

CENTER FOR GENDER IN ORGANIZATIONS

WORKING PAPER, NO. 9

**GENDER, RACE, AND CLASS DYNAMICS IN
POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA**

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June 2000

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The Center for Gender in Organizations (CGO) is dedicated to advancing learning and understanding of the connection between gender, in all its complexities, and organizational effectiveness. Through research, education, convening, and information dissemination, CGO aims to be a major catalyst for change in enhancing equity and effectiveness in organizations in both the profit and non-profit sectors worldwide. CGO is a part of the Simmons School of Management and is supported by core funding from Simmons College and The Ford Foundation. To learn more about CGO and our activities, visit our website at www.simmons.edu/som/cgo.

Working Paper Series Editor: Bridgette Sheridan

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Organizations in South Africa share the common project of institutional transformation. The change agenda of organizations qualifies how “difference” (race, gender, and class) will be managed. Institutional structures, cultures and norms that reflect the discarded heritage of apartheid, are still embedded in South African organizations. Challenging the implicit ideology that reflects this history is key to creating equity in organizations. The complicated consequences of these changes surface particularly in managing difference. This paper investigates the institutional landscape from the perspectives of several South Africans. Their viewpoints describe the shape of the terrain of “difference” in South African institutions and reveal emergent strategies to grapple with the complications of national change and transformation.

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We are pleased to have this compilation of theory and of case studies from South Africa as part of our Working Paper Series at the Center for Gender in Organizations. In June 1999, the authors gave a panel presentation on gender, race, and class dynamics in post-apartheid South Africa at CGO's conference "Gender at Work: Beyond White, Western, Middle-Class, Heterosexual, Professional Women." Following the conference, we asked the moderator and convener of the panel, Ruby Marks, to introduce and edit these presentations in order to make them part of the Working Paper Series. The paper begins with an introduction and ends with a conclusion written by Ruby Marks. The paper includes studies of work done in various organizational sectors by Shireen Hassim, Bongani Khumalo, Nozipho January-Bardill, and Ilze Olckers. We hope that this working paper will generate more discussion on the case of diversity, difference, and organizational transformation in post-apartheid South Africa, and we thank the authors for making their work part of our Working Paper Series at CGO. Thanks also to Cassandra Goldwater for her fine editorial assistance and to Bonnie Gamache for her detailed formatting assistance.

A Note on Spelling:

We have used the U.S. form of spelling throughout the paper, unless the word was part of the official name of an organization or group.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The transformation process in South Africa has had far-reaching consequences for institutions in South Africa. The new policy agenda, with its focus on the eradication of all forms of discrimination, has forced institutions to re-think their current practices and arrangements.

In 1994, South Africa emerged from a long history of apartheid, the chief purpose of which was the legislated social exclusion of the indigenous black community. These laws not only maintained an economic, social, and political hierarchy based on color, but also regulated that hierarchy through a system of sanctions and disincentives—in the public sphere, through organizational policy and procedure; in the private sphere, through group segregation and permit systems.

Three hundred years of white colonization and decades of enforced racial segregation have shaped subjectivities and experiences for all individuals and groups in South Africa. These subjectivities have formed social cleavages in categories such as race, gender, and class in ways that have had profound consequences for the personal and working lives of individuals in organizations. Organizations also internalized the experience of apartheid when making and shaping organizational structure and strategies.

The history of institutions in South Africa cannot be divorced from the history of apartheid. Indeed, naming and defining organizational life is a reflection of the outside cultural norms mirrored inside the institution. During apartheid, occupational hierarchies confirmed legislated expectations of the time: for the most part, blacks occupied “working-class” positions, such as cleaners, administrative assistants, factory workers, etc., while whites occupied “middle-” and “upper-” class positions such as supervisors, managers, and directors. This racial hierarchy was reinforced by wage differentials (with blacks on the lower scales), job reservations (particular jobs reserved for particular groups), and spatial job segregation (separate workspaces) in the workplace. In short, organizational structure and strategy replicated the “real world” of apartheid.

The pervasive influence of apartheid ideology on organizational culture of work has been one of the major stumbling blocks in the transformation process in South Africa. The internalization of this ideology by all South African citizens is powerful. Reshaping the ideology to fit new cultural conditions has been difficult to shift.

A. THE NEW POLICY AGENDA

South Africa’s constitution, one of the most progressive in the world, prohibits discrimination through an equity rights framework. The National Assembly of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Bill illustrates the scope of this framework. This legislation defines “unfair discrimination” as “an act of omission, including any condition, requirement, policy, situation, rule or practice, that has, or is likely to have, the direct or indirect effect of unjustly or unfairly causing disadvantage to a person or persons on one or more of the prohibited grounds.” The “prohibited grounds” include “race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic

or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth or any other recognized ground.” The bill also makes discrimination based on class distinctions a punishable offense. The legislation holds the “market economy” which “discriminates all the time against those who cannot afford access to quality housing, health care services, credit and insurance” accountable.

Interestingly, the bill speaks less to control of resources and more to increasing access for all citizens to such resources. Combining access to and control of resources for all people and considering historically disadvantaged groups—black women and men—would enable a more equitable redistribution which would truly address class issues. Yet the bill does not call for an end to the hierarchical class distinctions (traditionally based on race and gender in South Africa). So the intention appears to be to effect changes in the color and the gender of the hierarchy, while keeping the class structure in place. This bill, coupled with the passing of affirmative action policy and a mandatory quota system to fast-track black people, particularly women, has forced all institutions to change their current practices to be in line with the new equity rights agenda.

B. BREAKING THE GLASS WALL BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE

The history of South African institutions, together with a culture that clings to the old and the familiar, makes change a difficult and painful process for many people within organizations. This history and conditioned culture, shaped as it was by an apartheid ideology, also influences and shapes the continuation of conditioned stereotypes around race, class, and gender. People are often reluctant to deal with the extent to which their own conditioned responses interfere with the process of change.

The transformation processes in organizations have also been fraught with the tensions of translating policy into practice. Change management has focused on: a) appointing a “transformation leader,” who was expected to lead the change process internally, b) the “policy stick,” where organizations adopted policies but then failed to develop commensurate procedures to guide implementation; and c) the “below stairs meet above stairs,” where the organization conducts strategic planning to address equity issues in the organization. Each of these approaches comes with dilemmas and contradictions that are discussed below.

1. The transformation leader

The recent resignation of the managing director of the Land Bank (*Mail & Guardian*, 7/23/1999) is an example of the complicated consequences that can result from appointing a transformation leader. Briefly, the Land Bank was created during apartheid to assist the white commercial farming sector. The national democratization process (post-1994) necessitated a shift of its target group from whites to include all ethnic groups, and with that to address issues of race, gender, and culture in the Bank. A new managing director was appointed as a “transformation leader” to oversee and lead the transformation process with the guidance of a consultant group. The transformation process included three issues: black empowerment, gender justice, and workplace democratization. Six years in, few people would dispute that the transformation process achieved a great deal of its objectives: stakeholders were widely consulted, the bank re-designed their financial products to provide access and credit for poor rural women, and staff

went through “process mapping” exercises to review how they could work differently. However, the issues of race and gender, already harder to deal with than workplace democratization, became more difficult because, publicly, the “identity” of the managing director had become synonymous with the transformation process. Shared ownership of the change process, with commitment from the workforce to protect the collective gains of the process, could have gone a long way toward averting the crises. Instead, when the ruptures happened, the managing director was isolated because of her “identity.”

After six years, the white female managing director was forced to resign under allegations of racism, nepotism, and corruption. This was a charge that many people found surprising, because she had, in South African parlance, impeccable struggle credentials. Not only did she spend her life committed to eradicating apartheid, but she was also the widow of the late communist leader, Joe Slovo. In South Africa, that says a lot about one’s commitment to non-discriminatory values! What makes the case even more interesting is the fact that the person behind the attack was a black male who served as Director General of Agriculture in the former government of the Ciskei, one of the most despised homeland regimes. It later appeared he attacked her because the Bank blocked his bid to tap Land Bank funds for his private company. However, the fall-out, broadcast on television and written about in newspapers, was severe enough to force the managing director to resign. The media portrayed the issue as a “black-white” issue. During the prevailing climate of “regstellende aksie” (corrective action) that favors appointing blacks to senior positions of power, maintaining a white female as the leader of a transformation process will be accepted with great difficulty. In this instance, the transformation process, driven by the managing director (seen to represent a privileged group), became her demise, irrespective of her personal commitment to equity and evidence of a fairly well managed and inclusive change process.

2. *The policy stick*

The “policy stick” approach has not been very successful either. The transformation process in the tertiary education sector is a case in point. Soon after 1994, “historically black and white universities” adopted policies to bring their universities in line with the national equity goals. This meant that universities that had been reserved for white people (or black people) had to ensure that access and equity were key cornerstones of their change process. The ruptures between policy and practice, however, have already begun. Since 1997, three of the largest “open” universities that had been designated white universities, have declared their intention to segregate residences according to race: Free State University, Randse Afrikaanse University, and University of Stellenbosch (*Mail & Guardian*, 2/28/2000). At Free State University, the university senate claimed that this apartheid-style segregation was carried out at the request of both black and white students following several incidents of violence. The following statement sums up the dean of students and transformation’s defense. Dean Theuns Verschoor was quoted in the *Mail & Guardian* on February 28, 2000: “We realize that if you allow people to live with their own kind, they create security for themselves which will make them want to reach out to each other. We haven’t had problems in the female residences—only the male residences—because females can communicate. Males have three problems—tradition, territoriality and testosterone.” And that, in a nutshell, sums up the approach—keep them separate, and that’s how to manage transformation! Sound familiar? Interestingly, female residences are still mixed

race, although there have been allegations that the house committees in female residences have barred black women from standing for office.

Male students also claim that they are not able to live together, because they claim to always argue about different tastes in music, sports, TV channels, and language preferences in meetings, particularly the use of Afrikaans. A corridor that serves as no man's land has divided Karee house into a segregated residence on campus at Free State University. Black students now use the back entrance while white students use the old front entrance. They have different house committees and different facilities. Both groups of students claim that they are comfortable with the arrangement.

These universities are an especially good example of the difficulty of moving the process from policy to practice. Indeed, it appears that the policy was adopted to conform to the external equity imperatives of national commitments. Yet upon implementation, the institution, steeped in an apartheid ideology that shaped its structure and policies, ignored embedded practices. In this case, the practical realities of implementing the changes, and their potential effects on conditioned stereotypes of students, staff, and administrators housed in the history of the institutions were ignored. Simply changing university policy proved to be a panacea rather than a sufficient condition for effective change management, particularly in the case of male residences at the university.

3. *The “below stairs meet above stairs” approach*

The “below stairs meet above stairs” approach adopted by the Department of Transport (*Mail & Guardian*, 10/8/1999) appears to have yielded better results: They have appointed transformational leaders (in this case, the Directors General) and established institutional mechanisms to implement change by forming department-wide transformation units. Although Directors General are responsible for transformation in their departments, the transformation units are directly responsible for monitoring, co-coordinating, and evaluating transformation.

Transformation was divided into two phases. The first—from 1995 to December 1998—focused on rationalization. The second—began in late 1998—has been aimed at achieving greater representation. During phase one, the bloated department went through a process of right-sizing. The department's number of employees declined from 1,400 in 1994 to 250 in October 1998. Most transferred to new agencies, while others (white males regarded as the “old guard”) opted for severance or retirement packages. During phase two, the transformation units made representation a priority for transformation, an issue that was not tackled during the first phase. Cooperation with and commitment from white managers has been good. This seems to stem from their sense of job security as the department relies on their specialized skills that are currently not available in the black community. Although this hampers representation at a senior level, the department has made a commitment to strengthening the skills base of its historically disadvantaged black staff.

The relative success of this transformation and change process seems due to integrating the transformational leader approach with strategic planning. Integrating policy and practice by

creating institutional mechanisms to monitor and manage the effects of these changes using a two-phase process yielded better results.

C. THE KEY ISSUES

1. *Dealing with the complexities of race, class, and gender within a transformation process*

A key tension in the transformation process within South African institutions is how to deal with the intersection of race, class, and gender in organizational change processes instead of treating these as separate categories that are dealt with at different points in the process. Addressing race issues seems to be the most comfortable focus of change for organizations to act on while gender keeps slipping back on the agenda of the change process. Class remains a hidden issue—hierarchy is accepted as a given for organizational structure and design. Efforts to separate and manage race, gender, and class are inadequate because the relationships between these categories are so embedded with each other and within the history of South Africa's institutions/norms/culture that change will fall short of transformation without careful consideration of these relationships.

2. *Distinguishing between change and transformation*

While large-scale transformation efforts have become a common project within South African institutions, few organizations have undergone real transformation. Many organizations have not fundamentally transformed even though the institution has undergone major change. It is critical to distinguish between “frame-freezing” that accommodates change and “frame-breaking change” that would involve a more fundamental departure from past practices, values and beliefs, structures, and cultures that can lead to fundamental transformation.

3. *The “evaporation” of policy*

While organizations have eagerly adopted new policies, they have been more reluctant to develop procedures and guidelines to implement the changes mandated by those policies. A huge gap exists between formal commitments to equity policies and the will and expertise to implement change strategies to address the complications that arise from fulfilling these commitments. While many organizations can boast that they have an equity policy, their tendency is to “evaporate” the policy by claiming lack of resources and time to implement it. The lack of operational guidelines results in a curious anachronism: progressive policy existing side by side with regressive practices from the past.

4. *New alliances between black men and white men as protectors of privilege*

As race gains primacy over issues of gender, black and white men have increasingly rallied around their masculinity to protect their own privilege within the organizational system. Addressing gender issues has also met with a great deal of resistance from men, who tend to be more comfortable addressing issues of race. When gender issues are raised, men often act like “gender draft dodgers” who have been conscripted to fight in a battle they feel will only result in

their own defeat. These alliances between men act as a real barrier to addressing the intersections of race, gender, and class and have reshaped forms of white and black patriarchy in the workplace.

5. *A shift from the political to the technical*

In the fight for equity, the formal adoption of policy has resulted in nominal, rather than substantive, equality. Increasingly, it appears that institutions use policy as a catalyst, divorced from political processes, to mainstream equity. This instrumentalist view removes issues of power and domination from the equity discourse. With policy as the new focus, practice becomes divorced from the issues of power and privilege that initially brought equity issues to the forefront. To create substantive rather than token equality, it is important to make the link between politics and policy. We need to bring the politics back into the discourse around equity in organizations.

D. THE U.S. AND SOUTH AFRICA: CONTRADICTIONS AND DILEMMAS

Managing change within the context of an uncertain external environment and a diverse internal workforce presents challenges to all organizations concerned with addressing issues of effectiveness and equity in the workplace. Both the South African and the U.S. contexts provide rich ground to explore some of these challenges. While the dilemmas of change and diversity present a common theme between these countries, closer investigation reveals specific contextual variables shaped by their different historical trajectories. Although commonalities relating to the issues facing institutions exist, there are also sharp differences in the meaning, definitions, and performance of organizational change for two such diverse contexts.

The June 1999 Center for Gender in Organizations (CGO) conference, *Gender at Work: Beyond White, Western, Middle-Class, Heterosexual, Professional Women*, addressed these commonalities and differences. The conference brought together a panel from South Africa, where panel members reflected on their experiences working with diversity and organizational changes that South Africa grapples with today. The panel reflected on these experiences from their own subject positions, as members of South African culture who carry “difference” through their gender, class, and ethnic group locations. Case studies provided the basis to analyze these categories of difference at the intersection of the practice and theories of organizational change, transformation, and diversity. Together, these subject locations revealed rich vignettes of dealing with the complexity of organizational change within a national transformation project. The case studies remind us that how the change is managed is as important as who is involved, and that the potential for “letting the outside in” to change efforts can provide a powerful impetus for change. The case studies also remind us that understanding the interpretive lens that managers and individuals use to “make sense” of change often reveals why the change process is frequently so difficult for individuals and organizations. Finally, the case studies remind us that our project to build organizations that are context specific and context relevant in the U.S. and South Africa provides the necessary “scaffolding” of organizational processes and structures that will reflect an understanding and recognition of the lived, diverse experiences of its workforce.

II. THE CASE STUDIES

A. INSTITUTIONALIZING GENDER IN SOUTH AFRICA: INCLUSION AND TRANSFORMATION

By Shireen Hassim, Department of Political Studies at the
University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

1. Summary

Hassim set the national context by analyzing the gender justice process within the national transition process. She reminded us of the dilemmas and dynamic that develops when we try to bridge the divide between policy and practice, and highlighted the ways in which an active women's movement can transform the national rhetoric of transformation into tangible action. She assessed the impact of policy instruments on government performance and argued that establishing national machinery offered the necessary conditions for articulating women's interests and rights, but policy instruments will not in and of themselves transform the structures that impede these interests and rights. Finally, she reminded us that an effective women's lobby in civil society is key for protecting the gains won through policy adoption.

2. Introduction

The transition to democracy in South Africa has profoundly impacted the broad nature of political institutions and political debates, as well as women's politics. The most significant shift in women's politics has been a switch from opposing the state to engaging with the state as the central locus for redress of gender inequalities. Institutionalization has been pursued as a mechanism for reducing conflict among key political actors in South Africa. Women's organizations, although vociferous during the transitional negotiations, have not had the disruptive power of organizations such as trade unions. Nevertheless, the process of designing new democratic structures provided the opportunity to address demands to create mechanisms to promote gender equity. It can be argued that the arrangements created to take account of gender in the constitution and the state "institutionalized" women's politics by drawing them into the formal structures and the routine and repetitious processes for interacting with other "stakeholders."

The intention behind institutionalization is to ensure that gender concerns are integrated or "mainstreamed" into the everyday work of government – procedures, policy formulation, and service delivery. Thus women's concerns are channeled inside government through the Office on the Status of Women (OSW), and in civil society through the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE). Within the state, representatives of constituencies of women are formally organized in the Parliamentary Women's Group and through the Joint Standing Committee for Improving the Quality of Life and Status of Women. In effect, what was instituted was a "gender pact." As has been noted by numerous commentators, the achievement of this comprehensive set of institutions was a major victory for the women's movement (Kemp et al., 1996; Meintjes, 1996; Hassim and Gouws, 1997; Cock, 1998).

One central consequence has been to “open” the state to consider gender issues both in its internal operations as well as in policy formulation. The role of the OSW, in particular, is to “conceptualize a national gender policy and provide guidance on its implementation” by working with line ministries, provinces and public bodies in mainstreaming gender into all policies and programs (CGE Report, 1997:53-54). Part of the OSW’s brief is to act as the mechanism for liaison between the non-governmental organizations that deal with women’s issues and the Office of the Deputy President, as well as liaising with Parliament. The location of the OSW in the office of the Deputy President is widely regarded as an acknowledgment of the importance of the structure, and as giving it “the necessary clout” (CGE Report, 1997:53).

Katzenstein (1997:197) conceives of institutionalization in spatial terms as the establishment of “organizational habitats.” “Such habitats are spaces where women advocates of equality can assemble, where discussion can occur, and where the organizing for institutional change can occur.” The policy-making process itself has generated a new dynamic of civil society regeneration and a changed political opportunity structure. Institutionalization can create openings to new mechanisms for articulating interests, particularly for marginal political groupings. The relatively open nature of policy formulation in democratic South Africa, in which the public has the opportunity to comment and challenge draft policy before it is put to Parliament, as well as the formalized processes of consultation, have provided a focus for organizational energy and demands. Unlike in closed political systems, social movements in South Africa do have the space to protest against unpopular policies.

Below, I consider the experiences and dilemmas of women in two habitats: parliament and the civil service.

3. *New institutional forms*

There are two new “institutional habitats” within the state that are currently occupied by gender activists: the representative sphere and the civil service. Both these habitats may be deemed to be “uncomfortable” from the perspective of feminist theory. Feminists have held very ambivalent views about the state: on the one hand, the state is variously regarded as masculinist, repressive and/or excluding (Mama, 1996); on the other hand, much of feminist advocacy in the policy arena has involved demanding an expansion of the roles of the state in the provision of services and in the establishment of a juridical framework which would mitigate the gendered impacts of capitalism. Drawing on studies of the attempts to integrate women into development, Goetz (1992: 6) points out that

the pursuit of gender policy ambitions through public institutions has improved women’s condition at the margins of survival at best, and has consistently failed to advance women’s participation in decision-making, whether it be in the family, the community, bureaucratic institutions, or the state.

This is a key dilemma for feminist activists in South Africa. By their very existence, national machineries foster the notion of “women’s interests” as a distinct (if not coherent) entity, at least partially separable from other interests in society and actionable in discrete policy terms. While on the one hand, national machineries legitimate the consideration of gender issues in state

policy, on the other hand they carry the inherent danger that, in the absence of a strong organizational buffer between different groups of women and state institutions, social policy can increase women's dependent relationship on the state (Hernes in Sassoon, 1987:78).

The challenge for South African actors who wish to use the national machinery as a mechanism for addressing gender inequalities is, therefore, to seize the political opportunities offered by the opening of the state, while at the same time confronting the structural limitations of state-centric transformation strategies and contesting state-constructed definitions of women's interests.

4. *Representative politics*

One of the most notable features of the government elected in the first South African democratic elections was the significant number of women elected – nearly 25 percent of all Ministers of Parliament (MPs). This was due largely to the use of a quota for women candidates on the ANC list and to the knock-on effects this had on the compilation of other party lists (see pages 12 & 13). In terms of formal representation of women, South Africa resembles more established democracies. Women have undoubtedly succeeded in creating a presence in the legislature. In the Cabinet, 4 out of 27 Ministers and 8 out of 14 Deputy Ministers are women. This suggests that women are significantly represented at the highest levels compared to the proportion of women MPs. Although the “social” portfolios (Health, Welfare, Housing) are assigned to women, these are key areas of social delivery which formed the cornerstone of the ANC's electoral manifesto. As well, the deputy ministers of “hard” portfolios of Finance and Trade and Industry are also women. In terms of membership of portfolio committees in Parliament, women's representation ranges from 0% (Public Accounts) to 73% (Health).¹ Committees in which women dominate include Welfare (60%) and Communications (66%). Women are notably under-represented in Land Affairs (18%), Mineral and Energy (12%), Transport (12%), Foreign Affairs (12%), and Labour (19%).²

Current women MPs frequently describe Parliament as an unfriendly institution in which male culture is dominant and exclusionary. While representation might be secured through political struggles inside political parties, once in parliament the institutional culture often proves hard to shift. In the first democratic Parliament, a number of routes were used to tackle this. Within the ANC, a Parliamentary Women's Caucus was formed to deal specifically with the advancement of gender-sensitive policies and legislation within the majority party. This group has been highly successful in identifying legislative priorities for women and in building support for legislation such as the Domestic Violence Bill, which might otherwise have languished in lengthy bureaucratic procedures. Another route was to constitute an informal multiparty Parliamentary Women's Group (PWG). The PWG aimed at providing a strong women's caucus in Parliament from which to promote anti-discrimination legislation and to act as the link between women in Parliament and civil society. Finally, a Joint Committee on Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women (JCIQLSW) was established as one of fifty parliamentary committees. Internal party structures, such as the Women's Caucus, are vital to ensure that gender-sensitive interventions in legislation are made early enough to be incorporated before they are tabled

¹ T. Mtintso (1999) The contribution of women parliamentarians to gender equality, Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, p. 64.

² T. Mtintso (1999) p. 64.

before the House and voting takes place. They also can play a vital role in refining the understandings of gender within the party. Unfortunately, only the ANC has such a structure. The PWG has had mixed fortunes as a multiparty caucus. Inevitably, its initial work revolved around making Parliament a women-friendly institution, and the linkages with civil society were harder to pursue. Transforming Parliament has also been the task of the Women's Empowerment Unit in the Speakers' Forum. This is a vital long-term task to ensure that women are both effective and accountable parliamentarians. The fundamental problem with a structure such as the PWG is that the common ground between women MPs is narrow. Women are not a homogeneous constituency. Even where women MPs are committed to broad principles of gender equality, their definitions of what this means, their strategies for achieving equality, and the constituencies of women they represent, may be vastly different. It is significant that the driving force behind legislative reform to eliminate gender discrimination has been the ANC Women's Caucus, rather than the multiparty forum, reflecting the different weight given to gender equality by different political parties. Differences in party ideologies cannot simply be overcome by broad commitments to gender equality. Indeed, robust debate between women MPs from different parties should be welcomed. Contestation over which areas of inequality should be addressed in policy, the specific content of policies, and how the national budget should be allocated will get us further towards actually implementing political principles than an approach which rests on maintaining the lowest common denominators around which women unite.

The most successful parliamentary structure for women has been the JCIQLSW. This committee has consulted with women's organizations in civil society, advocated for legislation to eradicate gender inequalities, and acted as a point of concentrated energy with regard to gender activism within Parliament. One of its most notable achievements has been its sponsorship of the Women's Budget Initiative, jointly with civil society. This project has addressed the key determinant of government implementation of its commitment to gender equality—the budgetary allocations to gender. It has desegregated the budget votes of all the ministries, analyzed spending on women (both direct and indirect), and opened access to the Department of Finance. This lays the groundwork for the next Parliament to consider precisely how women's needs can be addressed through resource allocation in key areas. Collectively, women in the first Parliament made significant progress in addressing gender discriminatory legislation.

The key to assessing whether representation has translated into real benefits for women, or simply into creating a new elite of women in government, is to examine the extent to which principles of gender equality and mechanisms for reducing inequalities are integrated into government policies and delivery. From this perspective, the picture looks less rosy. The ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme attempted to "mainstream" gender and developed a draft Women's National Empowerment Policy in consultation with women's organizations. The policy shift away from the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) has removed the enabling discursive environment in which claims for gender equality could be pressed. The Office on the Status of Women, whose responsibility is to develop the draft Women's National Empowerment Policy into a fully fledged plan for mainstreaming gender, has yet to present any policy for public comment. In the absence of direction from this body, civil servants staffing gender desks in government departments have tended to focus on internal issues of gender representation in the bureaucracy. Nevertheless, significant gains which are worth noting are the child and

maternal health policies of the Department of Health under gender activist Minister Nkosazana Zuma and the reform of maintenance procedures in the Department of Justice, championed by its Deputy Minister Manto Tshabalala.

Women's gains in and through parliamentary representation are an important facet of the long-term battle to recognize women as agents in political processes and to provide voices for women in the various arenas of public decision-making. It is important, however, to maintain a critical tension between MPs and government bureaucrats—male and female—who claim to be speaking on behalf of women and the constituencies in whose name these claims are made. Without strong mechanisms for upholding accountability, the danger always exists that representation carries little power to advance the agenda of gender equality.

Women MPs in National Legislature by Party Affiliation, 1999		
Political party	No. of women MPs	Women MPs as % of total MPs of party
African National Congress	97	36.5
United Democratic Movement	2	14.3
United Christian Democratic Party	0	0
Minority Front	0	0
AZAPO	0	0
National Party	3	10.7
AEB	0	0
Inkatha Freedom Party	7	20.6
Freedom Front	0	0
Democratic Party	7	15.8
Pan Africanist Congress	1	33.3
African Christian Democratic Party	2	33.3

Women MPs in National Legislature by Party Affiliation, 1994		
Political party	No. of women MPs	Women MPs as % of total MPs of party
African National Congress	90	35.7
National Party	9	11
Inkatha Freedom Party	10	23.3
Freedom Front	0	0
Democratic Party	1	14
Pan Africanist Congress	1	20
African Christian Democratic Party	0	0

Despite these positive features, the experience of women in South Africa's first democratic Parliament has been mixed.

5. Institutionalizing gender in government

The institutionalization of gender in government has to be regarded in the context of the overall task that the first Constitution imposes on democratic government of addressing issues of equity and redress in the public service. This task has been interpreted as requiring that “public sector organizations must not only reflect a broad demographic representativeness, but must be capable of serving the interests of all sectors of the population” (Muthien, 1998).³ The ANC government has prioritized two forms of state-led transformation. The first is to ensure the representivity of state organs in terms of race and gender. The second is to reduce inequalities through public policies.

From a gender perspective, transformation involves redressing skewed patterns of employment in the public service sector, as well as the broader tasks of examining the extent to which these institutions promote or reproduce relations of power and privilege. The former demands an internal focus on gender equity within the civil service; the latter requires that policies and service delivery be examined for their impact on gender relations. Both are aspects of what can be called “institutional gender responsiveness.” Gender responsiveness of state institutions involves two aspects: 1) the degree to which the agencies responsible for public service delivery “include women equitably among the ‘publics’ they ostensibly serve” (Goetz, 1992:6); and 2) the extent to which there is accountability of the public administration. Accountability for parliamentarians is more clear-cut in terms of elections, but nevertheless, the extent to which MPs have deep relationships with their constituencies is also important.

In the civil service, the inclusion of women has been slow. Section 196(1)(g) of the Constitution requires that the public administration should be “broadly representative of the South African people” and allows for affirmative action policies to redress imbalances. The 1995 *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* aims at taking this provision forward. A 1994 study by the Public Service Commission found that only 5 percent of management level employees were women.⁴ The White Paper stipulates that within four years at least 30 percent of new recruits to the middle and senior management echelons should be women. Progress towards this target has been uneven across government departments. The 1998 Presidential Review Commission on the Reform and Transformation of the Public Service found that the Department of Housing “remains, disturbingly, an exclusively male and predominantly white preserve at the management levels.”⁵ It also found that “progress in the area of race has been more noticeable than in the area of gender.” The Commission concluded that there was no “justifiable excuse for the disturbingly slow rates of progress towards representivity.”⁶

The establishment of new institutions for ensuring gender equality has opened a new set of battles for women, both within the state and between women and the state. Although agreement was reached on the need for such structures, the government was tardy in making appointments to run the structures and in putting resources behind them. Both the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) and the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) were only set up in 1997, three

³ Professor Muthien was a member of the Public Service Commission from 1994-1997.

⁴ Y. Muthien (1998) ‘Representivity in the Public Service’, Unpublished report, Public Service Commission.

⁵ This despite the fact that the Minister of Housing is a woman.

⁶ Presidential Review Commission (PRC) (1998) *Developing a Culture of Good Governance: Report of the Presidential Review Commission on the Reform and Transformation of the Public Service in South Africa*, Ch 4.

years after the democratic elections. When the national machinery was finally set up and appointments made to key positions, the structures were not adequately resourced. The CGE was allocated a budget of approximately R2 million, insufficient to even cover the salaries of the commissioners. In an ironic replication of gendered wage differentials in the economy, CGE commissioners are paid lower than any other commissioners.⁷ Similarly, the OSW was established with a resource crisis. The OSW at national level has only a director and an administrator and yet has to coordinate the activities of line-department structures in nine provinces.

The issue of the location of the OSW structures in the government hierarchy was explicitly addressed. The national structure is located in the office of the Deputy President and would seem to be at the locus of government power. Similarly, most provincial structures are in the offices of the premiers. Indeed, many interviewees commented on the additional clout they gained within government by being located at the center of government and from the active support of Premier in some provinces:

The province is strapped for money and anybody who touches gender is strapped for time. And therefore the only practical way if it's ever going to get done is if we can persuade the premier to appoint someone with a proper budget allocation and let that person initiate and move with it.⁸

Despite this political support, most OSW structures remain marginalized with its head appointed at a fairly low level in terms of government seniority (director level). All provincial appointments are at the level of Deputy-Director. These post levels carry little formal power to force Directors General of government departments (those formally charged with implementing policy), let alone Ministers, to take account of gender concerns. With envisaged cuts in social service spending, it is even more unlikely that OSW structures will have much success in convincing policy-makers to integrate gender and, therefore, spread spending to a wider group of people.

These problems raise the question of the extent to which gender structures will be able to impact on policy-making processes. It is a policy truism that structures without resources are doomed to fail. It is, therefore, insufficient for government to agree to a new set of institutions on the one hand, and then to effectively take these away by assigning them insufficient resources on the other. These issues of rhetorical versus real (i.e. financial) commitments are becoming a key area of battle between women's organizations and the new democratic state.

6. *A new class of femocrats?*

The challenges facing the new women bureaucrats are two-fold: first, women in the civil service have to transform the internal structures of government to create a culture in which women employees are treated as equal to men; and second, for women in the OSW in particular, they

⁷ In the first year of its existence, the CGE faced a severe financial crisis as well as a political crisis, as opposition parties attacked all the statutory commissions (Human Rights, Youth, Cultural, among others) for being wasteful and unnecessary.

⁸ Interview with Z. Nchita, Eastern Cape Provincial Government, May 2, 1997.

have to change resource allocation and policy priorities such that the various needs of women are addressed by the service delivery agencies.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the first cohort of women in democratic government in South Africa is experiencing enormous difficulties. Plucked out of their familiar organizational contexts and placed within resistant if not openly hostile departments, the new women bureaucrats have faced isolation within government and distancing from civil society. They have had to contend with the process of transforming the culture of late working hours, lack of consideration of domestic responsibilities, as well as inadequate resources, unclear mandates, and uncertain job descriptions. It is little wonder that Hannah Britton found that over half of women parliamentarians are not planning to stand for election in 1999 (Britton, 1997). For women bureaucrats on the other hand, even this level of choice is a luxury.

Apart from the budgetary constraints faced by the national machinery, women bureaucrats face a number of other constraints. At the most general level, they have to translate the political commitment of the government to gender equity into meaningful programs:

One of the major tasks we have to face is to actually begin to grapple with the whole aim of the gender policy framework for the country...At the moment everybody knows that gender is a buzz word - you have to have something called gender in your department, or gender in your institution...Why it should be there is not clear.⁹

Or, as another interviewee expressed it:

People (in government) just don't have the commitment to gender equality. I mean, everybody says the right thing when they're called on to say the right thing, but when it comes down to actually doing those things it's a different story...that's the frustrating part for all of us.¹⁰

Although the myth of gender neutrality in the public service has been broken, the difficulties of actually addressing the ways in which public administration is “both gendered and gendering” are encompassed in Goetz’s (1996:6) formulation of the processes by which “significant social, political, and economic resources and values (are) grant(ed) or with(held).”

Even where there is strong political support, women bureaucrats in OSW structures find they have to constantly legitimize the inclusion of gender into their departmental programs of work:

Never mind that we have got the Director-General's support for this work and that the Director-General has told us to do this work. When we get back to the departments we're just a little junior officer [sic] there, this work I'm doing is

⁹ Interview with Phumele Ntombela-Nzimande, Commissioner on the Commission for Gender Equality, June 18, 1997.

¹⁰ Interview with Loretta Jacobus, Gauteng Provincial Government, July 16, 1997.

*but one activity and if my boss isn't supportive then he won't allow me to give enough time and energy to that problem.*¹¹

These difficulties are endemic to governments that have tried to rapidly integrate women, and women's concerns, into the bureaucracy and policy-making processes. Feminist bureaucrats are caught between the resistance of male bureaucrats to their work and the expectations of women's organizations outside government. Internal bureaucratic power struggles loom large for many women in the OSW structures:

*Men feel threatened by this. They don't understand that gender doesn't translate into women necessarily. And they feel threatened in that they think that they have to give more jobs to women, and they have got to give the higher positions to women. They don't understand that we also thought, more importantly, about the services we render and about engendering health, welfare and education...The whole reason for our existence is not to give us jobs, it's to do a service to the community.*¹²

For those women activists who entered the state after the 1994 elections in the expectation that they would be able to contribute to building democracy from within, the frustrations of coping with the transition from non-hierarchical and open organizational forms to the bureaucracy have been great.

*I was a COSATU activist...I was a shop steward and (took the lead) on gender issues even in the national structure of COSATU. So one is used to working with such problems...But when it comes to people that are in positions of power, who because of my status I have to consult to, it's one of the things that tends to disempower a person...With government one cannot run away from that they've got leaders, people with certain status in government, certain qualifications. At the end of the day you end up understanding them but you cannot change that (hierarchy).*¹³

7. Conclusions

There can be little doubt that women have made some significant gains in terms of their access to the arenas of political power in South Africa. Indeed, for a country so deeply rooted in a history of oppression and inequality, the achievement of democracy has symbolic significance for subjugated social groups internationally. Nevertheless, it would be foolish to assume that formal victories are sufficient. It is the degree to which that democracy is consolidated for all citizens that is the true measure of success. For this to be achieved, organizations of civil society have to continue to articulate demands and drive for greater commitments from government. Without effective organizations outside the state, the possibilities for radical transformation are slim.

¹¹ Interview with Celia Dawson, KwaZulu Natal Provincial Government, June 18, 1997.

¹² Interview with Liz Walker, KwaZulu Natal Provincial Government, June 17, 1997.

¹³ Interview with Matlakala Matthews, Office on the Status of Women, North West Provincial Government, July 30, 1997.

B. MALE, RACE, AND CLASS DYNAMICS: A PRACTICAL VIEW IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

Summary of Presentation by Bongani Khumalo,
Director of the Community Law Centre, Durban, South Africa

Bongani Khumalo focused on how to create change at an individual and community level, using his work as a trainer for the Gender Education and Training Network (GETNET) as a model. GETNET's goal is to bring men into gender discourse as active participants by providing training and support. The overall objective of these awareness-raising sessions was to reflect, with men, on the social construction and maintenance of gender. The three-day workshops have a number of specific objectives: to help allay men's fears about gender issues; to challenge their beliefs that gender is only about women; and to change their attitudes about men's and women's roles. Over a period of one year, training workshops with an average attendance of 25 men were conducted in seven of the nine provinces across South Africa. Participants came from all race groups, and included university graduates, traditional leaders, union activists and members of the private sector. Typically, men receive invitations to attend these workshops through their organizations that pay a small attendance fee. A large part of the intention of the workshop is to train organizations through training individuals from such organizations.

This process is important, because South Africa is still a deeply patriarchal society where culture encases the experiences of not just gender, but also race and class for women and men. Notwithstanding the process of transition, organizations are just beginning to realize how deep-seated these patriarchal values are.

Khumalo emphasized that, despite the enabling mechanisms for gender equality Hassim discussed, no policy can force someone to be gender-sensitive and change work on the individual and community levels is critical to ensure that both women and men are champions of gender justice. Of course, the cause of gender equality received a huge boost when Nelson Mandela declared in his inaugural speech that "the time to oppress women are over, men should also do housework!"

Gender training for men in any context is never easy, and no more so in South Africa where trainers have to adapt their workshop tools and approaches for a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious groups, as well as for both rural and urban lifestyles and varying levels of formal education among participants. The further trainers advance in their work, the more challenging it becomes. For example, while many workshop participants and communities react favorably to GETNET's work, some people have accused trainers of selling men out. This accusation appears to come from a fear that men who preach gender equity may be selling out the side by breaking ranks from other men. Others shift blame for gender inequality and sexism to men from other cultures or hold fast to the belief that the Bible or religion justifies or necessitates it. Addressing the issue of custom and cultural practices has been a core aspect of the training. Several workshops have been held with traditional leaders who play the role of custodians of culture in local communities, and are therefore key allies for changing discriminatory practices. Workshops have also taken place that targeted religious leaders. A strong leverage point for getting these important groups to attend training workshops has been the positive male role model that Mandela provides. Mandela stresses in his public appearances that women and men should play equal roles within society, and this has given a tremendous

boost to gender issues. This demonstrates the influence and importance that male champions of gender can play to provide the entry point for addressing issues of gender.

Workshops shift between discussing men's personal experiences and examining their structural causes and results. As Khumalo said, "We invite men to reflect on the construction of their own masculinity." Beginning with childhood conditioning, gender stereotyping, and societal expectations of participants as men, trainers move on to discussing women's portrayals in advertising and other media and their invisibility and marginalization in the workplace. Men often identified the women in videos and training materials with their own female family members and, in doing so, personalized their commitment to working against gender discrimination.

Although many participants begin the training workshops with skepticism and fear of being blamed and criticized, over the course of the training they began to realize that "their own role as men are socially constructed and maintained." They realize, Khumalo reflected, that it is OK to say, "I'm afraid" and start the change process from there, rather than endure the high stress and health problems associated with maintaining rigid masculine roles. Workshop participants commit to taking responsibility for the sexist practices in their own lives. They become change agents in their families, communities, and workplaces, and most go on to become trained as trainers for their own provinces with back-up and support from GETNET.

GETNET leverages its efforts by seeking to work with men in decision-making positions and by introducing men and women trainers to each other to encourage them to work collaboratively. Yet, while there are small signs of progress—for example, a new prestige associated with men carrying their children in public—mainstreaming gender equity and awareness is a long process, and the number of trained men is still relatively small. Khumalo concluded by emphasizing the critical importance of creating more developed support systems so as to expand and grow the pool of gender-aware men.

C. SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL CONTEXT TRAINING INTERVENTIONS AND THE “MODEL OF BIAS” FOR JUDICIAL DECISION-MAKERS: POSSIBLE PATHWAYS FOR WORKING WITH ISSUES OF GENDER

By Ilze Olckers, Independent Legal and Process Consultant
Muizenberg, South Africa

1. *Summary*

Olckers reflects on her work in the Law, Race and Gender Unit of the University of Cape Town around social context training with the South African judiciary and introduces us to the “Model of Bias” used in these training interventions. The starting point of their work recognizes the “individual-as-institution” as carriers of difference by surfacing the conditioned stereotypes around “difference” that often mediate judicial decision-making. The process-design of the training workshops links the individual with the institution, creating a training intervention that links institutional transformation with personal transformation.

2. *Introduction*

Many white South Africans have sentimental stories to tell about growing up with black nannies—surrogate mothers who gave them unconditional love and conflicting emotions in their apartheid years of adulthood. Well, I had a black caregiver for a few crucial years between from when I can remember and until I was six years old. She must have been between 50 and 60; she always walked barefoot and wore old Xhosa style skirts with beads around her ankles. Her room smelt of paraffin and polish and other exotic things. Her bed was high off the ground, on bricks—protecting her from the short evil one: the “tokoloshe” it was called. From her little transistor radio came sounds which even today is the closest feeling I get to belonging somewhere, despite the fact that it was in a foreign, black language and the beat bore no resemblance to anything I was ever allowed to listen to anywhere else.

I never knew her full name. I have no idea what happened to her, but what I remember is this: She hated not being able to talk her own language; she hated looking after these spoiled white kids; and she hated her young white mistress who was never at home; she hated what her life and her choices had been; and she hated her helplessness in the face of it. I was brought up on the rage of a black African woman, the black goddess Kali—and I could never, throughout my privileged white life, ever, ignore or underestimate her power. She has many names across the world (Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Rosa Parks, Oprah Winfrey, Alice Walker, Anita Hill, Sonia Ghandi, Winnie Madikezela Mandela), and now she is being redeemed. She is coming home; she is being dreamt back into consciousness; she is the topic of this workshop; she is you and me.

The starting point of my input today, in line with authors such as Marion Woodman, is that the focus on “the women from the margins” as we are doing at this conference, is, in fact, the recognition of the symbolic re-emergence of the Black Goddess in our consciousness. The Dark Goddess has been described by Woodman as follows:

The Black Madonna. . . . Sometimes she's crying. Sometimes she's austere. She's dark. Sometimes she's a black woman or Indian or Portuguese. I think she's dark because she's unknown to consciousness. She often has a fierce sense of humour that cuts straight through the madness of human behaviour. She's always larger than life, which suggests she's a goddess, fit to be the mother of a god.

[R]ejected by the patriarchy, her energy has been smouldering. It is now erupting in individuals and in the planet, demanding conscious recognition.

We have to connect to her because the power that is raping the earth, the power drive behind addictions, has to be transformed.

There has to be a counterbalance to all that frenzy, annihilation, ambition, competition and materialism. The Black Madonna is the bridge. She is a spiritual figure in a physical body, so she acts as a bridge between the head and the heart. She is a wisdom figure. (Woodman 1993:81)

And it is this quality of the Black Goddess that challenges the patriarchy wherever it still finds it; whether in a male or female body; whether in a white or black body; or in whatever organizational form.

I also draw on the work of business futurists such as Sue Mehrtens, whose recent publication came after an extended visit to South Africa last year. A key component of her Third Wave theory for organizations is the pre-dominance of “non-western” minds in organizations; as well as factors in the South African context such as the legacy of apartheid and indigenous African values such as “Ubuntu.” I have also looked to authors of the New Sciences such as the work of Margaret Wheatley who identifies the processes and products normally associated with the Dark Goddess, while not acknowledging her specifically by name.

My thesis for doing gender in organizations differently is that whether at the physical material level we are focusing on the lives and conditions of previously marginalized black women; at the theoretical level we are challenging our gender models for being overly linear and abstract; at the methodological level we are celebrating the use of previously devalued and denied experiential techniques; at the symbolic level we are focusing on the previously rejected, devalued, and repressed dark feminine in our collective unconscious; or at the systems level we are focusing on the self-regulating power and reliability of a-causal chaos principles such as synchronicity; we are, I believe, busy with the same sacred work. Our challenge is to integrate all these levels, the material, theoretical, methodological, symbolic, and systemic in order to do gender from the margins in and back out again.

Sue Mehrtens also refers to the concept of “the law of the retarding lead.” She explains it as the ecological principle that determines that the dominant group or species will be the last to adapt to new circumstances. Wheatley refers to a similar situation when she speaks of the “bifurcation point” in systems. “If amplifications have increased to the level where the system is at maximum instability (a cross roads between death and transformation known technically as a bifurcation point), the system encounters a future that is wide open.” This is where South Africa,

and the professionals and academics working in the area of gender and organizations in South Africa, find themselves.

I am standing by the sea. A great tidal wave is steadily rolling in. I am terrified. Gradually, I discern a large chocolate coloured woman riding majestic on the crest of the wave. She is triumphant, her body poised, her arm uplifted like Delacroix's Liberty. She rides her inevitable wave. Suddenly, I am a molecule of energy in the wave. My friends and I are all molecules in the wave, each molecule dancing with every other molecule in love. We are all dancing with the momentum of the wave that will bring Sophia to land. (Woodman 1996:199)

A core component of our approach is the “individual-as-institution” concept also referred to as the organizational hologram or holism (Wheatley 1992:112). We believe that judicial officers, judges, and magistrates, are prime examples of this phenomenon as they individually create and represent the institution in their courts and actions. Secondly, more than we believe in any other organization, the core business of judicial officers is making decisions. It is not only the means to the end, but also in most cases the final product—the end in itself. For this reason, working with the judiciary places one in a unique position to be able to focus on decision-making processes as an organizational system and as output. Our main interventions are in the form of training sessions of different duration and intensity.

3. Mainstreaming of gender intersections

We have attempted to mainstream gender intersections into our core framework, the Model of Bias in judicial decision-making, in all aspects of training: theory, practice, participation, educational input and content, methodology, approach, style, and design by working explicitly with the intersections of race, class, and gender. The training makes use of a “process” design-training model to take participants on a “journey” of discovery of the Self and the Other. Trainers comprise a diverse group of women and gender-sensitive male facilitators, and the workshops include socio-economic issues that reflect the lived experience of poor women in urban and rural contexts.

The framework includes a mix of experiential feeling-based techniques, body-awareness exercises (relaxation, dancing, drumming), drag events as a cross-gender activity, ritual, story telling, creative drawing, role-playing and modeling, myths and metaphors, as well as cognitive lecture style inputs. The training process includes gender, race, sexual orientation, and specific intersection dynamics in each category of the model through reflective group sessions during the training.

Workshops are comprised of equal numbers of women from all forms of differentiation, and care is taken to prioritize issues of self-awareness and personal growth. In particular, the workshops address self-limiting thoughts and actions and issues of internalized oppression.

4. *Adopted model of bias for South African context*

We define bias in judicial decision-making as a manifestation that primarily acts within the unconscious and unintentional, the internal psychological and external social factors. These factors include the following.

a. Stereotyping

Stereotyping is recognized as present in all people and is defined as a form of “social categorization” that equates a particular feature someone has with desirable or undesirable associations of a particular group. For example, Judge B. McLachlin comments on stereotypes in the judicial system as follows: “I am not suggesting that people consciously decide to apply inappropriate stereotypes.... in fact, the racial and sexual stereotypes are there, in our minds, bred by social conditioning and encouraged by popular culture and media. Sometimes they are embedded in our institutions. We tend to accept them as truths. When faced with a problem, we automatically apply them because it’s natural and easy—much easier than really examining the problem and coming to a rational conclusion by the process of thought and listening and evaluation.” (Judicial Training Material, Western Judicial Education Centre, Canada)

b. Identifying with the familiar

This includes:

- Principle of Accentuation, where similarities within a group and differences between groups are exaggerated or accentuated.
- Out-group Homogeneity Bias, or the tendency to perceive members of the out-group as much more similar or homogenous than members of the in-group.
- In-group/Out-group Complexity Bias, or the tendency to conceive of the in-group as more complex and differentiated than the out-group.
- In-group/Out-group Extremity Bias, or the tendency for people to make more extreme judgements of out-groups than in-group members.

c. Cultural inequivalence

Varonis and Gass (Quoted in Kaschula, 1995:84) describe cultural inequivalence as “misunderstandings [that] are particularly pronounced between native and non-native speakers of a language: they may have radically different customs, mode of interacting, notions of appropriateness, and, of course, linguistic systems.” In a cross-cultural legal context there are dynamics related to (cultural and) semantic voids defined as “the non-existence in one language of a one-word equivalent for a designatory term [practice] found in another” (Dagut quoted in Kaschula: 1995:92). Language is, in this instance, taken as the agent for transferring culture wherein specific variables (kinship, colour terminology, taboos and euphemisms, ordering systems, time, gender, rituals and practices) are enacted.

d. Ignorance of socio-economic and demographic factors and phenomena

Particular problems are the lack of accurate information, and the myths and assumptions about factors such as: the economic implications of decisions; social conditions different from the life-experience of the decision-maker; demographic and statistical realities of relevant community; psycho-social behavior of people in certain situations (for instance, factors such as Rape Trauma Syndrome, Battered Women Syndrome, Survivors Guilt).

e. Credibility findings

Winkler notes that scientific studies have shown “a pervasive tendency to regard men as more credible than women” and that “[I]n the courtroom, credibility may be the greatest asset an individual possesses, whether one appears in the role of lawyer, witness, litigant, complainant or defendant, and, as a result, this form of bias can be devastating in its effect. Similarly judges may be entirely unaware of the extent to which credibility can be undermined by the seemingly unimportant practice of calling [certain persons] on their first name, or using terms of endearment.” (Quoted in Crites and Hepperlee: 1987:234)

f. Bias target

Bias can operate in respect of any group, but according to the logic of the model the more “different” the issue or the person is to the life experiences of the decision-maker, the more likely that any of those categories will be activated. Main “differentiation” of power includes gender, race, age, sexual orientation, class, and culture intersections.

g. Hierarchy of oppressions

According to Johnson and Knapp (1971:692) “[J]udges have, as a group, made more progress in freeing themselves from racial bias than from gender bias,” and they conclude that “for the present generation of judges it may be easier to assume the imagined mental state of a black male, of whatever station in life, than it is successfully to imagine that one is a female (even a white middle-class one).” “Hierarchy of oppressions” refers to the ways in which individuals parcel out categories of “difference” and focus on the identity category that feels the most comfortable to confront. “We learn to think of ourselves as male or female before we learn to identify ourselves as white or black, and the process of learning to peel off our layers of bias proceed in accord with the order in which they were laid down.” (Quoted by Winkler in *Women, The Courts and Equality*, Ed. Crites and Hepperle, 1987)

5. *Barriers to Social Context Training*

A number of barriers or categories of resistance to social context awareness programs have been identified. These include:

- Denial;
- Failure to recognize inequality;

- Fear of compromise of judicial/academic independence;
- Fear of “special interest groups;
- Unwillingness to admit imperfections;
- Fear of “politicizing” the courts/classrooms;
- Problem of expecting unanimity from minority groups; and
- Reluctance to examine personal values and institutional pressures.

(Adapted from presentations and training material by Judge Catherine Fraser, Honourable Chief Justice of Alberta, Canada)

6. *Decision-making in a judicial context*

Kahneman et al. (1982) argue that decision-makers are constantly involved in micro decision-making of an extra-legal and legal nature. Micro decisions result in macro legal decisions through a process of logical deductive reasoning. This accounts for the fact that extra-legal factors influence decision-making more than legal ones (Kahneman, Slovic and Tyversky, 1982 in Chunn et al.). Willis and Wells (1988) divide extra-legal factors into three major divisions: factors relating to the individual decision-maker; situation factors specific to the case; and organizational factors relating to the individual decision maker entering into the formulation of a decision more than guidelines for the making of that decision. (ibid.)

The Gender, Race and Law Unit has developed a range of generic questions to guide self-reflection in practice for the judiciary during decision-making. Below is a summary of some of these questions that we encourage our participants to think through.

Generic questions to contribute to a social context approach in judicial decision-making:

When making a decision am I mindful of:

- 1) the possible differentiation and intersections of oppression the parties may have suffered;
- 2) existing stereotypes surrounding those oppressions;
- 3) different values and worth attributed to those persons and roles in society;
- 4) different “legal needs” the parties may have (practical vs. strategic);
- 5) the way in which I could entrench stereotypes through my order or findings; or could contribute to change in the lives of the parties and society generally;
- 6) different cultural, religious, and linguistic nuances of the case;
- 7) dangers of “one-word equivalents” in situations of cultural, religious, and linguistic nuances;
- 8) the credibility findings in the light of the evidence of systemic bias in these findings;
- 9) exactly what the life circumstances and experiences of the parties were ;
- 10) the likelihood of the profound difference between these experiences and the paradigm “reasonable person” of the law around whom the legal rule was developed;
- 11) instances where I can personally relate to a particular party or experience;
- 12) the unconscious bias a deeper understanding and affinity with a person or position might bring to my decision-making;
- 13) the phenomenon of “unconscious incompetence”—also referred to as a cognitive blind spot; not being able to see “around the bend in your own thought;”
- 14) guarding against the above with an attitude of constant vigilance, inquiry and openness;
- 15) my responsibility to challenge the narrow positivist jurisprudential approach in our law;
- 16) my responsibility to contribute to techniques for a critical engagement with the law;
- 17) my responsibility to identify and draw on materials not traditionally used in a particular context;
- 18) my responsibility in terms of role-modeling an open, engaged, contextual approach to the law; and
- 19) my responsibility to promote the constitutional guarantees of substantive equality for all through all my actions.

There are a number of key factors for leveraging transformation processes through social context training. These factors include the following.

- Linking issues of personal and institutional transformation;
- Working with the concept of a critical mass in respect to organizational change while targeting the leadership;
- Practicing non-attachment to specific institutional outcomes;
- Allowing space for synchronicity and other a-causal events;
- Allowing “down time” for socializing and other activities during training;
- Training interventions linked to practical action;
- Captive audience events followed up by free will events;
- Working with principle of alignment by reinforcing training with real life personal experiences;
- Commitment to a range of indigenous methodologies including music, dancing, storytelling, myths, and metaphors;
- Commitment to working in representatively diverse groups;
- Making use of certain group therapy techniques such as Focus Group and Reflection Group sessions (in respect to race and gender);
- Prioritizing self awareness, themes of change, growth and self reflection;
- Imparting models and tools for increased self awareness;
- Following up with model of bias and exercises to identify and apply the model; and
- Applying the training and the model referred to as “social context values” to issues of management, policies, and procedures.

D. RACE, GENDER, AND CLASS IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

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1. Summary

This case study uses a contextual interpretive lens to link the external change process on a national policy level to the internal impacts and tensions experienced within South African institutions. It reminds us of the leverage that a process of national transformation offers for institutional transformation and argues for an inclusion of politics back into our frameworks of change. The author challenges us to develop reflexivity in our work as change agents and recognize and work with our own subjectivity as bearers of “difference.”

2. Introduction and background

South Africa, under apartheid, demonstrated in the most graphic ways in modern history how an economic system, in our case South African capitalism, used racism, sexism, and class oppression to subjugate a people. The Afrikaner ruling class boldly and ruthlessly developed a racist and sexist state of white and male supremacy to justify its ends not only to its own followers but also to the rest of the world. It used inhumane mechanisms ranging from brutal physical and psychological violence to insidious exclusionary strategies and tactics to bully black and some white people into submission. It demonstrated, through excellent and unprecedented social engineering, the depth that human beings can stoop to protect selfish interests. The historic Truth and Reconciliation Commission, set up to exorcise the demons of the past, bears testimony to this reality even though it failed to highlight the atrocities that women suffered at the hands of white oppressors and black comrades.

While South African capitalism under apartheid successfully used black working class men and women to build the sophisticated infrastructure that has set South Africa apart from other post colonial states on the African continent, it deprived our people of the most basic human needs through an ideology which rendered them less than human. In the words of Verwoerd, the mastermind of separate development, black men and women were to be nothing more than “hewers of wood and drawers of water.” They were to serve their privileged, white masters and madams like queens and kings and provide the economy with cheap unskilled labor in return for poorly paid and sometimes dangerous working conditions.

This vision shaped all the laws and policies that were to govern South Africa’s people. Every single institution was designed to deprive black men and women of their basic political, social, economic, and legal rights. Political policies disenfranchised the majority population. Transport policies kept people apart. Pass laws and influx control policies kept black women in the poorest, unproductive, waterless rural areas, where they were expected, without much state support, to reproduce a black labor force while the men flocked to the industrialized cities for unskilled jobs, living in the most desperate urban slums and ghettos. Education policies left millions of black working class men and women poor, jobless, functionally illiterate, and unable to exercise their democratic rights in post-apartheid South Africa. The justice system

successfully used a combination of Roman/Dutch and customary law to infantilize women and criminalize, rather than protect, the people.

3. Post-apartheid South Africa

The South African revolution was achieved through armed struggle and strong social and labor movements whose leaders are the current ruling class of our newfound democracy. Shunned by the international community; paralyzed by a collapsing economy depleted by the cost of wars against “citizens” and neighboring countries; and haunted by the endless working class strikes, boycotts, and other urban resistance activities, the ruling class was left with little choice but to review their racist policies. They sensibly chose to unlock Mandela’s prison gates rather than wait for the storming of the Bastille.

This unlocking of the prison gates set the tone for the political transformation of South African society. A group of middle class, educated, black and white males (except for the ANC whose women demanded representation) from contesting liberation movements and political parties came together to work out the miracle formula that delivered peace, stability, and formal democracy in 1994. These elites, representing different political persuasions, entered into a pact which focused on consensus building and achieving “middle ground” through meeting the interests of all stakeholders as if everyone was equal.

In civil society, social movements, including a strong women’s movement, are diminished by the shift of their leaders and torch bearers from the movements themselves to formal government positions. These positions are in national and provincial Parliaments, national and provincial governments and statutory bodies, and are mandated by the Constitution to promote and act as the custodian of the new human rights culture.

Some progressive members of Parliament are still calling for the social movement vacuum to be filled to support their efforts at challenging all the racist and gender oppressive laws that remain a legacy from our past, as well as ensure accountable governance. Moreover, it is apparent that the state is not the only avenue for political activity. The overthrow of apartheid has demonstrated how effective a critical, autonomous, organized civil society can be.

The labor movement remained strong and influential through maintaining its alliance with the ruling ANC and the Communist Party. It has continued to protect the rights of the working class through the promotion of progressive, but contested, labor legislation even though it still has a long way to go to transform and alter its own male image. It is questionable whether the structured participation of women in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has, in fact, created avenues in which women can actively participate in shaping the legislation to include their diverse interests.

4. The national agenda

a. Nation-building and reconciliation

The first five years of democracy have focused on “nation-building” and “reconciliation.” President Mandela’s statesmanship and stature has appealed to the sentiments of many South

Africans and other nations throughout the world who have admired his ability to forgive his jailers and oppressors. He has been partially successful at cultivating a spirit of nationalism even among some very skeptical white South Africans of all classes whose fears of losing privilege have often left them feeling helpless and unable to contribute to the transformation of South African society. However, Mandela's nationalism has aptly been described as having "sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized hope and masculinized humiliation (Lewis, 1999)." His appeals for unity have often been directed at white South Africa for reasons that may seem obvious. He has seldom linked gender equality or women's interests to nationhood.

The Constitution of 1996, shaped by the skillful leadership of the ANC through a multi-party democratic process and active participation of organized civil society, has set the tone for non-racialism and non-sexism. The Equality clause affirms the rights of all South Africans irrespective of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and religion. It explicitly outlaws any form of direct or indirect discrimination against social groups. Labeled as one of the most liberal constitutions in the world, the new leaders were motivated by the vision that no South African should ever be subjected to the kind of oppression that characterized the apartheid era.

The agenda of the past five years has encouraged black and white, male and female and working class South African nationals to give up victim status and privilege; to acknowledge the "comfort" and "safety" that they appear to have provided in the past, and to accept the sense of loss that is felt by giving both up. Post-apartheid South Africa cannot afford a culture of entitlement, which black South Africans have sometimes tended to want. Neither can it afford the luxury of white privilege.

However, the agenda has been less successful at highlighting tensions between different classes of black people and women. Many black men continue to question the legitimacy of the struggle for women's emancipation. White women have sometimes undermined affirmative action in favor of black people because they have felt left out of the process. Many still resist the notion that while women may all be sitting on the same boat, black and working class women may be sitting on different decks.

b. Women's empowerment and gender equality

The government has also done much to move women's empowerment from the margins to the center of its political agenda primarily through the efforts of women in the ANC who insisted on a 33 percent representation in parliament; male leaders who experienced the women's movement during their years in exile and who understand the relationship between race and gender oppression; and women in civil society who, through successful lobbying, have actively supported the appeal for gender equality and justice. The ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, the Women's Charter for Effective Equality, South Africa's own home grown women's charter, as well as the declaration of August 9 as National Women's Day, have all contributed to creating an enabling environment for the protection of gender equality.

Gender oppression is being challenged through a national machinery to institutionalize gender equality in government departments and the society at large. An Office on the Status of Women (OSW) in the Office of the President; a strong women's caucus and an ad hoc committee on the Status of Women and Quality of Life in Parliament; and an independent Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) which looks after all women's interests in all institutions and sectors form the basis of that machinery. Small but effective pockets of urban civil society organizations focusing and advocating for the advancement of social justice in traditionally women's issues, such as violence against women and reproductive rights, are slowly challenging the mindsets of a very patriarchal national consciousness.

However, the limited resources the state offered to these bodies have undermined their potential effectiveness in attaining substantive long-term equality for women. The OSW and CGE have notably been under resourced despite government's gender sensitive rhetoric.

While these mechanisms have given the impression that there is a commitment to formal equality, only time will tell whether the intentions of government will translate into the achievement of systemic equality.

c. The Reconstruction and Development Programme

The Government's social agenda was articulated in the Reconstruction and Development Programme—its 1994 Manifesto. It prioritized meeting the basic needs of South Africa's poorest communities who are largely black, female, rural, and working class. Unfortunately the realities of internal debt, incurred by the previous government shortly before the new dispensation, as well as globalization, forced it to change its economic policies.

Social investment had to be sacrificed for a Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) to reduce the debt, lower inflation, and stabilize the economy. Though GEAR was criticized for its "structural adjustment" tendencies particularly by the unions and some organs of civil society including women activists, few were able to offer an alternative option for a government that found itself truly between a rock and a hard place.

A number of other factors hindered the delivery process including high expectations from a needy population; a bloated and sometimes corrupt civil service steeped in old traditions; resistance to change; a non-commitment to service delivery; as well as a government not accustomed to making quick decisions.

Despite these obstacles, the lives of many poor South Africans have improved since 1994. More have access to housing, water, education, health and welfare. Safety and security leaves much to be desired as does access to the economy. Banks and other financial institutions are still discriminating against poor people. The economy is still controlled, by and large, by white and male South Africans. Few women sit on corporate boards or hold executive management positions. The private sector lags far behind the public sector and represents, by far, the most resistant sector to transformation and redistribution.

5. *The role of change agents*

This background forms the basis of the work that many of us are doing in the field of the management of change and transformation in South African institutions. It highlights the highly politicized nature of South African society because of the overtly intrusive nature of apartheid as well as the depth of the resistance to it. It also shows that race, gender, and class cannot be located at the margins of the political process as “tag-ons.” They need to continue to be central to the political process as we enter the next millennium and see results of the 1999 elections. This reality poses a number of challenges for those of us who have to make sense of the dynamics of race, gender, and class relations in South Africa’s workplaces. These challenges include the following.

- To what extent should we interrogate, deconstruct, and reconstruct our own values, identities, attitudes, norms, behaviors, ideologies, and politics in order to effect substantive changes in race, gender, and power relations in South Africa?
- Is it necessary for change agents to be explicit about how their own interpretation of social, political, and economic phenomena in South Africa affects their interventions?
- Should we also have a consciousness of our own analysis and understanding of organizations and the role that power plays in shaping race, gender, and class relations in the workplace?
- In the light of these, what kind of analytical tools should we develop to help clients analyze their own situation for themselves, and what frameworks inform the solutions that we offer our clients?

The absence of a theory of organizational transformation in South Africa and the centrality of politics in our society will no doubt influence the methodologies of change management, organizational development, and management development. As most of our clients are in the private sector, examples used will tend to be drawn from there.

a. Starting with ourselves as consultants and change agents

In my experience the biggest challenges for change agents are the ability to be explicit in stating who we are, where we stand, what our needs are, what our motives are, what social position we hold, what assumptions we make about black and white people, about men and women and young people, what we have to offer and what we have to learn. These values and assumptions should not be hidden because that often leads to manipulation. They should be explicit in what we say and do.

Being able to engage in this exercise means that we can also invite our clients to do the same when they begin managing change in their organizations.

I once asked a non-South African white male co-facilitator and friend to share how he would describe who he is and this is what he wrote:

As a white, single, middle class male in employment I automatically occupy a relatively powerful social position, regardless of my personal merits. I can walk along most streets at any time of the day or night without fear, unlike many women. If I apply for jobs, I am statistically more likely to be offered them than a black person with similar experience and qualifications. I can attend meetings almost everywhere at any time without worrying about climbing stairs, hearing or seeing the other participants, unlike many people with disabilities. I can afford to buy a home, have a telephone, travel or eat out - unlike many people on low incomes or out of employment. I have been through enough education to follow economic, social and political issues in the 'quality press' as well as alternative viewpoints in magazines from left, right and centre- unlike many people who have been denied access to higher education.

In other words, I have a remarkably narrow view of the world. But because of my social position, that view looks down on most people and across to a very large, but comparatively small section of the population, as well as the 'political' conversations of my social peers. This means that it is very much easier for me to make my voice heard in the political system or to buy what I want in the market place than it is for most people, who have a lot more to shout about. How I use this power, this birth-right arbitrarily put at my disposal, is therefore a big responsibility.

I have learned quite a few tricks about how to exploit my social position and power, apparently by accident, as extra curricular activities. Yet I have had almost no training in responsibility, except to my social position. I therefore have a lot to learn and to unlearn—as well as a few tricks to share. (Alexander, T. 1989)

This introspection may seem a little self indulgent but does influence how we relate to our clients and colleagues. Our values, motivations, and aspirations also influence how we relate across races, genders, and classes and whether or not we make them explicit to ourselves. South Africans will pick them up, in one way or another, and locate them in the realm of politics.

b. How we interpret political and socioeconomic realities

A second challenge is the ability to interrogate the interpretation of our own reality and to be open to other's interpretation of that same reality. A case in point is the whole question of crime and violence in South Africa and particularly the violence against women. Some think the violence is related to poverty and the inherent gendered notion of freedom—that is, freedom to rape rather than freedom from oppression. Others think that it is pathological and confirms the inherent criminality of black people. A third interpretation could be that those who indulge in crime, the marginalized, fragmented, disenfranchised, disadvantaged, and dispersed have decided to create space for themselves in the center in pursuit of some kind of recognition.

Many may be laying claim to parts of South Africa that they were deprived of. The “minimal self,” in Stuart Hall's words, is about the centering of marginality—the notion that one is where one is to get away from somewhere else (Hall, 1992). This process is particularly important,

because there is a relationship between our interpretation of the world and our consciousness. Our consciousness determines the way in which we interpret what goes on around us.

The basic needs agenda of the ruling party is a powerful tool for mobilizing support and encouraging all South Africans to feel that they can and have a role to play in contributing to improving the quality of life of all South Africans. Its message is simple. New laws that have been passed in the last five years are creating an enabling environment for institutions to take active steps in challenging a status quo which deprived people of access to housing, water, electricity, recreation, education, health, safety, and communication—basic needs which everyone, black and white, in South Africa wants.

It also represents a veneer of substantive rather than formal equality, though many others feel that the laws only protect the interests of black working class people. Indeed Affirmative Action has been a sore point for white people some of whom see themselves as potential victims in the future, potentially disenfranchised, marginalized, disadvantaged and dispersed, suffering the effects of reverse discrimination!

Such interpretations influence behavior. The exodus and brain drain to kith and kin in Europe, the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand tell the whole story.

The fear of Black rule has to be justified and acted on. “The guts to fight back,” the Democratic Party’s 1999 election campaign, had a subtext which capitalized on white fears and the notion that black people are unable to rule this country. It was liberal in intent but racist in effect. It confirmed the notion that the struggle against racism in post-apartheid South Africa is now less about dealing with the extremists who were featured in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, who perpetrated the violence of that era and are now exceptional and exist only on the fringes of this society; but more about the reality that people can now speak about race without mentioning the word. Racism that makes no reference to “race” or hierarchy is an important characteristic of the latest form of racism that we as change agents have to deal with. Racism is being recoded, and terms such as “cultural diversity” are being used to continue to locate people in the realm of the “other.” (Gilroy, 1987)

c. How we analyze organizations and power relations in South Africa

- Organizations as microcosms of society

A first observation is that South African organizations have been politicized by the external environment in which they exist. They are all organizations in South Africa (SA) rather than of SA. Many of them, and primarily those in the private sector, are microcosms of the macro apartheid structure. The result is that employees tend to form coalitions of varied individuals and interest groups including professional groups, black groups, gender groups, and sometimes ethnic subgroups, to become visible and gain access to resources.

It would not be an overstatement to say that there are enduring differences among individuals and groups in the values, preferences, beliefs, information, and perceptions of reality in our organizations. An interesting exercise that we always begin our workshops with, which we call

“The Wall Exercise,” invites participants to share information with each other on their experiences in different decades, e.g., in the 60s-70s and 80s-90s. They are asked to say what their perceptions were of what was going on in the country, their organizations, and their careers, as well as in their personal lives during those periods. They are also asked to say what they think of the future in relation to the country, the organization, and themselves. Perceptions between black and white and male and female South African’s are sometimes vastly different. But people learn much about both the similarities that they share and differences they have to live with.

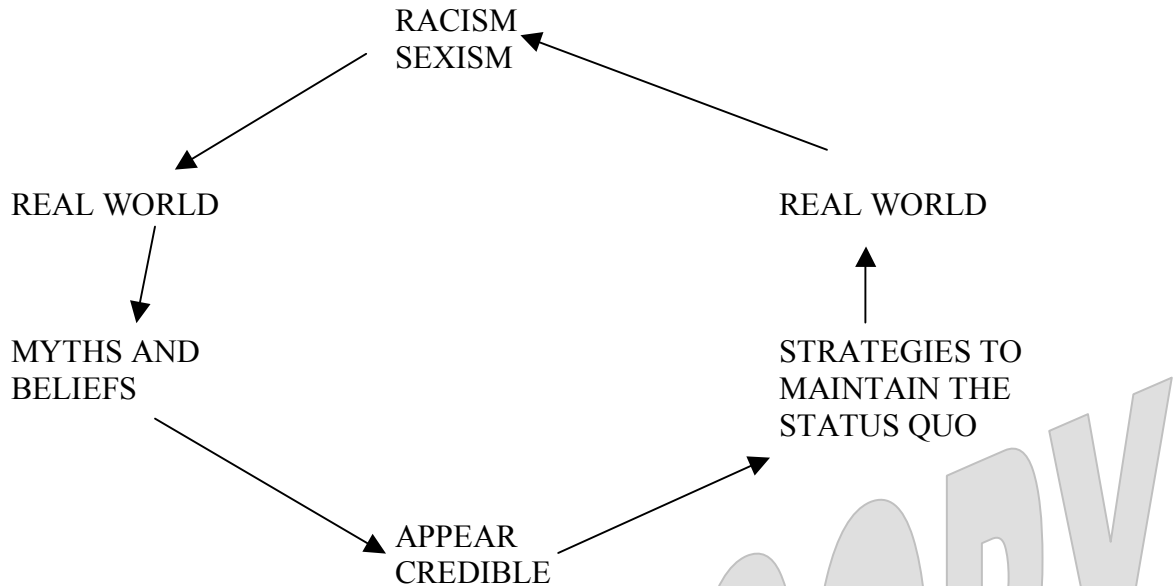
- Organizational ideologies

A second observation is that all organizations have their own ideologies of race, gender, and class.

A model or analytical tool to illustrate how organizational ideologies influence decision-making, practice, and policy was developed a number of years ago when the bulk of the work I did was on anti-racism in Britain. The model explains that ideologies are interpretations or accounts of the world as experienced by people who live in it. These interpretations are very often false (hence myths and beliefs).

However, in order to be effective they must appear credible and correct. They must correspond in some ways with the real world that people experience. This is where their force is located. The beliefs and myths often do correspond with reality and make much sense for people. An example is that white people either experience black people as “muggers” directly from living in the same area or neighborhood, or indirectly through newspapers, stories, books, history lessons, or friends. The fact, therefore, that there is a teaspoon full of truth (the one black person who stole a bicycle) in the myth justifies the development of policies, strategies, and practices which regenerate that reality. Social, political, and economic institutions play a significant role in perpetuating ideologies.

The main argument is that racist and sexist ideologies are not just propaganda or justifications for the way things are. They are developed in specific social and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the use of ideology rather than coercion makes it possible for people to participate in their own oppression. Stereotyping, ignoring and trivializing the contribution of black people, women and working class people to this society has at times led many of them to believe in their own inferiority and often collude with their oppressors without even knowing this. The following diagram illustrates the tool:



- Resource allocation in organizations

A third observation is that resource allocation in our institutions is regarded as an exceptionally powerful activity. The extent of power commanded by top management is often frightening (Moahloli, 1997). Who decides who gets what is predictably a decision made at the top, and one that is often influenced by dominant organizational ideologies and interests. For example, the allocation of time as a resource for men to play golf has become a standardized norm in many South African companies. It is used to justify “networking” with actual and potential suppliers and clients. Black and white women and some black men who do not want to or cannot play golf are inadvertently excluded from this activity. This often affects their performance results as the organization has placed value on the ability to network on the golf course. Women complain that they would never be allowed to network in shopping malls with potential suppliers and clients!

- Analyzing conflict in organizations

The kind of differences described above tend to generate a fair amount of conflict in South African institutions where access to position power (authority), information and expertise, alliances and networks, control of agendas, control of meanings and symbols and control of rewards and sanctions still lies in the hands of white, upper-middle class, heterosexual men.

However, increasingly white South Africans are beginning to realize that black people have allies in the new ruling classes who are changing employment, recruitment, selection and procurement laws to level the playing fields. There is a definite move towards the realization among white people that black allies are a necessity. In turn, black people realize the opportunities that white people can offer in such strategic alliances.

This analysis is political because it assumes that power is a key resource in the way people behave with one another in our private institutions. Long-term historical differences related to race, gender and class among managers and employees leads to conflict.

The analysis does not seek to offer only structural and procedural solutions to the many problems that we face daily in South African organizations, nor do we seek solutions which address human resource needs only, such as ensuring that organizational and personal objectives fit with each other. This would be a human resource solution to the problems (Bolman and Deal, 1991). The mobilization of people and ability to create and manage change is one of the biggest challenges for managers.

6. Conclusion

The real issue facing us as change agents working in the private and public sectors in South Africa is the degree to which we can sell the notion that race and gender equality are good and right for business and citizens.

The government's basic needs agenda invites the entire nation to participate in it. It is a political agenda and makes it imperative for business in South Africa to begin to understand the social justice discourse of a non-racist and non-sexist society that is being used to promote the transformation of South African society.

In the same vein, government needs to understand the discourse of the "bottom line." Business will only respond if an enabling environment is created which enhances rather than diminishes that bottom line.

If we argue that we cannot remove race and gender from the core of politics and tag them on as anti-racists and multiculturalists have done in other countries, then our challenge is also to develop a more positive understanding of politics (with a small "p") so that everyone, every citizen, is able to understand how political processes affect their lives at home and at work on a daily basis including executives in corporate board rooms.

The real challenge is four-fold:

1. To develop a South African political framework to analyze race, gender and class in the workplace, both corporate and public;
2. To find practical ways of breaking through the ideological circle through education and training to debunk the myths, and developing formal strategies that undermine the status quo as well as making these visible to the whole nation through public institutions like the media;
3. To develop a management style which encourages real participation through understanding power as a relationship between black and white and men and women and people of different classes rather than as a commodity; and
4. To utilize difference maximally through perhaps developing open organizational cultures, that encourage the sharing of common and different experiences, that develop coalitions, that actively challenge behavior that is discriminatory and that celebrate success and mourn losses through rituals and symbols in the workplace.

Though the ideological analytical model appears closed and rigid and appears to offer little change, experience has demonstrated that institutions are not monolithic and dents can be made if there is a level of commitment and people understand the significance of working for the achievement of equality and justice.

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A. EMERGENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE STRATEGIES

The case studies present a number of embryonic strategies that embody opportunities for institutional transformation. The following are some of the critical enabling conditions that supported internal and external transformation. The starting point of these strategies stresses the importance of context-specific and context-sensitive strategies. Effective and sustained institutional transformation needs to focus on four inter-related areas: the external context, the development of institutional leadership, the establishment of enabling institutional arrangements, and working with organizational culture.

1. Work within context

The South African case studies reflect the importance of an enabling context for equity to leverage organizational change. The national agenda of change allowed a dialogue around diversity to be taken into organizations. The vibrancy of the change process, coupled with the existence of a strong women's movement within an active civil society, have ensured that the agenda-setting of organizations was reflective of equity issues discussed in the external environment.

The existence of the following factors has allowed for this.

- Alliance-building with all potential allies, like-minded organizations, gender machineries within government;
- Recognition of and work with enabling contextual imperatives: macro-level equity policies, political commitment of political leadership, the existing issues, needs and challenges around diversity;
- Working on a national as well as an institutional level that contributed to a holistic approach;
- Strong activism through a two-pronged strategy that combined working on policy with building a strong, independent women's movement;
- The development of approaches and strategies that were context-specific and context-relevant;
- Ensuring that government had joint ownership in gender justice goals; and
- Working with men and women in order to grow awareness and strengthen the support base.

2. Enabling institutional leadership

The support of leadership in institutions has been critical to move support from policy commitment to policy enactment. This recognizes the influencing role that leadership has within the organization, both as leaders as well as role models that reflect equity culture in leadership style and behavior. This requires new leadership skills that reflect some of the following.

- A leadership that demonstrates a new kind of leadership: transformational and strategic that will "walk the talk;"

- Ensure participative strategic planning that will define, manage, and monitor the change route within the institution;
- Create equity institutionally through cross-sectored dialogue that links policy to practice;
- Create and implement incentives and disincentives for performance; and
- Develop organizational procedures to guide implementation.

3. *Institutional arrangements*

The South African case studies demonstrate the difficulty of moving from policy-speak to policy-do. While many organizations have adopted equity policies, there is a worrying tendency to “disappear” the policy by not developing guidelines for procedures that can lead to implementation. Organizational culture is also left intact, so that the policy exists alongside an informal culture that reflects the old. The question of “what do we have to do differently” is addressed in the case studies by the following:

- Develop strategic management teams to track the process consciously to sustain and maintain change;
- Develop multi-skilled teams, trained to be effective in implementing gender goals;
- Work towards a supportive board;
- Articulate a business rationale that demonstrates the benefit of policy implementation to all stakeholders, internally as well as externally;
- Locate the performance gaps between policy and practice;
- Work with the institutional history and culture;
- Make the vision tangible and concrete: set targets linked to the performance appraisal systems; have sanctions and disincentives;
- Anticipate resistance: invest in a change process for everyone within the system; and
- Make the link between the personal, organizational, and societal change required.

4. *Working with organizational culture*

Organizational culture presents a formidable barrier in many organizational change efforts. While it had been a necessary condition to adopt equity policy to change what goes on in the “head” of organizations, the adoption has not presented a sufficient condition to change the “heart” of organizational members. Here, the resilience of apartheid ideology continues to be the most difficult area to shift. The process of transition has to include addressing culture as part of the change strategy, or the gains of the policy will be rolled back to the familiarity of the norms and belief systems of the past. The following strategies need to be part of the change process:

- Surface institutional assumptions on which the organization is based;
- Distinguish between instinctive and conditioned responses so as to establish a pattern for change;
- Focus on a change process that links the external to the internal;
- Recognize and link diverse personal life of staff with work structure, and consider implications of these for organizational practice; and

- Be aware of shifts in ideology through the formation of groups that may form in order to protect privilege for specific groups within the organizational system.

The case studies highlight snapshots of change processes within South Africa and stress the importance of linking the personal with the institutional and overall societal change to nurture and sustain efforts towards transformation. They also reflect on some of the emergent and embryonic strategies that change agents have developed to deal with the complexity of change. As such, the case studies provide rich ground for further analyses and learning.

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