AN EXPLORATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN DIVERSITY DYNAMICS

by

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Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject

INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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November 2003
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I feel a deep sense of gratitude to the following people who guided and supported me in completing this dissertation:

- Frans Cilliers and Michelle May, for their supervision, guidance and support.

- Caren, Juan-Jacques and Chené for their encouragement, patients and loving support.

- My family, for their interest and encouragement.

Marius Pretorius

November 2003
DECLARATION

Student number: 7908253

I declare that ‘An exploration of South African diversity dynamics’ is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE                                                                                             DATE

Mr M Pretorius
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SUMMARY

Diversity has, over the last few decades, become a burning issue on the agenda of most companies. Current diversity-related interventions are mainly based on behaviouristic and socio-cognitive approaches. In this research diversity was approached from the systems psychodynamic paradigm. The general aim was to gain an understanding of the diversity dynamics that manifests in an South African diversity experience. The literature review focussed on diversity in the workplace, on the group relations training model, and on the application of the group relations training model to diversity. Qualitative research was done by interviewing a sample of 15 delegates who attended the November 2000 Robben Island Diversity Experience. These unstructured interviews were used to obtain in-depth information about the participant’s experience and the data was analysed hermeneutically. The emerging themes were ‘crossing the boundary, engage the new world, the ties that bind, being imprisoned, the struggle, the road to reconciliation, integration and healing, back to the future and the crucible’.

It is recommended that South African organizations make more use of the systems psychodynamic approach to study the manifestations of diversity dynamics. The aim is not to replace the other approaches to diversity, but to add a perspective that can enhance awareness and sensitivity to the covert, unconscious and irrational forces that impact on diversity.

KEY TERMS: South African diversity, diversity dynamics, systems psychodynamic paradigm, group relations training model, Robben Island Diversity Experience, identity, power, reference systems, relations and relatedness.