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The impact of South African culture on the management of people

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2016-08-19
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/20919

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their own logic and what is logical to you may not be logical to them, but we are likely to see things more logical. Now I think in western thought we like a framework to fit. If I have a world view then I like things to fit into that world view and to make sense. If things happen to me and there are reversals in my business or in my health or something like that, I need to integrate that in terms that either, God is doing something to me, or else I am responsible and I have to do something about that. To some extent those two things can run in parallel. But what is very interesting in African thought, particularly as I have experienced over many years, is the sense of foresight and a sense of real responsibility for what is going to happen. Now the very common anecdote that you will hear from anybody is that a lot of African people think and the thing that is a big difference between caucasian or western European people and African people is the anticipation that something is going to happen. For example, you may have a dispensary full of medicines and it may be very difficult to replenish those medicines, at least a week or two. But often your assistant will come along and say it is finished. Not it is getting finished, it is finished. Now you ask the question, why is it finished, why have not you told me before? I do not know, it is just finished. There is no sense that the person there is taking the responsibility for the fact that they forgot or did not anticipate that this thing was running out. That is part of very significant world view. I do not know how to explain it, but it is pretty universal.

Researcher

Is it a form of external locus of control as opposed to internal locus of control?

Respondent 9

Yes, I think so, I think it is . It applies as well to illness. If you have an illness then the question about that illness is why did I get ill at that particular time. Now that question is not unique to Africans. Many religions were asked that question as well. But is very significant that the African patient very often will understand the germ theory or whatever you tell them. But to answer the religious question

"Why did it happen to me?" And Why me, and then comes a lot of other explanations which are important and which are germane to the thinking that the immediate ancestors are involved. Now even the very sophisticated people, I had an experience last year, I asked one of the psychologists last year, do you believe that you can be bewitched and she answered, yes. Now that would apply to anything whether it was sickness, whether it was a business reversal or whatever it is . There is a direct influence that one person can have on another for bad luck or whatever may happen and which is an imponderable and something of which I have no control except of course if I take precautions against bewitchment but the precaution may not work. I can go to a witchdoctor and a witchdoctor needs to be understood. A witchdoctor is a person who treats witchcraft. They are not necessarily people who are perpetrating witchcraft. That is a misunderstanding that we whites have had for a long time. So I go to a witchdoctor who will then tell me, where is this bad luck coming from, who is the witch and what must I do about it. And that is a very deeply engrained, almost an instinct, rather than something that is thought through and it affects people who have taken on any kind of religion, christian religion or whatever it is . It is a very engrained deeply seated belief, and that is what I am involved with.

Researcher

Does it influence people's relationships with each other?

Respondent 9

Well I think it is the reason for the suspicion. People do not fundamentally trust each other and that is where the family members are important. Because, again the fundamental instinct is that if you belong to my family you will not harm me even if you are a very distant relation, you are my sister, you are my brother. But beyond that it is very difficult to trust, whereas in some cultures there is fundamental trust before there is mistrust. In an African culture perhaps mistrust is too strong a word, but there is just a wariness - I do not quite know where you are coming from.

Researcher

So, it makes that element of relationships very important between people. That is the basis on which you build trust.

Respondent 9

Yes

Researcher

In your view, how does that affect people who come into a western business as most of our businesses actually are in terms of their orientation?

Respondent 9

Well I must say I do not know.

Researcher

How would you see it affecting them?

Respondent 9

I would think it would take a long time before they could really be able to build up trust, and a long time before somebody would be given the benefit of the doubt. Where there are two possible interpretations on something, the bad will be given before the good. Whereas I think that in a western view, and I may be wrong, I do not want to be dogmatic about it, but I think that most people will wait and see and give the benefit of the doubt and say, OK it looks bad but there may be another, let us just turn a blind eye to this. I think that the bad will just hook in to, now I cannot trust this person and there is a wariness and the loyalty perhaps. The loyalty will be to the clan more than to the business. You know in many different ways one will find - perhaps this is true of all lower socio-economic groups and I think one of the difficulties in this country is that black people are generally poor and white people generally rich, and that makes a problem in the generalising of what is culture and what is purely socio-economic.

But I think that the engendering of a loyalty to the employer or to the company perhaps would be more difficult with other cultures. There is another loyalty and that is a loyalty to the clan and the family which overrides everything. And that kind of generosity which is truly African is a kind of self giving generosity unquestionably to people of their own family and the sort of demands that family members have a right to make on somebody else just because they are family. That may be in conflict with the business loyalty.

Researcher

Just coming back to what you were talking about, the suspicion and the wariness of people with whom you are not related or not family, there is a lot that is been written about Ubuntu and "I am part of the community" and the dignity of human beings and treating all people with dignity etcetera. How does that fit into that wariness of approaching others, strangers. Does it fit in or is there a clash?

Respondent 9

No, I do not think so. I think that one of most important things about African philosophy is it is not divisive it is synchronistic it pulls things together. So one would think that suspicion and ubuntu would be mutually exclusive, but not in African thought. It runs together. And there is a closeness and that is certainly in our situation now the grades of loyalty. My experience is, that if you are black you will support the black person even if you think they are wrong. The white person is on the other side of the line. And that is certainly been my experience, that firstly there is a loyalty to the clan and then there is a loyalty to the tribe and then there is a loyalty to the race, and I think that this is where ubuntu is strongest, in their loyalty to each other. There is a very strong loyalty. At the same time, it does not mean that I cannot kill him, or beat him up, or where there can be considerable violence within that ubuntu but still with even that the loyalty is stronger that it would be across the race barrier. I am just speaking from my experience, and that is that one feels that when the chips are really down, the loyalty is to each other and one is an outsider. And sometimes when one realises

that one can be very hurt about it.

And I think that it lead to enormous amount of misunderstanding in a business. You know when you see people standing around smiling at each other, drinking cocktails and you think we are building a company, we are building a community, we are building a team, that is not what it is about at all. It is really built in time and I find that kind of understanding and loyalty does not occur in normally investing 5 or 6 years of association. It takes a long time to build that trust. The people feel they can really trust you, and they - it is a fine line - it is nice.

Researcher

Just to take what you have said a little bit further. Does that imply that to an extent if we want loyalty and we want that giving within our organisations, that we have to try and structure them and create (not artificially and not manipulatively) those feelings of relationship and attachment that exist within the outside lives of the workforce.

Respondent 9

I do believe so.

I think that it has got to be built on relationships which are realistic and a relationship not built on telling. And it has got to be built with people who will really allow time for people to express themselves and people have to be willing and feel that they are free to express themselves, they can actually express themselves. And I think this is one of the biggest problems we are going to have in the post-apartheid society is that the African person at grass roots has never been listened to. You just need to take the example of the person working in a house. They know all about you as us. They have probably reared the children, heard all the fights that the parents have had, all that sort of thing. But how much do we know about that person and where they come from, their customs. They are really there for our convenience and chattel. It has been a very one way

relationship certainly for a long time. And for the black person to really feel that the white or the business leader is able to sit down and listen to them, it may take a long time. It may seem totally illogical, but that is the only way that trust can be built. When the person coming into the situation feels that they are being heard, that they are actually being taken seriously and being heard. And a lot of the frustration comes from the assumptions that leadership make. "I know these blacks." That is the biggest flaw. That is what one has to understand, where they come from. And if that listening is taken seriously in the terms of Martin Buber where the I/Thou relationship is really taken seriously and assumptions are put aside, then I think we can bring some communication and the engendering of the rot. But you know we have all made this terrible mistake of assuming that we know, and we do not. It is enormously time consuming - enormously, and in a busy business one gets just satisfied with a minimum of contact and a maximum of execution. And that does not really so anything. It is just a pay cheque at the end of the month there is no interpersonal relationship between them.

Very often at Baragwanath the doctors have names and the sisters do not and there is that kind of non identity in a sense is protective to the sisters, they do not want to be known so they do not wear name tags. At the same time there is no real kind of personal connection between the doctor, who is often white, and the sister who is black. They will work together, they will do the job and so on and one will go one way and the other go the other way at the end of the day. It is really only a work contact and that is an I/It relationship, not a person to person relationship.

Researcher

Does it have an impact on the way people perform and the level of their performance that I/it relationship?

Respondent 9

I think it is demonstrated quite clearly. My son was a houseman at Baragwanath

last year and became enormously angry with what he perceived as professional neglect by nurses. He became angry with the nurses. And there just was not any way of resolving that in the mechanics which there are. There would be a blow up and no resolution. But then again, in that sort of situation it is an artificial situation. Nobody is the employer, they are both just forced together in what is really patient care, but the expectations of one of the other are deceptively different. And again it really is communication, different expectations, different communications, different cultures of what this is all about. Why did I go into medicine? Why did I go into nursing? What do I expect that I should do for my patients? And I suppose those questions are no different in any organisation.

Researcher

Coming back to your view that you talked about. You talked about the element of suspicion and in the sense, not fatalism but external locus of control

Respondent 9

That fatalism comes into how you nurse a patient. It makes a difference to how she performs and what is caring. It certainly perhaps affects the so-called caring professions more than perhaps it would affect business because business is more uni-directional, your goal is more clearly defined. Whereas the whole thing of caring is a much more difficult thing and why people come into something like medicine for very different motives. I would imagine people go into business for more clearly defined motives.

Researcher

No, I think they are probably as diverse or more diverse because there are so many types of .....

Respondent 9

I would have thought that business, at the end of the day, was to try and create wealth. But I am not sure that caring can be defined that way. We cannot even say

that we are there to create health because we cannot do that. We are there just to cure some, to relieve many and to comfort a lot. And even if those words; care, relieve, comfort; are open to a host of meanings whereas creating wealth is not open. It is either there or it is not, you are either winning or losing.

Researcher

In that sense I agree with you.

Respondent 9

There may be different ways of getting there but, and perhaps that makes it easier in bringing together cultures where you have very clearly defined goals to what performance is and what performance is not. How you are going to get there.

Researcher

Coming back, we were talking about fatalism and the loyalty that exists. Are there any other what you would see, as salient features of that world view or culture?

Respondent 9

Well I think the important thing is the external locus of control and perhaps very clearly expressed in simple things that happen. In African languages you usually find the person missed the bus. You will not say "I am sorry I am late, I missed the bus." " I am late because the bus left me." That is a very common expression. Or else, I fell off my bicycle. The bicycle threw me off. And it is a view of responsibility. Now again it comes to the external locus of control but it is also a view of how much am I responsible for what I am. And that I think might be a profound shift in thinking that we need to take place. Being master/mistress of my own fate is a very important thing. I can believe in myself and I am going to do it. I am responsible. And that is a very important issue.

Researcher

From your experience of this world view, and your understanding of what

business is and how it operates, do you believe business is structured to allow people with this world view to succeed or to become successful?

Respondent 9

I do not know the answer to that, but my gut feeling is that it is not. That certainly the experiences of business, the little that I know about it, when it comes to industrial relations and trying to get resolution, what I have heard is an absolutely enormous frustration. Again because of different views of what negotiations are all about. African negotiation is, generally speaking, about consensus and if one takes the tribal systems and family gatherings and so on, and the individual is then subjected to a corporate mind, people will discuss it endlessly, and the discussion will go on and on. And from what I have heard of many of these kinds of unfortunate situations, everybody thinks they have got the resolution the night before, and the next morning when they come to it again they think they have the resolution and everybody has changed. And I do not quite know where all that is going wrong. It seems to me that it may be a misperception of what negotiation is doing. I think a large part of that is also - is not that and there are other agendas coming into that negotiation which really one does not fully understand. The goal posts keep on being shifted.

And I think also there is a misunderstandin~ when you start bringing a western view to an African view you are coming back to this whole thing of logic. What is logical to one is not logical to the other. What is obvious to one is not obvious to the other. And they come at it from very different points of view. I think that is one of the difficulties to reach consensus where there is conflict because each person is coming at it from a different agenda and nobody is really seeing the other person's views.

Researcher

So instead of looking for conflicts of interest there is an element in needing to look for commonalities of interest.

Respondent 9

I think that, and if people again can be taken seriously and really know that they have a stake and investment in what happens and they really know what is happening to everything. Now of course say letting them know everything, there is a huge element of misunderstanding because of educational problems, because one just does not understand economics and does not understand what happens to money, and then again, always at the back there is the suspicion and the interpretation that I am being done down here. And the history of our country is that we have done them down. They have reason to be suspicious. We have got such huge discrepancies between the rich and the poor, where the rich have got richer and the poor have got poorer. It is obvious to see that. They are in our homes they talk, there is an enormous amount of communication - that is another interesting thing - is the level interpersonal communication between blacks. The blacks give a huge amount of time to communication and this is where the ubuntu comes in again. At the time when the state of emergency was here and they clamped down on communication it did not affect the blacks at all. It affected the whites. Because the whites only get from television or the newspaper, they do not talk to each other. Whereas with the black people there is a huge amount of communication. They walk much slower and they talk much faster. And so they understand. So the spread of this communication is very much faster between each other. They are still in an oral tradition. Their tradition is heavily oral and they are relying on oral tradition. This may be one of the problems that management have in dealing with staff.

Researcher

In a sense there is a lot that has been written in literature. People talk about the autocratic nature of African society. The father or the parent decides your future or where you are going, the Chief decides. You constantly listen to somebody else. Yet there is talk about democratic nature of that, that getting consensus, the indaba, sitting down and discussing things. Are either or both of these elements true, and if they are how do they work together?

Respondent 9

That is a very interesting contradiction but they are both true. Again if one looks at the structure of say this huge body of nurses at Baragwanath, now it is the nurses that keep that colossus together, but it is a vicious, disciplined, autocratic structure. And also the feeding from the bottom to the top is instantaneous. The people at the top demand that there is an inordinate amount of time spent in meetings, writing, reporting, sending it up, so all communication goes up to the top. This give the top enormous power, it gives the top a lot of information and they can control. At the same time, policy is talked about. People at various levels have quite a lot of times - I am just talking again about basic structure - there is a lot of times spent talking. And although there is the autocratic structure, to be able to formulate the policy that is often formed by consensus, but then policy is ruthlessly applied. But the indaba has to be seen running parallel to a fundamental autocratic society. A father, what he says is law. Now to a certain extent in places this is breaking down and changing, but there is still a very authoritarian view and people accept that authority. And that may seem to you a contradiction with democracy. But if you look at any African country, there is no democracy. There is a lot of talking. But fundamentally it may be to air their ideas, but somebody will make a decision, it is usually the dictator, usually somebody at the top. But it also does not stop a lot of talk, and in the tribal authorities it is usually the elders who make the decisions for the youngers. That is another thing, there is respect for age which is very characteristic of the Africans. They have deep, deep respect for the elder people and for at least caring for them and if possible listening to them. Very soon these people will be dead and they will be the ancestors who will have an immediate effect on them, so they have to watch how they treat them. And that is engrained.

Researcher

Linked to that, there is that tremendous respect for age that I have read about, and the fact that wisdom comes from age and authority comes from age. Yet even if you go into a hospital like Baragwanath, authority does not come from age.

Authority comes from skills and knowledge and somebody being promoted by someone outside in authority. How do those two concepts work together? Do they clash in an organisation or an institution like Baragwanath? Can they complement each other?

Respondent 9

I think that there is a mixture of two systems, and he who pays the piper and calls the tune. And competence and learning has overtaken that. And that to some extent I think is what happened when the school children rebelled against the parents. That here now was a different enabling, enabling from knowledge and that knowledge gave power and the parents actually found themselves powerless in stopping. And there was a huge disruption in those days, first of all the 76 riots and in the 80's when the young people really took the bit between their teeth and went for it, and this then became democracy and became the powerful thing. But with all that there is still a respect for the elderly person generally speaking, a caring. Even if the older person is my junior in the system I will still respect them as a person of standing they will not just be denigrated. I do not think that is terribly different from our system. The fact that a person has not got a high position does not mean to say that we just wipe the floor with them. I think that - I mean it comes in the Judaeo Christian code as well honour thy father and thy mother, and I think it is there that there is a natural ubuntu about that as well. The ubuntu as you know is "a person is a person through other people". That really is the concept of ubuntu. And in a sense that is one of the most hopeful things in this country is there is still respect for people and despite all political machinations when the chips are really down there is a great deal of goodwill between people. Though in short term I might be pushed aside because I am not black, but in the long term I believe I will be accepted because of who I am rather than the colour of my skin. And I think that the black people see that more clearly than white people do. They are less inclined to simply put people into pigeon holes. That is my personal view. I think I have seen much more prejudice, white to black than black to white.

Researcher

Where does this take us? Culture is not a static thing. Culture is a changing thing and you have, what I feel, a very strong westernised culture among the whites. We have a strong African culture, but the two are coming together. Do you foresee a time where that African culture disappears and is swamped by this western culture, or will something else emerge?

Respondent 9

I think it will depend - certainly I think that we are merging. I come across most competent African people in various ways. A really competent person who I felt I trusted a lot more than his white colleagues. And I think there is going to be a merging. The eventual mix will depend, I think, upon how many whites are in business, and if business thrives then I think it will become more westernised, it will swing more towards western of centre. If it does not thrive, then I think obviously it will become more African in its nature. What is very interesting to me, as just a lay observer, has been the growth of the flea market type of non-formal business sector which in many ways is essentially African, 20-25 years ago people were sitting at the roadside selling a few vegetables or something like that, and all the markets in Dar es Salaam, Addis Ababa, Kenya, and so on, this informal sector. Sitting at the side of the road going to Zimbabwe were people who were prepared to sit for hours selling their little sculptures, pots, etc. And as this economy has gone down here so the flea market type of non-formal organisation has burgeoned to the effect, I understand, that it is changing the nature of some of the way people are doing business, in particular the clothing industry, and so on. So the informal kind of selling which is very African in nature and the Spaza shops, somebody having small business and merely buying a bit, selling a bit and making ends meet, but having a lot of time to do other things as well. A lot of time for communication, a lot of time for socialisation and so on. It really is very essentially African rather than the eastern type of really high powered 7 days a week, loyalty to hard work and having efficiency. That is different in Africa. There is a big difference between, if you take the opposite

end, the eastern cultures. I do not know very much about it but I just see what has happened in Japan, Taiwan, these countries that have gone ahead so fast. They are very different from the African view of what life is about and this may be where ubuntu comes in, that my relationship, my communication is actually more important than sacrificing myself to work.

Researcher

Does that mean that we as Africans and an African economy can never really compete in a world class environment?

Respondent 9

Yes. I think that it probably does mean we cannot. And I think that certainly I cannot see any huge changes, unless worlds are kept apart. In other words, people will come and work in what is a highly efficient industrial area. And in so doing sacrificing a lot of things that for them (I am talking about us and them as white and black - I do not really mean to be racist) But there are huge differences in just where people are in terms of first world, developing world and so on. I think that many people can come into first world and in perhaps increasing numbers will come into a first world setup provided that they can see the fruits of that, see the fruits of actually having a work ethic, and that work in itself is valuable. But that is something that is different in different cultures. Just the fact of working and doing something, sometimes whether one is remunerated for it or not, for example Western art, and the enormous amount of hours and hours of work that is put into doing something which essentially brought them nothing except appreciation of what they had done, and that is a different world view. And the other reason for doing work is to be paid for it, and if people are paid properly maybe that will bring about efficiency. But my mind boggles to try and move from the huge amount of inefficiency - inefficiency is a bad word - but a different attitude toward what happens during working hours and how much I need to be accountable for each minute of every day. And as I understand eastern work ethic is there and that is how they have been able to build these economies, and I do

not know how we can translate Africa into that. The two seem to me to be so different.

But, on the other hand, one sees important exceptions in numbers of people who are coming into schools, black children who are coming into schools and doing phenomenally well, and who really - who have generated a work ethic. And that could possibly change, but it will take a while. It will not change overnight. People have really got to see the results of the hard work. And that will be the only thing that will convince them, and I think that will be more important than a world view.

In other words, I think that if people can really be involved in their business and the direction of the business is such that they are getting direct remuneration from what is happening in the business, then I think that there may be an improvement and one may be able to compete in a world market in that kind of way. The difficulty is that, as I see it as a non-business person, the way we have been able to compete in the world market up till now is having vast numbers of low paid labour, which has made our products relatively cheap, but the low paid labour has been inefficient. Now the question is, can one raise both efficiency and wages at the some time? Because that is not what people are demanding. People are demanding more money for less work, or more money for the same work, and that is a very big problem, I think, to business.

Researcher
You are intimating some form of sharing in the wealth, and participating is feeling of belongingness to that organisation or that the organisation is giving something back to them.

Respondent 9
And I also feel that the discipline in an organisation is something that Africa fundamentally understands. The trade unions fouled it all up, and I think that the

trade unions have done a good job for the average person, but in terms of understanding discipline that is fundamentally African. If you do not do what you are supposed to do you are either dead or get out. If you look at the discipline in the wars of Chaka, the way he ran his armies and so on, it is absolute discipline. And I think there is an element where authoritarianism comes through, but it will probably be melted - perhaps this is totally idealistic - but it will probably be melted into a combination of participation and discipline. The two things running together. And an understanding that if I do not perform that these are the parameters laid down before I even start to perform out there, so there is some sort of sub selection. And that would be the way in which contracts may be could work and would not be against an African impulse.

Researcher

There are a number of contradictions that you are talking about that we have to reconcile and perhaps are not contradictions at all, but sympathetic or different ways of looking at the same point, and that they are in fact two halves in a whole.

Respondent 9

I do not think - I think that probably those contradictions need to be held in tension as givens, that we must not in a western way try and reduce everything to this common denominator. We actually have to live with these things and understand them. They are probably in some ways not reconcilable. In all of us there are contradictions that we live with, that we do not really understand, but we live with them and we are very functional people. And perhaps what it means, the wisdom to know the things that you have to attack and the things that you do not have to attack, and to be able to accept that there are differences between those things. But I think that is right to think there are these differences which need to be reconciled, but we need to build on the strengths, and I would feel very hopeful that if we can really build a nation, but I think there has got to be a strongholding on it. There need to be limits set and lines drawn, and perhaps we, as western people, know less of setting limits and drawing lines than they

understand. In the traditional African home the expectations of people are very much more clearly defined that in the ordinary western home in particular in the American home, where the lines between parents and children, and the lines of responsibility are not there. It is an interesting sideline, you know, this ubuntu thing. If you and I are not related, but if your children are playing somewhere near me, and vice versa, and your child does something wrong, it is my responsibility to protect and discipline that child. You just are not physically there, but I am there, and I will take that responsibility and I will give your child a correction or protection whatever, and you will not feel resentful about it, because that is ubuntu, when I am actually taking responsibility for your child when you are not able to. And you will give me latitude in disciplining your child because I am there, whereas it is quite different in western society. If I hit your child and your child goes home, you will never allow your child to visit me again. And that really epitomises what ubuntu is about, as it works traditionally. The African situation likewise, if you are a widow and are unemployed, and you have a child that needs to go to school and I am there, I am working. I may have a very menial job, but I am working you will demand that I share the school fees for your child. And that is again ubuntu. There is a tremendous taking in of the stranger, even if he does not belong to the family, the beggar and the stranger are taken in as family. Strong bonds even if they are beyond family members, and those things need to be considered. For example, businesses get very acid because people take time off to go this funeral and that funeral. But it is usually genuine, it is usually genuine, and if that can be tolerated within a system, I think an awareness of the tremendous importance it is to go and sort out these problems and sort out the family difficulties and so on, is very important to the person.

Researcher

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Respondent 9

I do not know. Just to rephrase it a little differently. One of the biggest problems

in the interface between blacks and whites is the sort of blinkered, focused concentrated view of a western person. You know, everything, dashing along with their briefcase, and their grey suit and their grey shoes and dashing to an appointment and dashing back again and absolutely focused on and never see anybody at the side. And the African person who will greet this one and say hello, and have a moment for that one - that is a huge difference, and I think that probably epitomises an attitude towards life and what is important. That is ubuntu. And I think that in managerial positions that management has got to understand that a huge amount of time has got to be spent on communicated. If a satisfied workforce is going to be there, and people have got to be communicative at all levels not just at a cocktail party with smiling faces. Another thing I think is that whites are extraordinarily bad at interpreting blacks' body language. They do not understand it. And they do not understand the smiling face. They think that smiling faces equal satisfaction and happiness, and that is a total misinterpretation.

Researcher
What does it equal?

Respondent 9
Well, it might just equal I am not allowing you into my life. I will do what satisfies you, but I am not really letting you in because you are not really asking to be let in, not really asking to know me. As long as I keep you happy I will be paid at the end of the month. And to keep you happy I must look happy. And I think that there is naturally in African society a laughing, and there is a comfort in interpersonal relationships which does not easily become aware of the pain on their part. And that, from a medical point of view, for a very long time we did not recognise depression in African people. So there is a huge learning curve. In our country at this time, it is not the blacks who have to learn about the whites, it is the whites who have to learn about the blacks. That is where the learning curve needs to happen and we really need to take time to understand who the people are that we have lived with all our lives.

Researcher

We all have the same problem?

Respondent 9

Yes. And if business is going to work, there has got to be going back to the drawing boards to understand the people.

Researcher

Thank you very much it has been most fascinating.

Respondent 9

One really needs to get to the hurts, which are below prejudices in people. I think people are very hurt and disappointed. That if, in trying to get this thing together, if in putting together a package that helps management, they have got to get beyond just facts. They have got to get to attitudes, they have got to get to prejudices and beyond that they have got to get to the pain and hurt which may have nothing to do with the present situation. We bring this baggage of goods into relationships and the present relationships are often affected by what is happened outside. And I think that that is an aspect that really would need to be dealt with in this inter-cultural mix. It is very painful hearing the hurts of the black man and hearing what we, what I and my society have actually done to them.

Researcher

I think it is Lovemore Mbigi who says that you have actually got to do that. You have actually got to go through that process, and it is not just my attitudes and my actions as a white have done to a black, but it is what they have done to me as a white, as a person. Because, his view is, we are all victims of apartheid. In dehumanising others, we have become dehumanised.

Respondent 9

Absolutely right. And that is exactly what I have seen many times. And it is the

holocaust of apartheid, and yes it has affected the black population tremendously, but in a sense the black population is more whole than the white population. And you talk about the paranoia of the white population is exactly what is happening is that the guilt is spinning back right now. We are damaged people, because the black people have been able to relate both ways, but we have never related properly to the black people in a really significant way. And I think that a new generation which does not know apartheid will be able to put this thing together better than we can. We have just got a huge amount of scar tissue there. A whole preconception about people which to some extent we will never be liberated. That sounds pretty hopeless in a way, but I think that we can do it if we recognise it and do something. If we do not recognise it we are done. But also, you come back to the very question that you asked about the efficiency of the business world. I think that a new efficiency, a new ethos, a new hope, a new country will be looking at this. You have to look at the pain of the past and look at the hope of the future. But also recognise that we are damaged, they are damaged, we have damaged each other. That is got to be recognised. It is almost a definitive thing. It cannot be a given.

Researcher

You almost need to go through a national counselling phase, some form of catharsis.

Respondent 9

I think that if we had something that we could really celebrate together it would also help. We need to learn to celebrate. But we have got to celebrate one thing, we cannot all celebrate different things.

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Researcher

In your opinion, can we identify something that is an African or South African Culture?

Respondent 10

Well it is not an easy task, but it is a task that the people of this country are faced with. It is unfortunate that you come to make this enquiry at this point when we all tiptoed because of the developments taking place. Some of them are worrying us. One had hoped that when the process of transformation of this country has taken a line that was in fact very unique in comparison to any change that has ever taken place, especially in Africa. So South Africans have embarked on this process of coming up with a model of their own. If one, for instance, traces these things back from the unbanning of the liberation movements, the return of exiles which culminated to the first meeting of the African National Congress at Groote Schuur with President de Klerk and subsequently the DF Malan meetings which led to the emergence of Codesa 1, and so on, we had hoped that that process would in fact be a process that would bring positive results to the whole change that is taking place in this country.

But while it would appear that the fear of the unknown in other quarters in this country, are now bring some doubts and fears to the people of this country. For instance, now the fact that we have got the right wing element that is mobilising against the process, that is quite worrying us. So it sort of has an impact on people now to come up with broad perspectives and also touching on the subject that you want to have information about. But we are still convinced, of course, that things will not be as bad as has happened in other parts of Africa such as Angola, Mozambique, but definitely we are going to have a serious period, either

on the eve of the elections or after. Unless otherwise ways and means have been devised to tone down the element of the right wing and, of course, the people that have also got their own approach and who are from the left per se, like for instance the leader of the IFP. I mean he is a force to reckon with, we cannot just sit and fool him around. But all the same we are worried we had hoped that as a champion of democracy he will support the process of democracy of this country. But apparently he has got certain fears and so on, so he would like those fears addressed before the elections, entrenchment of certain positions in the present constitution. So we have got different views, for instance.

Whereas we fully support the whole process from Codesa 1 up to the multi party forum, but at the same time we know that the forum itself was not democratic, let alone that it drew up a lot of political parties in this country but at the same time it was not democratic forum - democratic forum in the sense that most of the people who gathered there were not in fact mandated by the majority of this country. So we had hoped that - not everything had been addressed in this process, but people at least would fully support this process so that it reaches the stage of democracy that is now the Constituent Assembly where democratically elected people now at least would have been mandated by the people of this country to represent them. That is where in fact we feel the whole demands that are being put today should go, but I do not think there is justice in people demanding that now their fears be addressed before the democratic elections. So we think the position for instance of President de Klerk and the ANC meet at this point.

So that sort of impacts now again on the question of people coming up with direct positions. So we know that we have got the whole long history of apartheid in this country. Apartheid that has, in fact, led to the inequalities of the people of this country. So for instance, when I was travelling in Europe, I have travelled to a number of countries in Europe, they were having a problem of where, for instance, the GATT issue, where they have been saying the acceptance of South

Africa to the GATT forum would be very important especially that South Africa with the infrastructure that it has, it would sort of be a spring board for the whole economic development of Africa. But what the problem that those people have is where should we put South Africa? Should we put South Africa now in the developing country category, or where exactly? Because the problem now is that we have got two worlds within South Africa. We have got the First World and the Third World within South Africa. So the underprivileged people of South Africa feel that South Africa should actually be reclassified as a developing country so that these people can qualify in all what is available in the national community, like the injections the financial field, loans and so on, and we can only qualify to those if we are qualified as a developing country. But at the same time looking at the high standard of infrastructure in this country. I mean if one would look for instance at the eastern countries, we are far ahead as one would make comparisons. So we have all those clashing.

Researcher

Yes, we have got all those tensions in this country - contradictions.

Respondent 10

That is right. So they make that difficult for us. We do not know how we are going to harmonise now this view. But all the same that is going to depend now on how the coming new government is going to address the question of the economic policy in this country. But that economic policy, of course, if it does not address the question of the underprivileged people of this country, again that is going to cause more tensions. The same applies, that those are categorised, of course, in the upper class per se, are at the same time going to be worried, because they will not like to be bogged down. They would like to maintain their standard or even go up. So we are going to have those problems. So I think it is a pity that not everybody has engaged himself so much in addressing the economic policy of this country.

But we have seen the reconstruction programme of the ANC. It does, of course, address a number of issues that the majority of people in this country are concerned about. But at the same time, it does have problems on the other sector because it does have the element of nationalisation some how, and they feel that without nationalisation there is no way in fact that they can address purely the problem of imbalances of this country.

Most of the economy of this country is owned by a few people, in the white sector for that matter, it is only a few people that own the businesses in this country. So we have only got five guys owning the whole business in this country. So we have got that problem. That is why the ANC has decided to retain the clause of nationalisation. Though of course they say that is only there, in fact they have been quoting Germany. Germany has in fact got a clause of nationalisation in its constitution, but it has never applied it. So the ANC also seems to copy that approach as the Germans. So we do really have a problem and unless this whole matter really is seriously looked at by all the people engaged in the transformation of this country or the change of this country, it is a pity that some of the parties at this moment have not come up with positions like the ANC has done. But one is hoping that the National Party is going to follow on that to come up with policies, because I do not think they are going to inherit or take over the present economic policy because they have sorted destroyed the economy - I mean the policies of the National Party in terms of economy has sort of down graded with the economy of this country if not led to mismanagement of the economy and so on. As a result we have got this problem.

So I think, in as much as we say we do have resources in this country, we can sort of on our own, address the basic needs of the people of this country, but we definitely are going to need a huge financial investment or financial injection from the international community. Whether that is going to come in the form of loans or anything, but without involvement for instance the IMF, the World Bank and so on, and also individual countries that have economic co-operation with South

Africa. We are definitely faced with problems, and besides that, South Africa is a trap even to our African colleagues. You know for instance if one would look at Nigeria, it has always been seen as the giant in Africa, but they are faced with some serious problems at the moment. For instance there is no political stability in the country. And again, those people feel that they are the people in Africa. And just recently they have applied for admission to the United Nations Security Council, but now that South Africa is going to be democratised, they have become worried. But now South Africa is also worried that it cannot just push all of a sudden to be a member of the United Nations Security Council. Countries like Nigeria that have been in this field for a long time feel that they should be there. But what I see now happening, is Nigeria is now coming closer to South Africa and the idea is that, if it can cement the brotherhood with South Africa, then it would stand a good chance th. they may go jointly now to the UN application for a seat in the security council because Africa is not rep sented at the highest echelons of that body which is something that we feel is a great omission because it is a pity that Africa is going to be de ed upon as some body. If one would look for instance at the trend followed by the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Chief Anyaoki. You can see his attitude towards South Africa. He has been very positive. But we are quite aware that is not what is inside himself is there, but he does not have a choice without South Africa, so they cannot in fact succeed. We do not see them succeeding. But all the same, we are faced with enormous problems.

It is very difficult to say what type of culture do we really have in this country to envisage that we may look at it in this country, it is very difficult.

Researcher

I know, it is difficult, because it is difficult to generalise about 35 million people.

Respondent 10

Definitely, yes. But what we think is going to happen is th first of all South

Africa will have to look at a stable, simple, clear economic policy. And a policy that at least will not lead to fears scepticism, suspicions by the international community, and even to the people of this country themselves. So we need a clear, simple and strong economic policy, which will not necessarily look at ...going in you know the international trade and investment, but which will at the same time look at the quality of the people that will be coming to this country to invest and also with an element of an investment code. In other words, inasmuch as we would like those people who are coming to invest in this country that they enjoy the privileges of getting profits at the end of the day. But they should also try to address the question of imbalances, the upgrading of the human resources of this country, to address the question of the informal sector that we have in this country. So those policies, if one would look at the stokvels approach by the disadvantaged people in this country, that is an encouraging move. Those people need that they should also be assisted so that they upgrade themselves.

And again the question of education is another area which also makes things not to be so rosy in this country. The fact that - I do not even think that the blacks in this country constitute even a fraction of a percentage of managerial positions. So you would only get for instance, the blacks in this country, the so-called managers, you get the majority of them, the personnel managers. So you do not get pure managers. We have got that problem. But even dealing with that through, of course, affirmative action and so on, it should not be done in a blind approach. It will need to become a process and we do not just simply say, now South Africa has been democratised and as such would like to see now a big chunk of the people of this country reflected in all spheres. That is not going to happen all of a sudden. It is going to be a process. When I am talking about the code of investment, I am looking at people that will be coming to invest in this country, and even, of course, the business community in this country, it should look at the question of the upgrading of these underprivileged people so that at least we move together. Then one can start now really looking at what culture do we have in this country. It is not going to be an easy road at all. For instance, if we look at the

question of the rural areas, the bantustans. Looking at Transkei, for instance, which has got ± 45 million people. The majority of those people live in the rural areas. There is poverty, malnutrition, you get all these sorts of things and again the question of people not being educated, a lot of those people are illiterate, and so on. You look at the health facilities, they are totally nil, education facilities - totally nil. It is so pathetic.

You have a child that starts from sub-standard A up to Matric and that child has never seen how a laboratory operates. So all the scientific subjects like physics, mathematics and so on, they only get the theory of that, and that is why we have got these problems. Of course that is not the Transkei alone, that affects every part of the community in this country, but I was just citing the plight of the rural areas. So that is the problem we have all over these bantustans. And unfortunately those that applied for independence and even those that are not independent, they have been operating on a bridging finance facility. As a result that is never brought any development in those regions. So we have got a backlog there of infrastructure and so on. So I think at the moment I think the only bantustan that was better off was Bophutatswana partly because of the rich platinum mines there. They were getting some royalties and so on. Otherwise almost all of them, including Bophutatswana, they have been operating on a deficit. So there are millions and millions of rands of deficit in these bantustans. I do not think there was any attempt made to develop those areas. For South Africa to start now redistributing the existing meagre resources that it has to be channelled in those areas, that is going to contribute a strain on South Africa. We may in fact have some hiccups because the PWV region for instance, of course having the problems of Soweto and the surrounding townships that it has got to look at, and so on, but the other regions are lagging far behind. If one would look at the Cape region, for instance, no infrastructure was started in that region. The PWV people definitely are not going to feel alright if they are going to part with some of what they have to other areas, when they are faced of course with this neighbouring townships and so on. Really There we have got a problem. I needed to gather some more

information, but I just wanted to give this to you.

Researcher

If I may ask a couple of questions, because you have brought up a host of very interesting points and some of them right at the beginning and some further on. The very first thing you said that this process we have gone through of transformation - political transformation - has been unique. It has never been done anywhere else in the world. You see some of it starting to come through in the PLO/Israeli negotiations now. You see something with the British government and the IRA, but that is still a long way away from anywhere. We here politically did something extremely unique. OK we still have things that have to be solved, but even if you look at the process now at the moment, there is still an attempt constantly to bring the IFP the Afrikaner Volksfront into the process. Nobody is shutting doors. Is that something that is uniquely African that is part of the African spirit of doing things. Because so many people talk about Africa as being, the way you solve problems in Africa - problem solving - is to bring people in, bring the people who need to be there into the process. Did it come out of that, is there elements of that in the way that we have gone about the political process?

Respondent 10

I would say that maybe because of history and the whole question that people will come up with the conclusion that that is the approach Africa has, and that has developed in fact to be a culture. But I think there is also a hidden thing on that, because I think if one would look at the whole question of the African history, that almost all of the whole of Africa was colonised, and as such, colonisation itself brought up a new culture which might not have been the original culture of Africa. But the truth is, influences that were brought about by colonisation in Africa, that may be seen now that there is a new culture that Africa has of imposing things on the people and so on. But we think that South Africa in fact has sort of unveiled that perception that we have about Africa - in fact may not be true, because we are part of Africa. We have come out now to unveil that. We

do have the other side of the story this time, because this initiative has been taken by African people, the South Africans. And of course South Africa was also colonised, but we think we have learned a lot of things. South Africa is the last part of Africa to fight for liberation. We have learned a lot and that has made the people of South Africa to go deep in trying to look at the other side of the coin. Hence we have come up with this initiative of now bringing a process that is initiated by the people from the grass root level.

Researcher

Are you saying that is not necessarily a core belief people in Africa, and when I talk about Africa I mean South Africa.

Respondent 10

To qualify what I say is that South Africa may now have unveiled that. In fact that perception was not a hundred percent as it is seen. If one would look at, for instance, how some of our neighbouring countries are closely monitoring and also engaging the not yet free South Africa in their own domestic affairs, you can see that this process that has started here is, in fact, part of a cultural process in Africa itself. We do have, for instance, an influence in Mozambique if I may start with recent developments. The fact that now the leader of Renamo, is meeting with some leaders in South Africa including the liberation movements that have not been in good books per se, because he says that this is in fact the correct approach that we have taken. We may have our different problems, so both leaders of Mozambique, are meeting the leaders of this country, they will be meeting President de Klerk and Mandela, the leaders. Because so they are now also embarking on a similar project and the international bodies have seen that the process that has been taken is the correct one. And it would seem that really this is a culture was in Africa but unfortunately was not given expression. The recent developments in Lesotho, but now the people of Africa came together, important leaders of this country came together to discuss the matter, and also now they have decided to come up with the task force that is now, that committee of the

leaders of Southern Africa to address the question of Lesotho, and so on, and that is not in fact the only country, in Angola itself they saw the leaders of this country and involved them ...

Researcher

Did it not even start, I do not know even earlier, it just occurs to me even earlier with the front line states' attitude and approach to South Africa during the whole sanctions period.

Respondent 10

Yes, if one would look at the sanctions period, the Harare declaration and so on, that was in fact mooted by the leaders of this country. Because the Harare Declaration, for instance, was the initiative of the African National Congress through Oliver Tambo. And he drew that document himself and discussed it with the national executive of the ANC and ultimately brought it to front line states and adopted it as a document by the OAU. So South Africa really is going to have a lot of influence and probably coming up with a new culture in the whole of Africa. So this is really not an easy thing.

Researrher

No, I know it is not. This is why I am not talking to people who are experts or who have the answers off the top of their fingers. I am trying to get a feel for the experience of people. Because as I am sure you are no doubt aware it is outside of my experience to an extent. I may be South African, and I may think of myself as an African, but I am one sort of South African.

Respondent 10

Yes, look at how South Africa for instance influenced the democratisation of Africa let alone that there were some problems. They were involved in the - let alone that we had some problems of these in our super powers then that is not the same in the United States. But South Africans were involved for instance in the

democratisation of Mozambique and Zimbabwe, Angola and many countries to such an extent they had to actively participate in those processes. Whether it was truly a process of the army and so on, but they acted and participated in that. I am sure that the final - if at all South Africa succeeds that is definitely going to change the whole of Africa, and we should expect that there is going to be a new culture emerging in Africa. That is what we envisage. Of course, we do have some problems. We do have some of our African colleagues who get worried that the emergence of South Africa is definitely going to pose a threat to them. They see South Africa as going to be a powerful block. Especially when one addresses the question of the commonwealth. Because without South Africa the survival of Africa is very slim. So everything depends on the success of South Africa for Africa to sort of be resuscitated and so on.

Researcher

You talked earlier about the democratisation process we are going through. It is a slow process and a constantly changing process of a political democratisation. If we look at businesses, corporations, do they need also to be democratised? OK there are two sides of that. There is the one part that is who holds and controls the wealth of those organisations and quite rightly you say a very few people control the wealth. But it is the way they operate. How do they operate, how do they relate to their people? Do businesses need to be listening more to the people who work for them and bringing them more into the process of decision making?

Respondent 10

I think so. I do not see any business boom in this country without, in fact the economic policy I was talking about, we have to address those things. Because without having those things imported in the economy policy, the national economic policy itself, so that is going to have problems. And at the same time, coming to a point, there is no way that we shall be in a position to be stable economically and also to attract trade and investment or financial investment in this country without the business sectors in this country or the businesses

themselves reflecting the true South Africa. In other words, they will have to look at the question of addressing - the question of getting the people involved in this business. As I was saying, without addressing the imbalances, that is going to lead to even the people that have an interest in coming to this country not moving to our expectations. It will be of paramount importance to people of this country, the business inside this country, to look at the question of addressing those things. At least the businesses should reflect the people of this country. In other words, they will have to involve all people of this country.

An element of democracy will have to be there, but at the same time, that should be done with caution. Because if people are going to say we are democratising and not looking at the ability of the people to also contribute in those areas. The Sullivan Code, for instance, tried to do these things but it failed partly because they just wanted to get people in certain portfolios or in certain positions, in companies that sort of subscribed to that code without looking at whether the people do have the necessary skills to get those particular positions. As a result the Sullivan Code could not work to the expectations of those countries that subscribed to the Sullivan Code. So whilst we support democratisation of industries, businesses and so on, it should be done with caution. It becomes a process. It should not just be a cut and dried approach. It should become a process. Let the people learn through that process until they develop to certain levels. But as long as there is that commitment, because if there is no commitment, really that is where the problem is going to be. So what we need is that there should be a commitment, then they start now applying the democratisation in a process approach.

Researcher

Again something you said, was this option of nationalisation which the ANC have built into their economic policy, and one which they have said - it is there, we will not necessarily exercise that option, but we hold that. If business does not like this idea of nationalisation, which most of them do not, is it in their interest to

work on things like wealth creation. Not just for themselves but for all the stakeholders in the business, which is customers, suppliers, employees, in order to keep that option away from themselves? You know, businesses talk about profit, should they rather start thinking - because profit is for shareholders - should they rather be thinking about creating wealth, because when you create wealth, you create wealth for everybody?

Respondent 10

Well, I do not know really, but yes business should be creating wealth. If now that word again does not benefit the majority of the people that will be doomed to failure. That will definitely fail. It has definitely got to be wealth for everybody. Hence I say the development of wealth by the businesses, it is true, but the economy policy of this country has got to see to it that that wealth is really meant for the people of this country. So it should not be a wealth that will again make the poor poorer and the healthy healthier or wealthier. We have got to look for a balance in this area. Most of the people at the moment in the businesses is that certain category of the population in this country. So if it is going to mean now only addressing the question of that category and also neglecting the other category, definitely we are not going to go anywhere. So that wealth will have to in a way balance the inequalities, the imbalances that we have. If the idea is to balance the imbalances that we have at the present moment one would say that would affect the correct approach. And, of course, I do not think ANC wanted that it should retain that clause, but it is faced with enormous problems. I do not talk about this period from the elections up to the end of the drawing of the constitution, during this period of the government of national unity - I am not worried about that. But I am worried about it when it comes to a stage where we shall be having the real government in this country, the party which will have won by majority, we will have the forming of the government and so on. So during this period I am not worried because everybody will be involved in this process.

If, for instance, the ANC wins, it must be seen delivering the goods. It is also

very sensitive to the fact that it has tested the policy of nationalisation, and as Mandela has said I do not think therefore they are going to be married to the policy of nationalisation. But there are of course certain sections that will need, if it is by fraction, that nationalisation will be applied in this country. To address these areas that I have just hinted on. For instance, for the National Party to be where it is today, it had to nationalise. So if one would look for instance at the coming into being of Iscor, Escom, it was to address the question of the poor whites, the "arme boere", especially after the recession of 1930's/1940's. So where people had the farms and could not produce anything because of the drought and so on, that now the farmers were finding themselves finding themselves doing nothing, so it had to be partly nationalised to address those things. But things may not in fact be the same as then, but I think even if it is by fraction they will have to nationalise some, in order that these problems of South Africa are addressed, even if they may not come out publicly to say they are nationalising. They may co-ordinate that, because by saying they are nationalising, that will scare the people.

Researcher

You were talking about businesses' responsibility in creating wealth to balance the inequalities. Is their responsibility only to their workforce, because in any company you have those who have wealth and those who do not have, those who have education and those who do not have, those who have skills and those who do not. So there is an obligation to the people who work for a business. Is a business' obligation limited just to those people or should it extend to the broader community.

Respondent 10

It should extend itself to the broader community. It should not limit itself to only those people. I think that is what made apartheid to fail. There were even those that have made an attempt. So they only limited those corporations to the people who were in the business. So will have to expand into the community. By so

doing it will create investor confidence. So I do not think they should think that by limiting their scope they are making big profits per se, because if they cannot expand, they should look really at the question of getting themselves engaged in the broader community. So the more there is confidence in that particular business the better for it to survive. So by so doing it will be opening up chances of expansion and so on, rather than to concentrate only on a limited scope. That will depend on the ability of the business itself, but if they can afford it they should broaden their operations.

Researcher

Just one more question. You have talked a lot about looking at it from - almost looking down at the situation. From your experience with people in the community, what do you think they want from business? People on the grass roots, what do they want when they move into an organisation?

Respondent 10

What they want is security. The priority is that security. Security in the sense that they would like to see themselves in employment. With the rate of unemployment in this country that we have at the moment, that has created fears to the people. What the people want is security and they can only get security through employment, and at the same time, of course, security in the areas of health facilities and also education, housing. So what the people want the most is security and they feel that they can be secure if they have jobs, houses, health facilities, education. So that is what I have learned in my experience since I have been in those positions. I have been in the rural areas. Wherever I go the people say, if the new government is going to create job opportunities, if the new government is going to see to it that we have shelter, if the new government is going to make sure we are healthy and if this new government would make sure we are educated, that it will address the major problems. Of course, my experience is with the underprivileged people, so I will not say that I am talking on behalf of everybody.

For instance, during the time I was a member of the Transkei Legislative Assembly, I think one of the areas that gave me popularity was, first of all, to be seen addressing the question of provision of the basic needs, for example water in areas. I made a number of contacts with the non-government of organisations like the Kagiso Trust Fund, and also putting pressure on the Transkei government then to take the question of the provision to the water to rural areas as a priority and also putting up of clinics, the health clinics, but water was the priority to me and also the putting up facilities such as clinics to the areas. For instance, the area where I was residing had more than 25000 registered voters, and there is only one hospital in that area, and it is quite a large area. That area had only one hospital and that was very pathetic. So for people to reach this hospital they had to travel hundreds and hundreds of kilometres and we do not have transport again and so on, as a result that made things to be very sad. So my priority was to look at the provision of water and of course the health care facilities. So that made me more popular in the area. But that has now come up, so employment has come to be number one demand of the people of the country.

Researcher

Just something that struck me about you personally. You are a traditional leader, you have also been an elected leader in the Transkei Legislative Council. In the sense of your position here you are an appointed leader. Three different ways of coming to leadership. Is there a difference in what is expected of you as a traditional leader, or as an elected leader or as an appointed leader? Do you h... to behave differently to the people in those three roles, or is it the same?

Respondent 10

I will say basically it is the same, because we are all looking at the needs of the people. Whether the other area has got more emphasis on politics than the other.

Researcher

As a traditional leader is it much harder to dislodge you though, if you are a bad

traditional leader.

Respondent 10

Yes, if you are not meeting the expectations of the people, that sort of really affects the people that you were representing as a traditional leader. And besides that of course, as a traditional leader, there are also other areas that you have a duty. For instance, the chiefs are the custodians of traditions and customs of their people, something that we even have to maintain in the new democratic South Africa. We must maintain our traditions and customs. But that does not mean that has to surpass the basic needs that should get addressed for the people. So I think the mixture of both these things is better off for any traditional leader in the element of the exposure and at the same time having traditional experiences.

Researcher

When you talk about being as a traditional leader the custodian of traditions and customs, sometimes when we talk about traditions we think about ceremonies. Is this more than just ceremonies? What are you the custodian of, the keeper of?

Respondent 10

Well, it will be the ceremonies and because our history you do not find it in books and so on, it is our duty as traditional leaders to relate these things because we get fortunate, we as traditional leaders, we inherit some of these things from our forefathers. For instance, before I could stand as a Chief at home I must have gone through a process of education, my grandfather, my father and the counsellors are always with us. We are the people that should now always remind the people of how our ancestors lived, how our grandfathers lived and which were the most important things which we feel that we should retain those things. Of course, we know that there is now this culture of education and so on. Some of these things do not become so much talk, and most of that now we are challenged by the realities of that now the minds of people are brought up through education. And most of the traditional norms and so on, things that cannot be proved

scientifically, so you have to face the problem of those people who are educated and those who are not educated. You must be the person to balance those things at all levels.

Researcher

Are you forced then, not by circumstances, but because a people that does not change dies, or that is my belief. People have to change and we adapt to circumstances. Are you forced to take your traditions, take your values, take your cultures and customs and adapt them to the changing circumstances, or is it important that you maintain them, because that gives people some rock against which they can fall?

Respondent 10

Yes, what is important is that we should not be rigid as custodians of this things. We should not be rigid. We have got to look at the circumstances prevailing, but that should, at the same time, mean not taking away what the people believe in, and we have got a duty as provisional leaders to engage ourselves in the process of educating the people. You have got to make this a process. Otherwise the moment that you impose these things on the people there is going to be a confrontation. It must be a process. And, at the same time, you must be flexible enough, at least somewhere, it should be made to adapt to the certain environment but without totally taking it away. Do not tear away the foundations. But at the same time do not be too rigid because that will cause harm in the area in which you lead. You have two schools that you lead. If you go to the old people you cannot tell them anything, the same applies to the young people.

Researcher

So there is a need for a leader. Not totally democratic, we make all the decisions?

Respondent 10

You can see that these people are used to a leader. Somebody has to sanction

decisions somewhere.

INTERVIEW NUMBER 11

No interview transcript available

INTERVIEW NUMBER 12

Researcher

In your opinion, is there such a thing which we can identify as a South African or African culture?

Respondent 12

Any society has distinctive cultural features and it is not earth shattering to expect that the South African society would have certain distinctive cultural features as opposed to any other society. What is a society, is a problem in terms of definition. You can define a society in terms of geographical boundaries. You can define a society in different linguistic groups. You can define a society in terms of particular historical features that binds people together beyond geographical boundaries. In South Africa, I think, what you have is a high level of fragmentation which has been obviously given major impetus over the last 40 years by the social engineering of apartheid. But even before that there was a high level of fragmentation anyway in terms of linguistics and in terms of history, in terms of clashing cultures, in terms of European colonialism and the conflict between indigenous people and the European colonialism. But I think in South Africa you probably are talking about several sub-cultures that exist, and these sub-cultures obviously have an impact on every sphere of South African life and it would have an impact on the workplace organisational life more generally. However, sub-cultures do not necessarily mean that you cannot have commonalities that intersect with various sub-cultures. By that I would mean, for example, certain work ethics can find its place amongst different sub-cultural groupings.

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And I think the important thing in the South African sort of context is that a lot of the division has been on racial lines, but that sometimes obscures some of the

sub-cultures rather than clarifies what the cultural features are. Because at an obvious level of course there is black and white and there is certain distinctive features that will obtain there and that is a distinction that is not unuseful but I think it cannot be solely the one to look at. And I think that a lot of social science, research, a lot of business studies tends to simply do that. The failure to disaggregate the black mistaken-homogeneity and the white mistaken-homogeneity I think is a serious shortcoming in terms of making any useful analysis and useful lessons. Because the range of other variables that need to be taken into account in addition to what I have already mentioned, for example, rural and urban cultural patterns, are very different in the sense that urban culture is very distinctive from the rural culture. The other thing that will get very much more stressed in the new political dispensation is around regionalisation. I know the Eastern Cape region very well now and I can tell you that the Eastern Cape region has a very different vibe from the PWV. There is a very major cultural difference. But you see I think there is a need for you to unpack what you understand the culture very carefully, because culture and cultural experts gets defined by certain things like dance, language, arts, art forms.

Researcher

Those are external manifestations of culture.

Respondent 12

Yes, and I think that for the purpose of this study obviously that is important, and those are usually signposts of the deeper fabric of a particular society or grouping. But in the end, culture for me is just the pattern of life in a very simple way, and the pattern of life of people living in the informal settlement is distinctively different from the pattern of life of people living in the Northern Suburbs. And it does not have to be race bound, it does not have to be linguistically bound, because in the informal settlement you have all sorts of languages, different historical groups, even now in the modern day in the Northern Suburbs. Now to make a meaning of that for the purposes of how it impacts on an organisational

life, I think it is a very treacherous and difficult task. I think the temptation to draw a quick analysis, should be, or quick commonalities, you should resist that, because I think in the end will be very difficult to pull out sufficient common trends that can actually apply. But I think the main lesson or main feature that needs to be taken on board is, in fact, differentiation. That one of the distinctive features of South African culture that needs to be understood, within industry, within organisations generally, is in fact differentiation is a key feature and organisations have to work out a way of dealing with differentiation if you have to get the full potential of people.

Researcher
When you say dealing with it, are you saying perpetuating it, dissipating it, working within it?

Respondent 12
I think working with it. I do not think that differentiation is necessarily a bad thing. I think it is - even apartheid's slogan was unity and diversity, and there is - I think it is a strength that needs to be worked on. It is not peculiar to industry. You take ANC branches. You go to an area like Eldorado Park. It is a Coloured community. You go there and you look at the ANC branch, half the members are African people living in informal settlements. Now African people speak different languages, not all the same language. Now working out a way in dealing with that in a way which can run your ANC branch meetings in an effective, participating, inclusive, productive way is, if you want, an organisational nightmare which is what I call it, some people call it a cultural nightmare. But I think there are ways in which you can manage those diversities in a way that it does not need to disempower you. I think the biggest problem with a lot of South African workers from labourer level to management level, is that a lot of black cultural realities is a patent alienation.

I think there are a lot of skilled, particularly black people, and you are right, the

culture is eurocentric - that is the dominant culture, and I do not think the idea is to wipe it all off and say there is something called a South African culture that we need to find out what it is , discover it and then transplant it here. I do not think it is going to happen that way. I think what you need to do is ensure that the high levels of alienation, the people coming from non-eurocentric cultural paradigms are not able to feel alienated. That is the first step. I do not think at this stage there is space for that kind of engagement. There is not really a conscious effort made by the bulk of ...., there are a few obviously, example deviations from the norm, but there is not an effort to understand where the people are coming from. The issues of productivity for example, if you have two managers at middle management level, one coming from Thokoza and the other from the Northern suburbs, and they were both black, their productivity as a result of the person in the Northern suburb having a completely peaceful night, no problems, and the person in Thokoza whose neighbour got killed and whose child has to go to a school even though it is a Catholic school just outside of Thokoza, but the child has to come back while the parents are still at work. That kind of factor affects productivity in a major way. I mean people's peace of mind being absent because of ...., because that for me is culture.

That is part of defining patterns of life, and I think that the kind of things that need to happen, even though this is a bit of a technosyst's solution, is that people who are in senior positions in management need to find ways of going on, spending weekends in townships by schemes that are set up to actually get a sense of, depending on the nature of the workforce, where they come from and all that, but they would need to work on that and actually need to get that sense. Because I think what you going to have in the end is a marrying of different cultural trends, and that is going to happen anyway and it is happening. And I think the problem that those who control power, power relationships within the business to a large extent are white managers. There is no willingness to do that consciously. It is happening by accident, it is happening by contestation, that kind of thing.

Researcher

Just an issue when you were talking about ANC meetings, that you had to find a way of managing diversity so that we can have a participative structure. Now the term participative comes up a lot, it comes up in management theory etc.. But why do we need to have participative structures? Is that something that is just nice to have because that is the way things are going, or is there a genuine need for people to be able to participate.

Respondent 12

I think that it is very easy to make a fetish of participation and I do not think that is helpful. I think there are certain levels of participation that are desirable, depending on the issue, depending on the context, depending on the people. People desire different levels of participation. In fact, sometimes you can annoy people when you expect higher levels of participation than they themselves are keen to actually be involved in. I will give you an example, the organisation I am part of here. We had a very participative culture. But when I was the Natal director in SACHED in 1991, when we had a staff meeting and we had long staff meetings, sometimes 3 hours, we would have all the staff involved including the women who made tea. She could not speak English and it would be translated for her, and we thought that this was such a good thing for her, and she hated it. She said it was like all these issues that she did not really have an interest in, she would like to come into every meeting for 15 minutes where she could just raise her issues, whatever things, if people were not rinsing the cups or coming and taking the tea on time. She just wanted to raise those issues and leave. She did not want to sit in.

Participation for me is functional. It must enable people to do the work more effectively and feel that they are being affirmed in their particular positions. They need to have a sense that they are not simply - I mean I will just give you a very practical example as an anecdote. In SACHED we have a very participatory planning process. When we develop our plans for the next 3 years or next year,

we ensure that there is a high level of participation in planning. But we do not expect the person who is a secretary to be as involved as someone who is writer.illustrator. If you take this product here, Upbeat. In the Upbeat programme we do not expect everybody to be involved at different levels. But we say that the secretary has to be part of the planning because he/she has certain distinctive planning needs. We want the secretary to say, firstly in terms of my work I want you to plan, I want certain things implemented, I need a computer or new equipment, or I need to go on a training course. So they must be part of planning so they can factor in their needs. And there has to be space for that level of participation which is functional to the company, to the programme and to the staff member in question. Obviously there is a negotiation process. Sometimes if a person wants to go on a course that costs R5000, we will have to say....., but at least there is space for that to happen. Often there is not the space for that to happen. And obviously we are creating a very democratic environment which is very different from the corporate sector where the ethos is one that encourages that. But then, on the other hand, the secretary also wants to say that, on thinking through your work I would like you to think about how much time you are giving me in terms of meeting certain publishing deadlines, etc. And based on a reflection of the previous year's experience to say in the coming year I would like to see this or that. And that level of participation is very critical. But if we are expecting the secretary to participate in discussions around the content of the magazine when the person does not recognise that as his/her competency, then that is just a waste of the person's time and your time.

So I do not think it is simply a romantic notion, I think it is a very useful notion that if applied creatively and appropriately and with flexibility, it can be an immensely useful tool to help individual workers to feel that they are shaping, and to feel that they actually shape their working lives, because in the end people might have high expectations in terms of the kind of resources they need in the world. And if the given the chance to articulated at least, in the end they might not get everything that they want, but the fact that there is space to articulate and

hear the reasons why in fact they cannot get the full set of tools that they need for the job but they can get part of the tools, ensures that that worker does not go through the next year saying "They did not give me even a chance to say what I want." But the person either would buy whatever reason is given as to why they could not have everything they needed, or at least they would understand what was the rationale. If someone says "Why do not you have a laser printer in the office?" like people ask me "Why do not you have a computer?" and I answer "Well, I have been part of the decision, and I have sacrificed it so that two other secretaries on this floor can have it and I am sharing the facilities because they use it more. I would ideally like to have the facility, but I understand it. The same goes for my assistant. She desperately needs a laser printer, but we have limited resources and she has to share it with three other people and the fact that she is part of the planning where she put it down, we argued about it, and then in the end we had to rationalise. She is not thrilled, but she understands it and she says she knows she made her input, she put her stuff on the line and hopes that next year when she raises it again if the resources are available she will stand a good chance of getting it because she has had the space to put the issues on the table.

There is another factor and that is, I think, a lot of people, ok, I will just give a personal sort of thing without naming names. I am working in a non-profit organisation but we interact with corporates, the private sector and the SABC and a range of institutions all the time. The lack of professionalism, inefficiency in those organisations and the lack of strategic thinking with some of those we have had to deal with is totally mind boggling. We have always had the assumption that these people are driven by profit and high agendas, and what I think is a key problem is that a lot of people who are in senior high management positions do not understand reality. They do not know certain basic tenets and I think that the value of the participation of people in low levels of skills and middle management and all levels working together with senior management and forums in the spaces that has been created for that is that I think would be a highly educative process for senior managers.

And I was in America last year on an Adult Basic Education conference and I visited some work place literacy programmes. There were some of the managing directors who said that some of the solutions that the workers themselves came up with around safety measures around productivity, around innovative ways of actually running the operation and increasing productivity and stuff, was way beyond any one of the people in management could come up with, because they were working there and understood the issues of safety better than managers did. Obviously in the end it needed to be packaged and crystallised and resourced by management.

But the fact that there was space in that particular steel company for people to make the input meant that some wonderfully innovative solutions, and I would argue that that probably is the case of almost any enterprise, including in ours. Some of the best solutions I have heard in terms of dealing with some upper organisational development issues here do not come from people in management, they come from people - sometimes in middle management and sometimes just ordinary staff.

Researcher

Something that is been said to me by a number of people I have spoken to and, I can understand some of the historical roots and their own variety, but the South Africans as a whole and that is not a white or a black thing and perhaps it is something that is changing, are extremely compliant. We accept, we are autocratic and we accept autocracy and we comply with it.

Respondent 12

I think that eurocentric, I think that is a white view.

Researcher

I am saying that cuts across colour.

Respondent 12

Compliance is not a neutral thing. Compliance relates to power. People comply often because they do not have the power to contest it, there is not the space. That is what I am saying that is the value of participation but that participation must create the space for contestation, for new ideas, for critique and I would not say it is autocratic as much as it is authoritarian. What you have is there is strict authoritarian structures. But I think that there have been levels of contestation from black workers in the last 10 years, I mean at lower levels. The contestation has been more around the burning issues, and sometimes the burning issues is not the day to day existence in terms of how they function in the world, it is more the issues of salaries and pension and sometimes safety. When you can buck compliance, when you cannot comply, and when you do not have power on your side, is when you can actually have unity, where you can actually build your power around uniting, and that usually in South African work places has been only around issues of prices it is not on a day to day value of the enterprise, because then you are the individual worker. There are deviations from that and I am sure there are other examples. Yes, I would say there is a high level of compliance but I do not think it is a peculiarly South African thing, I mean, there is a certain corporate culture as well that I am sure defines some of the broad parameters of behavioural interaction and that tends to be very authoritarian, very rigid and I think we are at a point where things will start changing. It has the potential to change, but we will see.

Researcher

Just to summarise something you said right up front, just so that I can clarify it for myself. The unique features of culture that you were saying exist, are a result of life circumstances the way we are forced to live our lives, or our various live out themselves. Does that mean in a theoretical situation where we could, in theory, provide reasonable standards of housing for everybody, reasonable standards of education and health care for everybody, reduce the levels of uncertainty and violence that a whole host or the majority of people have to live

with. Would you see in that hypothetical scenario that there would be greater similarities across the board in the cultures that we have, the divide between the man who lives in the northern suburbs and the man who lives in Thokoza would be less great?

Respondent 12

I think the certain structural divisions that are class related that you can do your damnedest but you are not going to be able to reach a commonality of experience. You cannot merge - I have friends who live in squatter camps in Alexandra and I have friends who live in Sandton, and there is no way those two experiences can actually be merged in any meaningful way. The best you can hope to do is to actually have an understanding of each others reality.There are certain common features that you can draw out, certain human behavioural patterns that can extend across widely different poverty and wealth levels. Like it is easy to have someone in northern suburbs being a killer, and someone in an informal settlement in Alex who can be a completely peace loving person, but on the other hand you can have people from both contexts who value peace for example, or to have a particular way of dealing with conflict, or have a particular way of relating to people, or who have certain aspirations for self improvement. Even though the starting parts are very different. Take self improvement. If you are a millionaire living in Parkmore, you can have the same kind of - the manifestations of how you aspire to something can be very different from somebody living in a shack, you know and the way go about trying to make your aspirations become reality.

So I think those cultural connections are possible. But beyond that, I live in Yeoville. I cannot really compare to what it must be to live in on a daily basis in a shack in Alexandra. Neither can I comprehend what it must be to live in a house with 10 rooms and 5 servants, a swimming pool and tennis court. It is just - you know these are people I know I interact with, I have a certain level of friendship from both contexts, but I cannot understand what it must mean in terms of how they deal with life on a day to day basis. I cannot work out what it must be like

to have 4 people working for you, a gardener, a cook, I cannot come to terms - it is not for me to judge whether it is right or wrong, I do not understand what it means in terms of their daily life. If I tried to think I had the money to employ 4 people and I did it, what would it do to my life, it is so far out my experience that I could not really even hazard a guess of what it might be like. I think that is the difficulty because we have got such disparate levels of wealth in this country, that for me, people when they talk about culture, they often talk about subjective things like dance and art and class is a very important cultural determinant. It is probably the overriding cultural determinant in the end because that determines life patterns more than any other factor.

Researcher

Are there any commonalities? I understand when you are talking about 35 million people it is very difficult to talk about commonalities of any sort especially in the disparate society that we have. If we look at basic assumptions about people, are there generalities of any sort that come up?

Respondent 12

I do not think that generalities are any more peculiar to what one would expect in any other society. I would say most people believe in peace. Most people have a competitive spirit. Most people are committed to their families, when they do have families. Most people would like to improve themselves. They do not want to be where they are, they are always wanting to - I would say the vast majority of people desire a certain level of community interaction, whether you are in Alex or in Sandton. I think it takes different forms, there is a certain level of community social interaction that people desire. And most people like to have fun and pleasure in their lives. But they are not particularly South African features, just features of humanity, and I do not think beyond that I could identify anything that is distinctively South African. I think what you can identify with is more the international things, like desire to end apartheid. That is obviously not common. It has a certain level of commonality, but it is a contested commonality if there

is such a thing.

INTERVIEW NUMBER 13

Researcher

In your view, is there something that you see as an African or South African culture that makes us different?

Respondent 13

I would say yes. In my view we do have a South African culture, and in fact that the culture that has spread amongst South Africans., The western people came in with their cultures and the black people in South Africa came in with their cultures and what I would call a South African culture is a mixture of the two cultures basically. To me it is very unique.

Researcher

What are those features? What makes it unique?

Respondent 13

Let me first of all start off by defining what I see as unique. For instance, it is not really with the clothing. Let me start off with a very common subject - communication. If you look at South Africans, they are very warm people. I mean it is warm in the sense that if you meet anybody in the street, you say "Hi." You greet that person regardless of whether you know that person or you do not know them. And to me it is a very welcoming type of communication that you get, because if somebody you do not know greets you, then you are likely to ask him a question of, say, where is the bus stop. I am saying this specifically, because when I was overseas I had a very different experience. People are so enclosed in their corners. They can hardly greet you, let alone look at you if they do not know you. And I find South Africans in that quite unique and I think their way of communicating, whichever language you speak, whether you speak Zulu or

English, the fact that when you see people you smile and you tell them you care. That to me is one way of uniqueness in the South African Culture.

Now when it comes to things like food, I would say South Africans are unique in the sense that, well it is basically a mixture, but the thing that makes them unique is the fact that they seem to be eating a lot of western - the blacks have sort of crossed over - they have left their own old cultural values as far as food is concerned and they are going for those expensive western things such as cheese and all those things. Something which may be in other countries, like in India for instance, they would stick their own cultural type of food. Now the staying together of the different tribes and nations in South Africa has actually caused that cross. Even in a family. You will find a husband being a Tswana and who would like to eat their type of food. and married to a Zulu who eats something else. But as a family they will come together and today we cook my favourite and tomorrow we cook your favourite. And I find this sort of to be building across. And you often find the same thing in educational institutions where they are all there now, the black and the white. The black girls, for instance, will go out and teach their white counterparts about our own national vegetable. They teach about even things like eating... what do they call it, that thing in bottles. But it is something that I learned at nursing college, for instance, I would never even dreamt I would eat that thing when I stayed at home in Transkei where I was born and bred. And you sort of bring this cross cultural thing even in eating patterns, and I think South Africans are unique.

Now when it comes to clothing, it is very obvious. I think maybe you have seen or heard about South Africa's Fashion Designers Association. If you look at that association you see the very grass roots of the black culture coming up. But the way it is designed it is no longer you would find it when you drive down to the Cape and see a Xhosa woman dressed. It is mixed with a lot of western things, but it is so designed that you will not find it in America, England or Germany, you will not find it anywhere. It is just a unique South African kind of dress. And

a few of the shops are already having those kinds of dresses. Originally it looks like a Xhosa attire or a Zulu or Shangaan attire, but it is mixed with so much else that it is really South African, really unique.

Researcher

So you are saying in fact that, all the various cultures that have come in here, the white or the European, the Indian, the cultures that were here, are now coming together to create something that is very different and very new.

Respondent 13

Yes.

Researcher

How does that affect our values? You talked about one of the things being openness. Do you see that there is a commonality of values. A lot of people I have spoken to have spoken about the differences, and here it is a black, almost a black/white issue, the differences in the way black people view and relate to each other as opposed to white people. And just one of those issues, and I am not trying to stress it, is things like white people are very individual or perhaps urbanised or westernised as opposed to white people are very individual. I achieve, it is my achievement, I make money, I go off, I do my own thing, I am an individual. The non-westernised outlook is more that we share. I am because of other people, I am part of the community. What I do I share with other people. Is that changing? First of all do you see that as a real distinction?

Respondent 13

Well, I would say at this point we are 50/50 with that, because you will find our educated or our elite blacks that are now staying in what used to be white only areas, and because they are staying in those areas and like you were saying the whites are more reserved and they stick to their own. Because they are staying in those areas they are now sort of pressurised to sort of stick to their own too. But

it is definitely not in their culture, because sometimes what some of them usually do on a Friday afternoon is go to Soweto. He drives out of this big beautiful house and he joins his brothers out there and they have this nice drink and they sit and enjoy themselves. I think in our African culture it is a very important part of our culture that if you are a person and you have got a lot of things, as you were saying. You have got it because of the community that you are serving or the people that you are staying with and as such, say an ordinary thing like slaughtering a sheep or ram. You can never be seen people in our culture slaughtering a sheep, chopping it and putting it into a deep freeze without even giving something to your neighbour. In fact, it is a culture that you call one or two of your neighbours and on that very first day share some of your meat with them and then from there you can chop the rest and put it in your freezer. But it is still in our blood that if my neighbours have seen that I have slaughtered, I am sure they are expecting me to give them a little bit of it, call them in for a small meal and share with them. So I think we are fairly 50/50. It depends on where you are and how you view things.

Researcher

That is something other people have said that the distinction is not a black or white issue or western and African, but maybe an urban and a rural distinction.

Respondent 13

It is more of an urban than a rural distinction because if, for instance you go to the rural areas, that is still practised a lot. And, in fact, they would sort of sanction you if they would see you do that sort of thing. But here in the urban areas it is almost dying off.

The other thing which I think is becoming more of a culture is languages. You know a lot of the African languages are still there, but it has become so much of a norm that if you want to be seen as an elite or somebody who accepts all races kind of people then you must be seen speaking English. And some of our black

colleagues are actually making their kids speak English at home. Just to make them used to the language so that they can nationally be or internationally be sort of accepted.

But my personal attitude I think in fact it is not a very good thing. I agree the children should be able to speak English fluently so that they are able to communicate. But I still feel that they must not forget their roots. What I am trying to say is that they must still have that pride, that I am Sotho and therefore at least I should be able to communicate in Sesotho. That is my attitude. And I think when it gets to a stage where people cannot even speak their own mother tongue, it is bad. To me it is bad.

Researcher

You talked about they must know their roots, and roots are more than language. And when we talk about culture it is difficult, we are talking about 35 million or 40 million people, and it is very difficult to generalise about 35 million or 40 million people because they are not all the same. But if we look in terms of Africanness, being African, are there things or values that come with being African?

Respondent 13

I am not sure whether they are still there anymore. You know things like, for instance, going to the initiation schools, educating the little girls when they are young about sexuality, say when they are between the ages of 12 and 15, teaching them a lot of things about that. Those are some of the things, but I think they are almost dead. But they are not completely dead. Because they have been replaced by educational programmes coming up from TV, teaching young children or young adults about their bodies, about their being male or female, and all those things. And actually the version has completely changed. It is no longer a question of being African more than it is information that each and every growing teenager should know type of thing. And I would not really attach an African

value to it as such. It used to be an African way before when young children were taken to some isolated spot, the girls being taught by old ladies and the boys taken to the mountains and have their circumcision and their lessons there. It used to happen, but circumstances have taught us that that information is very important. It was valuable information. We threw it away because we thought the western culture was the thing. But we learnt it the hard way when all of our teenagers started having children, and then we say hey where did we go wrong? We missed something. Then we came back. But it was brought up now in a much more westernised way in the form of booklets, you just give your teenager things to read and you tell them specific things or you send them down the road to a youth centre where they learn the rest that you are not comfortable teaching them.

Researcher

You mentioned earlier on that there are very often even amongst the very urbanised westernised black people who live in white or what were white areas will come to Friday night and feel they miss Soweto. What is it about Soweto, or that group or place that they miss?

Respondent 13

I think as you said earlier on, there is still quite a difference like for instance in a white family they feel what they have earned is theirs and therefore they cannot share it with anybody. Unlike amongst the black families. Like for instance, if I run out of sugar and I do not have R2 to go and buy sugar, I will not even think twice. I will shout to my neighbour and say, hey I have run out of sugar please help me. And she scoops some for me. All that kind of sharing. And in the township you see this kind of get together in the stockvels over the weekends where people just sit and drink and jive and do any sort of fun that they can get. And I think that warmth and that sort of get together and communication is what is fairly unique still with the African culture. And I see some sort of cross pollination because you go almost in any of the gigs around Hillbrow or around the areas, you find a nice bunch of young people, black and white, sitting, jiving

and drinking together. I think we have really shown the influence across to our white counterparts.

Researcher

There is a sense of being part of other people, with other people. Is that linked to ubuntu?

Respondent 13

Yes, I would say it is linked to ubuntu.

Researcher

How important is ubuntu?

Respondent 13

Well, like I said earlier on, I see it as something that is more linked to communication, more linked to caring, more linked to being warm and caring for your neighbours or people.

Researcher

If we come to business, do you think that business as it is structured, and I am asking an opinion not necessarily hard fact, that it allows the people who come into it to succeed. That it gives them the full opportunity to be successful? If you look at the big businesses and organisations that exist.

Respondent 13

I think, if we can look back at the kind of businesses that are successful, the nature and the information even in business management and information and anything that is committed to business, marketing you name it. it is more of a very westernised way. I think it is only during the 80's that business then started recognising the African culture or the importance of culture in a business. You know when they came up with things like you have got to study your community,

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you have got to study your target group, you have to know what their feelings are. But I see it still as a failure in the sense that many of our black businessmen are not having the kind of exposure that they need to do or market their own businesses whereas in so far as coming to studying things like the psycho-graphics or whatever you need to study when you are preparing yourself for a business, they just think I want to do spray painting of cars or I want to sell this, and they just go for it. And only when he is there he realises he is not in the right place for spray painting because there are only 4 cars in the township anyway. Because he went down to Durban and saw a friend of his who had a spray painting business in his back yard and thinks this is a wonderful idea. And without having done any study of his target market he just goes for the idea, and I think that is where a lot of black people are falling short.

Researcher

So there is a need to educate black business people, or black people rather, so that they can develop their own businesses more successfully and look at the issues involved? What about the ordinary people who are not starting businesses who are going to start working for Anglo American, or for half a dozen of the factories that exist just up the road?

Respondent 13

Well, my sounding or warning word for those kind of guys management, in fact, is that when I am an MD of Anglo or an MD of Pick 'n Pay or Checkers, I must not think because I am the manager of the business I am the guy. In other words, you have got to bring in the workers, the cleaners in, let them understand what the business is all about. Because if they know what the business is all about then they can tell people about the business. And God knows, maybe they can be saying the right message to the right person at the right time, kind of thing. So to start off with they have to be well informed in the business. Not only what the business is all about, but things like, for instance, the plans of the business, the objectives and the aims that the business is having, and in fact even getting them

involved in strategic plans. Because then in that way, when you are stuck as an MD and your finance manager or your finance director do not have any money, those people on the ground should be the first ones to understand why there is no money, and in fact they give you much more support and they understand. And in that way you are not likely to experience a lot of problems in your organisation if you involve your grass root workers.

Researcher

You are saying within organisations there needs to be much more sharing of information?

Respondent 13

Sharing of information is very crucial.

Researcher

And by sharing information we do not alienate people, we bring them in.

Respondent 13

Yes. In fact you become very transparent. If I would be an MD of a company, I would go to the extent of, not necessarily printing out the whole income and expenditure, because they will not understand it anyway. But just basically tell them that this is how much we have made this month, this is how much we have gained and this is how much we have spent, so that they actually see everything. For instance, you do not have to go and call all of them, but you know in those little task groups or areas where they are working, if they have got just one spokesman, then you get those key guys and occasionally call them in once in two weeks or once a month and just tell them what has been happening and tell them were we are, or tell them why you want to change. Because sometimes management decide to change the strategies and they never tell those poor cleaners, and then all the cleaner will see is they were wearing grey uniforms and now all of a sudden they are wearing red uniforms, and she does not know the

hell what is happening. And that is actually where you pick up resistance, and when you are trying to bring about change without having informed your people.

Researcher

Is that just good management practice, or is it because something you said earlier, in the community there is an openness, there is a sharing? Should we be doing this because it is just textbooks and everybody in the world is doing it, or because it fits in with the way our people operate, the way they behave?

Respondent 13

The textbooks are emphasizing that which I think is good. If you look at the whole background of human behaviour and psychology, even of people in London, Germany or India want to be informed, they want to know, they want to share information. Now this is more so in an African background business, because firstly because we have been blacks and whites living separately, you know a big wall has been separating us, has caused so much suspicion. Now it makes your workers more relaxed. They feel more comfortable if they see the MD coming to address them and telling them X, Y, Z. It becomes more emphatic in an African connotation in the sense that we have been living in an era of apartheid. And those suspicions and all those blacks feeling being used, they are not wiped completely. The only way of wiping out all those suspicions is to share the information, even if you think they are not going to do anything with them, tell them at least they know about it. It is not like they do not know, because the next thing was you think you are making your own nice big planning strategy this side. They are not happy about something else the other side or one of your managers, and the next thing you see is they strike. You know some of the strikes in the country are not really genuine or necessary. It is because there is still that wall between the management and the workers. And management is just really keeping the information to themselves for no other interest basically because they think the business is theirs and they forget the fact that that business is there because of that lady cleaning there, it is there because of that machine operator,

it is there because of the tea girl who keep smiling and keeps bringing them tea every morning. In other words the books are emphasizing team spirit in a business, but a lot of our managers are still far from reality.

Researcher

You are saying that in our businesses our workers are more ready for progressive and modern management techniques than our managers are?

Respondent 13

Yes. They are more ready. They want to know, they are curious to know what are the managers talking about today. Are they talking about retrenchments or what? Most of the time the managers do not even tell the poor workers what the meeting was all about because they think it does not concern them. But they are very tense when there is a meeting. "God are they not back from this meeting, it is two hours now, I wonder what they are talking about." And then woe unto you as a manager if you come back and tell them about retrenchments. Whereas, they are really ready for progress and they are actually keen because they feel that if you tell them more, the you are more ready to accept them, and in fact you do not see them as just tools or as a means to your ends, but as sort of co-partners in the business. And if you look at the trend, some of the very big businesses have already started and taking a step further and selling shares to the workers.

Researcher

There seem to be a whole host of contradictory issues. There is a move in South Africa to democracy. Democracy politically, democracy socially, democracy in the work place, and that means openness and participation. But at the same time there is a lot of talk that African society is very authoritarian, very autocratic. In the tribal setting, what the Chief says goes, his word is final. The parents word is final. If you look what we have had traditionally in our government, the governments word is final, in our businesses, what the manager says is final. Yet if we talk about openness and democracy and we talk about African culture as

being democratic. Is there a contradiction?

Respondent 13

I think there is. I basically think there is a contradiction in the sense that I personally see, you know like during the old, it still is a culture in me, but during the good old days where this autocracy would be in families let alone taking it further when we talk about the Chiefs, the parents and the husbands, where they would want their own way, his word is final and I am the head in this house and my word is final. And in fact, looking at the end result of those kinds of behaviours, it is not working. You see teenagers leaving their parents because of that very same story of the father saying you must do as I say and you see a lot of youths in the rural areas where they would go out and toyi toyi and even stone the Chief to death because he decided to do something that the community did not want. So I am trying to say that those days are over, they are almost dying, and if anybody is still living in that era I think it is about time for them to change. I mean it has been proven that parents who have been very autocratic to their children and never give them a chance to discuss or say anything. You go to this school, you do this degree, you do that. Those children at the end of the day become failures. Or if they are strong enough or hard enough and want to become successful they will withdraw out of that family and go and start their own kind of life. And this has been a trend during the political situations right out in the rural areas, right out in school principals that would try to force school children and tell them this is the law, this is a rule and you must do it. Whilst it is sort of a controversial thing, I think it is time for it to die if it has not died. And that is why we still have problems with our government, because they want to do this.

Researcher

At the same time people have said to me, particularly in business but I think socially as well, that we have a culture of compliance. That we as South Africans listen to the manager, we listen to the boss, we do not make waves. I think in black communities it has changed politically because so much has come through

with standing up against authority. But even if we look in business, people do not rock the boat. They do not make decisions, they wait for somebody else to make a decision. They do not tell people they think that is wrong, they do not express their views. Do you think that is true?

Respondent 13

I think the truth in that lies behind the kind of boss you have got. If you have got a nice kind of supervisor, somebody who will approach you, somebody who will allow you that democracy to air your views, then it sort of comes out. But if you have got a boss who will bang the table on you, I mean nobody wants to lose their job, so I think the conformity actually comes from the fear that if I do not do as he says, I may lose my job, and therefore because I want to keep my job I will keep quiet. In fact, that is where the conformity or people seem to be saying yes, yes, to everything. Not that they want to say yes to everything. Given the opportunity or the correct climate they would sort of reject or refuse to do some of the things that we as managers tell them to do. If he thinks it is not right, he is going to come and say "No. I am not doing it because of this, this". And most of the times you ask him he is going to tell you that there are sound reasons for not wanting to do it. But most of the time because the managers are themselves bossing, then people will sort of feel obliged to do certain things or even orders. And this, in fact has even gone out in abusing women at work. If you want me to promote you to a senior secretary's post you must get to bed with me and these funny things. Now because she wants more money - "Do not you want an extra R1000 on your salary?" "Yes ." Then you must conform. I think like the second aspect of it is more of an economic viewpoint that people have been put in this era where you can no longer live out of nothing, you have to have money to earn a living or do anything. You cannot walk long distances, you have got to catch a train or bus and therefore you need money, and for economy sake people feel they have to keep their jobs and the one way of keeping your job is .... But politics is changing the whole situation.

Researcher

If you look at the political change taking place, what is happened in this country, it has been, from my perspective and I may be wrong, it has been to me very unique. Because nowhere else in the world can I think of an example where one government negotiated itself out of power. Now there are all sorts of things to keep power, I agree, but where you are changing a whole history and way of doing things through negotiation. Now that to me is very unique. Does that reflect something that is very African about us? Is that an African process that we have been through that negotiating?

Respondent 13

I think yes, it is something like you say and it is something very African in the sense that, I mean if you look at the rest of the countries. In India it is 99% Indians, in Europe it is 99% Europeans. But South Africa specifically has got it all, like one advert said it is a world within one country. It has got it all, and I think through the fights and the struggles and the killings that everybody has come through in South Africa, everybody has come to realise that it is not going to help to fight, and therefore the best way out of this rut is to sit down with my enemy around the table and negotiate.

Researcher

Now that process that we have gone through politically, should we bring the process, and the way it was done and the spirit into our businesses? Should business be mirroring what is happening politically? Should it be going through similar processes?

Respondent 13

I would say some of the businesses are going towards that. When companies start hearing rumours about workers wanting 15% or wanting 10% and threatening to go out on strike, to avoid that strike happening they will call the unions and sit around the table and negotiate, and negotiate. In some of the areas it does not

work, but basically some of the businesses have already adopted the process of negotiating.

Researcher

Is there anything else that you would say are core values of the way South Africans relate to each other?

Respondent 13

Like for instance in terms of business, or in terms of languages?

Researcher

In terms of how people relate to each other, whether it is in business or in the community or anywhere. Is anything that reflects the way we believe people should behave towards each other?

Respondent 13

I think there is yes. There is a way, because for instance if you find yourself in the middle of a street or a city and you are walking you see a lot into what people are doing, how people are doing things. You know even including the vendors, and you know sometimes a kind of interaction that one gets amongst the cross cultures, it is not even in the form of words. It is a very sort of unique way of communicating. And to me it is fairly unique. For instance in the street, if you want to buy a newspaper. All we ever do to the guy who is selling papers, is either to hoot, or put out your hand. To me it is quite something that you would not find in any other country. It is very interesting how the people interact and communicate in this country. And I have seen this in cities where the vendors are selling their different kinds of things. And in fact you must see the kind of reaction. Say somebody is selling sweets. The kind of reaction that you get from the vendors as a mob. If for any reason you just pass by a table and snatch a sweet and go. They become so violent they can kill you. And to me that is a message that we are all trying to live and therefore as a brother or as a sister you

must actually help me to live by buying or paying for this instead of trying to snatch it.

Researcher

You actually brought up another question. You talked about a brother or a sister. Now that is a term very often used specifically among black people. For me my brother is my mother's son. There is blood between us. Very often within black communities you will talk about brothers and sisters who are not your mother's son in the same sense. Why?

Respondent 13

I think like we said earlier on that amongst blacks there is a culture of uniqueness and oneness. Now do not ask me where it comes from. It may have come from the fact that we have been previously oppressed, you know squashed together in hostels in the mines, and because we are all coming from different areas and you know develop that kind of uniqueness and oneness. I do not want to say that is the only reason, because even right out in the rural areas you will actually find this uniqueness, this brotherhood and sisterhood and people wanting to share things together and be seen as brothers and sisters, and not wanting to hurt each other. I am not talking about the violence that has now come up due to politics, but basically that is one is one old value that the blacks have been having.

Researcher

So when you call somebody a brother or a sister, are you actually creating a relationship with them, in the sense that by giving them that name you are creating that relationship?

Respondent 13

I would say in a way you are creating a relationship or some friendly informal relationship. In other words you are saying I have accepted you.

Researcher

Would you use the term to somebody you had not yet accepted, or is it something you will generally use to people as a way of showing your acceptance?

Respondent 13

It is not only a word you can use for somebody you have accepted. Say for instance, for example, the vendors in the street. And the least thing that they are expecting is for somebody to come and take off their own thing that they have actually bought and you come and try and take it for free. I think the understanding of your behaviour as another person you must help your own black brother to live or your own black sister to live. Therefore, even if you do not accept him as an individual, I mean some of them look real rude and dirty, but the norm is if I want his banana, for instance, I must be prepared to the price for that banana.

Researcher

So, even people you do not know you have a responsibility to?

Respondent 13

Yes. Even people you do not know you have a responsibility to. Like for instance, myself, I find myself sometimes not buying bananas from Pick 'n Pay or from Checkers, and when I walk down the road I say, "Ag shame, buy bananas from an old lady that is sitting in the corner of the street or tomatoes". It is to give them more support. I do not know whether it is with everybody, but I very often feel real pity for the people that are trying to make a living from street corners. I have a very soft spot for them.

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Researcher

Do you believe that there is something that can be identified as a South African culture which should be utilised in business?

Respondent 14

It is a matter that some of us have been talking about for some time. In fact the Black Management Forum is one of those organisations that says the corporate culture in South African companies must change. It must be a culture that is more reflective of South African environment. And in fact with us, the typical BMF leader what is the major challenge you face with BMF? They will probably say the South African organisation of companies. Which says there is probably some thinking in certain quarters that there is a uniqueness that we ought to be having as a South African business or South African corporation. But what exactly that uniqueness, the difference is bit of a problem. I tell you it is also a problem. Businesses are owned by and run by, in general terms, by white people in this country and the concept of running those businesses came from Europe and the US as an example. Therefore to a large measure their orientation, the thinking processes that are there also are reflective of this origin so to speak, and we all know there is a glaring absence of black people within these organisations. At least in key positions and decision making positions, which are the positions that are responsible for indicating the kind of conduct, assumptions, values that are acceptable in an organisation. Therefore the absence of these people poses a problem in that we now do not know what kind of a culture there would be if they were in place. So until such time as they are in there on a critical mass basis we will not be able to truly know how it will be. But I think it will weaken.

Researcher

If we do speculate, because you say we need to be changing white faces for black faces, and in that change something will happen to organisations, but we do not know what something is?

Respondent 14

No I am definitely not suggesting a substitution process at all. If anything an enrichment process where those who are outside become part of those who are inside. So it is the bringing together of the two that everyone is talking about and naturally, therefore once black people come into an organisation and come in at numbers that are reflective of the demography out there, the culture of those people who are now the new entrants once they rise into key positions and in numbers that reflect the population, you will begin to see any uniqueness that they bring to bear onto the conduct of business, which at that moment in time is not there because they are not at the levels that count.

So if one has to maybe make one or two comments about the culture in South African companies, is that not only is it western in terms of its origin and orientation, but it is unique in the sense that it has a high element of exclusivity attaching to it, in my view. Almost a closed shop arrangement, in that it is predominantly a particular group that drives the organisation, therefore gives the organisation a particular way of life in a typical South African environment. So it is white male run. In a meeting of executives it is not an anomaly not to have a women, and if you raise the question "Why do not you have a woman in there?", they look at you funny. Or when you raise the question of black involvement you are raising challenges and sensitive issues. So that is the tradition, so one could say it is very unique in the sense that it is exclusive in that it only is tapped into one group of people.

As far as black people are concerned, looking in from the outside, I guess that one of the things they seem to notice in this culture is a level of detachment bordering

on aloofness in relationships with people within the community of the business so to speak. I am observing with black workers, with black people looking at a number of things how business is conducted. I think black people would say it is cold, it is not like they would like it to be in the sense that relationships, respect for the individual, taking in the individual more seriously is probably not a very strong point of the way that business is conducted. It is a smaller matter in the eyes of some people as greeting, to a substantive matter as bringing the person along in terms of involving him where the pension money is going to be invested, for an example, to those kinds of extremes. So I am saying, take greeting for example, it is quite an important thing. As an index of your attitude towards the next person. So if there is one way in which to clearly mark an individual as to whether he has any feelings of brotherhood for the next person in the black community for example, is whether he greets or not. And this in a white organisation they have no relationship whatsoever to what you think of the next individual. But to blacks it is a very important and big thing that people greet one another. Which means there is maybe an over emphasis on how their relationships are structured vis a vis how the job is structured on output. It is an integrated way of work. I am not suggesting that all blacks are like this.

Researcher

I know it becomes very difficult when you try and generalise about 38 million people, because there are always differences. But something that you are saying is that the process of integrating blacks into the decision making structures of business in fact is a twofold purpose. One is simply normal standard economic justice that we need to have it much more reflective of our population, and do away with that exclusivity that is been there. The other is the impact that that will have ultimately on corporate culture because of the differences in values that exist between whites and blacks.

Respondent 14

I say that indeed. And maybe that partially explains why this exclusivity has

continued, because surely it is logical to conclude that once you bring people in they do not leave their personalities, their values, their assumptions, their baggages at the factory gate. They bring all that in with them, and therefore they will impact on how business is being done. And again one has to look at certain tendencies of things that black people do and then try and contrast that.

I think it is not incorrect to say black people tend to be elaborate. Even the greeting in a sense is an elaborate process. That is why if you listen to radio 702, as I do, and find excitement in the kind of conversations that go on there, particularly with a fellow like John Robbie, and one of his trademarks being "you cut the slush". You get to the point, you do not ask him how life is and so on, you just get to the point. It happens invariably. Each black person who phones in, despite his way of doing things as a host of the show, asks him "how are you?" And they want to continue with the discussion on the preliminaries which appear to be preliminaries but the person views them seriously, he sincerely wants to know "how are you?, how is the family?" and so on before getting onto whatever the business of the day is. So that to me is another indicator of this tendency to be elaborate. Now if you take functions within a black community, I am told, I have not been to the NSB AGM, I have been to AGM's of companies, typical white established companies, where they take 5, 10 at the most 20 minutes. Now that is an annual general meeting which means a meeting held once a year of shareholders holding a major interest in the organisation, but they come together and business is discussed in 10 minutes once a year. I doubt it if that would happen in a black run company. I hear NSB slaughter a cow.

The business goes beyond the figures. It is the meeting that takes place, the exchange of the soul that takes place. So they are elaborate I think, whether it is matters of dress or matters of funeral. I think they tend to go a little longer, which could be a disadvantaged but properly harnessed could be a major advantage. For instance, I think one advantage of that is located in the value or the sense of thoroughness, not wanting to rush the job, because indeed blacks given the

opportunity they do not rush the job. They actually do not. I was at a funeral yesterday. It started at 8 and got back here at 6 in the evening. I actually left the funeral at around 3. I was there the whole day basically. While the actual burial took its own time, there many other things around it, including the meeting of the people. People you have not seen for many years and so on, so it becomes an integrated function as opposed to one stand alone event.

I think what one could extract from that is doing a job well, whatever the job is, and ensure that it is properly done, which I think is one thing that would impact positively on levels of performance, productivity if black people were to move in significant and of course skilled base into organisations. So I suppose that is one of the key elements that strikes me. Of course, the old concept of ubuntu is at that the centre of it all is not expressed as such, it is lived out, and therefore you cannot walk down the streets and see it as such. But in small things, how people do things, we can see that this is an expression of that value. In fact there is a desire to ensure that I am my brother's keeper and vice versa in a number of ways. So I think again whilst there could be a downside to it. For instance some people may say "You will not be able to exercise discipline." "You are buddy buddy, everybody is a friend". I say I think we could get some very positive results out of that when care is taken to harness the contribution of each person and appreciating it to the extent that you treat each person as your blood brother. That should be an advantage.

Of course these things do not stand on there own, we have to have other systems in place. So again I think we probably would not see the kind of power relations that exist within business with respect to hierarchical conflict out of the managers or capital versus labour. I do not think we would see the same kind of tone that we currently have if we were to have a situation where black people have come into business in numbers that are significant to influence the thinking and the direction of the organisation. There is going to be a change. I think we will experience other problems, but I think the ones that we have experienced to the

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degree that we have will probably be toned down significantly.

Researcher

Just something that you have mentioned, this aspect of brotherhood and relationships and dealing with people with care and bringing them in, may create problems of discipline. But a lot of people talk about black culture as being a highly authoritarian culture and a highly disciplined culture, when those in leadership positions state something - this is how it is going to be - make a ruling, it becomes something that is accepted unquestioningly. Do you have a comment, is it true is it an incorrect perception? Does it apply?

Respondent 14

I think it applies. The two live alongside each other. This disciplinarian approach to it which almost is like laying it down, this is how it ought to be done, no question about it, or do not ask too many questions, and the other of collaboration, co-operation and considerateness. I think they co-exist. And I do not see necessarily incompatibility. It depends on the context in which each is expressed. What I can say, without a doubt, is that the question of co-operating and being considerate, showing compassion, it is something that is a thread that runs through. Now specific occasions require that the law be laid down and discipline be maintained, that no questions be tolerated by people whose roles have been legitimised as such, by society by the community. And therefore acting in that manner would not be seen as contradictory to be compassionate. Now clearly these would be in relationships where there is a subordinate who has to be taught or told by somebody who has walked the road, who knows better, who has the authority to do so. Like the family relationship. I think there is less problems in days gone by, it is now not so but still so in some black families - less consultation between father and his children or the man and his wife. There is that ranking that is there. Therefore outside the family there will probably be an occasion where, if it is the Chief or the king, or whatever, he would at some occasions be seen to be enforcing or laying down the rule. But there would have

been a process in terms of that particular norm being endorsed that would have taken place at any rate. So when he comes down on an individual, or lays down the law it will be where clearly a breach has occurred. So I do not think it will be correct to describe black community and way of life in either of the two. I think that they exist together.

For instance, if a stranger comes to my door whilst I am in a position of power I do not act as if I am in a position of power. I act as if I am in his place because I could be in his place. Now I have to show compassion, food, water to drink and a place to sleep. And it is totally different if here is a fellow identified as a criminal. He has done something wrong to a particular community in a section of the community and he is being chased. I think maybe he will be treated very harshly, tough, hard, almost in reverse - almost - of that compassion that is day to day ordinarily shown. Almost as a way of saying 'you have let us down very badly, this is not how things should be done, so we will teach you a lesson'. Or almost saying that kind of thing.

That is why I sometimes, it is a personal view, I sometimes thought this whole question of necklacing which has happened in the black community, where the black community on a number of occasions has had opportunities to take out revenge or avenge themselves, have not done so. They have not gone out of their way to physically hurt white people. Where, in fact, clearly if they had done that, a lot of people would have understood. Some people would have endorsed it. Here now, one of their own, who in their view has done something unacceptable vis a vis the relationships between themselves as a black community and a government which is white and that individual is treated by measures much tougher than they would ever contemplate treating the person that they probably should have done that. I sometimes thought that maybe this is the reversal of ubuntu when ubuntu has been betrayed. And they say, "He who does not understand my way and my culture treats me badly, but you who does it is more unforgivable for you". And therefore the punishment is equally severe. I just sometimes thought maybe this

is the thinking behind this whole thing, because it does not make sense at all in the context of being considerate and showing compassion and historically that kind of thing never happened. There were occasions in the black community where a person would be treated very harshly. Not necklaced, but very harshly. Maybe in the context then it would come close to that. So I think maybe a sense of having been let down which really is in a sense an attempt to restore this old value system. But we should be assisting one another here we should be helping one another. Now you are doing the opposite, selling out.

Researcher

That whole issue of assisting one another, being part of a community and being responsible to a community. In an ideal world - and I do not know if such a thing exists - where if we ever had something that was a South African corporate culture, what relationship is expected of the business between itself and the community? What is it is community? Is the community simply the people who work for it, or the people work for it and their families? What is that relationship? Should there be a relationship? Because a lot of organisations simply see their relationship with people who work for them you know that becomes a very small group.

Respondent 14

No I do not think it is going to happen that way with blacks. There would be black people who would advocate that, who would see it as an efficient way of doing business and so on, but I think it is going to have difficulty for some time. Maybe over a period of time it will return to that, but in the immediate future I cannot see it that way. I see black people taking more than a casual interest in the businesses where they operate, where they work. Whereas people talk about what they do at work, I think black people within the work environment say "This is home". This is at home. Or when they approach the boss man although that is now changing especially with the advent of trade unions, and say to the manager "You are the father here. We have come to you with this request that you increase

our salaries". They actually mean it in a - almost in a literal sense. So the extension of family concept into business or taking business into the brother community, I think it goes much deeper much more seriously that it is in a typical western way of doing business. So I think there will be a greater claim on business by the black community than there would be by a typical white community.

Maybe what I am saying is the creation of compartments is not an easy thing in the black community so to speak. It tends to be an integrated thing. Even if you take questions of going to church as an example. There are specific ceremonies in black communities but the question of your religion was not separate from your social, from your business life. There were ceremonies that were linked to the business which were religious in nature and you sang as you performed the job. And you gave thanks for the products at the end of the day in a religious ceremony. So the whole thing was integrated. So I think creating companies that are in tune with the beliefs and the values of the people around them would be an important consideration. It would be a requirement by the black community that this organisation be part of us as we are part of the organisation. I do not think it is a major challenge. It is a major mind shift that must take place, but I think it is desirable and I think it is achievable.

Researcher

Just something else that a couple of people I have spoken to have said, and I would like your reaction to this, that the problem we have in South Africa or the differences in culture are not a white/black culture. And if we just look at them as white/black, we will lose sight of a whole host of issues, that the issues are more urban/rural, educated/uneducated, skilled/unskilled as opposed to black and white things. And I think there is a sense of unease that we for too long have separated and said these are black and these are white and there might be an element of being racist in making those distinctions and saying this is black and this is white. Your reaction? Are there differences? Should we be looking at

cutting the cake, if you like, more in terms of educated and uneducated and skilled and unskilled urban rural as opposed to black and white?

Respondent 14

I think to me the black/white are more predominant, to me, more striking, of greater consequence than the others. Now I do not think one can simplify it between rural and urban and therefore say blacks who spent 100 years in an urban area they are like whites - I do not think so. Let us look at specifics and see how far this argument can go. Now Thursday in the black community, black women go to church, white women do not. They go bowling on a Friday / Thursday, I do not know. Saturday, black people like all others go shopping, but they go funeraling in a big way, and there are other ceremonies that are linked to that. Take for instance the society concept in the black community. It is unique with the black community which is predominantly driven by black women, where women come together, stockvel kind of thing, and club together and prepare for rainy days. One of those rainy days is the funeral. And not just put money into it, but energy into it in the sense that we will cook for the masses that will come. My share will be this, your share will be this. We will dish, we will do that. There is a whole array of ceremonies that go with that. I do not think it is an accident but it is unique in the black community. So I think of instances.

Researcher

Why are some of these things not structural. If you talk about the church on Thursday is that not structural from the historical black women working as domestics and having Thursdays off? Is there not some of that historically we have created that? Yes, it is historical now, but we have created that?

Respondent 14

And the stokvel?

Researcher

Stokvels is another issue.

Respondent 14

I do not know the origin. I was born on a farm. The same thing happened, but black ladies went to church Thursday afternoon, it is a day of prayer. Whether it is originated from the domestic servants being released, I do not know where it comes from but it is there and it cuts people out as practising a particular way of life. It happens, including sport and all sorts of things. The emphasis is laid on certain things and that coupled by the physical separation between black and white, of course there is the grey in between now, but coupling that to the physical separation, one of the things that comes out of that in my way of thinking, is the particular world view. I do not think you can expect a person who goes through these kind of ceremonies to behave in the same manner as a person who does not. I do not think he wears the same kind of spectacles in viewing the world as some other person. This does not say that humanity is at different levels, I am not suggesting that at all.

Researcher

It is just the way it is shown.

Respondent 14

Yes. Therefore in the end my conclusion is a simple one vis a vis business. That none of these matters are of such consequence, whether they are predominantly in the black culture or predominantly in the white culture, that they cannot find accommodation in business for business to succeed with and despite them. Now they are not anti business. Take the question of funerals. It is a major problem in the black community. Because before the funeral some activity has to take place like - my nephew came in this morning. He has been involved in shooting films and so on and he has been off site for more than a week or two weeks, because his father passed away and we buried him yesterday. Now he has got to be

adjusting back. So he has taken away productivity from him and money from him specifically as an example. But one thing I know is that when that has been accommodated, you enjoy, your chances of getting out of that individual greater motivation and performance is much greater than otherwise would have been. The same with say white women who want to go and work, and they say we need a day off or half a day to go and do shopping. I do not see that as anti business. It, from a short sighted point of view, seems to be impacting negatively on business, but in terms of its yield, once accommodated, the return can only be better. So these cultural things are there. There is, of course, a common culture that is developing here. There are black people who say there is no difference between black and white, there are black people living in Diepkloof or Soweto who are much more sophisticated in western ways of life than a lot of white people. Which is true. The black people who many years ago were so seeped in stuff that is white in every respect that you just cannot believe it that these are black people. But there are those who still practice things that clearly are predominantly found in the black community, those that appear to be involved in a white way of life and the ones in between. But all put together, I say they can be accommodated for a richer way of life and richer conduct of business which then, in my view, would be South African.

Researcher

So we are going to get to something that is accommodation and an integration really of the varieties of cultures that we have now which accommodates, hopefully the best features of those and allows room for people to work and be within those?

Respondent 14

Without any doubt. But of course the difficulty here is whose judge of what is best. So over a period of time there will be an accommodation without any doubt. But maybe in the process, what I regard as retaining may not be retained or not be retained in the format that I want it to be. But we in reality do not have a

choice. We cannot insist on giving black people 2 or 3 days compassionate leave when there is a death in the family. It cannot continue that way. It has to change. Maybe it will be 4 or 5 days whereas maybe they would have preferred two weeks. So accommodation and give and take will take place. That is the beauty of cultures when they meet, I mean obviously there is a chemistry that takes place. But what has happened up to now is almost a refusal to accept that there is another culture or a contribution or a uniqueness or a difference that we must take into account. And I think that is been a mistake. Even to a point, I mean it is no longer the case, but it has happened in this country, where people were addressed in a manner in which their culture clearly says do not address us that way. OK. I mean, for instance a simple matter, calling people by their first names. A lot of black people have come to accept it today. But that never was an acceptable thing in the black culture. It never was calling a person by his first name. But to make things easy for the predominant culture in the business world, people were called by their first names. Even worse, when his first name was difficult or unpronounceable, he was given a name to simplify matters. Now that is an extreme case of subjugation of one culture. But when things are allowed to take their course, and people are being reasonable and adult about it, there will be an accommodation and settling in that will take place, I hope.

Researcher

You talked about, very early on, the sense of brotherhood, and it is something I have noticed and most probably a lot of people notice it in a negative way, is the sense of relationship brotherhood and sisterhood, people who are called your mother, or your sister or your brother who, in the western sense, do not have those strict blood relationships that we tend to as whites say this is your mother and nobody else. What does that reflect about black thinking, black ways of approaching people? Is it just something that is just grown up or does it reflect something?

Respondent 14

I think it reflects the fact that you do not stand on your own. You see in the black community you are not a Smith and full stop. There is not such a thing. There is a Smith with a beginning and a history and a Smith into the future in terms of linkages with the community. You do not just stand as one person or one family. It is impossible to do that. So that is why when marriages take place you have such an elaborate process, because it is the joining of the families and the communities and the creation of the future generation so to speak. So this individual now - that is why in some black communities, if the husband dies she will be taken over by one of the brothers. She is part of this structure, part of this family. She cannot now say my husband is dead I move out, that kind of thing. Therefore if a woman is my sister's age she is my sister. One who is my mother's age is my mother, similarly with my father. Again this whole concept of this extended family, where I think the idea and the belief is that the source is one, the end is one somehow. There is a connection which we cannot run away from. I am not dealing with a stranger. There is a connection somewhere, and therefore I treat it as real, but in fact she is my mother, he is my father, he is my brother. So, I cannot see whether it is the social life generally, any negative part or factor around that sort of thing. It helps people cement relationships and keeps people together. So if I shake an old man's hand in the street and say "I am the son of Ndlovu." It is not going to be hello and goodbye. He probably will go back and say I am talking now almost in the true tribal traditional setting, but even in the townships people still do these kinds of things, "You are the son of Ndlovu who is married to so and so's daughter and comes from such and such a place". I say, "Yes". "Who used to do this or was involved in this", "Yes". So there is a whole host of history that I present as I present myself.

That is why in the another sense criminality was so low, because really there was no place to hide, although the regions were vast and so on and people used to say, "Oh you are going to so and so's place, it is just around the corner" and it is 10 miles walking. And they talk as if it is just around the corner. The reality of the

matter is you could not hide yourself because everybody wanted to know consciously where you came from, who your parents were, and the chances are they would, as you described, remember a connection of sorts. So it knits families and communities together. A large part of this is lost. But the remnants are sufficiently there for it to be expressed in a number of ways, including the stokvel concept. It is very much an attempt to recover and to redeem some of these things to keep that kind of social network. Even the shabeens, I mean the shabeen is a negative thing in a sense. Yesterday we were talking about one shabeen and I was trying to probe one of my relatives as to why he goes to that particular shabeen. He does not know, but teachers go there and prison warders go there and another category. There was something common amongst them, they were like almost elite. So they were just going there. And they knew each other, there is a big crowd that goes to that shabeen. So even these apparent negative things have been used to galvanise the sense of belonging and value of fellowship and looking after one another, which I think overall is positive.

Researcher

Just one more thing. If you look at the political change that is taking place at the moment, the process. The process for me seems to be an extremely unique one. I cannot think of another example personally in the world where one government has negotiated itself out of power. How much they have negotiated is another matter, but they have negotiated, that process of negotiation. And even if you look now at where we stand with groups like the IFP and the AVF and things like that, there is still a need to bring them in and bring them on board. That whole process to me seems to be very unique as a process in a political sphere. Is there anything business can learn from that, or should there be anything business can learn from that process?

Respondent 14

I really wonder. Because we were told that the very process, in terms of the negotiation anyway, is something that business has taught the politicians. So at

least the influence of people like Ramaphosa and so on come from business. They have been able to use some of the expertise and skills on the political front. I think, clearly, one has to look at the possible motivation as to why this unique approach by an existing government was adopted and say there is a parallel.

I think there could be some kind of a parallel if you look at business as a microcosm of the broader environment in that the broader environment, from a leadership and control point of view, was in the hands of white people, and the doctrine was one of supremacy and very much so in the business world as well. It was an extension of that in terms of control, leadership ownership was white. So the one world, the broader one has shifted significantly. Maybe that is an area of possible learning, but who then is the new contender here. I think again, in like manner, as it is in the broader environment there is serious accommodation to bring in black people who were expressly excluded out of the system in a calculated manner. So very much in the business world, I think again, is the bringing in again of those who have been excluded.

But I do not think necessarily here we would see the same results if business were to engage in the same kind of process, but we are likely to see at the larger political front. I think predominantly on the political front we would see the levers of power, a lot of black faces. It will also depend on the success or concept of non-racialism and government of national unity. But I think it will strike us more in terms of the complexion that it would business, at least short term, medium term. And I do not think the aim would necessarily be exactly the same. The apartheid system had to be replaced. The Nationalist party says it has done that, so it is looking for a new role. And if this is true, that is fine. But the original order had to be totally replaced.

With business we have to retain certain things here. There are certain principles and practices of running successful business that we must retain. So there are clear aspects that are candidate for change here in the same way that they have been at

the latter environment. And these practices and these principles cannot only be driven by white people. So you do not so much remove the basis of the system, I am trying to make a difference here, I do not know if I am making sense. It is not so much as the removal of the basis of the system as it was on the political structure side, but more the institutions around the premises and the practices.... was the basis of entry into these key roles which we are attempting to change. So I think business can certainly learn something from that. Without any doubt. Without creating a totally new business order. It is not like negotiating themselves out of a position and something totally new has been created. Again I would return to the point of where it is more the bringing together and reaching the environment as opposed to a substitution.

INTERVIEW NUMBER 15

Researcher

From your experience with the community, and from the people you deal with at the school and various places, do you think that there is something that we can call a South African culture, something that is common to all of us?

Respondent 15

In this situation, with the kind of people you deal with, you have a different culture though. You do not have the kind of culture that maybe I have in my day job. You know you find a diff ent culture. You find the learners, because this is a community project and they have heard that this thing is being funded, they expect to be given everything. At the end of the day you really question are we doing this the right way. You know it is helping, but on the other hand, it does not make people to go all out and find out things for themselves.

Researcher

So there is an element of being reliant on...?

Respondent 15

Reliant, yes. They still feel dependent on you. They come to you with very strange problems, you have to sort it out for them. I think that most of them, being domestic workers, they are used to a situation where they, let us say in the case of a woman, she has to report everything to their madam or to their master or whatever. Then, on top of that, she still has to go and report something to her husband if she is married, or her boyfriend or whatever. So it is like really a bureaucratic situation in a way for them. And they still come in here.

I am one person here, I would like everyone here to address me by my first name.

But they still call me "Principal". And I look and what do I do with this. They look at me as an authority and I do not want to find myself as that. I want to find myself as being able to integrate with them, understand them, understand their problems, understand their needs and be able to make them better people instead. Not for them to look at me. oh, you know, I do not want it to be that way. I want the respect to be there. I want them to acknowledge that I am their senior, but I am here to guide them, to make their lives become better, not here just to give them something. That they should see me as a role model. That is how I feel. Not really as somebody who is here to manage.

Researcher
You are saying that is something that is peculiar to the people who come to the Centre.

Respondent 15
Yes, because that is how they are. Most of them, not having had an education, you still really believe in the family culture, whatever kind of school that you went to. You could have gone to school in the sixties or whatever and during that time, obviously, the principal was like.., you know that kind of thing. It is still there in most of them. You have another group that is sort of coming, maybe younger people, who have lost schooling and they are staying around here and they want some kind of schooling or whatever. But you can still feel that there really is not confidence among them.

At the end of the day, for me looking at this centre, whatever education we offer it should really be couple with equipping people, they should feel empowered in a way, feel more confident because that is what they need. And I could see that, even in some of them, the kind of skills that they have got, they could be using them in a more variable way or worthwhile way. But they are not simply because they are not really that confident. We have typing classes and things like that. But you look at them, they still go back and do the gardens and whatever. They can

never really go all out. If it was in my case, I would be putting an advert at Wits and saying, also because I know and they do not know that, and I would say "I can do your typing". And then start with very little things, type them here and see how I go. And eventually I find myself I make money and buy a typewriter or computer or whatever and start making money out of it. Because you are getting the training. But they do not really think, you tell them about something - you can see that that is an idea - they have not really had that kind of an exposure and I find that very inhibiting on their part.

Researcher

Just something that links into that. I have spoken to a number of people and there are almost two viewpoints. The first viewpoint is that differences in culture that we have in South Africa are related to things like education. That there is a difference in culture between the educated and uneducated, or the sophisticated and the unsophisticated, that you might even be able to say between rural and urban in some ways. There is another group of people who say to me, "Yes that exists, but the main difference in culture is between white and black", that there is a black culture and there is a white culture in this country and that there are certain things that most whites will believe in or do, regardless of their education, and there are other things that most blacks will think and do, regardless of their education. Which of those two viewpoints would you see as more correct?

Respondent 15

I think both viewpoints are correct to a certain level. For somebody who has had good education, let us say a black women who has had a very good education and they find a good job, and it sort of offers them whatever they need. Living in that environment, at the beginning obviously you will be learning a few things. It is not really for black people to go on holidays, it has never been there to go on holidays. But then living in that kind of a situation you are at work and each and every time the people that you work with go on leave and they say, "Oh, I have been to this place and oh it is marvellous. You must go yourself and have a look."

You actually start thinking about it. You are exposed to things like movies and TV on a more regular basis and you actually understand what is going on there. And you actually start envying people, looking at the whole thing. And you obviously end up doing that yourself. You find that, at the end of the day, there is not really any difference. The difference is what money do you have, how much can you afford, that is how it goes.

But then you have a situation where you have people who are black, they come, maybe, from the rural areas, they have not had an education, they are not confident, their level of exposure into what white people in the same age group are doing is not the same. They relate to them not as colleagues would but as a master and servant situation. So it obviously still puts them at the back because they can never afford to go on holiday. They do not even think of going on holiday. They think about it but it is a nightmare for them. Firstly, they will not know where to start unless they had to go to Durban, they had to go visit their grandmother or their sister. But in a case where they do not really know anyone they will never really think of it because when they arrive there, how are they going to know where they are going if they cannot read or write. It is already an inhibiting factor. They will not even venture into such a thing. They will not even know where to start. But for somebody who knows where to start, how to go about doing such things, it is easier. And that is why you will find that there is still a black culture and a white culture and a culture for the educated and for the uneducated.

Researcher

So you can cut the pie in a number of ways depending on what you are looking at?

Respondent 15

Yes you can. I look at my learners and I think what they aspire for is to get a job where they will have a room, a backyard room, and even if they can give them

a TV with CCV they will be OK. At least, have a full time job, be paid a certain salary, they will be happy with it. As long as they have, let us say, a nice madam they will be happy with it. What else could they want? And as long as he or she does not say to them, "Don't do this", and be allowed to bring, maybe, a boyfriend or a girlfriend, they will be happy with it. And during the holidays being given a month's leave or two months' leave to go and visit their people int the rural areas, and if you buy them some Christmas hampers, they will be happy with it. What else do they want? Nothing else because they do not actually see other things as being part of their life, it does not belong with them.

You look at the learners that we have got here, some of them, not because of age, you will have like the elderly ones who will say to you, "I only want to know English because I want to be able to communicate with my madam". They do not say, "I want to learn English so that I can go out there and communicate better with people". "I want to communicate better with my employer" It is sort of limited. So when they go out there they actually forget that they still have to go to the bank and that kind of thing. They do not really think of that.

Researcher

So their horizons are limited?

Respondent 15

Yes. They do not really think that if I can communicate better it means that when I go to the bank next time I can just do it myself, everything. I can be able to use an ATM card or whatever, they do not think of it in that way. I will be able to communicate with my madam. So their spoken level of thinking is there. So the next thing, "No, I don't want to do maths. What am I going to do with maths? It is not going to help me with anything". Simply because it is difficult for them and they do not want to sit down and think about it and give themselves time to do it. They do not even want to try it - it is not going to help them with anything. As long as they can learn the English. So you look at it and say, "That is what

they think they need".

I was speaking to this other lady who was saying to me that she knows, now and again people rob her of her change because she is never sure, but she will never go to the maths class. She is not even willing to give it a try. I get so fed up if somebody takes away 20 cents from me because I just feel it is not fair. If I want to give it to them I will give it to them or if I want to leave it at the counter I will leave it there. But she feels anyway what can she do, they will always take it anyway. They are not really prepared to go all out and try and challenge the situation or even find a better way of working. I mean I found I do not really have the patience for reading my change. So when I put in petrol in my car I put in R20. I do not make them fill up the whole tank and end up with R77,29 and I do not even know what kind of change I am supposed to get. I do not do that.

At least I have got a way of dealing with it. But they would rather go there and just be robbed of their money. And you question it because at the end of the day they do not really have that money. They have very little. So there are some things that they are happy to be left undone, they would not even bother trying them. It shows that it is within them. They do not see that as a way of empowerment, that it is going to make them better. They do not see it that way. Maybe the younger ones, but the elderly ones it is even worse.

Researcher

Something that has often been mentioned and talked about is ubuntu. As an educated black person yourself, as a very westernised, urbanised black person, the first question I suppose is, does ubuntu really exist?

Respondent 15

I think it exists. Maybe that kind of culture is fading away. In my case, at home, my family was fairly educated, I mean everybody in my house had professions. I am speaking of my grandparents even my great-grandparent was a priest. I feel

that at home the level of education was enough. But at the end of the day you still get to be taught that you have to respect elderly people, you have to respect other people's property. You know, you just do not look down at other people, let us say my learners, that these are uneducated, stupid people around here. You do not see it that way. You look at it in terms of something did not go well in their lives, they must have been disadvantaged in a way. You still have that. You do not just say that you have got nothing to do with me.

Unfortunately that kind of culture is not going to last longer. I think it is dying. Because there is so much crime and thievery and that kind of thing to the extent where you see an old person that you think really needs help. You try to help them and you end up in trouble yourself. So you do not know who to trust out there. It is a situation where I think at times you go to a parking lot, you find this old dirty man there. You can see that he actually sleeps here in the parking lot. He has no place to live. He is asking you for money to buy bread. You give them money and they say they will look after your car. You go away. When you come back you find that some thugs have come in and taken your car here and you ask him but he did not see anything. You question why I was kind to him because if he could say that he saw the people, or he could have alerted someone. You see in town people grabbing your purse. Just look at you as if it is normal. I am not saying that it is white people or whoever but everyone does that. Amongst black people it is even more questionable because we have not been taught that way. You see somebody doing a wrong thing you go and tell a senior or you go and tell somebody in authority who can maybe call the police. But you do not see it happening. People hear somebody screaming out there, even in the townships, at night, they lock their doors and they lock their windows and they hide under the bed even if somebody is being killed in their backyard.

Researcher

So the whole social and political environment is actually making it very difficult to practice something like ubuntu?

Respondent 15

Yes it is. The other day I was in town and there was this woman who came. She had a little child on her back. I could see they were starving. She was with another man. They said to me, "Can you please give us money for my child, she is starving?". I looked at them at felt that I was not going to take out my purse here, fish money out. I was scared. I wanted to give it to her but I was scared. I could not do it because I felt that I would end up having no purse and no car keys while trying to help.

A friend of mine saw little children somewhere in Rivonia. They came and asked for money, as she was looking in her purse, they just grabbed it and ran away. She had like R2000 for her rent. The next thing she could not even pay her rent. There is no way that she will do it next time. You want to do it, you want to show that you care about other people, you still value your culture and your traditional beliefs and all that, but somewhere along the way you have to stop doing it because it will not really help you with anything.

Researcher

Are you saying that ultimately we are going to come to a point at some stage where ubuntu no longer is practised?

Respondent 15

People are more into material gain and protecting their own property and protecting themselves as well, protecting their own life. You never really know out there who you are really trying to help. It does not exist anymore. You really question. Everybody is all out there for personal gain. I do not think that my grandchildren will experience it. It will just be maybe a family thing but to what level I doubt it.

Researcher

Just something else that a lot of people have said to me is that our culture, and I

do not think that this is necessarily a black thing - but it has been mentioned particularly in relation to black people or black culture - that it is a very authoritarian culture. That like you were saying the students look to you as the Principal to tell them how to live their lives. Even in the family what the father says becomes law, in the tribal situation, what the chief says becomes law. We listen very carefully to other people and we accept rules and regulations laid down by other people.

Respondent 15

I think that is just how society is like. I cannot really say whether it is within black people or within white people. You go to a big company like Ogilvey, Mather, it is an international company, they have offices all over the place. But if one of the bosses asks for something you see how people run around. You do not really expect this to happen. It is a culture that is there. It is not really black or white.

You go to a black family you find that whatever the father says is law. That will depend on the extent to which the father is conservative or authoritarian in the family. If he is really oppressive everybody will be scared of him. It is there.

Researcher

Is it changing in marriages with younger people, more educated people? Do you find men are more willing to listen to women?

Respondent 15

I think it is changing, but it is going to be a very gradual transition. Not every educated person gets married to an educated person. You still find an educated person, a doctor maybe, being married to somebody who has just got matric or whatever, who still really believes that my wife has to listen to me, and my children have to listen to me. I have to chose schools and things like that for them. So it will take time. Also with people coming from the rural areas, it is

definitely a different lifestyle. It will take time to really settle and find that each and every man is happy to listen to what their wives are saying and sort of take it as the right thing. It is going to take time. It is not really going to be that easy. But I think, in a way seeing so many women working and earning a living out there, in a way they are getting empowered. I think some of them can challenge their husbands at home. It may take time. And some of them can do it just for the peace of the relationship, not really how they feel.

Researcher

We have mentioned ubuntu and we have mentioned this authoritarian nature, I think it is probably in our whole society. We are used to an authoritarian government. Are there any thing else that you see as core values that we as South Africans or groups of South Africans hold as important to them?

Respondent 15

Not really, I cannot say. I am not really aware of anything.

Researcher

A lot of what you have been saying is that what we have had in the past is changing.

Respondent 15

It is, it really is. Maybe I am living in a different world.

Researcher

Do you think that we are going to come to a time, I do not know when, where there is ... I mean we have always been very separate in this country. We have separated blacks and whites, we have separated English and Afrikaans speaking, we have separated Zulu and Tswana. We have tended to sperate almost everything. Do you think that in time that we will get to the point where there is one culture. You know like Americans, you have white Americans, you have

black Americans, you have got Indian Americans and you have got Italian Americans. Yet, ultimately they are Americans. There is something very similar among all of them. Do you think that this is going to happen here?

Respondent 15

It could happen. I think it will take place by regions and it will spread but it is going to be a very gradual change. You still live in Johannesburg where it is the major metropolitan area in South Africa but you still have black people who look down on, maybe, a Northern Sotho speaking person or a Zulu speaking person looking down on a Tsonga speaking person. You still have that. You still have people who associate Zulus with being very hard, very conservative. They take the political situation. But really what do they expect. You still have that. So it is going to take time. People are still way back. People still believe in their own language. You know you go to places, people talk to you in their own language, you do not know it - you can feel the resentment. And the worst thing is that they can actually hear what you are saying, they just make it difficult for you. And why, you really question it. Is it worth it.

You go to advertising and you still find that people are trying to say that you have to talk to people in their own language. Well I do not know, maybe for the purposes of selling your brand you have to do it. It is one issue where you really question whether we will ever see ourselves as one nation. Will we ever come to that level. I do not know.

But maybe it will eventually happen. Maybe the Americans who have been through that stage, but long ago. We are getting there but it looks quite bleak to me.

Researcher

There is also an element that the western culture, this culture of being very much more an individual - I worry about myself, my possessions, my things, what I do

I achieve for me - seems to be the culture the culture that will take over.

Respondent 15

I think it will. Living in a capitalist society like we are. At the end of the day you really question what am I getting out of this. Like I told you, you want to help somebody but you want to protect yourself and your personal property - I do not want my car to be highjacked - there is no way that I can stop and help that person. So you see it is more people do not want to share things with other people. People still feel they have to protect their own property and whatever they have got.

The American influence. People look at that and see that the only difference is that they are black. That is the only difference. They have got money, they have got good jobs, they are movie stars. And it means that the only difference is that they are black and they are living a better life. We look at them, we start envying them and feel why not us. It means if I can do this and this and this. You get all the success stories from America and they influence us.

Researcher

Something that links to ubuntu and it is a black thing that I have noticed. There is a lot of talk about my brothers, my sisters and feeling of brotherhood with other people. Brothers not necessarily sons of your mothers but they are people with whom you feel close and you feel a kinship with them. Is that something that is dying out or disappearing or is it still very strong among blacks?

Respondent 15

I think it still to a certain level. I think most black people grew up in extended families but as soon as that comes to an end, this always comes to an end. If you grew up in a family where you were brought up by your uncles, your mother and everybody living in one house, obviously you will feel that kind of a relationship. You will feel there is no way I can be having all those nice things while my

brother, maybe who are my cousins, do not have anything. Especially if you have grown together. Because you know how you used to grow up. You feel they are your family. You can never actually have differentiate whether they are your sister or your brother. You grew up together. One person cooked for everyone and you came all together to one table to have your meals. If they were buying presents or new clothing you all got the same clothing. Out there if something happened to you they would all protect you against your friends who wanted to hit you or something simply because you came from the same family. But as soon as you start living far apart, not in the same family, it is no longer there. I does not work out because the relationship is no longer that close. I have grown up with my cousins and I find that I cannot just keep quiet and let them not have anything while I have got. I just feel it is wrong. I do not really see them as my cousins. I see them as my brother and my sister.

Researcher

Does the same closeness extend to friends?

Respondent 15

I cannot say to friends. But to family it is stronger. Even though at the end of the day you know that you uncle or your aunt is not really a very nice person. At times you feel let them have whatever they want because you cannot just discard them because of a little feud. It also depends on somebody's personality. But with westernisation and that kind of thing people move away, start staying alone. Now you have so many young people staying by themselves, not married or anything. Obviously in that way they are not even staying with their brothers or their sisters. So it means they are starting to really fend for themselves. When they want something they cannot go and call their uncle. They have to go and call somebody in the street or even pay for it.

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Name of thesis: The impact of South African culture on the management of people

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
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