

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. GENERAL

Africa has been going through the stages of transformation at such a rapid pace, that, at times, aspects of modernity have been adopted without being fully internalised. Underlying these transformational processes, has been the realisation that African countries must start looking to each other regarding economic, political and even social matters, instead of making the West their point of reference. Unfortunately, African countries have inherited systems and structures from their colonial past that perpetuated the transfer of Western business traditions. One of the major *challenges* facing not only South Africa, but also the African continent, is the existence of islands of wealth in a sea of poverty and underdevelopment.

The realisation that African countries must look towards each other for future development has gained ground in contemporary management literature, which refers to an Afrocentric approach. But *how* this approach is to be achieved is still mired in much confusion. A basis for theory development is needed next to serve as a point of departure which will (depending on the outcome), enable the expansion and verification of this argument. A review of the literature supporting the argument for Afrocentricity is provided, followed by a discussion of the research problem.

2. BACKGROUND

Studying literature on the business environment in South Africa, the term “turbulent field” seems to underlie all messages. Turbulence results from the increased intensity of causal interconnections between different facets of the environment, as well as from the actions of interlinked organisations. Turbulent environments

are characterised by complexity, rapid change and high levels of uncertainty. The causal interconnections between political, economic, cultural and social factors in South Africa are deepening. In the early nineties, economics were influenced by politically inspired actions such as consumer boycotts, union-organised stayaways, a low productivity/high wages workforce and conflicting financial ideologies. Although the latter two were still relevant in the second half of the nineties, the effect of affirmative action and the large emigration figure have also left their marks. Community life is affected by record-breaking crime figures, unrealised political ideals and promises, as well as a demand culture which have their roots in the struggle and the apartheid era.

Business in South Africa is caught between the ideologies and structures of the past and the ideals of the future. The have's and the have-nots, the educated and the uneducated, the first world and third world societies, the capitalists and the social-democracy of the black underclasses. All three "waves of change" (Toffler 1980:24) are currently present in South Africa: The rural population still employ the most primitive farming methods (first wave); the industrial sector - mining, manufacturing, construction - is still soundly based in the "second wave", whereas knowledge-based work (third wave) is entrenched in the information age. This unique divergence pushes South Africa into a class of its own, with problems related to a first world and third world environment.

Some 40 articles and books on the subject of African management all indicated that South Africa, from an economic point of view, has only recently been considered part of the 'African continent'. Arguments stating that South Africa has an existing infrastructure that is, by African standards, superb, are found throughout the literature, *inter alia* Rotberg (1999) and McGowan & Ahwireng-Obeng (1998). South Africa is a member of the Southern African Development Commu-

nity* but is significantly stronger in terms of infrastructure than any of the other member states.

According to McGowan & Ahwireng-Obeng (1998), the plight of managers in the rest of Africa is such that they have to supplement their income by doing private work (a job taking them out of the office, more often than not, resulting in low productivity, conflicting interests and the most common of all, bribery) as the economies of most of the African countries cannot sustain the public sector infrastructure. The African governments turn a blind eye to this additional income as it relieves them of their responsibilities.

Mills (1999:21) argues that Africa suffers from “personalisation” of sovereignty – where leaders take personal rivalries as challenges to national interests and far too often fail to distinguish between state assets and personal bank accounts. South Africa is in the process of transforming itself into a “new” society. This transformation goes far beyond the mere deracialisation, decolonisation and democratisation of society. What is happening in South Africa is also a manifestation of a global trend - a revolution sweeping mankind as a whole - the way we think, act, communicate and live. Globalisation and the forms of tension, change and the unfolding of events may correspond with those experienced in Eastern Europe, the Pacific Rim, China and the rest of Africa, but, uniquely, even though the cultures in South Africa have inhabited the region for more than three centuries, the majority find themselves in the uncomfortable position of not knowing much about each other.

Vaill (1989:36) describes the new world as “permanent white water”. Most managers are taught a normative theory; to paddle their canoes on calm, still lakes where they can steer the craft in the direction they choose. Sometimes they have to shoot the rapids only to find themselves back in the calm, still lake.

**Southern African Development Community is a 12-country grouping that also includes Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.*

The modern manager, especially in South Africa, finds himself permanently in white water. He never gets out of the rapids. No sooner does he digest one change, than another comes along; in fact, there are usually many changes occurring at once; the feeling is one of permanent chaos (Human 1991).

For the first time in its history, South Africa is developing interdependently from within, rather than its constituent parts battling independently, each in a state of apartheid. At the same time, work spirit rather than physical labour, human as opposed to financial capital, intangible information rather than tangible resources, culture rather than economy, have become primary resources (Lessem 1994:20). Beck and Linscott (1994:99) argue that the global revolution is sweeping managerial and organisational thinking, from ivory tower theory-building and research, to practical, coal face applications. These major fluctuations are not the only ones influencing South African organisations. A significant number of local pressures, problems and complexities are also impacting on South African organisations. There are shifts from:

- A production to a marketing focus;
- government structures to privatised schemes;
- White/European to a cultural pluralism;
- bureaucracies to meritocracies;
- formal to informal sector mobilisation;
- a South African focus to global strategies;
- isolated to integrated functions;
- privileged to partnership relationships; and
- linear to multidimensional thinking.

In the past, the funneling of black activism through the trade union movement has politicised the work environment to the extent that national issues have become more important than local, job-related concerns. Literacy and numeracy deficiencies and gaps are alarming. Skills in scientific problem resolution are

scarce and do not appear to be improving. According to Drake (1997:9) only one black matriculant in 10 000 had sufficient qualifications, on leaving school, to pursue a career in the fields of engineering and science.

People in South Africa are primarily concerned with violence, higher levels of crime, a struggling economy and high levels of unemployment (Van Aardt 1994:134).

Human (1994) attempted a first serious definition of a South African theory of an organisation and emphasised the fact that it was exploratory by nature and may lead to empirical research. His arguments were formulated in terms of the population ecology approach, which was broadly based on evolutionary theory:

Human (1994) argued that any observer of the population of South African business firms would be struck by the paradox of a relatively homogeneous business sector within a context of great diversity (an argument supported by Binedell, 1993). At the time of writing, there was far less diversity in business organisations than in society as a whole. South Africa was a society in which a small and homogeneous elite had created an organisational and institutional fabric to serve their own and particular needs. The environment in which business organisations operated was therefore tailored specifically to the needs of the elite. The majority of the population, who were viewed as *visitors*, had little impact on the nature of the specific and relevant environments served by the business organisation. The business environment could be seen as protected and isolated enclaves in the broader South African environment. Apartheid structures and racist attitudes created a small white island, only vaguely conscious of the African sea surrounding its shores.

The South African business which evolves successfully from this context would mirror the characteristics of the broader, relevant environment, whether management likes it or not.

- The evolved South African organisation would be characterised by divisions

and tensions similar to those found in the broader environment. The business organisation is thus paradoxically both similar to, and different from (refer previous argument) the environment. To resolve this paradox a redefinition of the very concept of the South African organisation is needed. Organisations are, theoretically, relatively coherent social systems with boundaries which differentiate them fairly clearly from other organisations. It can be expected, for example, that the employees of an organisation would be relatively more loyal to the management of that organisation than to the employees of another firm. It could also be expected that management be more loyal to their workers than to the management of another organisation. This, argues Human (1994), is clearly not the case. Management and workers see each other and act towards each other as enemies. Horizontal loyalties are far stronger than vertical loyalties.

- The South African business sector was, until recently, one of the most concentrated in the world. Most industries were, before efforts towards unbundling started, dominated by a few large and general corporations, the surplus of organisations being small and specialised niche players. The economy as a whole was dominated by a few large diversified conglomerates like Anglo American, Sanlam, Old Mutual, Rembrandt and Barlow Rand which operated in a wide variety of industries and markets.
- Competition among organisations in the South African economy has historically been feeble, given the concentration of economic activity. The little competition that has taken place, has been local and isolated from the global economy. The closed nature of the economy, especially to external investment opportunities, has also stimulated generalist strategies. The lack of intensive local competition possibly resulted in relatively unsophisticated organisations.
- Organisations in South Africa evolved locally in the absence of international

competition. This resulted in little exposure to international competition and diversity of environmental demands.

- The South African organisation historically evolved in an era of relative equilibrium. The environment is now experiencing punctuated changes. The internal environments are in the process of rearrangement and the society is opening up to the international community, the consequences of this punctuation being more diverse while different environmental demands are also being made on the firm. The ability of the organisation to transform is inhibited by a number of factors. The inertia of the organisation and the cost and irreplaceable nature of historically evolved competencies, both serve as inhibitors to change.
- Management staff may be selected for their uncritical attitude and acceptance of the implicit deep structures of the organisation. The type of manager favoured by the organisation would therefore be an appearance engineer. Focus on the appearance levels of the organisation, such as image, marketing, human resources, management and other support functions as peripheral appendages of the organisation to make it appear more effective, large or humane, may be overemphasised at the expense of core or line activities.
- The process of change in the business organisation under conditions of punctuated change is characterised by the replacement of whole deep structures rather than slowly evolving new deep structures.
- Many organisations attempt to create the image of radical change without changing the core itself. Business press, annual reports and business leaders engage passionately in change talk. The talk, however, far outstrips the actual changes in the workplace. In the short term, the organisation engages intensely in image management and protects past deep structures.

2.1 New management paradigms

Mbigi (1994,1997) argues that the rapid change in South African organisations makes the conventional management (Western) approach inadequate and calls for other management paradigms. African traditional practices and wisdom need to become the basis for management and institutional innovation. It is a mark of African achievement to be able to balance and reconcile opposites. Mbigi (1994,1997) finds visionary management (the inspirational, metaphysical domain of management) to be most appropriate for meeting African management challenges. He also argues that visionary management is capable of synthesising all the polarities. It could integrate ancient wisdom of the past with the modern science of the present, as well as with reality and vision. The metaphysical manager is an inspirational preacher who lives in the grip of a vision and shares his experience with the organisation he leads and seeks to transform.

The traditional African community is characterised by an organic structure in which primary and informal relationships are of great significance, as are formal relationships. In traditional African community ceremonies, rituals and symbols are important. Mbigi (1994,1997) states that these features have to be expressed in the organisational forms that are evolving in Africa. He argues that the new organisation in Southern Africa needs to gravitate towards organic structural designs, rather than mechanistic bureaucratic designs. The organisation has to be more than a mere economic unit. It must become a thriving, enterprising community as is the case in the traditional African community. Leadership must recognise, study and articulate emergent organisational forms and patterns as important, rather than superimposing Western organisational designs and forms on African feudal realities.

Lessem (1994) argues that Ubuntu is uniquely African, contextualised as it is by Khoza (1994) as central to an Afrocentric approach to management. Ubuntu has the potential to span the great divide between our Northerness and Southerness, and between individualism and communalism. As such, the practical application of Ubuntu provides for managerial relationships and practices that would promote harmony and higher productivity in African organisations.

Khoza (1994) admits to the fact that there is no real African management track record to blow one's trumpet about. He argues, however, that economic development is a function of how people relate (and thus communicate), how they organise themselves into productive forces. There are tendencies within a group of people which, if appropriately kindled, make for better organisational behaviour with attendant higher productivity, than an imposed organisational system.

At the Black Consumer Marketing Conference (1997) a number of speakers argued that Ubuntu be used as the anchor and the point of departure in communicating with blacks, while idiomatic expressions and proverbs, music, poetry, paintings, drama, sculpture and literature should be explored (by researchers and creative people) to find values that will strike a responsive chord with black target markets and publics.

Khoza (1994) further argues that Afrocentricity is neither racist nor anti-anybody. It is about Africans and their rightful place in the universe. It is about taking pride in the African identity without denigrating others. It acknowledges diversity as much as it abhors any notions of racial superiority. It is not an attempt to impose an African worldview upon others, nor is it an attempt to develop black supremacy. It proposes that people

of African descent or cultural orientation anchor their view and evaluation of the world within their own historical and ontological framework. It is about bold African self-assertion with Africa as a launch pad. Marais, Conradie, Malan & Schuring (1993:15) went as far as to suggest that “somehow the concept of Ubuntu,should receive more attention.” In an editorial in the *Economist* (March 1995), Ubuntu is referred to as South Africa’s quest for dignifying black culture in business. It refers to Ubuntu as the latest buzz-word dreamt up by management theorists to describe what they say is a uniquely South African fusion of tribal tradition and modern management techniques. The article continues to state that the hierarchical and paternalistic organisations have started to experiment with new management methods such as performance-related pay and decentralisation. Political pressure to increase the proportion of black managers from the current two per cent or so has coincided with a realisation in management circles that blacks might know a thing or two about motivating their fellow blacks.

The trouble, the *Economist* reports, is that Ubuntu seems to mean almost anything one chooses and to Binedell, director of GIBS (Garber Institute of Business Surveys) in Johannesburg, it implies both a “customer-focused” organisation and the view of a company as an “integrated system”: South Africans, he argues, “have an almost intuitive understanding of the essentiality circular shape of holism”. Other advocates suggest that it means “the importance of perception as opposed to reality” in managing change; or affirmative action, or simply working together in teams.

The article concludes, negatively, that a cynic might say that it just means treating blacks less badly.

In an article titled “The Transfer of Western management to China”, Fan (1998:216) states that developing countries in economic transition cannot depend on western management alone but need to develop their own management systems which combine the best of what it has locally, with that of the West. Coleman (1999:43) expands on this argument when he says that it is not debatable whether South Africa should develop its own model, but *how* to construct such a successful model. He continues that the Western model is increasingly blamed for growing numbers of working poor, rising levels of inequality, the dismantling of social welfare, and the cost this is imposing on African society. Davison & Rees-Mogg (1997:50) argue that major transitions always involve a cultural revolution, and usually entail clashes between adherents of old and the new values.

McFarlin, Coster and Mogale-Pretorius (1999:69) state that a conceptual model of a uniquely South African management philosophy need to be developed and tested, based on indigenous philosophies and values, that will help guide management development efforts in South Africa.

Khoza (1994) poses the following critical questions, which will be addressed as **secondary research questions in this study**:

- Is the continent’s business environment sufficiently homogeneous?
- Can we look at the South African situation and superimpose its values on the rest of Africa?
- Are values that are characteristically African, transcending African boundaries?
- Are these values relevant to economic development, business management and communication management in particular?

He concludes by arguing that these and related questions have to be

addressed with scholarly rigour and discipline before anyone can confidently and proudly talk about an Afrocentric management approach.

In summary it can be concluded that organisations in South Africa, like organisations worldwide, are experiencing rapid change and high levels of uncertainty. Such changes require greater management effort than merely maintaining the *status quo*. But in addition to these demands made upon management globally, the South African manager is also faced with local pressures, problems and complexities.

Because South Africa is undergoing major and fundamental changes, the question had been asked whether the conventional (Western) management approach is adequate in addressing management problems inherent to this country.

The purpose of this study is to conceptualise a framework for an alternative management approach, the ultimate aim being to develop a model for such an approach.

3. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the introduction, reference was made to the importance of an effective business or organisation that should mirror or reflect its larger environment. An original overview was given on the South African organisation and the call for Africanisation with Ubuntu as its core value, as the solution. The concept of Africanisation has been gaining in stature in contemporary management literature. Partly because of its relative novelty, and largely because of the absence of a significant body of research on the topic, this construct is still mired in much confusion.

A unique management style, addressing both Western and African values, is arguably one of the solutions to the Southern African transformation process. While speed is needed in political, financial and moral terms, too much haste can provide more confusion than results. Successful organisations take time to evolve. It is difficult to judge an organisation on one year's results. It is even more complex when there are no benchmarks, or if conflict of interest exists.

This study is based on the premise that communication forms a foundation for human organising and provides a rationale for understanding how people organise.

Corporate communication is a management function. The organisation has elements which act on one another in a constantly changing set of meanings constructed through communication.

Communication is a form of human behaviour derived from a need to connect and interact with other human beings. It unites otherwise isolated individuals. It is complex, multidimensional and occurs whenever meaning is attributed to behaviour or the residue of behaviour (Samovar & Porter 1995 and 1997).

An Afrocentric approach to management for the purpose of this study, referred to as the core value Ubuntu, has been hailed by a number of South African managers and opinion leaders as having the potential to span the great divide between the cultural diversity. Ubuntu as a core value for an Afrocentric management approach is in a pre-theoretical phase.

The overall problem identified in this study can therefore be described as follows: This study ultimately endeavours to formulate a basis for theoretical development by comparing Western, Japanese and African management theories and

philosophies, enabling the researcher to juxtapose these with the core value system, Ubuntu.

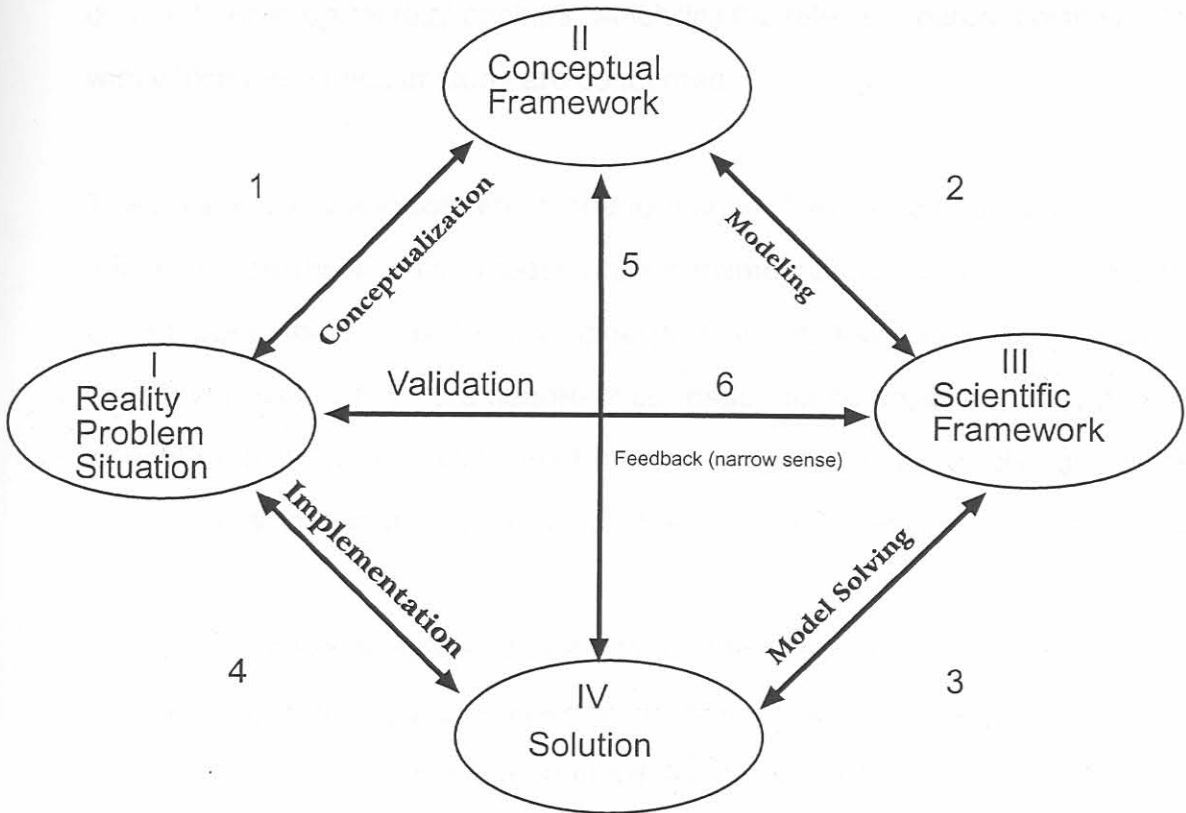
From literature on business management it would seem that the value of such a unique 'South Africanised' approach can contribute to the complexities experienced. The literature does however not explain or apply this approach to the extent that a working model can be developed and utilised. To date, attempts in this regard focussed on one or the other *aspect* of the complexities described in the background to this chapter. An example of such an article is one which appeared in the Journal of Management (1999:63-78), discussing the challenges of management development in post-apartheid South Africa, focussing on an *aggressive* affirmative action program.

4. SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH

In this section the scope of the research is addressed. The ultimate aim of this thesis is to construct a model of South African management communication by conceptualising a framework for the identification of the variables typical of Western, Japanese and African management, structured alongside Ubuntu as value system.

The scope of the thesis may be explained in terms of the systems model of science, as explained by Mitroff & Kilmann (1978:116) and diagrammatically represented in Figure 1.1

FIGURE 1.1 A Systems View of Problem Solving



Source: Mitroff & Kilmann (1978:117)

The model takes a holistic or systems view of the different varieties of scientific activities. Because of the cyclical nature of this view, the diagram actually has no predefined start or finish points. A research project could therefore start at any of the circles I, II, III or IV. For example, it can start at circle I, with an existing problem situation. The first phase of problem-solving would then entail the performance of activity 1 so as to develop a conceptual model in circle II. The conceptual framework sets out the definition of the problem situation or research question(s). It then specifies the variables that will be used to define the nature of the problem and the level at which the variables will be treated, defining the problem/question in the most basic and broadest terms: that is, from a macro-perspective, not from an exact, detailed, micro perspective.

The next phase would entail the performance of activity 2, namely the formula-

tion of a scientific model in circle III. A scientific model is a set of qualitative and/or quantitative logical relationships, which link the relevant features of the reality with which the particular study are concerned.

The third phase would concern the performance of activity 3 to obtain a solution (circle IV) from the scientific model, while implementation (activity 4) would entail a feedback of the solution to the original problem situation or research question.

In validation (activity 6), the degree of correspondence between reality and the scientific model may be evaluated. Finally, in activity 5, problem solving activities (circles I to IV) are applied, with the goal being to obtain better scientific solutions.

The authors have computed that a total of 3 555 research subsystems can be formed by considering all possible combinations of two, three and four elements. Each of these subsystems represent a different type or form of scientific activity. This implies that legitimate research need not address all of the activities and elements in the model.

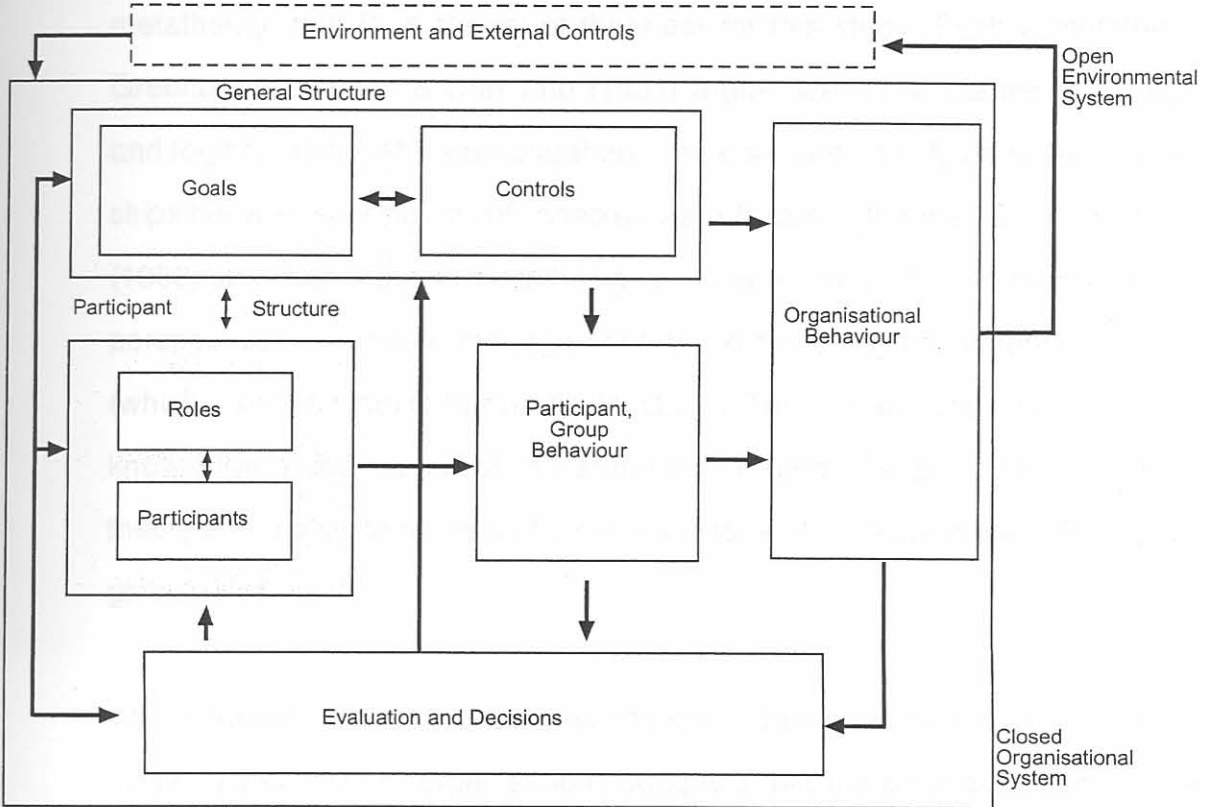
From the point of view of systems thinking, there are therefore no simple starting or finish points in the process of inquiry. A researcher may begin and end the process at any point in the model.

For the purpose of this study, the scope of the research is confined to circles I (Chapter 1), II (Chapters 2 to 5), III (Chapter 6) and IV (Chapters 7 and 8), and activities 1 (Chapter 1), 2 (Chapter 2 to 5), and 3 (Chapter 7). Activities 4, 5 and 6 will not be undertaken. This micro-model of the epistemic structure of science does not refer to the influences of the environment in which it exists, in the case of this study, where the publication and review process enters in.

Figure 1.2 is a macro-model derived from the field of organisational behaviour (Kilmann & Mitroff 1978) and can, the authors argue, be equally applied to the

institution of science. The Analytical Model of Institutions is drawn from the field of organisational behaviour because science does not function in a political and social vacuum: The broader aspects of science are both institutional and political.

FIGURE 1.2 A Macro-model Of Science – The Analytical Model Of Institutions



Source: Mitroff & Kilmann (1978:122)

For the purpose of this study, the concept of the organisation will be considered in broad terms. Any socio-cultural collectivity that has identifiable coherence and cohesion, so that it might be called a system, will be considered an organisation. Furthermore, a systemic point of view will be taken that concerns itself with socio-cultural systems in general, regardless of the extent or level of operation of such an entity as a system. By taking such a systems viewpoint, any size organisation, be it a small to medium enterprise (SME's), a multi-national or a unit within such an organisation, will apply. The term socio-cultural system signi-

fies social systems composed of humans in interaction. Human interaction in such systems is always implied. The emphasis, though, remains on the organisation as a form of socio-cultural system.

Systems theory therefore provides a general conceptual framework (or metatheory, that is, a theory of theories) for this study. Such a metatheory, Greenbaum, Kaplan & Damiano (1991) argue, identifies classes of variables and logical relationships among them, but does not specify particular relationships between specific sets of variables, as substantive theories. Brown & Moberg (1980) postulate that this metatheory represents one of the two most dominant perspectives in modern management, the other being contingency approach (which is not relevant to this particular study). The researcher assumes the prior knowledge of the reader of this study with regards the principles of systems theory and the systems view of organisations, and it will therefore suffice to only give an overview.

With reference to the discussion in section 1, the introduction to this chapter, a systems viewpoint of organisations suggests that the organisation is an open system, which is maintained through a continual two-way process of exchange between itself and its environments, and management involves regulating and adjusting the system to effect better organisational performance and emphasises the extent to which an organisation is part of a much larger environment. Managers can no longer ignore or wish away their environmental suprasystem. In today's fast paced world, adapting to a changing environment and learning new techniques are crucial. With less external stability, organisations develop elaborate information systems which help them monitor the environment.

Organisations are *processors* (via input-throughput-output mechanisms) of energy, materials and information (Farace, Monge & Russell 1977:4). These au-

thors explain that organisations comprise many different systemic levels; thus, one can look at interpersonal systems, or a network of work groups at a higher systems level, with the organisation as an even higher systemic level. They are consistent with the integrative perspective of the organisation, and describe an organisation to include two or more individuals –

- who recognise that some of their goals can be more readily achieved through interdependent actions, even though disagreement may be present;
- who take in materials, energy, and information from the environment in which they exist;
- who develop coordinative and control relationships to capitalise on their interdependence, while operating on these inputs; and
- who return the modified inputs to the environment in an attempt to accomplish the goals that interdependence was meant to make possible.

In times of rapid change and turbulence, the relationship between the open system, (the organisation) and its environment is likely to be affected in the following manner:

- Survival becomes increasingly elusive;
- boundaries separating the system and the environment become increasingly thin and permeable;
- two-way interaction between the system and its environment increases substantially;
- interdependence and interaction between subsystems becomes increasingly complex to monitor, as the subsystems mutate, merge or disappear; and
- the organisation attempts to expose more of its subsystems directly to the environment, in order to get *closer* to the environment, and make itself more sensitive to changes.

In this study, an interdisciplinary approach is adopted. The comprehensive literature survey spans several disciplines, including Business Management, Strategic Management, Organisational Theory, Change Theory, Management Information Systems, Financial Management, Strategic Communication Management, Organisational Communication and Studies on Behavioural Science. An interdisciplinary research approach complements Systems Theory, as Systems Theory adopts a holistic view of science and provides a simple means of categorising, understanding, synthesising and structuring the wealth of information and knowledge gained from specialised disciplines. This is the result of the interdisciplinary approach that will be followed.

In conclusion it can be said that certain philosophical assumptions underlie each of the approaches to research in the Social Science. In order to understand research it should be viewed in the context of the underlying web of beliefs and reasoned arguments. These beliefs and arguments have been introduced in this section. This discussion will be continued in Chapter 6.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The *general purpose* of the study is to contribute to theory building. This will be done by *constructing a model* of South African management communication by conceptualising a framework for the identification of the variables typical to Western, Japanese and African management, structured alongside Ubuntu as value system.

Two related goals guide the study. The first is to *identify the important dimensions* and variables associated with management in Western, Japanese and African organisations. This will be accomplished by first reviewing past theory and research, as postulated in literature, and developing a set of dimensions to structure and describe the range of variables relevant to the study.

The second goal is to *construct a model* of South African management communication by refining the dimensions identified after the first goal has been reached. This will be accomplished by grading the variables by South African managers, followed by factor analysis.

EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS

6. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study cannot presume to achieve more than providing an *introduction* to and construction of a model for South African management. It will require further research and validation before a measurement instrument can be developed, based on the results of this study.

Due to the researcher's linguistic limitations, literature published in African or Japanese languages was not considered, and includes, for the same reason, work by academics, authors and writers from the Anglo-Saxon linguistic group.

From a strategic point of view, the communication function is part of the dominant coalition in the organisation, but will not be discussed, as it is not relevant to this particular study.

7. VALUE OF THE STUDY

As described in the introduction (1) to this chapter, there has been extensive reporting on the 'need' for an alternative management style in the South African organisational context. Multiple streams of literature exist, producing competing or overlapping typologies. None of the individual typologies, however, capture the range of variables and dimensions associated with the model-construction process, which cover the very comprehensive domain of management communication. Instead, each emphasises only a portion of the content. Given the fragmented and overlapping nature of the literature, the field of management would benefit from an analytical and integrated approach to the problem.

The study will further stimulate research in this domain and provide the impetus to explore other avenues in related fields. It will provide a model for further testing, ultimately rendering a measurement instrument.

8. EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS

The exposition of the chapters should be read together with the model described in section 4, which provides the scope and structure of the research. Chapter 1 commences at circle I of the model as explained by Mitroff and Kilmann earlier in this chapter, and demonstrates the existence of a problem situation. The problem situation is the apparent inability of Western management approach to address problems unique to South African organisations.

In Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 the conceptual framework of circle II is developed. The elements or variables necessary for defining the nature and extent of the problem, as well as the perspective adopted in the research, are specified.

Chapter 2 contains a philosophical perspective on management and management communication based primarily on the arguments of Peter Drucker, illustrating the relative short history of professional management as a science. The chapter also expounds the premise of this study, that communication is the binding element that keeps the various interdependent parts of the organisation together. An introduction to Western, Japanese and African management styles in this context, starts the construction of the framework.

In Chapter 3 the three management styles are discussed in various dimensions as determined by the literature, *inter alia* the social, environmental and cultural context, decision making and conflict resolution, and career and attitude towards employees.

Chapter 4 attempts to explore the basic principles of Ubuntu as it appears in literature. The exponents of Ubuntu will be described, as well as the business sphere within which it operates.

The comparative analysis follows in Chapter 5, where the three managerial styles are structured alongside Ubuntu, facilitating an overview of the relevant variables exposed by the preceding Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

The research design is explained and substantiated in Chapter 6. The choice of a qualitative and quantitative research design for attaining the research objectives are explained and justified. The empirical research, as well as its design is discussed and an overview is provided of the three kinds of decision making processes, *inter alia* the strategic, tactical and operational decisions.

Chapter 7 summarises and reports the data collected, the statistical treatment of the data, and deals with the results of the empirical study.

In Chapter 8 an overview is given of the study, conclusions are made and recommendations regarding future research, contributions to research methodology, and a framework for a South African management communication model are proposed. Implications of this research for communication in organisations are also addressed.

9. SUMMARY

The provision of a unique management style, addressing both Western and African values, is arguably one of the solutions to the Southern African transformation process. The study starts from the premise that communication is a basis for

human organising and provides a rationale for understanding how people organise. An Afrocentric approach to management, and for the purpose of this study, Ubuntu, has been hailed by a number of South African managers and leaders as spanning the great divide between the cultures in South Africa. Ubuntu has mainly thus far, been described from a narrow, single factor point of view. Certain assumptions have been made regarding Ubuntu that will form secondary research questions to be addressed in this research.

This study proposes to address the problem holistically, and to ultimately construct a model of South African management communication. The general purpose of the study is to contribute to theory building. The scope and structure of the research has been identified, as well as its delimitations and value of the study.

In order to add to a better understanding of the role and context of management, the historical origins and development of management are described in Chapter 2.