Ironically, both he and Cnst. Jules confessed to partaking in a prevalence of race-based humour within their almost entirely coloured unit. They did so because they didn't believe it had a harmful effect on individuals. Notably, their African colleague chose not to comment.

A second focus group with inspectors September and Henry, following the sudden death of the station commissioner the previous evening, revealed a prevalence of anti-white angst. The focus group took place in the vicinity of the HR offices where the majority of employees are white women. Insp. September, also in HR, recounted in harsh, angry tones how she felt ignored by her white colleagues in failing to inform her about a prayer meeting that morning:

Supt. Dippenaar was not just the whites' station commissioner, he was our station commissioner as well but the way they were, like, acting it was like he was just the whites' ... they even made me feel out (Insp. September, focus group 2, 21/7/05).

She went on to explain her views of a race hierarchy in the station:

In this station, if you are a coloured – I'm only talking about the coloureds, they don't take any notice of the Africans here – if you are coloured ... you must be a coconut. You see, so I don't fit in at this station. I don't take shit from white people.<sup>13</sup>

Insp. Henry then recounted his time in the station in the 1980s. He talked about a mess hall where coloured members had to stand and eat while the white members sat. He told of being locked out of the station's bar while his white colleagues drank after a successful operation on the streets (Insp. Henry, focus group 2, 21/7/05).

Many members who shared these experiences of organisationally supported racial subjugation at the station continue to work there, notably senior management, as well as a number of older inspectors. This environment clearly lends itself to fostering long-term tensions between members. A good example is the testimony of Insp. September who was followed and whose actions were secretly recorded in the 1980s by someone who now occupies a senior management post at Hemel. At the time a case was opened against her and she was arrested for having a relationship with a non-coloured man and thus contravening the Immorality Act.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the order to have the inspector followed had come from the man who, until his passing

13. The common description of a 'coconut' as used in this context is 'someone who is brown on the outside and white on the inside'. In other words a dark skinned person who displays cultural and behavioral attitudes commonly understood as belonging to 'whites'.

14. The Immorality Act (1950) made inter-racial sexual relations illegal.

the night before the focus group, was still the station commissioner at Hemel (Insp. September, focus group 2, 21/7/05).

While the inspector was telling her story, a white ex-Hemel member who works at a nearby station entered the room. Hearing what the inspector was saying, she too told of being ostracised by members of Hemel station because of her relationships with coloured and African men when she worked there in the 1980s. In very unflattering, aggressive language she explained that she felt nothing for the passing of the commissioner because of the damage he had done in her life (Insp. Sanders, personal communication, 21/7/05).

During an interview with a junior detective her superior officer, a white male inspector in his early forties, entered the room. The interviewee introduced me to the inspector who immediately blurted out:

You're talking about diversity? Let me tell you those police during apartheid, the riot squads, they didn't go in there and attack the black people. We were a stabilising force. You go there, you see one black guy about to necklace another black guy so you take this one out of the equation [indicates shooting with a rifle]. It was not white on black, it was black on black. And if you want to blame someone, blame the SAP for the psychological damage they did to those guys. Young guys, sitting in a van for three weeks. Of course they will want to shoot when they get out. Let me tell you I pissed myself. I sat there like this [indicates sitting with rifle between his legs] and I pissed myself. Those police should be taken out of the service. They are psychologically damaged. (Insp. Krige, personal communication, 19/7/05).

With that the inspector turned and left.

An interview with an older coloured inspector suggested that the commissioner had changed significantly since the SAPS reforms started coming into place (Insp. Salie, personal interview, 22/7/05). Nevertheless, in about a third of the interviews a need for management change at Hemel was mentioned. The issue was addressed with lowered voices without including names, but it was a common theme nonetheless. The suggestion was that minds couldn't be changed, rather people needed to be removed from their positions for change to take place.

### **Whiteness re-articulated**

Cnst. Radebe's feelings towards the Hemel community suggest that for him organisational equity and transformation is less about internal dynamics than about changing community attitudes towards non-Afrikaans speaking (African) members.

The link between this member's hopes for community transformation through workforce transformation indicate another aspect of nation building. Without directly educating the public, community realities will change as the public face of government, as well as private workforces change. If the community knows they might have to speak English or interact with African members when engaging the SAPS, their understanding and expectations of the area will have begun to change. After time perhaps, less antagonism towards non-Afrikaans-speaking members will be

shown by them. Of course such processes are extremely slow and should not be relied upon for the re-imagining of communities or nations.

While Sgt. Diedericks and Cnst. Julies appear liberal and claim only to 'joke' racially, it is clear that things aren't that simple. Sgt. Diedericks's view that racial tensions are strongest between African and white members should be considered in light of Van Dijk's (2004) thinking on racial discourses. Van Dijk notes that racist disclaimers simply attempt to absolve the speaker of any part in the system he / she is critiquing. Indeed, with the majority of the station's members identified within EE reports as coloured, it is not possible that this group be complacent in Hemel's racial dynamics.

Inspector September's testimony, for example, speaks directly to the positioning of coloured bodies within a racial hierarchy. Her words are measured against her perception of whiteness in the station. The 'they' who don't take notice of African members, in her mind, are the white minority. It is likely that a more accurate description of this 'they' includes coloured members too. While she attempts to distance herself and the group with which she identifies, from her racist accusations, she simultaneously positions herself within a system of race-based power disparities, confirming her part in it.

Inspector Salie's opinion that the station commissioner had changed is valid. However, it is equally valid to assume that many members who worked at the station both pre- and post-1994, remain influenced by their pre-ninety-four experiences there. These might manifest as lingering feelings of superiority or of anger, feelings probably amplified for those still working with members who used their power to harm them under the apartheid system. Insp. Krige's spontaneous outburst highlights this issue. He clearly includes himself among the members who are damaged and should be relieved of their current duties. While this was the only example of a white recollection of the apartheid era offered at Hemel, it, along with the testimonies of Insp. September and Henry speak to the intricacies of re-articulating meaning in the social and work worlds of all SAPS members who served in the SAP.

### **Discourse from Above, Contradictions and Quotas**

New recruits joining the SAPS are required to sign a contract committing them to their original posting, anywhere in the country, for a period of two years without requesting a transfer. According to Supt. Stirk, the first questions asked when considering applicants for promotion and transfers are always about race, gender and rank (Supt. Stirk, personal interview, 22/7/05).

While this approach is a positive reflection on the SAPS's commitment to transforming the structure of its workforce, it does not rest well with some members. Having at first joked about resentment with affirmative action, Sgt. Diedericks and Cnst. Julies got serious. They told me 'The new motto of the SAPS is "the organisation

doesn't need you, you need them" (Cnst. Jules, focus group 1, 21/7/05). For these coloured members, the demographic most likely to be replaced by African members at Hemel (see *EE quotas* in chapter 6 below), the feeling is that affirmative action poses a serious threat to their livelihoods. While it is true that African members are theoretically more likely to see an accelerated career path than their coloured colleagues, the SAPS is not going to dismiss members from the service on the grounds of race. Instead members are likely to be transferred to stations lacking a coloured demographic. Again affirmative action as threat is revealed as central to the organisational discourse and culture at Hemel.

While it has been mentioned that new additions to the service must sign away the right to choice of placement and transfer, Capt. Taljaard at EAS suggested that very often transfer requests by African members can't be accepted because their presence is required to fill quotas (Capt. Taljaard, personal interview, 11/7/05). While the quota system intends to enrich the lives of African citizens it seems that at Hemel and other stations in the Grootland Area it might be causing them more distress than reward.

## Race Scripting

'Those who are darker than dark, can I call you "African"?' began one of the diversity workshops. The question was met with silence, blank faces. The African social worker continued unperturbed, 'Can I call some of you "white"?' Again, only silence, a sideways glance. Looking around the facilitator continued, 'We've also got Coloured, not "so-called Coloured".' He chuckled to himself, then rhetorically, 'Do we have any Indians here? Unfortunately not.' (Insp. Mabele, personal communication, 12/7/05).

Despite this apparent appeal to an essentialist and finite notion of South African body types, the facilitator's questions show an awareness of the contestable nature of race labelling. The silence with which he was met on the other hand, suggests the opposite. For these members, as is likely true for almost all South Africans, one's identity as either African, white, coloured or Indian is a given. Only twelve years after the end of apartheid and its articulation of social, institutional, ideological and political reality in the country – including the official classification of population using these four labels – perhaps this is not surprising. The question that remains is, is it worrying? I would posit that it is and that the diversity workshop's failure to ask members to interrogate these assumptions is perhaps one of its major failings.

The affirmative action and diversifying process is doubly bound into simultaneously reinforcing apartheid constructed essentialist identities while striving for equitable ideals. While government policies like the Employment Equity Act aim to empower 'designated groups' defined as 'African people, women and people with disabilities', they still use 'Black people' as 'a generic term which means Africans, Coloureds and Indians' (Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998). While on the one hand there is an attempt to amalgamate the apartheid created non-white categories under the single term 'Black', echoing the 1980s rhetoric of Black Consciousness, the

Act makes explicit reference to the apartheid defined categories of black, coloured and Indian. Quota systems such as that used by the SAPS, make explicit reference to the ratio of African, coloured, and Indian members required in each station. Thus even in their attempts to redress the harm done by apartheid and these categories, seemingly progressive policies serve to reinforce apartheid constructed notions of race.

Mare (2001:76) refers to this prevalence of race labelling in the daily discourse of South African life as the 'banality of race confirmation'. Mare's criticism extends to other systems and forms such as the South African census process, tax forms and birth certificates, which similarly employ the same apartheid labels. This aspect of Mare's argument is best summed up by Melissa Nobels (2001) who reminds us that counting by race suggests that there is something there to be counted. Nobels highlights the discourse-making power of government institutions such as census bureaux which are ironically presented as neutral and scientific.

Such is the contradictory nature of the New South African and SAPS discourse that in its attempt to re-articulate notions of citizenship and flatten old race hierarchies, it continues to employ racial categories in a relatively uncritical manner, reinforcing their essentialism in the minds of SAPS members and the public. Mare calls for an end to this simplified approach to race, both with a mind to ending essentialist notions of race, and for fear of policies for redress missing deserving targets who might not fall neatly into existing categories.

### **Colour blindness, essentialism and the obviousness of race**

The voices of Hemel SAPS members hint at an every day discourse that blends racial essentialism and colour blindness.

The following is an extract from an interview with an optimistic, young, coloured woman in the detective unit:

You just need to tell yourself, 'Listen, I don't want to live like my old people lived. I don't want to be like that. I don't want to live a hostile lifestyle', because at the end of the day we are one body and the eye cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you'. ... I have this joke, my own joke, I say 'What do you have that a black brother doesn't have? What do I have that a white sister doesn't have?' The only difference is our pigmentation so there's no difference, there's no difference at all except the mindset. And if only people can see other people for who they are, you know, see them for their character. You know what, you will not even see colour. You will not see colour if you see character (Const. Bruiners, personal interview, 19/7/05).

While at face value this was among the most liberal views offered to me at Hemel, the constable went on in a manner that seemed to contradict these opening remarks:

The Coloureds for example, let's take for example how they celebrate New Year. We believe that you come together as a group of friends and family and there's lots of alcohol and you just party the night away whereas white people in general, they are very different in that aspect. They spend it with very close

people, you know, only with their relatives and they have this traditional Christmas tree and they exchange gifts whereas exchanging gifts is not important for us really ... Whereas the Africans ... for some it means something, for some it's just a time to share and to live. It's not about exchanging gifts ... Just being together.

It is clear in this excerpt that the young constable does see colour after all. Some other brief examples of a denial of seeing race, or of participation in a racialised system are the following:

We don't actually have race issues here ... I don't need this [diversity workshop] cause I don't have a problem with the white guy or the Coloured or the black guy, you see? (Cnst. Maasdorp, personal interview, 19/7/05).

'I don't think I have a problem with anyone so I don't need to change anything', while at the station there are 'Racial problem[s] ... I think that's the biggest problem' (Cnst. Beyleveld, personal interview, 15/7/05).

Race never had any effect on me. I was like, I couldn't care a damn what colour you are ... I wasn't brought up to mix with blacks but when I grew up I decided this is what I want to be, you see? Because some of our coloureds are also very racist, they don't want to mix with blacks (Insp. September, focus group 2, 15/7/05).

### Failure to reflect on racialisation

While Cnst. Bruiners's first statement about seeing character instead of colour might appear appealing, she subsequently essentialises the Christmases / New Years of what she clearly sees as distinct race groups. Her vision of the world is still broken into racialised compartments of meaning which she, in her eagerness to move beyond race, fails to scrutinise. These examples suggest a quintessential understanding of race and culture, rather than class and culture. The fact that white people in South Africa generally have more expendable income to spend on trees and gifts while many African people don't have enough to buy a few drinks for the celebration, eludes her. This is what Balibar (1991:55) means when he states that racism provides an explanation 'to men about their own nature and their own birth'. Things just *make sense* to the constable in relation to race labels and racialised bodies. The workshop fails to interrogate such notions.

Similarly, in the very process of denying that she sees colour, Cnst. Maasdorp names three distinct South Africanised race groups, reaffirming their existence in her world. This is an example of the irony of South African colour blindness.

While Cnst. Beyleveld doesn't believe she affects, or is affected by race in the workplace, she acknowledges the existence of race-based frictions. Conveniently she, like everybody else interviewed, is able to remove herself from the processes and mechanisms which allow those frictions to exist (Van Dijk 2002).

Insp. September's example is even more ironic. She previously explained that she'd been arrested for having an interracial relationship in the 1980s. On the one

hand this suggests a kind of colour blindness on her part. On the other hand, in contrast to her claim here not to be influenced by race, her life clearly has been drastically affected by it. She refers to 'our coloureds', connecting herself with a community imagined in relation to skin, revealing the manner in which she too relies on race to understand and navigate her world.

Erasmus (2004) summarises what she calls the denialist and recognition approaches to race. Simply put, the denialist approach would be one, such as that employed in Brazil, where race is officially said not to exist, and can thus not be an influencing factor in citizens' lives, and is thus left unaddressed while lighter skinned people maintain dominance. The recognition approach on the other hand would be something akin to what is happening in South Africa where it is believed that race-based redressive action is necessary to mend the damage previously done in the name of race. While the official national discourse attempts to follow the recognition approach, the voices above appear to merge the two, simultaneously aware of a racialised reality while attempting to deny their participation in it. The current national approach to racial discourse thus gains in ambiguity as it filters down to the masses who struggle to reconcile notions of equality with a reification of apartheid racial classification. The resulting manifestation of an ostensible acceptance of all does little to engage the power dynamics that hold members in particular positions. Indeed it is actually strategic, disguising its power moves and leaving them in place (Steyn 2001).

## **Race and Class**

The lone body of a white cleaner at Hemel, and members' reactions to her, unearth one of the more powerful apartheid constructed notions of whiteness being challenged by the changing nation.

### **White cleaners**

Before I'd begun my station research, my interview with Capt. Taljaard at EAS revealed 'We've got a white female cleaner at Grootberg and we tell the other police stations about it and they say, "Really? Do we have those in the police?"' (Capt. Taljaard, personal interview, 11/07/05). A later interview with the said cleaner highlights what Laclau and Mouffe would call the mutual exclusiveness of the markers 'white' and 'cleaner' within South African racialised discourse (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002). Speaking of her white superior the cleaner told me:

She comes from her place and, because I'm a white person, and she said, 'I can't see you as a cleaner.' And I tell her, 'Why? I don't steal my money. I come here and I work for my money.' And she said, 'No.' She tried to kick me out of here (Ms. Krog, personal interview, 20/7/05).

But it is not only her superior who has trouble repositioning a white body in South Africa's traditional race/class structure. Speaking of her fellow cleaners in the station, all of whom are African and coloured, Ms Krog commented:

And the cleaners too. That's difficult. I don't do things with them ... They don't like me ... they said, 'You can't work like a cleaner,' ... and something like that (Ms. Krog, personal interview, 20/7/05).

Ms Krog's testimony was backed up during the focus group with Insp. September who volunteered the following information without my enquiring:

We have one white female cleaner. And I get angry because the coloured female cleaners are nasty with her. It's not nice. I've already talked to them. In the olden days you didn't get cleaners, white people ... *She forgot she was white*, she was looking for a job, she came and she got the job (Insp. September, focus group 2, 21/7/05).

### **'Forgetting' whiteness**

Wallerstein (1991:84) notes that 'The constructed "people" – the races, the nations, the ethnic groups – correlate so heavily, albeit imperfectly, with 'objective class' [that] a very high proportion of class-based political activity in the world has taken the form of people-based political activity'. In South Africa this is perhaps the ignored essence of race relations: class-based politics is reduced, in daily discourse, to race-based politics. At Hemel this was illustrated most clearly through the body of the white cleaner.

The comments above suggest that it is not only the white superior (of greater class status) who cannot see the white woman as a cleaner, but her fellow (of equal class status) cleaners too. Her white body doesn't fit their imagined understanding of race/class positions in the SAPS or country. Even Insp. September who sees the need for members to alter their race/class understanding of the world suggests that it is necessary to 'forget' one's whiteness in order to apply for a cleaning job. It is thus clear that to her too, 'white' and 'cleaner' are still mutually exclusive.

This example once again links to Mare's (2001) critique of the way race is used in South Africa, failing to challenge commonly understood essentialism. Similarly, when a white woman at one of the workshops stated that '*Blacks like living in shacks*', she actually believed it (Cnst. Rabe, personal communication, 12/7/05). The marker 'black' has become so reduced in her mind that she is able to blank out historical processes and believe in an essentialist, timeless notion of blackness. Hence Mare's argument for a more multi-faceted approach to affirmative action and race counting, one that takes into account gender, sexuality, class and other factors that shape our lived experience.

## Gender

According to Supt. De Swardt at EAS, apart from race, gender is the aspect of diversity given the most attention on the SAPS workshops (Supt. De Swardt, personal interview, 11/7/05). In my experience of the training, if gender was given any preferential treatment it was extremely secondary to race and the associations of culture, language and ethnicity tied to it. Nor was gender engaged with very critically.

During an exercise the facilitator was asking people to raise their hands if they identified as 'smokers', 'drinkers', 'soccer fans' and so forth, again in an attempt to highlight commonalities between racially marked groups. One of the questions was 'Who sees themselves as a woman?' and was met with a chorus of laughter (Insp. Bico, personal communication, 13/7/05). While this question, like the opening race label questions mentioned above, might have served as a lead-in to a discussion on the constructed and contested nature of gender assumptions, the facilitators laughed along and let it go. Additionally one might argue that the inclusion of markers such as gender or race with hobbies and interests, trivialises their complexities.

While 37% of Hemel's personnel are women, a breakdown of their job positions at the station suggests a job allocation within a particularly gendered understanding of women's roles. While women are well represented in the rank hierarchy, very few are involved in street level policing and community engagement. This suggests a continued conceptual link in the minds of management between traditional notions of policing as rough and masculine, and the manner in which positions are allocated.

Table 1 below contrasts the number of men in each work section with the number of women:

**Table 1**  
**Number of Women vs. Men by Department, Hemel 2005**

UNIT	MEN	WOMEN	% OF WOMEN
Community Service Centre – CSC (including patrol duties)	53	19	26.4%
Crime Intelligence (office work)	2	2	50%
Mess	1	12	92.3%
Court (guard and escort duties)	17	2	10.5%
Mortuary	2	1	33.3%

Crime Prevention (street patrols)	35	7	17.7%
Detectives	30	17	36.2%
Human Resources	0	5	100%
Finance	0	4	100%
Logistics / Finance	2	4	66.7%
Administration and Communication	5	16	76.2%

What is notable in this table is the prevalence of men in roles linked to traditional notions of policing (73% of CSC, court and crime prevention appointments) while women tend to occupy the majority of administrative positions (80% HR, finance, logistics, administration and communication).

### **Sexual harassment (of women)**

Early in my fieldwork I attempted but failed to access detailed disciplinary information regarding the Hemel station members. My attempts led me to the head of the disciplinary department at Area headquarters. Without allowing me access to specific cases, the captain explained that throughout the entire Grootland Area there had only been two sexual harassment cases in the past three years. While this might be seen as extremely positive, it may also suggest station cultures in which members don't feel able to make sexual harassment complaints. The manner in which the captain talked about the two cases was rather disconcerting in that he dismissed both as not being 'real' sexual harassment (Capt. Van Zyl, personal interview, 13/7/05). Notably one of the alleged ulterior motives he mentioned was the granting of a transfer to the Eastern Cape revealing his awareness of the struggle of African members in Grootberg.

Whether or not the captain was correct in his suspicions of ulterior motives his answers suggest a distrust of women. The low number of sexual harassment complaints lodged at Grootland Area HQ also suggests the possibility of an organisational culture which either encourages complaint solving at an unofficial level, or fails to provide an environment in which women feel safe to speak out. While I did not come across empirical evidence to suggest the latter, both the general theme of (shift/ rank/ unit) solidarity within academic police literature (Skolnick 1976; Reiner 1985; Brodgen, Jefferson & Walklate 1988; Brown & Campbell 1994; Manning 1997; Crank 1998), as well as testimonies from members at Hemel suggested that intra-shift problems are almost always resolved at an unofficial level (Cnst. Maasdrop, personal interview, 19/7/2005).

Inspector September believed few young female constables would know what to do if they were being sexually harassed (Insp. September, focus group 2, 21/7/05). At least one female constable made it clear to me that she knew the formal procedures through which to pursue any complaint (Cnst. Maasdorp, personal interview, 19/7/05). The inspector, for her part, stated quite sternly that 'If anybody is sexually harassing me and I don't like it I will definitely lay a charge against them'. What is important in this statement, apart from the suggestion that she would lay a complaint, is the phrase 'and I don't like it'. While all work places are open to sexual banter, flirtation and sexual interaction, police institutions like the SAPS have traditionally been noted for the dominance of masculinity and machismo in the work environment (Skolnick 1976; Reiner 1985; Brodgen, Jefferson & Walklate 1988; Brown & Campbell 1994; Manning 1997; Crank 1998). As Cnst. Maasdorp, the only woman on a shift of twelve noted, her colleagues often discuss matters which she finds sexually offensive. She negotiates this by expressing the offence taken and then leaving (Cnst. Maasdorp, personal interview, 19/7/05). She also noted that the men on her shift will sometimes not let her do certain kinds of manual work because she is a woman, or will stop a conversation with the words, 'Come guys, we have a lady present'. She was happy with such behaviour and didn't take offence to it, suggesting an internalisation of a prescribed gender roles on the parts of both her male colleagues and herself.

### **Maternity matters**

Prior to the start of a management meeting I attended, I had the opportunity to talk with the minute taker, a woman in her mid-twenties, Cnst. Beyleveld. As she was dressed in civilian clothes I asked her whether she was a SAPS member or civilian assistant. She informed me that she was a SAPS constable and had used to work on the shifts but had been moved to archives when she became pregnant (Cnst. Beyleveld, personal communication, 15/7/05). Having given birth more than a year prior, she said she was trying to get back onto the shifts but couldn't. With senior management entering the room I told her that I found her story interesting and asked whether I could interview her about it later in the day which she agreed to.

During the management meeting the station commissioner, a man thirty years her senior, made repeated jokes about the constable's beauty and directed a question to her relating to crime statistics, jokingly asking why so many women were being beaten up in the Hemel area. When he entered the room during my later interview with the constable he continued with his flirtatious jokes (Supt. Dippenaar, personal communication, 15/7/05).

Later during the formal interview with Cnst. Beyleveld her story had changed slightly. Whereas in the morning it appeared she was exceedingly keen to get back into the uniformed shifts, during the interview she played this down. She explained that she had been taken off the shifts because office hours were more accommodating for a mother, allowing her time with her child in the evening. She mentioned that every time she asked her superior about when she could return to the shifts she was

told they would talk about it the following month. She assured me she didn't feel this was discrimination. She said that while she would like to work on the shifts again she knew there wasn't anybody available to take her position in the archives and she didn't want to upset anybody by pushing for a transfer (Cnst. Beyleveld, personal interview, 15/7/05).

The constable estimated that out of the station's 89 women about six fall pregnant each year. She explained that maternity leave was paid, and full advantage was taken of it. When asked whether most women changed positions as a result of pregnancy she answered that this occurred mainly in the shifts. She added that most women return to their shifts after giving birth, though by this point in the interview she seemed to be searching for ways to make up for her early suggestion that the station might use pregnancy as a means to reshuffle the workforce. One of her final statements on the topic was 'They try to accommodate your pregnancy' (Cnst. Beyleveld, personal interview, 15/7/05). When the commissioner's secretary, Ms. Hendricks, entered the room during the interview, she too praised the station's handling of pregnancies (Ms. Hendricks, personal communication, 15/7/05).

While the two testimonies suggest an overall positive approach towards pregnancy at the station, the first testimony in particular speaks to the use of maternity leave as a means to re-shuffle personnel into positions in which they might not be happy. The constable's response further speaks to an internalisation of gender roles as evidenced in her appreciation for the station's 'accommodation' of mothers' needs.

### **Sexual orientation**

While the walls and notice boards of Hemel station are filled with posters pledging support to farmers, the disabled, the HIV infected and to women, there is no poster support for gays and lesbians. While I was unable to interview any openly gay members at Hemel I did ask questions of members about general feelings towards homosexuals in the station.

Members recognised that there were both male and female gay members within the station (Cnst. Beyleveld, personal interview, 15/7/05 and Sgt. Diedericks, Cnst. Julius and Const. Dlamini, focus group 1, 21/7/05). These members suggested that they were personally accepting of gay members but suggested that the station as a whole wasn't. The focus group suggested that gay jokes, like race-based jokes, are told in the presence of gay members but that all parties know where to draw the line, ostensibly before anyone is offended ('It won't go on and on and on until there is a fight' (Srgt. Diedericks, focus group 1, 21/7/05).

According to Cnst. Beyleveld, gay women are more openly accepted than gay men (Cnst. Beyleveld, personal interview, 15/7/05). She also told me that the gay woman with whom she shares an office walked out of her diversity workshop after the facilitators made gay jokes. While the said member chose not to speak with me, her

colleague was unaware of any complaint having been filed about the matter or of it being followed up.

### **Gender equality and culture**

During one of the race stereotype feedback sessions at the first diversity workshop, the representative of the African group explained to the room that 'we believe in polygamy and that men are on top'. This caused a stir among the white and coloured members in the room. A white woman shouted out, 'Are you open to change? If not there will always be problems'. A coloured woman, in an attempt to be more diplomatic added, 'We joined the SAPS and we must adjust to the SAPS culture.' The facilitator, Supt. Schmidt, attempted to ease the tension by stating 'When we join the SAPS we are all equal and to be efficient we must serve under everyone' (Supt. Schmidt and workshop participants, personal communication, 12/7/05).

Again the facilitators missed an opportunity here to unpack issues close to members' hearts. 'SAPS culture' is articulated by the coloured woman as one founded on a culture with which she identifies and to which she expects others to adjust. While the African group had taken a risk in sharing their belief with the others, they were not received respectfully, nor given a chance to explain themselves beyond their opening statement. The shared dominant opinions of the coloured and white group simply silenced them.

This kind of assumption about organisational cultural norms in the SAPS is dangerous. Difference is only noticed and used as a site for social manipulation when it is seen as foreign to the dominant group (Johnson 1997). As affirmative action diversifies the Hemel workforce assumptions about what constitutes normality will need to change.

### **Disability**

Hemel employs one disabled member, a blind, white male switchboard operator in his early thirties, Mr Blom. He has been at the station in the same position for fifteen years. Mr Blom articulated his view of how people interact with him as being similar to how people interact with anything they are scared of, naming people of colour as an example. While he felt valued by his colleagues, he also recounted the immense effort he had put into trying to acquire a computer to aid him in his work. After battling with station and Area management for six years he bought his own computer which he now takes home with him at the end of each work day (Mr. Blom, personal interview, 21/7/05).

Although Mr. Blom claimed to be on good terms with his colleagues and was able to navigate his daily work environment with relative ease, it was clear that he felt the management as well as the organisational culture needed to change in order to accommodate disabled members as well as African and Xhosa-speaking members. He

did not mention concerns about the fact that he worked in a type-cast position for the vision impaired, nor that he had held the same post for fifteen years. Despite his sensitivity then, he too reveals signs of having internalised prescribed notions of the blind in the workplace.

## **Summary of Organisational Culture**

Applying the thinking of O'Hara-Devereaux & Johansen (1994), Harrow (2000), Hardiman & Jackson (2000), Foucault (1977), Deetz (1992) and Kersten (2000) to the above analysis of the Hemel SAPS' organisational culture, a number of conclusions can be drawn.

Learned patterns of thinking and doing (O'Hara-Devereaux 1994) at the station include lessons that:

- 1) affirmative action is a threat to one's stability (for white and coloured members) and that it poses a management and employee satisfaction dilemma (for management and EAS staff);
- 2) Xhosa and Africanness pose a threat to the cultural stability of the station, service delivery, and are unwelcomed by the public;
- 3) Change and liberal attitudes are expected;
- 4) Women are better suited for office, management and administrative work than they are for street level policing and public engagement;
- 5) It is necessary to meet but not support quota appointments;
- 6) Racist and homophobic jokes are acceptable (for coloured members) and are not taken to heart; and
- 7) As long as disability is represented within the workforce, little additional attention need be paid to disabled members.

## **Policies and other structures supporting diversity**

Policies grow out of assumptions about human behaviour in particular contexts (Leeuw 1991). These assumptions can be revealed by asking 'if ... then' questions of policies. As a nationally centralised organisation the SAPS has no shortage of policies. Yet there is a shortage when it comes to what appears to be the one of the most problematic issues in the organisation: language. The following section offers an examination of policies relevant to the diversity and transformation process.

### **Language Policy**

In my experience of working with the SAPS I have, on a number of occasions, heard members speak of an 'English only policy'. Members are aware that they are only meant to speak English over the radio and carry out written communication in English. This is not always implemented.

I have already referred to some of the problems around language, identity and service delivery at Hemel. During my interview with Capt. Taljaard she expressed her disbelief that the SAPS could force anyone to work in environments where their language was not dominant (Capt. Taljaard, personal interview, 11/7/05). The challenge in South Africa is that it is rare that a single language will be exclusively spoken in an area.

Capt. Hartzenberg, the HR manager at Hemel, explained that there is in fact no language policy in the SAPS. What members refer to as an 'English only policy' is in fact a national instruction, a formal order with the same effect as a policy. Instructions may be issued by individuals and must be obeyed by all those serving under that individual. Instructions are temporary measures used while policies are formulated. Notably the current language instruction has been in place for over three years while a policy has not been developed.

The captain provided me with a document outlining a number of complaints by the Pan South African Language Board in 2000, recounting the steps taken by the SAPS in relation to language since 1994, and its plans to formulate a new language

policy. The document notes that in 1994 the SAPS amended the then Standing Order (General) (SO (G) 201) dealing with official language use in order to meet the requirements contained in the new constitution. In 1996 an interim Language Policy was adopted 'to promote multilingualism in the service' (SAPS 2000). In 1996 a task team was appointed to draw up guidelines for a new policy. A draft was submitted to the minister who decided it was inappropriate to amend the interim policy. He also suggested the draft be forwarded to PAN SALB and the Department of Justice for their comments, neither of whom offered any.

Additionally, the document referred to:

- The hiring of ten translators (nationally) to translate official documents into all languages.
- All SAPS recruits being 'proficient' in English and at least one other official language.
- A 'language planner' being hired in 2000 to be in charge of overseeing and implementing a new language policy.
- Establishing language services at provincial levels.
- Plans to encourage members to learn third languages.
- Plans to display access, crime prevention, equity and domestic violence posters in multiple languages in stations.

The draft policy attached to this document is clearly now obsolete as it talks of an official English/Afrikaans policy in contrast to the current English only instruction.

The final document pertaining to language policy offered to me by the Hemel HR manager is a national circular notifying members of a forthcoming draft language policy which would be tailored to each province, as well as the need for all stations to appoint language policy facilitators to aid in the transition. The formation and application of a practical language policy in the SAPS is both vital and extremely complex.

## **Provision of Training in the South African Police Service, 2003**

This instruction (not yet a policy either) outlines the SAPS's pledge to develop the skills of its workforce. The policy recognises the need to continue development of members' skills and outlines processes through which to achieve this. Instruction in training workshops is to be conducted in English which is likely to work against many members. This might be seen to contradict a clause in the same instruction which states that 'It must be ensured that all forms of unfair discrimination ... are eliminated ... in all training practices' (SAPS 2003).

Needless to say this simply reaffirms the magnitude of the language challenge in the SAPS.

### **Living with HIV/AIDS Policy, 2003**

The SAPS HIV/ AIDS policy aims to ensure there is no discrimination against HIV positive members in the workplace, anonymity around status where desired, protection of members around forced testing, compulsory HIV/ AIDS education, the provision of tests on request when exposure to the virus is suspected by individuals, and the provision of anti-retroviral drugs in such instances.

My own experience of an HIV/ AIDS workshop at the station, though good, was not optimal. The workshop was advertised on the main notice board in the building and was optional rather than compulsory. Xhosa speaking members were invited to a different room for the information session while the session in the room I remained in was conducted in Afrikaans. Our competency in the language was assumed. The presenter spoke quickly, rushing to get to the test process. This was where the policy was not met. Sitting around a table, each person present was given a finger prick test without pre-test counselling. Five minutes later individuals were called into an adjacent room to be given their results. Post-test counselling wasn't offered and members had to pass through the room in which other members waited, in order to leave the session. It might very well be said, then, that an individual's status was not being protected in this context as members' expression could be read by all on their exiting the room.

Notably too, while ostensibly looking out for infected members' best interest, the HIV/ AIDS policy states that such members can be 'rotated to duties and working conditions that are more appropriate to the circumstance of the employee within minimal risk to their health condition'. Additionally, 'where there are valid reasons related to their capacity to continue working and fair procedures have been followed, their services may be terminated in terms of applicable Codes of Good Practice and prevailing instructions' (SAPS 2003). It is clear that both these clauses open spaces in which infected members are at risk of possible unfair treatment on the basis of their HIV status.

### **Promotion of Employment Equity and Elimination of Unfair Discrimination Policy, 2001**

Echoing the country's Employment Equity Act, this policy attempts to provide overarching protection against discrimination of any kind in the workplace. In relation to the business case for diversity (Roosevelt Thomas 1996; O'Hara-Devareaux & Johansen 1994; Hayles & Russell 1997; Kersten 2000; Thomas 1990; Smith 1999; Adler 1997; Ferdman & Brody 1996; Lorbiecki & Jack 2000; Dupper 2004) it links the absence of discrimination to service delivery in a manner not explicitly referred to by members at Hemel: 'The SA Police Service acknowledges its responsibility to promote

equality and eliminate unfair discrimination as basic prerequisite [sic] to the effective delivery of policing services' (SAPS 2001).

In general the policy is extremely thorough and all-encompassing. Some contestation arises when it states that members shall not be discriminated against on grounds of 'family responsibility'. In light of the afore-mentioned notions of the station 'accommodating' young mothers, this might be used to perpetuate gender roles in assumptions made about on whom 'family responsibility' falls.

The policy also aims to prevent 'systematic inequality of access to opportunities to a person as a result of the sexual division of labour' as well as 'denying or removing from any person who has a disability, any supporting or enabling facility necessary for their effective functioning'. There is evidence of failings on both parts at Hemel.

### **Policy on Sexual Harassment, 1998**

This document too, is thorough and covers almost all eventualities. While it promotes the fostering of an environment in which members are not afraid to speak out against sexual harassment, it provide no guidelines for this. Grievances follow the normal chain of command, being lodged with one's immediate superior officer, or with a designated member dealing with sexual harassment cases. In that sexual harassment cases are rarely lodged in the SAPS it is likely that most members would not be aware of a designated sexual harassment officer in their station, nor that the officer would have experience in dealing with such cases. Lodging complaints with one's immediate superior is equally difficult when one works intimately with that person. While policy is sound, the grievance procedure is thus flawed.

### **Grootland Area Employment Equity Plan, 2005-2006**

The Grootland Area (encompassing Hemel) has on paper a thorough Employment Equity Plan of which the diversity training programme is a part. Central to the plan is a realisation of demographic transformation. While quotas are not set at a station level a comparison of Area goals and demographics with Hemel SAPS' demographics reveal important differences.

**Table 2:**  
**Grootland Area breakdown of current demographics and future targets (Grootland Area EE Plan, 2005/06) compared with Hemel Station Demographics (Hemel personnel strength, HR 2005)**

<b>RACE/GROUP</b>	<b>CURRENT AREA %</b>	<b>CURRENT STATION %</b>	<b>AREA TARGET % FOR 2005/06</b>	<b>FINAL AREA TARGET %</b>
African	21.07%	9.75%	45.5%	77%
Coloured	49.5%	60.17%	37.6%	9%
Indian	0.26%	1.27%	3.8%	3%
White	28.84%	29.81%	13.1%	11%

Table 2 above shows the current area demographic breakdown for the Grootland (Area) and Hemel (Station) in percentages. These are contrasted with the Area target demographics for 2005 / 06 as well as the ideal, final demographic scenario.

It becomes evident when comparing the percentage columns in these tables that Hemel, like the Area as a whole, is not on track with targets. The current coloured demographic at Hemel is 10% over, and the African 10% under the current Area average. As the biggest station in the Grootland Area, and the one closest to Area headquarters, one would hope that Hemel might lead the way in meeting these targets.

The EE plan sets out ten medium-term strategies to aid in the implementation of demographic transformation, as well as five 'quick wins'. The diversity workshops are included as one of these medium term strategies, as is the aim to 'create an organisational culture conducive for diversity'. While other strategies include the introduction of an 'effective recruitment strategy', 'accelerated training and development for designated groups', implementing a 'Mentoring Practice', 'Optimising promotional opportunities for designated groups' and implementing a 'comprehensive retention strategy', the plan fails to address exactly how the organisation might go about reaching its optimistic but radical targets (SAPS, 2005).

### **Organisational Structures Supporting Diversity**

My first point of access with the Hemel SAPS was the EAS office, the providers of the training. EAS, as stipulated in National Instruction 3/2003 is intended to be used 'as an intervention to address problems that may affect the work performance of employees'. An inference could thus be made that frictions around diversity issues are

seen as disrupting work performance at Hemel. On the other hand, as the Area HR manager stated, EAS was simply used in order to save time and money (Supt. Stirk, personal interview, 22/7/05).

Supt. De Swart at EAS said almost none of those visiting her offices complain about diversity related issues (Supt. De Swart, 11/7/05). Nevertheless it might be argued, as EAS staff would suggest, that they are indeed a structure capable of supporting such issues. Unlike an external provider these staff are theoretically available to members at any time.

The late station commissioner for his part, suggested to me that his door was always open to members. In the middle of a conversation with him however, Cnst. Dlamini who had complained to me during an interview about his bad housing situation telephoned the commissioner to query the issue. The commissioner cordially told the him there was nothing he could do, then put down the phone and told me how 'these people' want everything on a golden platter (Supt. Dippenaar, personal communication, 15/7/05). His open door policy thus seems questionable.

The overarching grievance process within the SAPS comes down to a hierarchy of rank. A subordinate with a problem should, within 180 days of the incident, take his or her grievance to their commanding officer who should deal with it or take it to their respective commanding officer. Only when grievances are against commanding officers can rank be skipped by the complainant (SAPS 2001). All members are aware of this grievance process, none is aware of anything they would consider a structure supporting diversity.

Although this official grievance procedure is in place, I have mentioned that interviews suggested most shift level grievances are dealt with within the shift, and without the knowledge of those outside the shift. Upper management is thus unlikely to learn about possible race tension within a shift as, following the theme of solidarity, members try to protect themselves and those with whom they most work closely. For the most part members seem happy with this arrangement though it clearly has its flaws, particularly for shift minorities such as Africans and women.

No member spoken to, other than those involved in its functions, was aware of an Employment Equity Committee in the station, though some were aware that one must exist due to legal requirements. Members on the committee didn't seem quite sure of what its purpose was other than locating positions that might need to be filled in order to meet quotas (Supt. Ngama, personal interview, 22/7/05 and Capt. Hartzenberg, personal interview, 20/7/05)

## **Synreport and Conclusion**

*'One thing, we're all proudly South African.'* So ended the second diversity training workshop at the Hemel training college (Insp. Bico, personal communication, 13/7/05). While the instructor who shouted out the statement as members shuffled papers and started standing to leave, didn't likely consider herself part of a grand nation building system, her words suggest some awareness of her role as a facilitator in the unification of previously divided people. More importantly her words suggest a recognition of the predominantly racial, linguistic and cultural differences among members in the room, and an appeal for them to unite under a national label. This concept, while simple on the surface, is important in light of the history of the apartheid SAP where a force ruled by white citizens policed non-white, non-citizens. The national and organisational shift in discourse in which citizens and the SAPS are one and the same, is thus important.

While unification of the populace is of foremost importance to the new nation, as Balibar (1991) notes, nationalism is founded on racist sentiments. Negativity around SAPS's treatment of foreign Africans adds credence to this perspective (Peberdy 2001; Valji 2003). In this regard it is unfortunate that nationalism, rather than humanism is presented as the overarching unifier within the SAPS's workshops. In the same way that selective treatment of the public based on nationality exposes a lack of humanism within members, the manner in which discretion is managed in dealings with people of different class, race, gender, and other groups is likely to affect the manner in which the public register their individual value in the new nation.

Additionally, while the actions of the notoriously violent and discriminatory former SAP linger in the public mind through holidays commemorating the Sharpeville and Soweto massacres, as well as in TRC publications, diversity related training should be recognised and approached with an acknowledgement for the potential it has to provide a new secondary socialisation to members. Therein lies potential to alter the paradigms in which members view and function in the world.

### **Revisiting the Context**

The SAPS was formed in a time and socio-political context very different from today. As a government organ, it has had to change along with the manner in which the country is ruled. With the move to a constitutional democracy, it is on its way to

converting from the pseudo-private security force of the pre-1994 elite, to a service that caters to and serves the new articulation of a South African population. While national employment equity targets have been set, diversity related training has only been conducted in pockets of the organisation and never in a nationally systematic manner. This report has probed one such isolated attempt to alter minds and actions of members in relation to diversity issues. It has focused on the Hemel station which falls under the Grootland Area's jurisdiction.

Like most urban centres in South Africa, Hemel is a racially and class stratified town in which income disparities are great. What is notable in Hemel is the South African Census (2001) breakdown of race/language which reveals a majority population of coloured Afrikaans speakers followed by white Afrikaans speakers. Census data for the town however excludes 20 000 African South Africans only kilometres from the town.

I have noted the manner in which counting the population by race has shifted over time in South Africa and drawn attention to the manner in which the SAPS counts and works with race independently of language. Language issues appear to be one of the Hemel SAPS's greatest challenges so this is problematic. I have also drawn attention to the manner in which governments count contributes to the articulation of the nation (Nobles 2000; Mare 2001).

Demographics at Hemel SAPS are closely linked to those of the town, but very misrepresentative of the nation. They are also far from reaching Area demographic targets. It might easily be argued, indeed most management at Hemel and in the Grootland Area would do just so, that mirroring local demographics is far more important to service delivery than would be a mirror of national demographics. This argument could, however, easily be seen as a protectionist strategy that resists transformation. It requires further consideration at a national level where equity strategies are developed.

## **Reflections on the Workshops**

The diversity training workshops offered to all members within the Grootland Area seem to have been constructed haphazardly and with little preparation. An instruction from the Area Director was given to the Area HR manager to provide members with diversity training. The manager, an ex-EAS employee, approached a SAPS member trained in a controversial diversity training programme in the mid-nineties, who in turn presented a group of social workers, psychometrists and priests with material from which they might assemble a diversity training programme. Importantly these trainers received no additional or specialised diversity training themselves. Their positioning as members of the SAPS thus means they are likely to be locked in the same paradigms around diversity issues as are the members they are trying to change, as indeed this study has shown.

Motivation for running the workshops appears linked to retaining African employees in the area. Grootland SAPS hopes this will be achieved through creating

an accommodating environment for all members. While there are thus hints of a moral and business/ service based motive behind the workshop, ultimately it seems driven by legal obligations to meet demographic quotas (Roosevelt Thomas 1996; O'Hara-Devereaux & Johansen 1994; Hayles & Russell 1997; Kersten 2000; Thomas 1990; Smith 1999; Adler 1997; Ferdman & Brody 1996; Lorbiecki & Jack 2000; Dupper 2004).

The workshops run for three to four hours but are called 'one day' workshops, perhaps in order to look more acceptable on paper. The two workshops observed for this report tended to engage only with surface issues while facilitators neither pushed participants to engage more deeply with the issues, nor to engage at all if they were silent. The workshops also failed to examine any notion of institutional, intergroup or interpersonal power disparities in the organisation or in South African society (Harro 2000; Hardiman & Jackson 2000; Kersten 2000; Pharr 2000). Its brevity made it easy for members without any real buy-in to simply pass the hours without grappling with issues. While most of the exercises carried out were well designed and decently implemented, single-pronged training strategies are not going to bring about organisational change (Koopman 1997; Ferdman & Brody 1996; Driver 2003; Hayles & Russell 1997; Arrendo 1996)

While feedback forms were distributed after the workshops to gauge participants' feelings about it, feedback validity is questionable and doesn't appear to be used for course improvement. During interviews, members seemed more willing to share their feelings about the workshops. While most members had something positive to say about their experience of the training, few believed it would result in any permanent change in members or the station. Most believed that if the organisation is to change, individuals need to change themselves, and management needs to change. While their impressions are valid, members' understanding of individual and organisational change being grounded in a belief in personal agency counters the ideas of Berger and Luckman (1966), Foucault (1977), Deetz (1992), Harro (2000) and Kersten (2000) who stress the socialising power of the employer.

## **Organisational Findings**

While secrecy and solidarity, both among police as a general group, but more among shifts and co-workers is well documented within police organisations (Skolnick 1976; Reiner 1985; Brodgen, Jefferson & Walklate 1988; Brown & Campbell 1994; Manning 1997; Crank 1998), the structure of the Hemel station adds a physical component to conceptual divides. A large, central building divided by five floors and dozens of offices, as well as three adjacent buildings, contributes to a physical separation of shifts and units from one another.

Another important conceptual division is found in the intersections of language and race. The words of members at Hemel SAPS as well as Grootberg Area Headquarters, suggest a particular articulation of these markers in relation to space. The dominant coloured and white groups at Hemel, as well as a lone African voice,

speak of the area as one saturated in Afrikaans and void of Africans. Ironically, despite 30% of the province's population being African and Xhosa speaking, the SAPS has turned to the Eastern Cape as a recruitment pool for this demographic. The result is a perception of an African, Eastern Cape threat to jobs in the minds of some members, combined with a feeling of displacement by some recruits. It has also led to a shared understanding of which bodies are desirable, and which are less so, in the station.

Language is intimately linked to workings with race and to management of the organisational space as members who aren't proficient in Afrikaans struggle to adapt. At the same time management struggles to meet nationally delegated quotas without dropping service delivery by peopling the station with members who struggle to communicate with the community. The challenge of quotas results in added stress and pressure on African appointees, as well as those white and coloured members who feel threatened by them. The subsequent manner in which certain bodies and cultures are viewed being in / compatible to specific parts of the country threatens a resolution in this challenge (Keith & Pile 1993).

Some members made light of what is seen as race-based competition for work while others showed serious resentment and disillusionment with it. Some coloured and white members expressed their concerns in relation to affirmative action and their careers. Ultimately, the threat of displacement due to affirmative action policies appears concerning for many members. While it is likely that members' fear of affirmative action based displacement might be greater than the potential for such displacement (Hochschild 1997) this fear still permeates the station and can thus be seen as a learnt aspect of the culture there (O'Hara-Devereaux 1994).

Everyday race scripting at Hemel is simultaneously locked into employing apartheid race labels while attempting to deny their relevance. Members present themselves as attempting to cast aside beliefs in racial difference while making reference to essentialist differences between racialised groups. This discourse reflects a conflation of the pre- and post-apartheid nation building projects. Facilitators at the training courses hinted at but failed to interrogate the possibility of altering members' understandings of South African races as permanently divisible by four. Additionally, members, and particularly the cleaning staff, appeared to have trouble contextualising a white body cleaning, suggesting an inertia of apartheid race logic and the complexity of rearticulating race meaning (Mare 2001; Erasmus 2004; Hesse 2004). The importance of shifting racial meaning in South Africa lies in rearticulating understandings of the nation and shifting the power structures which are in place (Wallerstein 1991; Ballbar 1991).

The diversity training facilitators claimed that gender issues were second only to race in their workshops yet the topic wasn't dealt with much in the two I attended. Within the station there is evidence that gay men are less tolerated than gay women. Additionally a gay woman walked out of one of the diversity workshops after a facilitator made an offensive joke. It would appear that while members are tentatively tolerant of homosexuality they are not sufficiently sensitised to a level at which gay members can be open and happy about their sexuality. Of course, gay friendly work

environments are not the norm in South Africa (see Hattingh 2005) and considering the masculine dominance in police organisations, it might be seen as progressive that members are tolerant at all.

While 30% of the station's personnel are women, a breakdown of their placement in the station reveals that women are being excluded from front line policing positions and concentrated in administration. There is also evidence suggesting that those women who are in frontline positions are removed, possibly permanently from those positions when they fall pregnant. While there didn't seem to be any disharmony around women's positions in the station, these examples reveal gender biases in the organisation, as well as an internalisation of gender roles by both men and women.

Similarly, the captain in charge of disciplinary action for the Grootland Area was dismissive of recent sexual harassment allegations. This might be reflective of attitudes pervading the organisational culture of the area.

## **Policy and Supporting Structures**

The SAPS as a national organisation is well organised in terms of policy with the notable exception of a language policy which it still lacks. Additionally, an instruction referring to training and development fails to grapple with the language in which exercises are conducted. The HIV / AIDS policy, while ostensibly protecting members' rights, makes provision for their dismissal in relation to illness.

Few members were able to name any structures that support diversity at the station, though it is apparent that there are some. Policies protect individuals and grievance procedures are known to all. The late station commissioner claimed an open door policy and EAS counselling services are available should members feel the need for counselling or (Christian) ministry. Whether these channels are used is another matter as it seems most disputes are resolved at an unofficial shift or unit level and EAS seldom deals with what it would see as diversity related counselling.

Policy relating to sexual harassment is thorough while grievance procedures require complainants to make their grievance known to their immediate commanding officer (unless he / she is the accused). This puts complainants in a vulnerable position and is likely to dissuade many from taking formal action.

While the Promotion of Employment Equity and Elimination of Unfair Discrimination policy aims to do just that, Hemel clearly remains stratified along gender lines, while the only disabled member has clearly not been afforded equal opportunities, and has had to spend his own money acquiring the tools necessary to perform his duties.

Grootland Area has a thorough EE plan on paper, as well as brief suggestions as to how the plan might be realised, yet practical processes are not mentioned. This is particularly relevant when it comes to meeting demographic targets set out in the plan.

## Concluding Comments

It might be argued that nation cannot exist without security forces that buy in to the political power's national ideals. Police members endowed with discretionary powers that can make or break a citizen's life should have a sense of belonging to the imagined community propagated by a democratically elected government. While print and television media, Proudly South African campaigns, school syllabi and the like contribute to shifting minds, sensitive, intelligent diversity training potentially adds a context specific, intra— and interpersonal aspect to nation building.

The Grootland SAPS should be commended for their efforts to tackle diversity-related challenges in their jurisdiction, particularly on such a large scale. Without any additional funding they managed to put in motion a diversity training programme targeting over four thousand members.

In Hemel, as in the rest of Grootland, the SAPS is faced with challenges such as the recruitment and retention of African, Xhosa-speaking members to operate in its predominantly Afrikaans-speaking environment, and the related sense of threat felt by some coloured and white members. I would propose that within the discourse of political correctness permeating the country, it is likely that what was once an argument over incompatible races is simply shifting to one of language at Hemel. Attention should be given to tensions between unofficial station and Area level discourses that advocate community rather than the national demographic representation at station level, in contrast to the official SAPS discourse. Attention should also be given to the experiences of members who worked at Hemel before 1994 and who remain there today. Their journey over the past twelve years will have been more complex than most, and requires additional attention.

The Hemel SAPS has missed an opportunity to take up the challenge of rearticulating race meaning and scripting in its workplace. The workshop's failure to interrogate assumptions about race, its parallels with class, and the manner in which we unconsciously appeal to it to order our worlds, is perhaps one of its greatest failings.

Despite its good intentions the Grootland diversity workshops have not been approached in a manner that is likely to be effective. While the workshops themselves have flaws, they alone have had to carry the diversity related challenges, rather than a multi-level approach. Both the voices of members, and the related literature speak to the insufficiency of this approach to bring about real change in members and the organisation.

Diversity issues make up much of the foundation on which this country is built. A well-designed training programme, supported by management, policy and other organisational structures, has the potential to re-articulate the way citizens see one another and themselves. Diversity issues are not to be taken lightly, nor brushed over in a light morning's discussion.

As a government body with great official influence over citizenry because of its application of the law, as well as members' ability to influence citizens' sense of worth

through interaction with them, the SAPS is most definitely an organisation in which more rigorous diversity-related interventions would go a long way to healing and building the new nation.

This work has highlighted the complexity of formulating and implementing an effective diversity intervention in a large South African government organisation. It draws strong parallels between foreign literature on diversity management and police culture, and the South African intersection of these two fields. It thus adds to a nuanced understanding of the two subjects, their overlap and intersectionality in a South African context.

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