

Problematic encounters between Chinese nationals and Black South
Africans in the building industry in Johannesburg, South Africa: An
intercultural communication analysis

by

GANFU YANG

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

DPHIL LINGUISTICS

in the Department of Linguistics at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SUPERVISOR: PROF CHF OHLHOFF

SEPTEMBER 2017

Table of Contents

Abbreviations.....	6
Synopsis.....	7
1.0. Chapter 1. Background, context and statement of problem.....	9
1.1 China-Africa relationships.....	9
1.2 China-South Africa relations.....	13
1.3 Cracks in China-(South) Africa relationship	15
1.4 International concerns about the cracks	19
1.5 Justification, aims and rationale statement.....	22
1.6 Summary... ..	27
2.0. Chapter 2. Literature review and theoretical background.....	29
2.1 Introduction.....	29
2.2 Basic conceptualisation of culture, intercultural communication and intercultural communication competence	32
2.2.1 Conceptualisation of culture	32
2.2.2 Conceptualisation of intercultural communication	35
2.2.3 Conceptualisation of intercultural communication competence.....	36
2.3 Cultural dimensions	37
2.3.1 Individualism—collectivism.....	40
2.3.1.1 Introduction: Importance of individualism—collectivism in this study	40
2.3.1.2 Chinese collectivism	42
2.3.1.3 African collectivism-individualism.....	43
(a) Traditional African collectivism/communalism/Ubuntu.....	43
(b) Africans’ shift from collectivism to individualism.....	45
2.3.1.4 Summary.....	52
2.3.2 High-context communication and low-context communication	53
2.3.3 High-power distance and low-power distance.....	60
2.3.4 Attitudes to time.....	67
2.3.5 Conclusions	75

2.4 Communication strategies.....	76
2.4.1 Harmony	77
2.4.1.1 Chinese version of harmony.....	78
2.4.1.2 African version of harmony.	79
2.4.2 Politeness.....	81
2.4.2.1 Chinese notion of politeness.....	82
2.4.2.2 African notion of politeness.....	83
2.4.3 Face concern	84
2.4.3.1 Chinese face.....	84
2.4.3.2 Face in business.....	85
2.4.3.3 Face and individualism-collectivism.....	85
2.4.3.4 Face and conflict style.....	85
2.4.3.5 African face.....	86
2.4.4 Summary	87
2.5 Conclusions.....	88
3.0. Chapter 3. Research questions, research design and methodology.....	91
3.1 Research questions	91
3.2 Research design.....	92
3.3 Research methodology	95
3.3.1 Data.....	95
3.3.2 Data gathering.....	97
3.3.3 Data analysis.....	99
4.0. Chapter 4. Data analysis and findings	101
4.1 Introduction.....	101
4.2 Data analysis	101
4.2.1 Analysis of close-ended questionnaires.....	101
4.2.1.1 Statements and cultural dimensions.....	101
4.2.1.2 Analysis of data.....	103
4.2.2. Analysis of open-ended questionnaires.....	105

4.2.2.1 Brief introduction	105
4.2.2.2 Analysis of data.....	106
4.2.3 Analysis of interview questionnaires.....	111
4.2.3.1 Brief introduction.....	111
4.2.3.2 Analysis of data	112
4.2.4 Summary	122
4.3 Data findings	123
4.3.1 Findings of close-ended questionnaires.....	123
4.3.2 Findings of open-ended and interview questionnaires.....	128
5.0. Chapter 5. Discussion.....	138
5.1 Introduction.....	138
5.2 Collectivism vs individualism	139
5.3 High power distance vs low power distance.....	145
5.4 High context communication vs low context communication.....	155
5.5 Long-term orientation vs short-term orientation.....	159
5.6 Contributions of this research.....	163
6.0. Chapter 6. Conclusions, limitations and recommendations	167
6.1 Conclusions.....	167
6.2 Limitations and recommendations.....	173
Bibliography	175
Appendix I	
Consent letter.....	188
Appendix II.....	189
A. Close-ended questionnaires completed by black South Africans.....	189
B. Close-ended questionnaires completed by Chinese	190

Appendix III	192
A. Open-ended questions for Chinese.....	192
B. Open-ended questions for black South Africans	193
 Appendix IV.....	 194
A. Interview questions for black South Africans	194
B. Interview questions for Chinese.....	195
 Appendix V	
Respondents' answers to open-ended questions and interview questions....	197
A. Chinese respondents' answers to open-ended questions.....	197
B. Black South African respondents' answers to open-ended questions.....	213
C. Answers to interview questions from Chinese and black South African participants	223
 Appendix VI	
Close-ended questionnaires done in Namibia and their findings.....	251
A. Close-ended questionnaires completed by black Namibians	251
B. Close-ended questionnaires completed by Chinese in Namibia.....	252
C. Results of close-ended questionnaire survey in Namibia	253

Abbreviations

BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (p.11)
CQ	cultural intelligence (p.169)
HCC	high context culture (p.36)
HPD	high-power distance (p.36)
ICC	intercultural communication competence (p.30)
IT	Information technology (p.9)
LCC	low context culture (p.36)
LPD	low-power distance (p.36)
MSR	Maritime Silk Road (p.8)
M-time	monochronic patterns (p. 66)
OSH	occupational safety and health (p.16)
PDI	power distance index (p.57)
P-time	polychronic patterns (P.66)
PRC	People's Republic of China (p.9)
SA	South Africa (p. 7)
SEZs	Special Economic Zones (p.12)

Synopsis

The purpose of my thesis was to investigate whether Chinese nationals and black South Africans had different cultural constructs regarding individualism-collectivism, the power distance index, contextual communication, attitudes to time and communication strategies and whether such differences caused problematic encounters between them in the building industry in Johannesburg.

The thesis is composed of six chapters, each of them dealing with different aspects of the research. Chapter one is introductory, accounting for China-Africa/South Africa relationships, international concern about the challenges of the relationships, justification, aims and rationale statement. Chapter two is divided into four parts, providing a review of existing literature regarding the four cultural dimensions and three communication strategies of Chinese, black (South) Africans and Europeans whose cultures have a profound impact on black Africans. Chapter three concentrates on research questions, three data collection instruments, requirements and number of participants. Chapter four concentrates on data analysis and findings from open/close ended and interview questionnaires. Chapter five argues how the different cultural dimensions and communications strategies caused the problematic interactions between Chinese nationals and black South African employees. Contributions of this study are included in this chapter. Chapter six deals with conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

The findings support the researcher' original propositions that Chinese nationals and black South Africans had different cultural dimensions and such differences caused their problematic interactions. Based on the results, this study recommends that cultural dimensions should receive due consideration to address contentious labour relations between Chinese companies and black Africans instead of simply observing labour laws as broadly claimed in political and economic circles. The major practical implication of the present research is that it provides much needed answers to both Chinese and black South Africans to understand the root causes of their problematic interactions better. Thus, the

results should be applicable to a wide population that is interested in Sino-Africa relations.

Those who understand others as well as themselves
will be granted success in a thousand encounters.

-----Chinese Proverb-----

Chapter One

Background, context and statement of problem

1.1 China-Africa relationship

The China-South Africa (SA) relationship is part of the entire relationship between China and Africa. Therefore, a brief but explanatory and demonstrating context of China-Africa relations is necessary to account for the China-SA relationship and to pave the way for fruitful, comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the problematical encounters between Chinese nationals and black South Africans in the building industry in Johannesburg.

According to Baah and Jauch (2009), China's interest in Africa is not new. Chinese history and archaeological evidence in East Africa indicate that China's trade relationship with Africa dates back to the Han dynasty between 202 BC and 220 AD. In the early 15th century, the famous Chinese explorer, Admiral Zheng He, sailed down the coast of East Africa with a fleet of over 250 ships and 25 000 people, rounded the Cape of Good Hope in SA and sailed up along the west coast as far as the Cape Verde Islands before crossing the Atlantic (Edinger, Herman & Jasson 2008). Exports of goods from Africa to China and imports of Chinese goods to Africa took place before and after the Tang Dynasty. The first Chinese visits and settlements occurred on the east coast of Africa, according to Baah and Jauch (2009).

While there is a long history of limited migration from China to Africa, the past decades, in particular, have brought tens of thousands of Chinese to African cities, towns and rural areas. It is estimated that the number is probably over one million (Park 2012). These migrants are part of the growing political, economic and sociocultural ties between China — now the world's second largest economy — and Africa, the poorest and most underdeveloped continent (Park 2012).

China's relations with Africa have flourished in the past decades, with massive Chinese investment across the continent. In 2013, President Xi Jinping's first state visit was to Africa. In Dec 2015, he visited Africa again. This is a clear signal that Africa is high on the agenda of the new Chinese president. A good political relationship between China and Africa resulted in good economic ties between the two. Chinese commerce with Africa reached \$220 billion in 2014, making China the continent's biggest trade partner. According to Brautigam (2015), in 2014 alone Chinese companies signed over \$70 billion in construction contracts in Africa that yielded vital infrastructure, provided jobs and boosted the skills set of the local workforce. The newly launched ambitious Chinese "The Belt and Road Strategy"¹ has covered seven African ports, which will involve more China-Africa interaction and drive and stimulate Africa's industrialisation (Aneja 2015).

People-people interactions between China and Africa are also encouraging. According to Brautigam (2015), Hong Kong-based academics Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong surveyed 400 Chinese companies operating in over 40 African countries. They found that while management and senior technical positions tended to remain Chinese, more than 80% of workers were local. Some companies had localised as much as 99% of their workforce, which indicates that more intercultural interaction takes place between Chinese and African employees and conflicts are likely to happen. In Ethiopia, for instance, nearly 4 800 Ethiopians were employed by the Chinese firm that built Ethiopia's urban light rail project.

¹ The Belt and Road Strategy has two components — the Silk Road Economic Belt that is to be established along the Eurasian land corridor from the Pacific coast to the Baltic Sea, and the 21st century Maritime Silk Road (MSR). The "belt and road" runs through the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, connecting the vibrant East Asian economic circle at one end and developed European economic circle at the other. The "belt and road" will be serviced by a network of roads, high-speed railways, fibre-optical lines, transcontinental submarine optical cable projects and satellite information passageways (Aneja 2015). To demonstrate the importance of African markets as a key player in the designs for the MSR, Chinese and Thai officials agreed to construct investment vehicles for the development of 12 strategic ports, which will receive and distribute cargo shipped along the MSR. Seven of these ports are located on Africa's coastlines (Aneja 2015).

Another 4 000 Ethiopians worked at Huajian, a Chinese shoe factory close to the capital of Addis Ababa (Brautigam 2015).

China plays a leading role in nearly all spheres of African development, such as agriculture, education, health, mining, trading, manufacturing and information technology (IT), among others. This is also true in the building industry of Africa. However, much as African people differ on China's presence in Africa (Shih 2013; Nedu 2015), Chinese engagements in this industry have also attracted both positive and negative comments across the continent and the world (Udeh 2017; Cottle 2014). Construction industries across Africa offer interesting comparisons, with considerable variations in size and growth that are usually tied to the particular country's overall economic performance and the interests of investors and donors. To illustrate, SA is a traditionally strong country in terms of the construction industry, while Namibia is a weak and small one. Following China's increasing engagement on the continent in recent years, the construction industries of various African countries have experienced extraordinary growth. This is not only due to the large soft loans that the People's Republic of China (PRC) has made available to various African countries for national infrastructural development, but also to the increased activity of Chinese construction companies in Africa, undertaking large-scale projects (Edinger, Herman & Jasson 2008).

According to Edinger, Herman and Jasson (2008), a growing number of private Chinese construction companies are being established in Africa in addition to existing Chinese state construction companies. Chinese construction companies have a range of advantages over their local and other foreign competitors in Africa, including: 1) a hands-on management style, 2) a high degree of organisation, and 3) a general aptitude for hard work (Edinger, Herman & Jasson 2008). This gives Chinese companies an advantage over other construction companies in terms of tender allocations, creating more interaction between Chinese and Africans.

Chinese firms are constructing roads and building hydroelectric dams and hospitals. A number of projects are being carried out by Chinese companies. The

state-owned China Road and Bridge Corporation, a leading company in the world, had over 500 projects on the continent by 2004. The researcher of this study worked for over three years for this company that had the lion's share of road projects in Kenya. In Zambia alone, the construction of the government complex, new headquarters for the Football Association of Zambia, a power supply project for a copper mine, a cement plant outside Lusaka, the Lundazi-Chamma road and the hydroelectric plant at Kafue Gorge were all carried out by Chinese firms. In addition, Chinese firms executed projects such as the Foreign Ministry buildings in Djibouti and Uganda, the presidential palaces in Kinshasa, the houses of parliament in Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon and Mozambique, and soccer stadia in Tanzania, the Central African Republic, Mali and Ghana, as well as the Supreme Court and the Police and Prison Training College in Namibia, where the researcher is currently based, among others (Baah & Jauch 2009; French 2014).

Chinese companies have actively involved themselves in the construction of roads, bridges, hydroelectric and irrigation schemes, schools, hospitals, health centres and other government buildings. It is clear that the construction industry has driven private sector competition and made a clear and definite contribution to improving the lives of people across Africa, while Chinese construction companies also enjoyed benefits. However, several issues, particularly labour-related ones, need to be resolved if this potential is to be sustained. If left unaddressed, these issues will needlessly tarnish the international reputation of China's multinationals and African economies will miss out on much-needed infrastructural rejuvenation (Edinger, Herman & Jasson 2008).

It is indisputable that China's engagement with Africa is producing positive results in the economic dimension of development. China's relations with Africa have grown exponentially over the past decade, both politically and economically, through increasing bilateral trade flows, investment projects and development assistance. This engagement has been lauded as a vehicle for boosting African growth and will have an impact upon the development trajectory of the continent (Edinger, Herman & Jasson 2008). It is evident that China and Africa are mutually

interdependent in terms of socio-economic growth, which demonstrates that China-Africa relations are of the utmost importance and in that spirit, such a mutually favourable relationship should be sustained for generations to come.

1.2. China-SA relations

SA, one of the largest economic entities in Africa and also a member of BRICS², has been a leader in Africa for decades and is still playing an important role in Africa in terms of politics, economy and social development. Events in SA generate a ripple influence across the continent. Hence, the South African case can prove instructive in terms of understanding what could be in store for Chinese migrants in other countries in Africa (Park 2012).

SA's relations with China are at the level of a comprehensive strategic partnership. The Beijing Declaration on the Establishment of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership signed on 24 Aug 2010 encapsulates all facets of SA's relations with China; in it China has committed itself to various developmental objectives for SA, as reflected in the discussion below. In response to these rapid developments, SA's policy towards China was re-examined with the specific aim of developing a long-term, stable relationship with China that is responsive to the changing international profile of China, as well as beneficial to Africa and SA. The overarching objective of SA's relationship with China is the establishment of a strategic bilateral and multilateral partnership of equality, mutual benefit and co-operation (Edinger, Herman & Jasson 2008). That is, both sides want to sustain a sound, beneficial and cooperative relationship.

During the state visit of President Jacob Zuma to China in December 2014, the

² The BRICS group refers to Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa. Led by the giant of the emerging power, China, the BRICS countries are now Africa's largest trading partners and the biggest new group of investors. According to Standard Bank South Africa, BRICS-Africa trade reached more than \$500 billion by 2015, with China taking the lion's share of 60% of this.

two countries concluded the “Five-to-Ten Year Strategic Programme for Cooperation between the Republic of South Africa and the People’s Republic of China”. The programme includes alignment of industries to accelerate SA’s industrialisation process, enhancement of cooperation in special economic zones (SEZs), enhancement of marine cooperation, infrastructure development, human resources cooperation and financial cooperation. This means that China and SA have engaged themselves in more social, cultural, human and economic activities.

A good political relationship has driven economic and trade development between the two nations. China is SA's biggest trading partner and relations between the two nations are at their “best ever”, as President Jacob Zuma said in his meeting with visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping on 2 Dec 2015 in Pretoria.

According to Baah and Jauch (2009), Chinese investments in SA are mainly in the areas of finance, construction/building, mining, retail and distribution, manufacturing, consumer electronics, transportation and shipping. SA’s exports to China consist mainly of raw materials such as aluminum, nickel, manganese, zirconium, iron ore, vanadium oxides, chromium ores, granite, platinum and gold. China’s exports to SA have included mainly manufactured products, such as footwear, textiles, plastic products, electrical appliances, tableware and kitchenware. Edinger, Herman and Jasson (2008) point out that the complementary nature of the two economies provided the impetus for the growth of trade.

Total trade between SA and China has been on an upward trajectory since 2009, growing by 32% from R118 billion to R271 billion by the end of 2013. While there is a trade imbalance between China and SA, both countries have implemented various mechanisms to address these discrepancies (Monyela 2015). These mechanisms include the Inter-Ministerial Joint Working Group, SA-PRC Bi-National Commission, Five-to-Ten Year Strategic Programme for Cooperation and the Strategic Dialogue (Monyela 2015). Evidently, high-level mechanisms from the

two governments are in position already to address the trade imbalance so as to avoid any negative influence such a trade imbalance would generate for bilateral relations. This is an evident demonstration that both sides value their good relationship and want to sustain it in a constructive and unproblematic manner.

One of the latest major developments between the two countries occurred in December 2015 when they signed 25 agreements with a combined value of US \$16.5 billion at an event at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in SA and attended by about 400 business people from both countries. At the same event, the two countries discussed economic priorities such as the alignment of industries to accelerate SA's industrialisation process, enhancement of cooperation in SEZs, marine cooperation, infrastructure development, human resources cooperation and financial cooperation. Given the current SA-China trade volume, China has become SA's largest trading partner (Wild & Mbatha 2015).

“Our two countries complement each other strongly economically ... Our cooperation on international affairs is becoming ever closer. China-South Africa relations are in the best shape ever ... China and South Africa relations are at a new historical level. We want to build it into a model for relationships between China and other emerging economies,” Xi told reporters in Pretoria (Wild & Mbatha 2015).

It is indisputable that China's relations with SA are mutually benefiting in a tangible and sustainable manner. Considering the inspiring political and economic relations and the huge potential of these, it is of crucial importance to carry forward this relationship and make it an exemplary win-win model for other African countries to follow.

1.3 Cracks in China-(South) Africa relationship

China's relationship with Africa/SA is, however, not without challenges, problems and obstacles, as each side finds previously unseen flaws in its partner, including the trade balance, as mentioned above.

While China's increased engagement with the African continent presented an opportunity for a valuable contribution to Africa's growth and development, it simultaneously presented a challenge (Edinger, Herman & Jasson 2008). Sanusha Naidu, a research fellow at the Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch, claims that China's deepening involvement in Africa has become a subject of much debate. There are two competing schools of thought, which tend to narrowly characterise China's behaviour in Africa as either inherently good or bad (Edinger, Herman & Jasson 2008).

According to Baah and Jauch (2009), the Chinese presence in SA has also been a popular topic of debate in business circles, especially since a diplomatic relationship was formally established with China on 1 January 1998. China's motives for making massive investments in Africa have been harshly questioned, especially by traditional economic and trade partners from Europe and America, with some critics, mainly Western ones, labelling China's presence in Africa a "new form of colonialism", "Chinese threat" or "China extracts African natural resources", among others (Cheng 2013). According to Cottle (2014), China's economic involvement on the continent has been accompanied with speculation that its role has shifted from that of a supporter of Africa's liberation to that of a neo-colonial power, competing with the West for influence in a new 'scramble for Africa'. China has repeatedly refuted such accusations, stating that Africa-China relationships are of a complementary nature (Cheng 2013). According to Chang (2013), Africa enjoys the benefits of China's presence in terms of socio-economic development in Africa.

China's increasing engagement in Africa, as noted above, has caused increasing

problems for both Chinese and Africans³. "Cracks are appearing in ... China-Africa relations. The honeymoon is over ... Now they are working on their relationship. It is not purely harmonious by any means" (Hunt 2013). A rift emerged in the increasing interactions between Chinese and Africans, be these institutional or individual, governmental or people-to-people. Gratitude for Chinese investment in Africa has been tarnished by a number of scandals, including the distribution of fake and poor quality anti-malarial drugs made illicitly in China and the mistreatment of workers (Hunt 2013). Complaints about Chinese behaviour in Africa are being voiced. The Chinese are accused of violating African employees' rights, providing poor working conditions, paying poor salaries and not necessarily transferring skills to African workers, among others (Cottle 2014; Ford 2013; French 2014; Hunt 2013; Nedu 2015; Udeh 2017), sparking very hot debate in media across the region and beyond.

Some problems, such as those that surfaced in business negotiations, deals and discussions between representatives from both sides, were resolved, but other issues have been highlighted, as reported by French (2014), Hunt (2013), Edinger, Herman and Jasson (2008) and Ford (2013). As noted above, these are being reported on extensively in the local and international media, making them a topic of international relevance.

As French (2014) points out, most of the complaints are about labour-related issues such as poor working conditions, overtime, poor salaries and other unfair labour practices⁴. According to Baah and Jauch (2009), Chinese employers tend to be among the lowest paying in Africa when compared to other companies in the same sector. These problems become conspicuous and have the potential to unsettle China-Africa relations and China-SA relations, which is in the interest of

³ The African population includes black Africans, white Africans, North African Arabs, the African diaspora, Indian African communities and even Chinese Africans (in South Africa) in Africa. It is important to note that "Africans" in this study generally refers to black Africans or black African people who are native to Africa or trace their ancestry to indigenous inhabitants of Africa.

⁴ Different cultures have different labour practices and labour management due to different world views, values and related communication behaviour.

neither China nor Africa (Baah & Jauch 2009).

Some Chinese scholars are also nervous that the behaviour of Chinese companies in Africa – often accused of poor environmental and labour relations standards – will sour China’s relationships with Africa. Ambassador Cheng, Director of African Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, admits some Chinese companies in Africa sought short-term benefits. They paid little or no attention to their employees’ working and safety conditions (Cheng 2013). “China’s main challenge is to demonstrate that it is not repeating the old practices of the European powers,” warns Pang Zhongying, an Africa specialist at Renmin University in Beijing. “China has to match its deeds to its words ... or Sino-African relations may have no future” (Ford 2013).

Owing to their unindustrialised practices in Africa, Chinese companies in construction industries face increasing challenges (Edinger, Herman & Jasson 2008; Baah & Jauch 2009; French 2014; Hunt 2013). For instance, the working relationship between Chinese employers and African employees is always problematical in Africa, as has been reported in both African and international media. According to the International Labour Organisation report, Chinese companies had “exceptionally low standards, with long working hours, low pay, low standard of occupational safety and health (OSH) and a poor record on workers’ rights” (Edinger, Herman & Jasson 2008).

No doubt the so-called unfair labour practices by the Chinese companies have led to tense labour relations, contributing to serious complaints from African employees who would often resort to strikes or go to labour court or trade unions to resolve their problems with the Chinese companies. But from the Chinese point of view, the way in which black African employees resolve their problems only worsens tense labour relations⁵, because it is unnecessary for African employees to take legal action and it is not fair to blame the Chinese only for tense labour

⁵ During 15 years’ working experience in the building industry in Africa the author often witnessed these tense labour relations.

relations. It is clear that Chinese and Africans, including black South Africans, have experienced problematic encounters in the building industry in respect of Africans' complaints about low salaries, poor working conditions and violation of African workers' rights by Chinese companies⁶.

1.4 International concerns about the cracks

China's presence in Africa and the associated contentious issues have attracted worldwide attention. China's apparent lack of concern for human/labour rights has come under attack from unions and other civil society organisations (Baah & Jauch 2009; French 2014; Udeh 2017; Cottle 2014; Ford 2013). Quite a number of studies thereof have been done and some websites, including The China-Africa Project (website), are even dedicated to addressing such issues. A book written by Ian Taylor (2006), *China and Africa: Engagement and compromise*, for example, provides a holistic view of China's policy on Africa and its challenges. In 2009 the African Research Labour Network conducted a comprehensive study in 10 African countries and published it as 'China's investments in Africa: A labour perspective', giving a detailed account of China's contributions to African socio-economic developments, highlighting all kinds of disagreements Chinese experienced in their business activities in Africa (Baah & Jauch 2009).

In addition, dialogues and symposia have been organised. The Centre for Chinese Studies at the University of Stellenbosch, together with UNISA, published "New impulses from the South: China's engagement of Africa" in 2008, claiming that the multi-faceted political and economic relationships between China and Africa provided rich stimulus for the debate (Edinger, Herman & Jasson 2008). Similarly, the China-African Civil Society Dialogue was held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 21 and 22 April 2008. The purpose of this dialogue was to generate debate between Chinese

⁶ The author also witnessed African workers from Chinese companies often striking/going to the Labour Department; Chinese employers often dismiss African employees; African employees in Chinese companies complain about their low salaries/unfair treatment; Chinese companies prefer to employ more Chinese workers instead of African workers; Chinese employers often complain about their African employees' non-productivity, among others.

experts on Africa and African civil society organisations in order to share views about China-Africa relationships and challenges thereof.

One of the core issues of such dialogues, debates and symposia is the working relationship between Chinese employers and African employees, with more critical emphasis on Chinese employers' violation of labour laws and labour practices in Africa/SA. In addition to that, reports of Chinese unfair treatment of their African employees have also gone viral and have often been highlighted in local newspapers/media (Udeh 2017; Cottle 2014; BusinessReport n.d.). The issue of poor labour standards has been one of the most controversial aspects of Chinese investments - pitting trade unions against Chinese companies and government officials (Cottle 2014). Trade unions from Namibia, for instance, took this matter up with high-level Namibian government officials, resulting in the former Namibian president calling on Chinese companies to honour Namibian labour law in 2006.

Shih (2013) points out that China's power projection in Africa is largely through geopolitics and its sizeable spending on hard infrastructure. China has a lot of economic power in African countries that supply resources. In African countries where Chinese workers have been brought in to build infrastructure, China's reputation has been tainted by resentment from locals (Shih 2013), constructing huge potential harm to China's soft power. It is important to note that Africans' resentment of this nature has a concomitant impact on the problematic encounters between Chinese nationals and (black South) Africans, while their cultural miscommunication would increase the resentment, posing further a challenge to China's soft power in Africa and harming Sino-Africa relationships.

The concerns are not only from the international community, but from the Chinese side as well. Chinese ambassadors in African countries have called upon Chinese companies to follow local cultures, norms and customs and to abide by the local labour laws in the respective countries (Cheng 2013). The Chinese embassy in Namibia, for instance, even translated the Namibian labour law into Chinese and

distributed the Chinese version of it to Chinese companies in the country. Clearly, 'Chinese unfair treatment of African workers' has become a contentious issue and attracted serious attention from Chinese embassies in Africa.

Mr Zhou Mingwei, a noted academic and director of Foreign Books Store, was invited to deliver a keynote speech at the "21 Century China-Africa Investment and Cooperation Forum". He acknowledged that the Chinese need to face the challenges and barriers caused by Chinese cultures and languages in their business and trading activities with African people because they cherish long-term strategic cooperation with Africa. They must be aware that their political, economic and people-people interactions and activities with Africans will always be hindered by barriers between the two civilized cultural groups (Zhou 2010).

China's President Xi Jinping even acknowledged that the relationship faced strain. In his speech to Tanzanian politicians and officials during his first state visit to Africa in 2013, Mr Xi said that China was helping Africa to grow and that "China frankly faces up to the new circumstances and new problems in Sino-African relations." "China has and will continue to work alongside African countries to take practical measures to appropriately solve problems in trade and economic cooperation so that African countries gain more from that cooperation" (Gettleman 2013).

French (2014), the author of a book titled *China's Second Continent: How a million migrants are building a new empire in Africa*, visited and interviewed a large number of Chinese and local people⁷ in Africa, mostly in the Southern African Development Community region. From what he saw, heard and experienced in Africa, he concluded that in time, the behaviour of these newcomers, the relationship they form with Africans, the way they conduct their business, their respect or lack thereof for the law, for local customs, for the environment, and

⁷ In general French gave an impartial account of the Chinese presence in Africa, stating that on the one hand the Chinese made remarkable contributions to African people in their economic and social development. On the other hand, French also admits that the Chinese did a lot of things that made African people unhappy. A typical issue is labour-related practices.

above all, for the people, will do more to determine China's image, and even China's broad relationship with the continent, than any carefully planned actions by the Beijing government to build state power and reinforce national prestige (French 2014).

French's warning deserves political and academic attention to address the issues. Both Chinese and African governments, as well as academics and non-governmental organisations in China and Africa, have expressed their concern about the problematic encounters between Chinese and Africans. China's soft power is at a crossroads (Cottle 2014). That the international community is really concerned about the disagreements is a warning that the cracks need to be taken seriously and immediate measures must be taken to mend them before they get bigger and end up out of control.

1.5 Justification, aims and rationale statement

It is proposed in this study that cultural differences between the two groups are the root causes of the problems in China-Africa/SA relationships, particularly related to the bilateral economic and investment activities noted above. To date the serious issues such discussion and discourse have exposed are the concerns expressed by the international community about the Chinese way of interacting with Africans, particularly in the building industry. However, only a few substantial studies have addressed the problematic encounters noted above. Some studies explored issues of China-Africa cultural differences in business relations, while others compared cross-cultural values between Chinese and Sub-Saharan Africans as presented in the literature (Anedo 2012; Matondo 2012). However, not a single research project has studied the problems in the building industry in Johannesburg yet by looking at cultural variables as potential causes, which constitutes an important research gap and justifies the present study.

Worth noting and worrisome is that Chinese scholars only offered some

suggestions and reasoning about the interaction problems as presented briefly hereafter, without any in-depth research into the issue. According to Cheng Tao, director of African Affairs in the Foreign Ministry of China, the Chinese have poor knowledge of African cultures, norms and traditions, compared with Europeans. He admits that China and Africa need to communicate more on culture and that Africans should know more about China and vice versa. There is a lot of work to be done with regard to cultural exchange so that Africans will have a better understanding of Chinese worldviews, concepts and traditions (Cheng 2013).

Zhou (2010) claims that cultural differences are a factor in problematic encounters between Chinese and Africans and proposes to address the problem from a cultural perspective. Zhou claims that culture is an important bridge and channel to strengthen people's understanding and friendship between countries. Cultural exchange is a pivotal pillar in a new type of strategic relations between China and Africa. He further claims that because of cultural differences and misunderstandings between Chinese and Africans, significant communication barriers have developed between them. The problematic interactions between China and Africa in the past two decades are evidence of this (Zhou 2010).

Zhou further points out that the impact and importance of culture will be noticed in bilateral interactions politically, economically and in people-people interaction. "We gathered here today to discuss how to deepen our economic and trade cooperation with Africa. But this discussion should be done from the perspective of intercultural communication" (Zhou 2010). However, like many other Chinese academics, Zhou (2010) does not deliberate on how a culture or cultural variable(s) affect Chinese-African communication negatively. Clearly, Cheng (2013) and Zhou (2010) simply emphasise the importance of culture in China-Africa interactions, but fail to deliberate on how and why cultural values contribute to problematical encounters, leaving a research gap.

Both Hofstede (2001) and LeBaron (2003d) state that culture is more often a

source of conflict than of synergy. According to them, culture is always a factor in conflict, whether it plays a central role or influences it subtly and gently. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster. There is a heightened chance of misunderstanding, miscommunication and mismanagement, of which damage to business and personal interests may be the end result, if people are not well acquainted with one another's norms, values, rules of life and codes of behaviour. This insightful viewpoint serves as a valuable conflict resolution approach and deserves more attention from the international community, especially the parties in conflict. Hence, embracing problem resolution without a critical look at cultural issues may cause researchers to miss some important clues (LeBaron 2003d).

Despite different approaches to intercultural communication⁸, it is a broadly accepted perception that the greater (and deeper) the differences, the greater the risk of the above-mentioned communication problems could be. According to Earley and Mosakowski (2004) and Flammia and Sadri (2011), cultivating cultural awareness and intelligence in the interest of cultural accommodation, acceptance and respect will provide appropriate solutions to problematic interactions and create harmonious relations in international relationships and intercultural communication. More cultural research is therefore needed to improve knowledge on the micro-level of China-Africa relations (Abuodha & Simiyu-Wafukho 2008). This explains why conflicting cultural variables are regarded in this research as factors contributing to the problematic encounters between Chinese nationals and black South Africans⁹.

In recognition of this, this study investigated problematic encounters between Chinese nationals and black South Africans in the building industry in an objective and constructive manner. In so doing, this study wishes to propose a new dispute

⁸ Different approaches to intercultural communication are briefly introduced in the literature review.

⁹ Please refer to Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 for the conflicting cultural variables and their importance in problematical encounters.

resolution mechanism and provoke constructive discussions and debates to give the parties concerned the means to recognise the nature and reasons for their problems; more importantly, to provide insight into and lend cultural sensitivity to the situation for the sake of cooperation and fostering of a mutually beneficial relationship between China and SA. It is hoped that this study will suggest remedies that may ease some of the concerns and mend the perceived cracks that the international community has observed in instances of tension between China and Africa in general, as noted above. It is intended to serve as an effective forum for consultation on matters of mutual interest in bilateral affairs.

Furthermore, since there is a general lack of information on cultural conflicts between black South Africans and Chinese in relation to cultural dimensions, communication strategies and relevant business practices, the intention of this study is to provide some limited but meaningful research findings/information to extend the existent literature. This research will attempt to inform the policy makers on both sides and Chinese companies in SA to look at the potential issues from a cultural perspective as well, rather than the mere suggestion that Chinese firms could help reduce friction by 'strictly observing the labour laws' of the host countries in Africa, as popularly claimed in political and economic circles (Ford 2013; Olander 2003)¹⁰.

In a global village, intercultural interactions and communication are increasingly becoming daily phenomena. As the second largest economic entity, China's international influence is evidenced increasingly. China's political, social and economic involvement in this global village has been a popular topic of discussion internationally. In view of this, therefore, it is expected that this research will sensitise the role players on cultural barriers and interaction problems between China and non-African people who share similarities with Africans in terms of

¹⁰ It is claimed and suggested that there will be no further problems between Chinese employers and their African employees if Chinese companies strictly observe the labour laws of host countries. Such a claim and suggestion fail to take cultural factors into consideration. It is assumed in this study, however, that different cultural variables are the key drivers of the problematic situations.

cultural variables. As the ancient Chinese proverb goes: ‘those who understand others as well as themselves will be granted success in a thousand encounters’. In so doing, cultural conflicts will be avoided/resolved in the interest of creating a peaceful and successful intercultural communication channel.

Increasing influence from China in international and regional political and economic relations means more and more direct people-to-people contact between China and other countries. Communication barriers and miscommunication are predicable and inevitable and the end results of these could damage relationship or cause business failures. Thus, it is imperative that this research is considered by this researcher to create constructive, successful and sustainable reciprocal interaction between Chinese and Africans and in turn other peoples as well.

A culture actively influences how countries do business. While Africans have been influenced by Occidental civilizations, the Chinese have drawn on Confucianism, Buddhism and Shintoism. It is obvious that these two cultural backgrounds are distant enough to allow cultural differences to be easily observed (Matondo 2012). Mere suggestions offered by Chinese scholars and the limited studies noted above have failed to resolve the said problems. It thus becomes imperative that research is done to look at the negative issues from a perspective of different cultural variables.

Based on the theories of cultural dimensions and communication strategies of harmony, politeness and concern about face, the researcher of this study has designed research questions, close-ended questions, open-ended questions and interviews in an attempt to account for the causes contributing to such problems. In so doing, this study has attempted to provide an appropriate and valuable stimulus to address the issue of strained labour relations between Chinese nationals and black South Africans in the building industry.

1.6 Summary

On a global scale there is growing recognition of Africa as a major destination for economic activities, with vast stores of untapped opportunity, proven oil reserves and critically important mineral resources. It is undeniable as witnessed from the previous discussion that China has made tremendous contributions to Africa's social, economic, human and political development. It is also true that China has benefited from this bilateral relationship in terms of opportunities for trading, opening shops, manufacturing goods, rendering IT services and concluding contracts for building infrastructure, among others. China and Africa are now the fastest growing economic entities in the world (Hunt 2013). Africa's steady growth rate is over 5% and there is an undeniable sense that over the next decades the continent is positioned to take its place in the global economy. Evidently the China-Africa relationship is of the utmost importance. Because this relationship is mutual and is in the interest of both Chinese and African people, sustaining it necessarily becomes an urgent issue.

However, as noted above, what is challenging and potentially problematic is that Chinese companies in Africa need to reassess their broad stereotypical views of Africa, address the issues of international concern and eliminate disagreements. According to reports on the working conditions in Chinese companies in Angola, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, SA, Zambia and Zimbabwe, researchers found a "common trait" of Chinese companies being "among the worst employers everywhere" (Baah, Herbert & Jauch 2009). This has prompted Africans' resentment of Chinese presence and ruined the image of China as Africa's all-weathered friend. Thus, it is important to understand what is at the root of being described as the worst employers and even more important, to come up with a resolution mechanism to mend the cracks.

Numerous studies have been published about Chinese investments in Africa, including both positive and negative reports. The negative behaviour of Chinese

companies, particularly in the building industry, has become well known through the media and has resulted in industrial and even social tension. Remedial suggestions were made and measures and actions were taken to resolve the problems, but no study investigated the problematic encounters from the perspective of cultural dimensions, as proposed in this study. This has constituted an important research gap that justifies the present study.

Chapter two

Literature review and theoretical background

2.1 Introduction

While there are a number of substantial and empirical studies on Chinese cultural dimensions of interest (Hall 1976; Hofstede 1984; Burns 1998; Gao and Ting-Toomey 1998; Guirdham 1999; Ting-Toomey 1999; Li et al. 2001; Lee-Wong 2002; Samovar & Porter 2003; Spencer-Oatey & Jian 2003; Schwartz et al. 2010), there is comparatively little literature on black African cultural dimensions, except for a number of publications on African historical events, changes and African traditional cultures (Khoza 1994; Mbigi & Maree 1995; Gbadegesin 1998; Harding 1998; Broodryk 2002; Thomas 2008; Prime 2010; Anedo 2012; Matondo 2012; Livermore 2013). In recognition of this, this study referred to the limited literature on Africans in general and also to the literature on European cultures with which African cultures have been closely interwoven. That black South Africans have been more acculturated to Western cultures than Chinese is a core context to refer to and to be considered in this study. It is important to note that the literature on European cultures was considered as a source of reference and to indicate the significant role of Western cultures in fundamental changes of African cultures and their shift to embrace Western cultures. However, this does not mean that Western cultures have an impact on each African equally.

Human communication styles and behaviour are strongly linked to human beings' cultural values, thoughts, beliefs, norms, religions, histories, attitudes and other cultural variables. These are the basic theoretical areas intercultural communication is about. From the perspective of the relationship between human thought patterns and communication behaviours, Bennett (1998:20) states: "Habitual patterns of thoughts are manifested in communication behaviour. Since our habits or thoughts are largely determined by culture, in cross-cultural situations we should see contrasts in these styles of communication." In similar vein, Wierzbicka (2003:69) agrees that different ways of speaking, or different communication styles, can be explained and made sense of in terms of

independently established different cultural values and cultural priorities.

The major socio-cultural elements, such as cultural values, worldview (religion), and social organisations (that is, family and state) directly influence perception and communication (Samovar & Porter 2003:11). Given the influence of history on communication strategy, Samovar and Porter (2003:13) further point out that China's long, continuous history as a country and culture will have a profound influence on the character of people raised in that country; an indication of the difference between the Chinese culture and others, especially African cultures, which have been closely interwoven with European cultures.

Different approaches are proposed and employed in the study of intercultural communication. These approaches include the dialectical approach, critical approach, systems-thinking approach, chaos theory, ethnographic approaches, dialogical approach, social science approach/functionalist approach and interpretive approach (Blommaert 1998; Flammia & Sadri 2011; Worldconnections n.d.).

Given the research questions designed for this study, the functionalist approach, interpretive approach and systems-thinking approach are referred to and applied in the study as theoretical guidance. Functionalists tend to consider culture as a primary source of identity that would impose its traits on its members by – for example – equating culture with nation, and suggesting a causal relationship between country of origin and a certain behaviour. The interpretive approach claims that cultures are not viewed as sealed, independent boxes, although they are still considered objects of independent observation. Interpretivists consider culture, in the interpretive paradigm, as generally socially constructed and emergent. According to the systems-thinking approach, culture is a system and not the sum of a collection of fortuitous traits. It is an integrated whole that cannot be understood by examining its components individually and in isolation. It is a dynamic whole, which is in flux and constantly changing, and which reveals itself

as being in interaction with the world in a multiplicity of complex and diverse situations and contexts (Blommaert 1998; Flammia & Sadri 2011; Worldconnections n.d.).

The existing literature accounts for the important roles of cultural dimensions in effective communication between Chinese/Asians and Americans/Europeans (Gao & Ting-Toomey 1998; Burns 1998; Goldman 1994; Guirdham 1999; Ting-Toomey 1999; Lim 2003). The existing literature provides some cases of cultural miscommunication between Europeans and Chinese, as mentioned hereafter in this study (Burns 1998; Gao & Ting-Toomey 1998; Li, Zhu & Li 2001; Lee-Wong 2002; Spencer-Oatey & Jian 2003). However, it must be noted that no literature was found to have employed cultural dimensions as critical contributing factors to the problematic real-life interaction between Chinese nationals and black South Africans.

The discussion in this section thus restricts itself to those matters relevant to intercultural communication variables, especially with regard to literature on Chinese cultures, African/South African and European cultures. As Halmari (1993:408) points out, “varying cultural backgrounds” cause differences in the discourse conventions of interlocutors in intercultural communication. Thus, one of the purposes of this study is to present the existing literature to support the researcher’s postulation that Chinese and black South Africans have different cultural dimensions and to further showcase that these differences are the root causes of the problematic encounters at issue. To achieve this, this study has explored and reviewed the relevant literature on Chinese and Africans’ cultural dimensions to draw a comparison between them and make an inference from them. It is important to note that since SA is part of Africa, this study has to refer to the existing literature on Africans’ cultural dimensions, which the researcher understands also to cover black South Africans. Black South African culture forms an integral part of African culture, though the researcher understands that not every African shares the same cultural dimensions. The existing academic

literature on African issues also uses the term 'Africa(n)' for some individual African nations or to make generalisations. Please refer to Section 2.3. The purpose of generalisations of this study is to enable easy comparison between Chinese nationals and black South Africans in terms of cultural national identity, which is still part of academic and business research. See also Section 2.2.

Three subsections are presented hereafter: (1) basic conceptualisation of culture, intercultural communication and intercultural communication competence (ICC) (2) cultural dimensions and (3) communication strategies and communication behaviour.

2.2 Basic conceptualisation of culture, intercultural communication and intercultural communication competence

2.2.1 Conceptualisation of culture

The 'culture' in intercultural communication study is defined as the 'culture' that encompasses attitudes to life, philosophical beliefs and values in human relationships. According to Samovar and Porter (2003), culture is regarded as the deposit of knowledge, experience, attitudes, meanings, social hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relationships, concepts of the universe, material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. As a complete pattern for living culture is elaborate, abstract and pervasive and countless aspects of culture, explicit and implicit, help to determine and guide communication behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups. The core parts of culture consist of traditional (that is, historically derived and selected) ideas and beliefs and especially their attached values, according to Hofstede (1984b) and Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952).

In contrast to other researchers, Blommaert (1998) defines another

conceptualisation of culture. According to Blommaert (1998), culture need not be 'traditional'. It need not be seen as something which is deposited in every member of a particular society. It can be made, changed, manipulated and dropped on the spot. Thus, Blommaert (1998) strongly advocates that 'culture', in all its meanings and with all its affiliated concepts, is situational. It depends on the context in which concrete interactions occur. Blommaert's approach overlaps with the system-thinking approach with regard to contextual influence on cultural behaviour.

This study employed the theoretical considerations of Blommaert's approach and system-thinking approach to serve two functions: defining and substituting. Defining means they serve as a big picture in the interest of describing and defining black South African culture and explaining why and how SA's specific situational settings and contexts have made its culture change from a traditional one. In other words, the fact that black South Africans are more influenced by Western cultures indicates black South Africans are Western-affiliated, according to Bate (1998) and Livermore (2013), implying that South African culture as a whole is different from Chinese culture.

Substituting means that communication problems are not always attributed to interlocutors' predetermined cultural dimensions, as claimed by the functionalist approach, but to a certain situation or context. In other words, a certain situation and/or context can work alone to increase or reduce communication problems while predetermined cultural dimensions as parameters stay functionless in intercultural communication.

In addition to knowledge and attitudes, three other cultural elements also have the potential to affect situations in which people from different backgrounds come together: (i) perception, (ii) verbal processes/language and (iii) nonverbal processes (Samovar & Porter 2003).

First, perception in its simplest sense is the process by which an individual selects,

evaluates and organises stimuli from the external world. According to Samovar and Porter (2003), those perceptual variables have the potential to impede the intercultural encounter seriously. The three major socio-cultural elements that directly influence perception and communication are (i) cultural values, (ii) worldview (religion), and (iii) social organisations (family and state), according to Samovar and Porter (2003).

Secondly, the importance of language in the study of intercultural communication is clearly captured in Ralph Waldo Emerson's simple expression, "Language is the archives of history". According to Piller (2011), language plays a central role in intercultural communication. Also, one's culture will have an effect on one's decoding. The way people use language differs from culture to culture. That is, language is a role-player in intercultural communication. Language is a "system of representation" for perception and thinking. This function of language provides people with verbal categories that guide their formation of concepts and categorisation of objects; it directs how they experience reality. Samovar and Porter (2003) point out that it is this "reality-organising" aspect of language that engages inter-culturalists. That is, language exposes users' life experience. Of course, the pragmatic aspects of language use (pragmatic skills, non-verbal communication) are also the subject of inter-culturalists' study because pragmatic aspects of language carry cultural traits of the users and different cultures have different interpretations of pragmatic aspects of language use (Samovar & Porter 2003). Please refer to Chapter 5.

Thirdly, all human beings also use a nonverbal system to share internal states. Although the process of using one's actions to communicate is universal, the meanings of those actions often differ from culture to culture. Hence, nonverbal communication becomes yet another element that one must understand to interact effectively with people from different cultures. Three important nonverbal categories (bodily behaviour, time, and space) could be problematic during intercultural interaction (Samovar & Porter 2003). Posture, gesture and facial

expression are important 'body languages' exposing different cultures. In addition, different cultures also display different time attitudes, with long-term orientation and short-term orientation resulting in two different views of the world. Space is also seen as a nonverbal category and people from different cultures keep their own individual distances of comfort in communication with others. Please also see the discussions in Sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.4.

Clearly, culture permeates every part of human life. Human actions, words, manners, world views, thinking and religions, among others, are culturally associated. Even an interaction milieu carries cultural meanings affiliated to a cultural group. It explains why culture-related issues are broadly studied and why intercultural communication problems need to be resolved from a cultural perspective.

2.2.2 Conceptualisation of intercultural communication

Intercultural communication is an interdisciplinary and broad-scope approach to the understanding of culture and its impact on the human experience and globalisation processes. It offers a valuable perspective for the analysis of complex issues such as identity and personal and cultural transformation. Intercultural communication is the symbolic exchange process through which individuals from two or more different cultural communities negotiate meanings in an interactive situation (Ting-Toomey 1999:16-17). The term also denotes what happens when people from different cultures have to communicate.

In intercultural communication, the difference between individuals is derived primarily from cultural group membership factors such as beliefs, values, norms and interaction scripts (Ting-Toomey 1999:16). Intercultural communication studies and theories encourage more discussion of a variety of cultural dimensions, communication styles, cultural miscommunication, intercultural conflict management, negotiation strategies between different cultures and intercultural communication at different work places, among others. Intercultural differences in

discourse and negotiation strategies in business contexts are also a well-known phenomenon. This study will only discuss parts of the wider theories. Please refer to Section 3.3 on cultural dimensions.

2.2.3 Conceptualisation of intercultural communication competence

According to Collier (1989), ICC “is defined as the mutual avowing confirmation of the interactants’ cultural identities where both interactants engage in behaviour perceived to be appropriate and effective in advancing both cultural identities”. Another noted academic, Ting-Toomey (1993:73-74), defines ICC as “the effective identity negotiation process between two or more interactants in a novel communication episode” and links it to communicative resourcefulness, that is, “the knowledge and the ability to apply cognitive, affective, behavioural resources appropriately, effectively and creatively in diverse interactive situations.” This implies that a culture and knowledge of the culture play a role in intercultural interaction.

ICC encompasses three components, according to Ting-Toomey (1999) and Wiseman (2001): a knowledge component, a mindfulness component and a communication skills component. ‘Knowledge’ refers to the process of in-depth understanding of the important intercultural communication concepts that really make a difference. As Wiseman (2001) points out, a knowledgeable communicator needs information about the people, the communication rules, the context and the normative expectations governing interaction with the members of the other culture. ‘Mindfulness’ means attending to one’s internal assumptions, cognition and emotion and simultaneously attuning to the other’s assumptions, cognition and emotion. Factors such as anxiety, perceived social distance, attraction, ethnocentrism and prejudice can influence an individual’s decision to communicate with another. The term ‘communication skills’ refers to the operational abilities to interact appropriately, effectively and satisfactorily in a given situation (Ting-Toomey 1999:267-269). Skills refer to the actual performance of the behaviour felt to be effective and appropriate in the communication context. Skills must be repeatable and goal-oriented (Wiseman 2001)

The underlying goal in any intercultural interaction is to manage content and to process relational/group membership identity issues appropriately, effectively and satisfactorily. Appropriateness, effectiveness and satisfaction are criteria of ICC. As Ting-Toomey (1999) claims, appropriateness refers to the degree to which the exchanged behaviours are regarded as proper and match the expectations generated by the insiders of the culture. Appropriate communication entails the use of messages that are expected in a given context, and actions that meet the expectations and demands of the situation (Wiseman 2001).

Effective communication suggests that people are able to achieve desired outcomes. Intercultural interaction effectiveness is achieved when content, identity and relational meanings are attended to with accuracy and when desired goals have been reached. To do so, competent communicators should be able to control and manipulate their social environment to reach those goals (Wiseman 2001). Ting-Toomey points out that in intercultural communication, individuals tend to experience more satisfaction in interaction scenes in which their desired identity images are positively addressed and sensitively dealt with (1999:263-265). Communicators' lack of ICC might lead to problematic communication. The problematic encounters discussed in this study demonstrate that the individual identity images of both Chinese and black South Africans were not positively addressed and sensitively dealt with. Please see Chapter 5. In the following section, cultural dimensions will be presented to account for communicative preferences/modes.

2.3. Cultural dimensions

Ethnic disputes frequently suggest that groups with different cultural beliefs and practices get into conflict because of their inability to communicate appropriately, effectively and satisfactorily. Cultural differences in beliefs and behaviour are certainly viewed as barriers to effective inter-group communication and sources of misperception and distrust (LeBaron 2003a). In intercultural communication, cultural dimensions have been studied to demonstrate how these cultural variables contribute to different human behaviour and communication styles and how such

differences might lead to intercultural interaction problems. According to LeBaron (2003a), three frameworks have been explored in the conflict resolution literature for their potential to help demystify cultural differences. These are individualist versus collectivist societies, traditional versus modern societies and high- versus low-context societies.

However, as explained above, the researcher of this study explored four cultural aspects: individualism versus collectivism, high-context communication (HCC) versus low-context communication (LCC), high-power distance (HPD) versus low-power distance (LPD) and attitudes to time (Hall 1976; Hofstede 1984a; Ting-Toomey 1999). These cultural dimensions, despite an element of stereotyping in them, are frequently used and applied to conflict processes to generalise and identify cultural differences. Given the nature of this study, the researcher regarded the theories of national identities as an imperative tool to facilitate his comparison of cultural characteristics of Chinese nationals and black South Africans, as well as the identification of their cultural differences and determination of the specific differences that are potential triggers of intercultural communication failure.

It is important to point out that according to the interpretive approach, the cultural features of certain groups as claimed by functionalists are changeable, socially constructed and emergent (Flammia & Sadri 2011; Worldconnections n.d.). This study draws on this perspective to understand and infer African cultural traits. Furthermore, this study draws on the system-thinking approach, which regards culture as systematically constructed, a claim overlapping with the dialectical approach. This approach claims that culture reveals itself as being in interaction with the world in a multiplicity of complex and diverse situations and contexts. In recognition of this, a dialectical view of culture and its context is imperative, meaning that contexts are to be considered in discussing a culture. This approach identifies five dialectical characteristics of intercultural communication: cultural-individual, personal-contextual, differences-similarities, static-dynamic, and history/past-present/future (Flammia & Sadri 2011). Please also refer to the

presentation of African cultures and their features in the literature review in Sections 2.3.1—2.3.4 and the analysis thereof in Chapter 4.

The following two circumstances in which cultural differences between cultural groups do make a difference should be considered and might be taken as factors potentially contributing to miscommunication. Firstly, Culture A might share similarities/sameness with Culture B in respect of a certain dimension(s), but might also differ in a different dimension(s) from Culture B. If such differences prevail over the similarities and are dominant, they might contribute to miscommunication. The actual cultural miscommunication between Chinese nationals and black South Africans and Africans in general is an indication that there are some subtle differences in the area where they share the sameness because of two differing cultural environments in which they live. Such subtle differences contribute to problematic communication scenarios.

Secondly, with respect to certain dimensions, the high/low power distance, for example, the difference between cultures is measured by scale: though both Chinese and black South Africans are on a high power index, China is higher on the scale than SA, as can be noted from literature (The Hofstede Centre n.d.). This difference is also postulated in this research as part of the potential leading causes of miscommunication between cultures. That is, a certain gap in the scale or index difference with regard to a certain dimension between cultural groups might also lead to communication trouble.

The purpose of this section is to examine through the literature review where black South Africans and Chinese share “sameness”, where they differ regarding the dimensions and where conflicts could arise from, which is a crucial part of the research. That black South Africans have been more acculturated to Western culture than the Chinese is a core context of reference and consideration in this study. This point of reference for comparison and inference making is a core argument of this study to identify and mark the cultural differences between black South Africans and Chinese, an approach not employed before by other researchers to identify differences between cultural groups.

By using a reference point for comparison, this study means to scale a degree or extent of difference between the two entities of comparison. In this study, either Chinese or Africans serve as reference points for easy comparison and identification of differences between them. To demonstrate, when Chinese serve as a reference point for comparison with Europeans regarding individualism–collectivism, Chinese are labelled ‘collectivist’ because Europeans (generally) are very individualist. This is also true of a comparison between Africans and Europeans who regard Africans as collectivists. However, when Chinese serve as a reference point for comparison with Africans regarding individualism–collectivism, for example, Africans are not labelled ‘collectivist’ because Chinese are more collectivist than Africans.

2.3.1 Individualism–collectivism

2.3.1.1 Introduction: Importance of individualism versus collectivism in this study

First of all, definitions of collectivism and individualism are quoted:

According to Landauer and Rowlands, "Collectivism is a form of anthropomorphism. It attempts to see a group of individuals as having a single identity similar to a person. ... Collectivism demands that the group be more important than the individual. It requires the individual to sacrifice himself for the alleged good of the group" (Freedomkeys n.d.).

As Landauer and Rowlands define, "Individualism regards man – every man – as an independent, sovereign entity who possesses an inalienable right to his own life, a right derived from his nature as a rational being. Individualism holds that a civilized society, or any form of association, cooperation or peaceful co-existence among men, can be achieved only on the basis of the recognition of individual rights - and that a group, as such, has no rights other than the individual rights of its members" (Freedomkeys n.d.).

These quotations essentially summarise the theoretical and definitional premises of a large body of work on the concepts of collectivism and individualism. They also present a complex of behavioural patterns derived from these core values in

intercultural communication. Clearly, the two orientations differ drastically, making the matter a potential communication barrier.

The dimension of individualism-collectivism is defined as a culture's commitment to the welfare of the group (Hofstede 1984a:47-48) and as a concept has been by far the most widely applied of all the cultural constructs to the analysis of cultural differences of all kinds (Guirdham 1999:53). According to Hammer, individualism-collectivism is posited to be vital for distinguishing cultural values between cultural groups and is hypothesised to account for differences in intercultural communication and conflict styles (Hamme 2005:680).

In this study, the individualism-collectivism dimension has been employed as a principal guiding framework in designing research questionnaires and interview questions because the researcher of this study is of the view that it plays a pivotal role in the identification of societal or national culture. In addition, it has a close interrelationship with other dimensions such as HPD/LPD and the time dimension. Contrary to Chinese academic researchers as noted above and Western and African researchers such as Anedo (2012), Matondo (2012) and Livermore (2013), who claim that Africans are strong collectivists, it is argued in this research that Chinese are more collectivist, upholding collective interests and relationships, while (black South) Africans are more individualist, upholding individual rights. Precisely put, Chinese adhere to a strong collectivism while Africans observe weak collectivism or stronger individualism than Chinese. Such a contrast between individualism and collectivism would make it a critical factor in addressing potential conflict in their interactions.

The literature referred to in this part of the study will cover communication modes of collectivism and individualism, a brief review of Chinese collectivism, traditional African communalism/Ubuntu and its shift to individualism owing to historical, social and cultural movements in which Africa has been involved. Emphasis will be placed on how traditional African communalism/Ubuntu shifted to individualism

to support the argument that Africans adhere to weak collectivism or stronger individualism than Chinese.

2.3.1.2 Chinese collectivism

Exploring the extant literature on the Chinese culture being regarded as collectivist provides readers with a rich array of researchers and websites (Hofstede 1984a; Gao & Ting-Toomey 1998; Guirdham 1999; Ting-Toomey 1999; Samovar & Porter 2003; Schwartz et al. 2010; Anedo 2012; Livermore 2013). Since there is no research denying/objecting to the view that China embraces strong collectivism, it is therefore not necessary for the researcher to review each publication for support and reference.

According to Schwartz et al. (2010) and Psychology Wikia¹¹, Asian, Latin American, Caribbean and Middle Eastern cultural contexts are collectivist and China is at the top of this list, labelled as strongly collectivist. Psychology Wikia also provides a general look at the traits and personality types of collectivism and lists examples of countries with generally collectivistic cultures. Worth noting is that no African country is included in Psychology Wikia, although Schwartz et al. (2010) support the notion that culturally based values of communalism, familism and filial piety are structural elements of collectivism.

In addition, numerous noted academics compare the East and West with regard to collectivism and individualism. Many such publications reveal that the Chinese have a culture of collectivism and Westerners have an individualist culture (Hofstede 1984a; Gao & Ting-Toomey 1998; Guirdham 1999; Ting-Toomey 1999; Samovar & Porter 2003). They also claim that collectivist culture and individualist culture have differing communication modes and differing approaches to conflict situations.

¹¹ Psychology Wikia is a collaborative editing site enabling academic and practitioner psychologists to contribute to developing a comprehensive peer-reviewed account of knowledge in the discipline of psychology.

Ting-Toomey (1999:197) analyses the different modes individualists and collectivists prefer to use in handling conflict. Individualists' mode is a step-by-step, linear one: dissect the problem, generate criteria, brainstorm some solutions and select the best one in line with these criteria. By contrast, collectivists use a spiral mode, taking all contextual conditions into consideration, looking at the "big picture", and then deciding on how to solve the issue. The two different approaches to conflict are in sharp contrast, which is an indication that it is not surprising if a collectivist interlocutor runs into problematic encounters with an individualist interlocutor and vice versa.

That Chinese are collectivists is unquestionable. It is furthermore worth noting that China is strongly collectivist, a significant factor not to be ignored in cultural comparison.

2.3.1.3 African collectivism-individualism

(a) Traditional African collectivism/communalism/Ubuntu

With regard to a study of cultural variables, there is not as much literature about Africans as about Chinese, yet the cultural dimension of individualism–collectivism of Africans in general has also been investigated (Khoza 1994; Mbigi & Maree 1995; Gbadegesin 1998; Harding 1998; Broodryk 2002; Anedo 2012; Matondo 2012; Livermore 2013).

There is not a large body of literature providing an adequate explanation of African communalism (Blunt & Jones, 1992). African conceptual knowledge about people and their predisposition to work and productivity are all connected with Africa's inclusivist Ubuntu-based value system, which reflects the African heritage, traditions, culture, customs, beliefs and the extended family system. Ubuntu covers the cultural propensity of African people to be community inclusivist-oriented. It is a concept that brings to the fore images of humanism, supportiveness, cooperation and solidarity within a community. Ubuntu or humanness is found in all African

languages¹² (Broodryk 2002), which demonstrates its importance and fundamental value in African society. A Xhosa proverb is of the essence in the process of understanding Ubuntu: “Ubuntu ungamuntu ngabanye abantu”, which means people are people through other people (Broodryk 2002:26).

According to Mbigi and Maree (1995), Ubuntu is a “metaphor that describes the significance of group solidarity on survival issues amongst African communities that are subjected to poverty as a result of deprivation, and which is affected through brotherly group care as opposed to individual self-reliance” (1995:4). They claim that Ubuntu’s core defining values are respect, group solidarity, conformity, compassion, human dignity and humaneness, collective unity and solidarity, sharing, universal brotherhood, communalism, interdependence and hospitality (Mbigi & Maree 1995:2).

According to Khoza (1994), Ubuntu is an orientation to life and it is generally regarded as the foundation of sound human relations in African societies. Duty, honour and deference to authority are less prominent for those with individualist starting points rather than communitarian ones (collectivists). LeBaron (2003b) claims that in communitarian settings, members are rewarded for allegiance to group norms and values, interdependence and cooperation. Their identity as a member of a group comes first, summed up in the South African idea of Ubuntu: “I am because we are”. The typical African view of man is “whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual” (Mbiti 1990:106). According to Ubuntu, a common link exists between us all and it is through this tie, through our interaction with our fellow human beings, that we discover our own human qualities (Manda 2009).

There is a heated discussion about Ubuntu as moral value in the new SA. Though critics of Ubuntu have argued against making Ubuntu an essential ethical idea or moral value in the new SA, these critics admit that Ubuntu was once a meaningful

¹² This list serves as reference: Zulu: Ubuntu; Sesotho: Botho; Shangaan: Numunhu; Xhosa (Transkei): Umntu; Shona (Zimbabwe): Nunhu; Swahili (Kenya): Utu; Ugandan: Abantu; Afrikaans: Medemenslikheid (Broodryk 2002: 27).

value (Cornel & Marle 2005). Similarly, Metz (2011) and Chasi (2015) have differing ideas about making Ubuntu a moral theory and human rights principle in SA; however, they agree that Ubuntu had an apparent collectivist orientation and played a role in pre-industrialised African societies.

Traditionally, Africa was characterised by strong communalism and community played an important role in shaping African mind-sets. The community is not a collection of fundamentally isolated individuals, but ontologically primary. The individual develops his sense of self through his relationships within his community. His personal welfare depends fundamentally upon the welfare of the community, rather than the community's welfare depending upon the welfare of the individuals who constitute it (Harding 1998).

(b) Africans' shift from collectivism to individualism

According to Geertz (1973), cultural meanings change over time and they are passed on from one generation to the next. Cultures are considered dynamic and changeable as people continually construct and reconstruct their webs of significance. According to Blommaert (1998), culture need not be 'traditional'. As Blommaert (1998) and the system-thinking approach claim, culture depends on the context in which concrete interactions occur. The new political, economic and social-cultural contexts in which African people engaged themselves during colonialism periods and afterwards reshaped their cultural characteristics. Africans are acculturated through communication with non-Africans, particularly through their interactions with Westerners, which affect their cultures. This matches the statement of "who makes culture relevant to whom in which context for which purpose" (Piller 2011:91).

Scholars agree that the structure of traditional African society is communal, as noted above. However, these researchers simultaneously acknowledge that black Africans are individualism-orientated and inclined. Gbadegesin (1998), on the other hand, points out that building on the initial exposure in the family compound, Africans severally and collectively cannot but shun individualism. This is the

meaning of the common reference to the typical African as saying, “I exist because the community exists”. Cooperation and mutual helpfulness are virtues held as essential; without them, the kin group cannot endure for long. Its survival depends on its solidarity. According to Gbadegesin (1998), this same theme of individuality-in-community is prominent in African social thought on the actions and behaviour of society.

It follows from this that the usual rendering of this as the individual in traditional African societies being crushed by the almighty presence of the community is not the whole truth. Individuals are valued in themselves and as potential contributors to communal survival (Gbadegesin 1998), an indication that individualism existed even in traditional African society.

Regarding Ubuntu as an African philosophy, Cornell and Marle (2005), Kimmerle (2006), Manda (2009) and Metz (2011) claim that Ubuntu implies an interactive ethic, or an ontic orientation in which who and how we can be as human beings are always being shaped in our interaction with each other. For what is at stake here is the process of becoming a person or, more strongly put, how one is given the chance to become a person at all (Cornell & Marle 2005). Ubuntu moves far away from collectivism. Rather it is an individualistic solidarity (Manda 2009). According to Kimmerle (2006), “To reduce *ubuntu* to the saying ‘I am because we are’, as so frequently happens, is also too schematic” ... “We have to take into account that the ‘I’, or the person, is becoming increasingly important in African ontology, too.” This emphasises the individual’s role and importance in African communalism.

As Prime (2010) points out, one can see that African communalism (Ubuntu) is not comfortable with collectivism in that collectivism stresses the importance of the social unit to the point of depersonalising the individual. According to Khoza, whereas Ubuntu is certainly opposed to individualism, particularly to the latter’s extreme and rugged form, Ubuntu is not the opposite of individualism, neither is it synonymous with collectivism, the metaphysical opposite of individualism (Khoza n.d). African communalism/Ubuntu is obviously different from collectivism, but not

the opposite of individualism. This draws a contrast with that of the most collectivist Chinese culture (Livermore 2013).

While claiming that “China and Africa have a strong collectivism”, which is marked for communal cooperation, Anedo (2012) points out: “... due to the medium masculinity, Africans sometimes are reluctant to cooperate because their masculine culture views cooperation in general as a sign of weakness and place a high value on independence and control”. Anedo (2012) further points out, “This study found that entrepreneurs from societies that are masculine and individualistic have a lower appreciation for cooperative strategies as compared to entrepreneurs from societies that are feminine and collectivist in nature” (Anedo 2012). Anedo’s findings and conclusion indicate that Africans are strong collectivists, but with an individualist inclination, drawing a sharp contrast with Chinese. Both Khoza and Anedo acknowledge that individualism is not new to African cultures but has always existed in African mind-sets. It was just not prominent because African communalism is dominant.

African cultures, including South African cultures, are diverse, varied and not static, and have been affected by both internal and external forces. According to Mbiti (1990), acculturation is the most sweeping phenomenon in Africa and everybody is affected by it. This defines its differences from the Chinese culture even if Africans and Chinese share some background with regard to collectivism. African collectivism is not the same as Chinese collectivism because African cultures and Western cultures have been mixed up (Okonkwo (1998), an indication that African collectivism is heavily saturated with Western cultural individualism, which has gradually ‘eroded’ African traditions through its advanced and predominant status in their interactions.

In their exploration of Ubuntu, Cornell and Marle (2005) claim that the troubling social and historical reality is that the very question of what constitutes African philosophy cannot be separated from the brutal imposition of colonialism on the continent of Africa. The issue of how the African gnosis has inevitably and inextricably been bound up with the social scientific constructs of a Western

episteme also needs to be addressed (Cornell & Marle 2005). Okonkwo (1998) claims that Western cultures have been rooted in African land and it was difficult for African nationalists to restore African cultures. He points out:

The cultural nationalists studied the institutions of the traditional society and sought, as much as possible, to cast off the European life style and to live according to African traditions. The difficulties this first generation of African nationalists faced in restoring their African nationality was a sign of the ever bearing influence European education had had. In their attempt to define the African personality and portray the true African cultures, the nationalists could not devolve themselves completely from Western influences. They remained hybrids, a mixture of European and African influences.

This has two implications: One is that ever since the interactions between African cultures and Western cultures, African cultures have been deeply penetrated and influenced by the Western culture of individualism, implying that Africans may have a stronger individualist inclination than Chinese who did not go through such cultural interactions with Western cultures. Secondly, traditional cultures Africans wanted to restore through Africanisation for instance are distant from Chinese culture because of African contextual contents. Ignorance of this fact will lead to the invalid proposition that Africans share the same culture with Chinese, as claimed by some researchers and discussed above.

As Mbiti points out, “Without warning and without physical or psychological preparation, Africa has been invaded by a world revolution”, including colonialism (1990:211), which constructed a unique context for African cultures. Africa is caught up in political, social and cultural changes. Mbiti (1990:212) further points out that Europe had divided up Africa; Europe meant to rule Africa and Europe began to change Africa. The change meant that individuals have been severed, cut off, pulled out and separated from corporate morality, customs and traditional solidarity. They have no firm roots anymore. “They are simply uprooted but not necessarily transplanted. They float in life like clouds. They live as individuals, but

they are dead to the corporate humanity of their forebear” (Mbiti 1990:214). Mbiti (1990: 219) further claims:

The traditional solidarity in which the individual says ‘I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am’, is constantly being smashed, undermined and in some respects destroyed. Emphasis is shifting from ‘we’ of traditional corporate life to the ‘I’ of modern individualism. Schools, churches, economic competition and the future dimension of time with all its real and imaginary promises, are the main factors which, jointly or singly, are working to produce an orientation towards individualism and away from corporateness of community or group.

The former Prime Minister of Namibia, Nahas Angula (2014), in his response to a reader of *The Namibian*, a local newspaper in Namibia, agreed that European culture had made African people ‘white’. He wrote that such conditions (socio-psychological conditions of post-colonial African people) came about because Africans lost their cultural roots and traditions. Under such conditions Africans tend to crave to acquire white people’s status symbols. In the process they imitate Europeans in their behaviour, tastes and orientation. In other words, through imitating European cultures, they become caricatures of a white man. Fanon described such a condition as collective unconsciousness and catharsis (Angula 2014). This means that generally African people have unconsciously embraced Western cultures, separating themselves from their traditional cultures, as also claimed by Mbiti (1990).

The above statements from Mbiti (1990) and Angula (2014) account for post-colonial Africans’ cultural changes causing a gradual loss of the traditional African personality. Looking at today’s Africans’ life, political, economic and social structures, it is not difficult to understand that individualism has been popular and rooted on African land, although such individualism is not the same as the Western form. It suffices to say that African collectivism is fading away from African land and this constitutes its difference from Chinese collectivism.

In a similar vein, while claiming African communalism, Nkrumah accounted for how European colonialism had changed African traditional societies. According to him, African society is not the old society, but a new society enlarged by Euro-Christian influences. Euro-Christian influences have introduced a social, cultural and economic organisation into African life together with new values, which means that African collectivist or communal culture has been loaded with a Western culture of individualism. He pointed out:

European colonialism is historical experiences of the traditional African society, profound experiences that have permanently changed the complexion of the traditional African society. They have introduced new values and a social, cultural, and economic organization into African life. Modern African societies are not traditional, even if backward, and they are clearly in a state of socio-economic disequilibrium. They are in this state because they are not anchored to a steady ideology (Nkrumah 1967).

Colonialists brought along their cultures and world views into African societies. As Nkrumah claimed, colonial and capitalist expansions are therefore a logical necessity for the realisation of the obviously universal European idea. That Africans have won their independence does not mean the automatic return of their traditional culture, values, norms and customs etc. Nkrumah further claimed that the defeat of colonialism and even neo-colonialism would not result in the automatic disappearance of the imported patterns of thought and social organisation. The colonialists' patterns have taken root, and are to varying degrees sociological features of contemporary society (Nkrumah 1967; Agwu 2011). This means that modern African societies have been penetrated by Western patterns of thought and social organisation, an environment that did not exist in Chinese culture.

It is evident that individualism has landed on African ground. A popular expression in Namibia is used when describing a greedy and individualistic phenomenon, 'I,

me and myself', meaning that 'I' am the centre of the world and 'my' individual interests must be achieved to my satisfaction.

Like other African countries, black SA has been subjected to many more influences in colonial times and afterwards. Generally speaking, for historical reasons and because of cultural influences from the Western world, black South Africans are relatively more individualistic in terms of communication behaviour. Livermore (2013), while claiming Sub-Saharan Africa as a collectivist culture, also agrees that SA is the biggest outlier in this cluster. In fact, a part of SA (white South Africa) is grouped in the Anglo cluster because of the predominance of European cultures, which is seen particularly in the business culture of South Africa. According to Louw (2010), being colonized by the Dutch in 1652, conquered by Britain in 1803 and unified in 1910 after a devastating war, SA became a quasi-Western state, which affects black South Africans' cultural dimensions.

This is a specific 'situation' and context this research needs to highlight when it comes to the cultural variables of black South Africans. According to the system-thinking approach, situations and contexts are crucial factors in understanding intercultural communication, meaning that situations and contexts make cultures change. A Chinese saying goes: 'One who stays near vermilion gets stained red, and one who stays near ink gets stained black.' Its English equivalent is, 'One takes on the attributes of one's associates'. This implies that black South Africans' culture has undergone critical changes under the influence of dominant European cultures, affecting the lives of South Africans and making some black South Africans adopt the behaviour of white people. In other words, their traditional communalism has been changed. "Emphasis is shifting from 'we' of traditional corporate life to the 'I' of modern individualism" (Mbiti 1990:219).

Bate (1998) claims that there is a movement today for all in the country to see themselves as Africans. The cultural diversity of SA¹³, however, seems to provide

¹³ David in his book groups part of SA into the Anglo cluster because of the predominance of the British culture. The Dutch Afrikaans culture also plays a significant role in SA, as does the Indian culture (Livermore, David A.2013).

an attractive mode for many people in the new South Africa. SA is a developing country. It is 63% urbanised and a large part of its population has been affected by modernity. According to Bate (1998), Western cultures have influenced South Africa. The ideas, beliefs, attitudes and values coming from modern and post-modern Western cultures have furthermore percolated into the social fabric of SA and greatly affect the lives of South Africans, especially young South Africans (Bate 1998).

Undeniably, black SA has been changed and shifted from its traditional predetermined rules, standards and value systems towards a Western-orientated political, economic and social-cultural environment, making it a comparatively individualist-oriented society and constituting a sharp contrast with China. The current political, economic and social-cultural environments in SA are the best testimony of this, although African traditionalism and African nationalism still exist to varying degrees.

2.3.1.4 Summary

What the above literature exposes is that Chinese represent the most collectivist culture, while both culturally specific elements and elements of merging and converging cultures exist in African collectivism, leading to the African version of collectivism. According to Mbiti (1990), Western cultures have a cardinal influence on African cultures, religious attitudes and life. African men and women are forced to live in two half cultures, which do not unite to form a single culture. “Those who bring the foreign culture give it to Africans only in part while withholding the other part. Africans also receive part of that culture and reject the other part; and they kick away part of their traditional cultures while retaining the other part” (Mbiti 1990, 215-216). This means African people neither received 100% of foreign cultures nor kicked away 100% of their traditional cultures, which results in the existence of a mix of both Western and African cultures on the African continent, a very salient cultural context.

Therefore, the above individualism-collectivism literature indicates three points that merit attention:

1. There is a difference in respect of individualism-collectivism between Africans/black South Africans and Chinese.
2. Africans, including black South Africans, seem to be more individualist when compared with Chinese, who are strongly collectivist-oriented.
3. African Ubuntu/communalism does not simply mean collectivism because of its African contexts coming from both inside and outside, as discussed above. Cultural proximity leads to assumed similarities, which further contribute to misleading conclusions. These inferences facilitate better understanding of the cultural differences between the two and the differences between them might contribute to the problematical encounters.

To sum up, Africans' traditional communalism of Ubuntu contains solidarity, corporations, interdependence and other collectivist characteristics. Nevertheless, the individualist culture is more ingrained in their psyche. In addition, such traditions have been changed, as discussed above. Thus, the literature review supports the view that Africans are more individualist-inclined in comparison with strong Chinese collectivism. Given this difference, it is proposed that individualism-collectivism is a potential contributor to the issue of this research.

2.3.2 High-context culture and low-context culture

As a cultural dimension, Edward T. Hall's theory of HCC and LCC (1976) also helps the researcher of this study to understand the powerful effect culture has on communication better. A key factor in his theory is context. This relates to the framework, background and circumstances in which communication or an event takes place.

HCC and LCC are terms created by Hall, anthropologist, to describe a culture's style of communication. In HCC the rules of communication are primarily transmitted through the use of contextual elements, while in LCC information is communicated primarily through language and rules that are explicitly spelled out. In other words, LCC values direct and explicit communication, whereas HCC

values indirect and implicit understanding. The potential sources of problematic communication in this regard are the key areas of interest of this study. Contextual information plays an important role in Chinese business communication because it is a salient and sensitive area in Chinese communication. It is also one of the key areas where communication failures often happen between Chinese nationals and other cultural groups, according to the researcher's own experience.

Investigation of the existing literature reveals only a theoretical framework of this variable as reviewed below, with a low number of research studies examining its role in problematical communication between Chinese and Westerners¹⁴. This research is the first to regard this variable as a factor contributing to problematical encounters between Chinese nationals and black South Africans.

The existing literature accounts for the communication modes of HCC culture and LCC culture on which the researcher of this study draws to identify and infer the different modes of communication of Chinese nationals and black (South) Africans. Hall (1976) uses the distinction between HCC and LCC as the basis for differentiating different cultures. According to Hall (1976), people from HCC are relational, collectivist, intuitive, and contemplative. This means that people in these cultures emphasise interpersonal relationships. Developing trust is an important first step in any business transaction. Since these cultures are collectivist, they prefer group harmony and consensus to individual achievement. Group interests prevail over individualist interests. People in these cultures are less governed by reason than by intuition or feelings. Words are not as important as context, which might include the speaker's tone of voice, facial expression, gestures, posture — and the person's status. High-context communication tends to be more indirect and more formal.

On the other hand, communication styles of LCC are logical, linear, individualistic, and action-oriented. Also, as Hall (1976) claims, people from LCCs value logic,

¹⁴ Spencer-Oatey and Jian (2003) explore the context of communication in intercultural business interactions between six Chinese people and a British company, concluding that Chinese HCC and British LCC are the key factors leading to their problematical interactions. The way seating arrangements were made and the contents of a welcoming speech by the British company made the Chinese lose face.

facts and directness. Solving a problem means lining up the facts and evaluating one after another. Decisions are based on fact rather than intuition. Moreover, communicators are expected to be straightforward, concise and efficient in telling what action is expected. To be absolutely clear, they strive to use precise words and intend them to be taken literally. Explicit contracts conclude negotiations. This is very different from communicators in HCCs who depend less on language precision and legal documents. High-context business people may even distrust contracts and be offended by the lack of trust they suggest.

The difference between HCC and LCC is obvious. It explains why the marked differences thereof are often regarded as communication obstacles to successful intercultural interaction. Generally speaking, directness-indirectness, fact-feeling, precise-ambiguous, group interests-individualist interests, reciprocity oriented-contract oriented are potentials to bring about miscommunication or communication failures, as proposed in this study.

Analysing the differing communication patterns of Chinese and Westerners, Hall (1976), Burns (1998) and Lim (2003) claim that Eastern societies and the Chinese often use high-context patterns and adopt a role-oriented style, whereas Westerners are more inclined to use low-context patterns and are more person-oriented. Chinese know the underlying assumptions of conversation, but those using LCC do not possess such contextual information and require explicit discussion to transmit the needed information. The contrasting aspects of HCC and LCC in terms of contextual information could be a factor contributing to problematic communication between Chinese nationals and black South Africans who are greatly affected by Western cultures and more acculturated to Western LCC.

Lee-Wong (2002) examines intercultural communication from the “language as a social phenomenon” point of view and argues for the consideration of context as basic to this approach. Speakers in LCC are responsible for constructing a clear, persuasive message that listeners can decode easily. In contrast, in HCC, the listener or interpreter of the message is expected to ‘read between the lines’, to

infer the implicit intent of the verbal message accurately, and to observe the nonverbal nuances and subtleties that accompany and enhance the verbal message (Ting-Toomey 1999:100-101).

The way Chinese communicate typically reflects the communication modes of HCC and it is in conflict with LCC communication. Contrary to the verbal approach taken by Lee-Wong (2002), Ting-Toomey (1999), as noted in the previous paragraph, Anderson et al. (2002), Burns (1998), Adair and Brett (2005) added a new angle to explore contextual communication cultures applying a nonverbal approach. According to this approach, the culture's information in high-context situations is integrated from multi-layered contexts such as the environment, situation and nonverbal cues (Anderson et al. 2002:99). This information gives the message meaning that is unlikely to be available from the explicit verbal utterances in LCC. For instance, the age of interlocutors, the situation and environment of communication behaviours are important aspects of the context in Chinese culture. The situation and environment in which the behaviour is manifested give clues as to what meaning is being communicated, with subtle meaning embedded in the spoken or written words, and extracting meaning from HCC therefore requires a second level of inferential skills (Burns1998; Adair & Brett 2005). It is evident therefore that contextual factors in intercultural encounters might be contributing factors to miscommunication in view of different interpretation and contextualisation conventions.

In high-context cultures, doing business involves a rich array of communication strategies. Tebeaux (1999) studies this issue from a business perspective. Written correspondence, contracts and agreements occur after personal relationships have been established (Tebeaux 1999:78). Personal relationship building is one of the marked differences between HCC and LCC. The Chinese often employ this communication strategy in business, valuing personal relationships rather than clearly defined contracts/agreements as practised in LCC. This could constitute a potential challenge for people from the LCC culture.

Worth noting is that HCC and LCC are functionally interrelated with collectivist/individualist cultures, which explains why individualism-collectivism and HCC and LCC are grouped in this study. Brew and Cairns (2004) offer a fresh angle on this. Linking individualism-collectivism and communication styles with contextual communication, Brew and Cairns (2004:333) claim that LCCs value individualist goals and separate the person and the issue. The LCC speakers are confrontational, and use logic-deductive thinking and explicit codes of speech. In contrast, HCC speakers value collectivist goals and intermesh person and issue. Members of the LCC are preoccupied with specifics, details, and precise time schedules at the expense of context. Therefore, the low-context message requires a clear description, unambiguous communication and a high degree of specificity. LCC may help prevent misunderstandings, but it can also escalate conflict because it is more confrontational than HCC (LeBaron 2003d).

Given the different communication modes of HCC and LCC, it is not hard to see the potential for conflict between them. Among the HCC Chinese, group harmony and relationships are challenged and under threat when communication is confrontational from LCC, which explains the tensions between Chinese companies and their local black African employees. See also Section 1.3 and Chapter 5 Discussion.

The literature review offers a limited number of studies with regard to the contextual communication of black (South) Africans. Livermore (2013) regards the whole sub-Saharan Africa as HCC, but also agrees that SA is the biggest outlier in this region, partly because of the predominance of the English culture, which is seen particularly in the business culture of South Africa. To Livermore, LCC exists in the business culture of South Africa. Similarly, Matondo (2012), while claiming that Africans are verbal people, contends that in some African countries business relationships are usually established based on friendships rather than business competitiveness, indicating that African people carry one of the marked characteristics of HCC as argued by LeBaron (2003c), who points out that relationships tend to be emphasised in some African contexts of conflict resolution.

Matondo's claim indicates that Africans seem to belong to both LCC and HCC, in sharp contrast with Chinese.

Thomas (2008) claims South Africans carry both HCC and LCC. That is, black South Africans are regarded as HCC and white South Africans as LCC. Prime (2010) agrees with Thomas (2008). According to Prime (2010), the generally white top management in SA uses an explicit style of communication with little reference to the contextual aspects of communication. In contrast, black South Africans use an implicit style of communication with frequent reference to contextual elements. It means white South Africans belong to LCC while black South Africans belong to HCC, constituting a sharp contrast with China in terms of cultural backgrounds.

However, as is proposed in this study, reference points for comparison should be considered when one discusses differences of communication modes between different intercultural groups. Black South Africans' HCC differs from that of Chinese to varying degrees, given the fact that black South African's culture has been interwoven with the white LCC in SA and European cultures for decades, while Chinese culture largely remains in its own perimeter. In other words, the black South African version of HCC (as Thomas and others claimed) can at most be called a weak HCC when compared with the strong HCC of Chinese.

According to the system-thinking approach, 'situational factors'/'contexts' play a crucial role in shaping one's behaviour/communicative preference in intercultural communication. That black South Africans' culture has undergone critical changes under the influence of European cultures, particularly English culture, a dominant culture, indicates that black South Africans have been moulded and affected in terms of behaviour/communicative preference by the European cultures. These salient 'situational factors'/'contexts' are key parameters in understanding black South African HCC.

Looking at the 'situational factors'/'contexts' from which Chinese culture is derived is also insightful and imperative. One must not ignore the fact that the 'situational factors' and 'contexts' black Africans had and have did not and do not exist in Chinese culture. China's long, continuous history as a country and culture has run

for a thousand years. This explains why traditional Chinese culture remains comparatively less changed. On top of that, the literature regarding Easterners as HCC and Westerners as LCC serves to draw the inference that black South Africans should also be categorised under LCC in view of the country's intensive historical and cultural interactions with European cultures, which have had a profound impact on black South Africans.

As the above literature exposes, the Chinese have a predominantly HCC culture, whereas Westerners have an LCC culture. There is a clear difference between HCC and LCC in terms of communication modes and behaviours. Culture is rarely unified, and new contexts generate a new impact on cultures¹⁵. In comparison with China's HCC, the inference is drawn that Africa's HCC constructs are quite different in terms of connotation and context and thus it is proposed in this study that Africans are LCC inclined. By connotation and context here, the researcher of this study means that Africans' unique contexts carry an African connotation and version of HCC different from that of Chinese.

The life experience and observation from the researcher of this study during his more than 15 years' stay in Africa also demonstrate Africans' LCC inclination. To demonstrate, black African drivers would not help their Chinese employers offload materials from a vehicle because a driver's responsibility is explicitly to drive employers but not to offload things, an LCC communicative preference, whereas Chinese drivers would do so because Chinese drivers who intermesh person and issue would go beyond explicitly coded responsibilities of drivers, a HCC characteristic. As far as the researcher knows, black African drivers' behaviour led to serious Chinese complaints (including his own) in Chinese companies. That the researcher is experienced and equipped with knowledge of African cultures does not stop him from voicing angry complaints about it, not to mention the angry responses from Chinese who know little about African cultures. This implies that

¹⁵ This does not mean that a new context has an equal impact on all cultural groups. For instance, globalisation brings about different changes to different cultural groups. China undergoes fewer changes than Africa because of its particular socio-political system and stronghold of traditional culture.

cultural differences between HCC and LCC are a potential source of problematical encounters.

2.3.3 High-power distance and low-power distance

As an important cultural variable, the power distance index (PDI) matters in intercultural communication (Ting-Toomey 1999; Guirdham 1999; Anderson et al. 2002; Lim 2003). The PDI looks at how much a culture does or does not value hierarchical relationships and respect for authority. It is widely applied in intercultural communication either as a contributor to communication failure or as a facilitator to communication success. That something is a universal concept does not bring about universal understanding and practice thereof. Instead, different cultures attach different meanings to it, resulting in cultural differences (Ting-Toomey 1999; Lim 2003). The bigger the difference in PDI between cultural groups, the greater the possibility that the two parties might encounter problems in their interactions.

This dimension is applied in this study because the investigation of PDI differences between Chinese nationals and black South Africans has facilitated the identification of the potential conflicts these differences generated between them. It is argued in this study that hierarchical relationships and respect for authority play a pivotal role in Chinese life. As collectivism is particularly prominent in Chinese culture, so is HPD. According to Samovar and Porter (2003), social organisation (family and state) directly influences perception and communication. China as a state is a good example of this. No countries have more effectively and successfully unleashed the collective power of culture in their economic and social development, as China has demonstrated. No governments have more power and authority to call for efficient collective mobilisations to face their challenges and save their people from poverty as China has done. No people can sacrifice and give up their individual interests for the sake of the national interests as Chinese do. All these examples demonstrate that the Chinese are strongly HPD-oriented.

It is ingrained in the Chinese psyche that authority, power and superior social status deserve respect and high esteem. This is simply an accepted culture in

China. This explains why Chinese are easily “offended” in their interactions with interlocutors with an LPD inclination. Except for a description of communication modes and a general indication of cultural clusters of HPD and LPD (Ting-Toomey 1999; Guirdham 1999; Anderson et al. 2002; Lim 2003), the existing literature fails to provide case reports of conflicts caused by the two variables. This study provides real-life data on how HPD and LPD come into conflict with each other between Chinese nationals and black South Africans.

All interactions reflect some form of power. As a value dimension, HPD and LPD affect communication behaviours significantly. Gudykunst and Matsumoto, in Anderson et al. (2002:95), claim that members of HPD cultures regard power as a basic fact in society and promote coercive or referent power, while members of LPD cultures believe power should be used only when it is legitimate. They prefer expert or legitimate power and information flows that are functional and unrestricted, and companies tend to have flat hierarchies and matrix organisations (Guirdham 1999:53). As a power of influence over others, ‘referent power’ in HPD and ‘legitimate power’ in LPD draw a sharp contrast between the two, which is a potential area where miscommunication could occur.

Relating interpersonal relationships with HPD and LPD, Lim (2003:62) and Ting-Toomey (1999:75) characterise the differences between Western cultures and Asian cultures in general. In Western societies, of the two essential dimensions of interpersonal relationships, the intimacy or social distance has more influence on how to use language. In Asia, however, status difference overrules social distance. The older, wiser, more contemplative person is held in high esteem and one has to employ honorifics when one speaks to a superior or an elder, regardless of how close one may be to them.

The literature investigation reveals that Ting-Toomey (1999) offers a comprehensive and insightful analysis of Chinese cultural dimensions, including PDI. Ting-Toomey (1999) examines the Chinese values, index of age and power index and concludes that Confucianism is still the fundamental philosophy underlying Chinese values, attitudes and behaviours. She (1999:75) points out that

“the following two principles guide Confucian philosophy: (i) a superior in the workplace must act with virtue, and those in inferior positions must obey their superior; (ii) one should act dutifully toward elders, reciprocally in one’s obligations, and respectfully in role differentiation.”

China, which is rated as a highly collectivist country, enjoys its own political and societal system. Four aspects that exemplify the collectivism among Chinese people are group orientation, interdependence, face, and respect for authority, which are very notable in Chinese culture. In China, there are no verbal wars between the “ruling party” and “opposition parties”¹⁶ as one observes in Africa and elsewhere. Chinese governments (both central and local) and those with high social status enjoy authority and prestige. In China’s media, there is no open, bald-faced criticism of governments or personal attacks on those in power, as happens in Africa, where it is quite normal to publish articles, stories, letters and even messages using humiliating/insulting language. Open and free attacks on and name-calling of those in authority, high-level officials, traditional leaders, elders and governments and heads of state are published every day in the media in Africa, even calls for overthrowing government by violence, as suggested recently by the leader of a South African opposition party, the Economic Freedom Fighters. ‘Criticism’ of political leaders or people with high social status in SA and other parts of Africa often crosses the line of morality or goes beyond common sense. ‘Speaking one’s mind’ as above exposes the communicative preference of the individualist and LPD culture.

In terms of power distance, China is centralised (though it has shown some tendency toward decentralised power). In HPD cultures, authority is inherent in one’s position within a hierarchy. There are strong dependency relationships between parents and children, bosses and subordinates and a significant social

¹⁶ In China, the terms “ruling party” and “opposition parties” have hardly any currency. The ruling party in China refers to the Communist party, while opposition parties are all in general called democratic parties. All these parties work together via a mechanism referred to as a political consultation channel.

distance between superiors and subordinates. In LPD or power tolerance cultures, individuals assess authority in view of its perceived rightness (Anedo 2012).

Compared with China, Africa is relatively decentralised. The existing literature gives conflicting information about black (South) Africans in general regarding power distance. This study argues that black South Africans have low PDI when compared with China. Reference points of comparison play a pivotal role in determining the cultural differences between interlocutors. To illustrate, compared with Europeans, Africans' PDI is higher. To Europeans, both Chinese and Africans are higher in PDI clusters, while Africans are lower in PDI if compared with Chinese. On Hofstede's scale of power index, China scores 80, while SA scores 49, nearly half the score of China, indicating that China has an HPD inclination while SA largely has an LPD inclination (The Hofstede Centre n.d.). Ignorance of this fact will lead to the fallacious proposition that "Africans are of HPD", as claimed by researchers mentioned later.

LeBaron (2003 c) claims that many African nations have indigenous systems of conflict resolution that have endured into the present, sometimes quite intact and sometimes fragmented by rapid social changes. These systems rely on particular approaches to negotiation that respect kinship ties and the structures of local society generally, notably the age hierarchy and ethnic origin. Thus, in many African traditions and cultures, elders have substantial power, and when they intervene in a conflict or a negotiation, their words are respected. According to Broodryk (2002), 'respect' is known as 'Ukuhlonipha' in the Zulu language and respect for elders or power is one of the customary rules that govern relationships at different levels of society (Broodryk 2002:54). This is partly because certain elders are believed to have access to supernatural powers that can remove protective shields at best and cause personal disaster at worst (LeBaron 2003c).

In a similar way, Matondo (2012) claims that Africans generally have a deep and ingrained respect for old age, and even when they can find nothing to admire in an old man, they will not easily forget that his grey hair have earned him the right to courtesy and politeness. Elders are believed to be teachers and directors of the

young. Advanced age is inherently equated with authority, business wisdom, rank, title and experience. Thus, an older person automatically holds a certain level of superiority, regardless of rank, title, or education, a demonstration of an HPD cultural trait.

Nyasani in Lassiter (2000) claims that an "endemic and congenital trait of what could be described as a natural benign docility generally brought about many years of blind social submission and unquestioning compliance to the mystique of higher authority that reigns surreptitiously yet effectively in all black African societies in varying degrees. This 'benign natural docility' is generally regarded as positive, legitimate and virtuous strictly within the context of a traditional social regime" (Lassiter 2000).

From a systems-thinking view of culture, Aneas and Sandin (2009) claim that culture is a 'system' and not the sum of a collection of fortuitous traits. It is an integrated whole, which cannot be understood by examining its components individually and in isolation. It is a dynamic whole that is in flux and constantly changing, and which reveals itself as being in interaction with the world in a multiplicity of complex and diverse situations and contexts. This implies that events and happenings in the Western world since the 18th to the 20th centuries in the field of science, technology, education, economy, politics and communication are important factors in one's consideration of African cultural dimensions. These factors have affected Africans' behaviour and communication styles. In its social, political and cultural development, Africa embraces Western values of democracy, freedom and human rights, which have firm roots on African soil owing to the cultural, social, economic and political interactions between Westerners and Africans. Such movements are claimed to play a vitally constitutive role to shift Africa from its traditional HPD inclination to an LPD inclination. Both LeBaron (2003 c) and Mbiti (1990) agree with this claim.

Mbiti (1990) presents insightful studies of African religions and philosophy, which are also cardinal elements in the study of African cultural orientations. According

to Mbiti, traditionally, African elders, authority and leaders are highly respected and kings were even venerated with acts of reverence and obeisance (1990:178).

However, as Mbiti (1990) points out, the physical expansion of Europe into Africa exposed African peoples to the socio-economic change taking place in the Western world and elsewhere. The European conquest of Africa reached its formal climax with the Berlin Conference of 1885, at which the major powers of Europe politically shared out the whole of Africa apart from Ethiopia and Liberia. "Whether consciously or unconsciously, Europe began to transform Africa and if possible to make it resemble itself in many respects" (1990:212).

According to Mbiti (1990), this change has been described as 'detrribalisation'. This means that traditional life is deeply undermined, so that tribal identity is fading away to allow other identities to make claims on the African individual and community. Colonial administrations generally tended to incorporate traditional rulers into the political structure. The powers and charismatic images of Africa decreased considerably. In some cases the colonial government did away altogether with traditional rulers and this did not always happen peacefully. The office of the king has survived in some societies into the modern independent African states, with some rulers taking on a leading position (Mbiti 1990:181).

Furthermore, according to Mbiti, ethical and moral problems also arise from the new social problems in the process of the African modern nationhood and urbanisation (Mbiti 1990:217-218). The family experiences great strain in this changing situation. "The authority and respect which parents enjoy under traditional morality and customs are being challenged by the young generation" (Mbiti 1990:220). This also explains why African intellectuals advocate Africanisation and revival of Ubuntu values (Msila 2009; Msila 2014; Metz 2011; Cornell & Marle 2005; Oyowe 2013).

What Mbiti (1190) accounts for is a clear indication of what the researcher also witnessed in Africa and heard through anecdotes: traditional African HPD culture faded away into an LPD culture, in sharp contrast with China. In other words, in

comparison with the HPD of China, black Africa can at most be categorised as accepting moderate power distance (Livermore 2013). That today African governments or authorities or people with high social status are being attacked, criticised or humiliated, be it politically or privately or for the purpose of improvement of work, is an evident signal of Africans shifting from HPD to LPD.

According to Nyasani in Lassiter (2000), Africans have gone through cultural and psychological changes under the influence of Western cultures, which explains how Africa has become a low-power culture as it is today. He points out that culturally, it is as if the traditional African script of "submit to family and community authority and immerse yourself in and partake of all group values and norms" was rewritten during the colonial period. Through force, Western education and missionary proselytization, the colonialists subordinated traditional African authority and the values and norms of African communalism in the minds of Africans. This new anti-African script, argues Nyasani (1997), remains deeply imbedded in the minds of contemporary Africans (Lassiter 2000).

Psychologically, Nyasani in Lassiter (2000) argues that Africans' "natural benign docility" contributed to and exacerbated Africa's widespread social and cultural demise via Western acculturation. He argues that "it would not be difficult to imagine the ripe conditions encountered at the dawn of European imperialism for unbridled exploitations and culture emasculations, which left many an African society completely distraught and culturally defrocked. Indeed the exploiting schemers must have found a ready market glutted with cultural naiveties for quick but effective alienation" (Lassiter 2000).

Clearly, traditional Africa carries every characteristic of an HPD culture. However, cultural and psychological changes Africans went through during the colonial era and their close international interactions and communication with outside cultures have eroded such characteristics of the HPD culture and substituted them with an LPD culture.

Except for Hofstede's power distance scale, the exploration of existing literature has yielded no report on black SA's culture of a power index. However, black SA's specific contexts and backgrounds matter. Interacting with Western cultures during colonialism and afterward, SA, like other African countries, has also gone through cultural and psychological changes, with the traditional high-power culture fading away into a lower power culture, although the traditional high-power culture still enjoys a certain prevalence in South Africa. However, compared with the fairly high-power culture of China, SA is obviously marked with more LPD traits, which de facto matches Hofstede's scale as discussed above. This difference could pose potential problems to the intercultural activities between Chinese nationals and black South Africans. Nevertheless, an extensive literature investigation reveals no research study about the communication failure between Chinese nationals and black South Africans with regard to power distance.

The results of the literature review demonstrate that HPD and LPD affect communication behaviour significantly, given their radical differences of communication modes and considerations. Under the fundamental influence of Western culture, the high esteem Africa's traditional power and authority enjoyed has been fading away, resulting in black Africans' communicative preference of LPD. On top of that, in comparison with that of China, black (South) Africa can at most be regarded as an LPD culture instead of an HPD culture, as claimed by other researchers mentioned in the literature review.

2.3.4 Attitudes to time

In intercultural communication, if culturally marked aspects of communicative behaviour of one group are in sharp contrast with another group, the possibility of communication failure is bigger. This implies that a prominent cultural dimension of one ethnic group may bring about undesired communication results when the interlocutor of this group interacts with another group with no such ethnically prominent dimension. This section will dwell on the time dimension, another weighty cultural variable in Chinese and Africans' cultures, making it a particular and sensitive area of interaction between Chinese nationals and black Africans.

Time is one of the most central differences that separate cultures and cultural ways of doing things (LeBaron 2003 d). One's understanding of time may help to pave the way for understanding the thinking, attitudes and actions of people. As one of the important cultural variables, attitudes to time influence people's communication behaviours. Time orientation is employed to investigate the communication problems to which this cultural dimension will give rise. This study sought to claim that the unique time attitudes black Africans have or the African-ness of the time concept constructs a communication barrier for Chinese, making it a potential factor of conflict.

The literature hereafter reviews time orientations of Chinese nationals and Africans, and exposes differences between them, on the basis of which an inference is made that such differences potentially affect communication.

The existing literature accounts mainly for the communicative preferences of Westerners and Asians with regard to time attitudes, with limited publications on Africans' time orientation (Guirdham 1999; Ting-Toomey 1999; Storz 1999; Brew & Cairns 2004; Anderson et al. 2002). The researcher nonetheless used the limited literature, plus the literature of Westerners and Asians, to support the postulation of this study that Chinese and black South Africans have two different attitudes to time and such differences are a contributing factor to the problematic encounters between them. What is noteworthy is that "African time attitudes" is used as a broad term in this study to express a general attitude to time of Africans, but it does not mean every black African has the same time attitude.

Generally speaking, there are two kinds of time patterns: monochronic patterns (M-time) and polychronic patterns (P-time). M-time cultures are most comfortable with accomplishing tasks at a time according to a schedule. People with this cultural orientation tend to do one thing after another, finishing each activity before starting the next, while P-time cultures view events as happening in all dimensions concurrently and are more oriented toward people. Different attitudes to time construct different communication styles. Differences over time can play out in

painful and dramatic ways in negotiation or conflict-resolution processes (LeBaron 2003 d).

Hall in Brew and Cairns (2004:334) agrees that Westerners usually have a synchronous approach to time, which results in an emphasis on time deadlines and sequential, efficient task performance. By contrast, Easterners traditionally use a more polychromous approach to time. They place less emphasis on prioritising tasks and have an approximate attitude to time frames. Time can be linked with direct versus indirect communication strategies. That is, Westerners' preference for communicational clarity is partly driven by the need to save time and energy, whereas collectivists are more likely to be obscure, circuitous and less mindful of time constraints, because they are sensitive to the face-wants of others (Brew & Cairns 2004:335). See also Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.3.

While Hall in Brew and Cairns (2004) generalises the time attitude of Westerners and Easterners, Anderson et al. (2002) and Ting-Toomey (1999) draw a direct link between individualism-collectivism and time attitudes and point out that individualism tends to foster monochronic rhythms, while collectivists tend to cultivate polychronic rhythms. Cultures with a single-track view of time are monochronic. For monochronic individuals, effective conflict negotiation means reaching and implementing tangible conflict outcomes within a clearly established timetable. One thing is done at a time in individualistic cultures, which are more task-oriented in contrast to the relational and socio-emotional orientation of collectivistic cultures (Anderson et al., 2002:94). Cultures with a multi-track view of time are polychromic. For polychromic individuals, a deadline is subject to renegotiation; also, clock time is less important to them than is dealing with the relational rhythms between interlocutors in a flexible and patient manner and multiple events are scheduled simultaneously (Ting-Toomey 1999:213).

As noted above, the time dimension is interrelated with individualism-collectivism, HCC and LCC variables. It is not hard to understand that this creates problematic interaction between Chinese nationals and black South Africans, as exposed in

the literature reviews of individualism-collectivism and contextual communication in Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.

Discussing the effects of 'time' on group-work, Guirdham (1999:65) presents two time orientations: long orientation and short orientation. Long orientation explores all issues before a decision is made, whereas short orientation shows a sense of urgency and pressure for closure. This means that long orientation people have a comprehensive plan and take a big picture about issues and a collectivist approach to issues, while people with short orientation take a straight-to-the-point approach, now-and-near-future thinking in an individualist culture.

Unlike other researchers, Ting-Toomey (1999:63) proposes two different time orientations from the perspective of business: members of business groups who favour a 'past-present' focus and members of business groups who favour a 'future' focus. She claims that potential clashes may occur between these two groups because the former groups want to view everything from the company's history and traditions, whereas the latter groups want to bypass the past and plan ahead efficiently for the immediate future.

In his examination of Confucian attitudes to time, Storz (1999:121) points out the Confucian notion of 'history'. As one remembers one's past, one creates one's present and future. For Confucians, the past, present and future are dialectically connected and deadlines are moveable and not immutable. Storz (1999:128) states that Chinese forecasting and planning in a business context are different from the Western kind; this may present problems for those who see time as objective clock time or calendar time if they have to operate within the Chinese cultural framework (Storz 1999:126,128). Needless to say, as Storz claims, such differing time attitudes may cause problems between Chinese nationals and Westerners (1999:126,128).

From the above literature one can see that Guirdham (1999), Ting-Toomey (1999), Storz (1999) and Anderson et al. (2002) present two types of time variables under different terms. Generally speaking, the Eastern cultures are under M-time or a synchronous approach or long orientation or past-present focus, while the West

adopts P-time or a polychromous approach or short orientation or immediate future focus. The differences between the two types of time dimensions are clear and this will result in two different communicative preferences, which might further lead to communication barriers for the interlocutors from two different cultural groups, as postulated in this study.

The literature investigations yield a limited number of studies on African time. Livermore (2013) gives a general conclusion of African time: short-term orientation. Africans' time orientation values immediate outcomes more than long-term benefits (Livermore 2013). Anedo (2012) compares business differences between Chinese and Africans, demonstrating that Africa has a short-term orientation while China has a long-term orientation. People from short-term cultures (African countries) would love to maximise the present rewards and are less prone to saving or anticipating long-term rewards.

Matondo (2012), however, argues that in African cultures, time is polychromous; a person can do three or more things within a given period simultaneously. Matondo's claim is contrary to the generally accepted claim mentioned by Hall in Brew and Cairns (2004:334) and the researcher's own observation/experience in Africa. For instance, the author has come across many scenarios when Namibians could not organise or handle two issues at a time. Chinese friends in the building industry often told him that if one gives African workers two commands, they get confused and fail. This is a demonstration of the M-time culture of Africans.

One prominent part of the African time dimension lies in its being related to social activities, as Matondo (2012) claims. According to traditional Africans, time can be socialised and should be programmed into socio-cultural norms of human behaviour and inter-personal relationships. Therefore, the death of one person in the neighbourhood could change appointments previously made even for business purposes. The time is first related to the social obligations and professionalism comes later (Matondo 2012). This leads to complaints from Chinese employers about their African employees who often fail to turn up at the workplace because of their social obligations. This is also the area where Chinese employers are very

concerned when skill transfer becomes an issue. This is because Africans' absence from work to observe their social obligations has a negative impact on the business operations or productivity if Chinese companies conduct skills transfer and rely on these skilled African employees only.

In the existing body of literature on African time attitudes, Mbiti (1990) is the only author who has produced sustained and in-depth analysis of African concepts of time. Mbiti (1990:16) points out:

The question of time is of little or no academic concern to African peoples in their traditional life. For them, time is simply a composition of events which have occurred, those which are taking place now and those which are inevitably or immediately to occur. What has not taken place or what has no likelihood of an immediate occurrence falls in the category of 'No-time'. What is certain to occur, or what falls within the rhythm of natural phenomena, is the category of inevitable or potential time.

According to Mbiti (1990), African time is a two dimensional phenomenon, with a long past, a present and virtually no future. "The future is absent because events which lie in it have not taken place. They have not been realised and, therefore, cannot constitute time" (Mbiti 1990:17). This "no future" time attitude leads to black African people's lack of appropriate consideration and planning for the future, a possible explanation for the fact that most black Africans would follow like sheep when they participate in an event or a strike without thinking over its aftermath, in sharp contrast with Chinese who would secure a job for their future before making any decision. This is an area of potential conflict between the two cultures, as discussed in this study.

Mbiti (1990) further points out:

Time has to be experienced in order to make sense or to become real. A person experiences time partly in his own individual life, and partly through the society which goes back many generations before his own birth. Since what is the future has not been experienced, it does not make sense; it cannot, therefore,

constitute part of time and people do not know how to think about it – unless, of course, it is something which falls within the rhythm of natural phenomena.

Mbiti (1990) concludes that Africans at most have a short future orientation, which is only an extension of the present. Mbiti calls this time “micro-time”. Micro-time is meaningful to the individual or the community only through participation in it or experiencing it (Mbiti 199:22). For the people concerned, “time is meaningful at the point of event and not at the mathematical moment.” Therefore, in traditional African life, time has to be created or produced, meaning that to Africans time is not fixed but is closely linked to an event through which Africans set their time at their own will (Mbiti 1990:19).

The African time concept as claimed by Mbiti (1990) might explain why an event or function or ceremony in Africa (South Africa, Namibia for example) always starts not at the scheduled time but late, sometimes very late. This might also give an answer to why outsiders are very disappointed when waiting for Africans who have said, “I am coming”, “I am on the way” and they turn up half an hour or more late. To African people, starting/arriving at 10:00 is no different from starting/arriving at 10:30 or 11:00 or even later. An African proverb vividly describing this time attitude says: “Where the runner reaches, there the walker will reach eventually.” The most important thing is to arrive.

The communication modes of Africans’ time attitude could constitute potential for conflict between Chinese employers and African employees. Such a time attitude is troublesome and frustrating to Chinese¹⁷ who always complain about Africans being late. Such an attitude to time affects their productivity at the workplace negatively because for African workers, coming to work eight hours a day in the company is more important than what they are supposed to do and complete within eight hours a day.

¹⁷ According to Livermore (2013), Africans’ ‘not punctual’ attitude also makes European visitors or investors feel frustrated and lead them to complain a lot.

To sum up, Chinese have a long orientation time attitude, which explores all issues before a decision is made. The Chinese attitude to time is in sharp contrast to the African attitude to time, which indicates no dialectical connection between past, present and future¹⁸. The two different time attitudes reveal two different life attitudes and different ways to resolve problems and challenges: the Chinese approach to issues is to consider their past, present and future, with emphasis on the relationship between past, present and future; Africans' approach to issues is to consider mainly their present and their past slightly, with the emphasis on the present. People with a 'present' life attitude are short-sighted and try their best to meet their present needs and obtain rewards without considering the future outcome of their present actions. This could contribute to conflict between the two cultural groups.

As noted above, four cultural variables of Chinese and black (South) Africans are discussed. However, before the researcher concludes this section, a contemporary discourse on Africanisation needs to be viewed briefly, as it has an impact on African identity and communicative styles as well. Contemporary Africanisation has become a very important issue for people in search of unity, a sense of belonging and a sense of pride in who and what they are and what they stand for (Louw 2010; Msila 2009; Msila 2014). According to Louw (2010), Africanisation involves incorporating, adapting and integrating other cultures into and through African visions to provide the dynamism, evolution and flexibility that are so essential in the global village. Africanisation is the process of defining or interpreting African identity and culture. Africanisation is important for the whole African community. Not only does it give each individual who calls this continent home a sense of belonging, but it also has the potential to unify a very diverse community with diverse cultures and values (Louw 2010).

It is also important to note that Africanisation is not about excluding Europeans

¹⁸ Partly because of Christian missionary teaching, partly because of Western-type education together with the invasion of modern technology with all it involves, African people are discovering the future dimension of time (Mbiti (1990). However, given the historical context and compared with Chinese time orientation, Africans still remain under the label of a short-term orientation cluster.

and their cultures, but about affirming the African culture and its identity in a world community, as Makgoba claims in Louw (2010). One must bear in mind that the internet has introduced globalisation and its diverse implications into the local village, and this has an impact on how knowledge is constructed. If knowledge is anchored by the way the world is, then African countries still seem to face a dilemma in constructing local curricula, where the ideas of the West continue to be considered superior (Louw 2010).

In view of the socio-political, cultural contexts and historical background of Africanisation and on the basis of the researcher's experience and observation, the researcher seeks to claim that the African identity Africanisation has shaped and its concomitant communication styles consequently differ from the Chinese national identity and communication styles, because the Chinese have not experienced such radical cultural interactions with European cultures. By saying this, the researcher does not mean that Chinese culture has not evolved (Enterprises Technology n.d.). "The Chinese are in a state of evolution. And some of the cultural roadblocks are starting to fall. For example, the Chinese are beginning to understand that power-distance, the concept of inequality between managers and employees, is not helping them" (Enterprises Technology n.d.). The researcher does tend to claim that mainstream Chinese culture remains unchanged, as explicated in the literature review.

2.3.5 Conclusions

Cultural differences occur because cultures are developed in different geographies, climates, economics, religions and histories, each exerting a unique influence (Anderson et al. 2002:90). Cultural differences also occur because of particular situations and contexts, as Piller (2011) and Blommaert (1998) claim. African historical situations/contexts are attributes of African cultures. The different cultural dimensions of individualism-collectivism, HCC, LCC, PDI and attitudes to time could have an impact on the communication strategies of different culture groups.

The above literature exploration evidently supports the view that because of different cultural backgrounds, Chinese and Africans/black South Africans have differing cultural orientations: Chinese are very collectivist while Africans/black South Africans are strongly inclined to individualism; Chinese are HPD-orientated while Africans/black South Africans have an LPD tendency; Chinese adopt HCC whereas Africans/black South Africans adopt LCC; Chinese are long-term orientated whereas Africans/black South Africans are short-term orientated. Such differences are claimed to be responsible for problematical encounters between Chinese nationals and black South Africans. See also Sections 5.2—5.5.

The emphasis in this section is based on the comparisons and contrasts between the Chinese culture and African cultures that have experienced political, religious, social and cultural changes in exposure, particularly to Western colonialism and in their close interactions with Westerners afterwards. Africans may be claimed to be collectivist or HPD orientated or HCC inclined, but Africa's versions thereof are much weaker and have different shades of meaning when compared with those of Chinese. Therefore, the reference point for comparison serves as a crucial benchmark in the identification of cultural differences, making it an inevitable role player in this study. One must also bear in mind that situational factors/contexts of African cultures serve as critical parameters when compared with Chinese culture.

It is important to note that the four variables are closely interrelated, according to the literature. Thus we need to consider this interrelationship when discussing (i) the cultural differences between Chinese nationals and black (South) Africans and (ii) the potential contributions of these to problematic encounters. This explains why these four variables are selected in this study.

In the following subsection, the researcher of this study will briefly review the literature on communication strategies of Chinese and also those of Africans in general, whose cultures have been significantly influenced during the periods of colonialism and post-colonialism.

2.4. Communication strategies

As demonstrated above, cultural dimensions play a major role in affecting communication strategies and behaviours. Three communication strategies discussed in this section are harmony, politeness and face concerns. It is important to note that harmony, politeness and face concerns are prominent and closely interwoven and thus this study combines them to address the issue at hand.

Every culture employs communication strategies of harmony, politeness and face. However, the same terms may be defined by different cultures in different ways. That is, each culture has its own views of these concepts and therefore its own ways to express and practise them. Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998) specifically examine Chinese communication strategies and compare them with Western ones. The Chinese phrase “han xu” refers to a mode of communication that is contained, reserved, implicit and indirect (1998:37). An implicit style of communication enables one to negotiate meanings in interpersonal relationships and helps to maintain existing relationships among individuals without destroying group harmony. In addition, to protect face and preserve interpersonal harmony as well as the cohesion of the group, Chinese tend to adopt an unassertive style of communication in interpersonal interactions. Chinese have learned to be strategically unassertive by articulating their intentions in an indirect manner and leaving room for negotiations in private. In Chinese interactions, both participants are very “ke qi” (polite). Clearly, harmony, politeness and face concerns are three notable cultural strategies in Chinese communication.

As in Chinese culture, harmony, politeness and face concerns are also employed in African cultures. In the following section, the three communication strategies will be discussed in an attempt to account for differences between Chinese nationals and black South Africans and their potential role(s) in problematical encounters as postulated in this study.

2.4.1 Harmony

‘Harmony’ is a fundamental part of the Chinese communication strategy and communication style and it is closely linked with the cultural dimensions of

collectivism/individualism, HPD/LPD and HCC/LCC. As such, judgment and interpretation of harmony should be related to these cultural variables.

2.4.1.1 Chinese version of harmony

The Confucian-based notion of harmony is one of the main Chinese manifestations of the collective ideal (Clyne, 1994:184). Burns (1998:47) and Li (1987:137) claim that Confucian values lead to conformity, which is a central value in Chinese society. The Confucian concept of 'Doctrine of the Mean' (Zhong Yong), a profound and fundamental part of Chinese philosophy, asks individuals to adapt themselves to their collectivity, to control their emotions, to advocate conformity and harmony, to avoid conflict and competition and to oppose extremism. On the contrary, it advocates non-extremism. Non-confrontation is the core of Chinese culture, which is proclaimed by both Confucians and Taoists. According to Li (1987:139), "Taoism claims that non-confrontation is a moral behaviour", which explains why Chinese individuals or institutions would adopt a communication strategy of conformity, avoiding conflict and opposing extremism, rather preferring peace and compromise to address conflict or problems.

Li, Zhu and Li (2001) analyse the interpersonal harmony in Chinese business interactions from the perspective of the key Chinese cultural concept of harmony, claiming that harmonious relation building is extremely important in doing business with Chinese. The Chinese intermesh person and issue and prefer group harmony and consensus to individual achievement. This explains why Chinese employers see Africans' strikes and outspoken complaints as lack of group harmony and consensus and do not understand this behaviour of Africans.

Claiming that harmonious relation building is extremely important in doing business with Chinese, Li, Zhu and Li (2001) and Young (1994:125) point out that the Chinese try not to make the other person look bad. They want to help others save face. They often look for points on which there might be some agreement or similarity, even if the other person is thought to be 99% wrong. Gudykunst and Kim (1984:142) point out that Asians tend to be concerned with the overall emotional quality of the interaction rather than with explicit messages such as the meaning

of particular words or sentences. As Samovar and Porter point out, the communication pattern the Chinese adopt is regarded as reserved rather than boisterous (2003:9). This implies that Chinese do not like to be made to look bad in their interactions with others.

It is important to note that in Chinese culture, collectivism, HCC and harmony are closely connected to create a harmonious, polite and face-saving communication mechanism. Any isolation and separation of these variables will make this communication mechanism fail. However, this unique cultural communication strategy has 'victimised' the interlocutors from different cultural groups in that Chinese fail to make an appropriate judgement and interpretation of harmonious behaviours from other groups who simply follow their own cultural communication norms. Such wrong judgement and interpretation could lead to miscommunication, and vice versa for other cultural groups.

2.4.1.2 African version of harmony

It is noted that there is little empirical evidence of what 'harmony' encompasses in African cultures. Nevertheless, considering the cultural dimensions of individualism, LPD and LCC noted above, the researcher does not find it hard to understand black Africans' version of harmony. One should interpret Africans' view of harmony in the context of Africa's close connection with Western cultures. Studying the Western rhetorical tradition of logical, rational and analytic thinking, Gudykunst and Kim (1984:140) claim that a key function of speech in this tradition is to express one's ideas and thoughts as clearly, logically, and persuasively as possible so that the speaker can be fully recognised for his or her individuality in influencing others (Gudykunst & Kim 1984:142).

Matondo (2012) relates 'harmony' with individualism-collectivism in his comparison of business practices between Chinese and black Africans. Claiming that communal life is encouraged among Africans, Matondo (2012) argues that collectivism characterises the core of Chinese human relationships. Maintaining harmony within an in-group is often regarded as a duty of all group members. An important concept relevant to in-group harmony is face. Giving face to others

(showing respect) and avoiding losing one's own face (being humiliated) help maintain in-group harmony. Thus, according to Matondo, in China's version of harmony, collectivism, harmony and face are closely connected, whereas Sub-Saharan Africans' version of harmony is an acute sense of solidarity and communal life. It seems that to Matondo (2012), Chinese and Africans share the same cultural traits in terms of harmony, but the researcher understands that Chinese 'harmony' and African 'harmony' are from different contexts that breed different contents and connotations.

Chinese philosophies have many characteristics in common with the African Ubuntu culture of harmony, but one must bear in mind that in the Chinese version of harmony, collectivism, harmony, HCC, politeness and face are closely related. Matondo (2012), like other investigators, claims that Africa is characterised by communalism/collectivism. This could be due to lack of consideration of the historical and social-cultural contexts and their impact on African cultures and also because Matondo (2012) views cultures as static and separate from one another, as claimed by the functionalist approach. African unique contexts breed African collectivism, as noted in the above description of African communalism/collectivism and Chinese collectivism. African unique contexts also breed African harmony. Given the contextual differences between Chinese and Africans as discussed above, the African version of harmony, historically derived from African solidarity and communal life, cannot be the same as the Chinese one, but is typically African in harmony with African contexts.

Each culture has its own understanding of 'harmony'. According to Broodryk (2002), in Africa, 'harmony' is expressed in its Ubuntu cultures, which encompass sharing, humanness, respect, caring, consensus and compassion. According to Schneider-Waterberg (2016), African Ubuntu encompasses harmony and unity and Ubuntu will allow people to once again restore a communal society, consisting of smaller harmonious communities. Ubuntu has been described as an African moral philosophy that finds actions grounded on good will to be right if they promote shared identity (Chasi 2015). Chasi drafted a provisional understanding of news

that reflects the values of Ubuntu, tentatively conceptualising news values inspired by Ubuntu, and advocating an Ubuntu-informed normative account of how journalists should cover conflict, war, and possibilities regarding peace (Chasi 2015), thus to create a harmonious society.

One must also bear in mind that African societies have been split and separated on many levels. Tribal wars among Africans take place and fighting because of grassland grabbing for cattle also happens often. Obviously it is not hard to find Africans becoming more explicit, boisterous and assertive than Chinese because of the profound influence of individualist cultures. All this is an important context one must take into account in understanding African harmony. In other words, the African version of harmony may not take the same form as the Chinese culture's harmony in a similar scenario. Chasi (2015) contends that freedom of expression is consistent with Ubuntu. According to Chasi (2015), freedom of expression enables people to be the most they can be, enabling the establishment of communities in which people can live together harmoniously. African cultures do not aim for 'harmony' in the sense in which Chinese culture does; in particular, they do not aim at sameness, or apparent sameness, of thought.

The Chinese version of harmony is not the same as the African version in terms of its connotation and contexts. This difference poses a challenge to communication between Africans and Chinese and has led to mutual complaints of "not being harmonious". A different conceptual way of thinking and interpretation has the potential to create problems among cultural groups.

2.4.2 Politeness

Politeness in communication has been taken as an important communication strategy, although different cultures have different connotations, expressions and interpretations of politeness. What is polite in cultural group A might be offensive to cultural group B and vice versa. Li, Zhu and Li (2001:290) see politeness as "a promoting strategy whereby speakers achieve a variety of goals, such as promoting or maintaining harmonious interpersonal relations."

In this study, this strategy is considered together with “harmony” and “face” strategies in view of their close connection and also interweaving with collectivism, HPD and HCC in Chinese culture. Again, judgment and interpretation of politeness should be related with these variables. All the same, this unique cultural communication strategy has ‘victimised’ the interlocutors from different cultural groups in that the Chinese make biased judgements and interpretations of polite behaviour from other groups who simply follow their own cultural communication norms, leading to problematic interactions. This also happens in other cultural groups.

Except for some research reports on the role of politeness in business negotiations and business relationships (Mirjaliisa 1996; Spencer-Oatey & Jian 2003), the researcher of this study could find no literature on communication failure from lack of/misuse of politeness strategy between Chinese nationals and black (South) Africans.

2.4.2.1 Chinese notion of politeness

Spencer-Oatey and Jian (2003:44) claim that “politeness is a social judgment, and whether or not an utterance is heard as being polite is, to a large extent, in the hands of the hearer.” It is true that the concept of politeness is universal, but in the case of Chinese people it has particular salience. Lee-Wong (2002:87) points out that Chinese “limao” (politeness) has three parts: the notion of ‘respectfulness’ (self’s appreciation of the other’s positive face), the notion of ‘attitudinal warmth’ (self’s demonstration of kindness and consideration), and the notion of ‘refinement’ (self’s behaviour that meets certain standards).

Both Mirjaliisa (1996) and Storz (1999) link politeness strategies with face concerns in business negotiations and relationships, but Storz provides a sustained analysis of the ‘politeness’ system of the Chinese. Examining Chinese values in the Malaysian business culture, Storz (1999) gives an in-depth analysis of the Confucian notion of politeness. The Chinese politeness system includes all aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication. The way in which language is used, as well as the intonations of speech and the ways people are addressed

according to a status hierarchy are part of this politeness system (Storz 1999). According to Storz (1999), respect for power and the elders is also seen as an important part of the politeness system in the Chinese culture of HPD. Furthermore, politeness encompasses how the body is conducted in terms of posture, giving things and receiving things (Storz 1999:120). This explains why there has been problematic interaction between Chinese nationals and people from LPD cultures.

2.4.2.2 African notion of politeness

Respect for power and the elders is an important part of traditional culture in Africa, because respect is the basis of a structured and disciplined society (Broodryk 2002). African politeness is expressed in Ubuntu culture, which regards human beings as the foremost priority in all conduct. However, it should be noted that generally speaking, black Africans have been acculturated by the Western cultures for centuries and this has had an undeniable impact on the African politeness system.

The European notion of 'politeness', however, is that a particular linguistic formulation is employed in order to avoid conflict (Clyne 1994:15); for example "would you" is more polite than "will you". In addition to that, the Western philosophy is a contributing factor to its own 'politeness' system. Examining the philosophical differences between the West and the East, Brew and Cairns (2004:333) claim that the Confucian legacy promotes social relationships and concern for others, therefore requiring essential politeness and diplomacy, whereas the philosophies of the West, namely individualism and rationalism, promote freedom of speech, truth, logical thinking and objectivity, leading to explicit speech codes. The Western expression of politeness is different from that of the East. See also Section 2.3.3.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the traditional African politeness system, especially reflecting respect for authority and elders, has changed, as discussed in Section 2.3.3. Such communication is called freedom of speech. This freedom of speech has changed the African cultures of harmony and communalism and introduced a new context of politeness. This African context has vested African

'being polite' with different connotations from those in China as discussed above, leading to different ways to express 'politeness' and different interpretations of 'politeness'.

In view of this, one must bear in mind that, given two different contexts, what is polite in African cultures, namely the African form of politeness, might be offensive to Chinese and vice versa. Different ways of thinking and interpretation of politeness could thus potentially create communication barriers.

2.4.3 Face concerns

Everyone needs 'face'. According to Guirdham (1999:173) and Goffman (1967), 'face' metaphorically means prestige, honour and reputation. Culture influences people's use of face work and their tendency to select one set of face work strategies and conflict styles. Empirical evidence has proven that different cultures have different ways of expressing face wants, giving face and saving face.

'Face concerns' are widely studied. Some studies are about the interpretation of face-gaining and face-losing. Lim and Browers (1991:54) propose three distinct face wants of human beings: (i) autonomy face, describing the want not to be imposed on, (ii) fellowship face, describing a desire to seem cooperative, accepted and loved and (iii) competence face, describing a desire to appear intelligent, accomplished, and wanting to have one's abilities respected. According to them, individuals in individualistic cultures tend to focus on autonomy needs, while members of collectivistic cultures tend to concentrate on meeting the need for inclusion.

2.4.3.1 Chinese face

The concept of face is Chinese in origin (Redding & Ng 1982). The term is a literal translation of the Chinese 'lian' or 'mianzi' (face). It is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interactions. Although acknowledged as a human universal, concern for face is seen to be more salient for Chinese than for most other cultures. 'Face' in Chinese culture is closely connected to harmony, hierarchy perceptions and the

politeness system. On top of that, 'face' is also interrelated with Chinese collectivism, HPD and HCC. Clearly, 'face' is a very sensitive issue in Chinese culture, but a hard issue for other cultures in terms of interpretation and adaptation to Chinese face concerns. Its rich array of meaning implies that in communicating with Chinese it becomes crucial to avoid direct confrontation, open criticism and controversial topics in order to maintain harmony and 'face'. This explains why Chinese easily experience 'face-losing' when they interact with Westerners and black Africans, often resulting in conflict, as discussed in this study.

2.4.3.2 Face in business

Some research relates 'face' with business success in general. Redding and Ng (1982:209) find that 'face' is significant in social relationships between colleagues and in business negotiations. They point out that having face is believed to influence success in business transactions and negotiations. To be given face during transactions is perceived as highly favourable, whereas to challenge or to destroy face deliberately is viewed as highly unfavourable.

2.4.3.3 Face and individualism–collectivism

There are some scholars who link 'face' with individualism–collectivism. Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998) and Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2003) conducted in-depth studies of how 'face' is linked to individualism–collectivism, face-work preserving behaviours and face-tactics. They claim that in individualistic cultures 'face' is associated mostly with self-worth, self-presentation, self-value and self-face concern. In collectivistic cultures, they point out, 'face' means projected social image, social self-respect, other-face and mutual-face concerns. More specifically, in Chinese culture, gaining and losing face are closely connected with issues of social pride, honour, dignity, shame, disgrace, humility, trust, mistrust, respect and prestige (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998:54). 'Face' can hence promote or ruin one's business in China. Given its sensitive nature and important role in Chinese culture, 'face' could become a big challenge to other cultures.

2.4.3.4 Face and conflict style

Linking 'face concerns' with conflict styles is another study area in which some intercultural communication scholars are interested. Both Ting-Toomey (2003) and Oetzel and Rahim in Ting-Toomey (2003) claim that individualist cultures and collectivist cultures adopt different conflict styles. Investigating the relationship between 'face' and conflict styles, Rahim in Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2003:133-134) introduces five styles of handling conflict: integrating, compromising, dominating, obliging, and avoiding. Individualism and independent self-construal cause self-face concerns, which result in dominating and competing conflict styles. By contrast, collectivism and interdependent self-construal lead to other- and mutual-face concerns, which result in avoiding, obliging, and integrating conflict styles (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel 2003:140).

In intercultural communication, an integrating style reflects a need for solution closure in conflict and involves high concern for self and high concern for others in conflict negotiation. The obliging style is characterised by its high concern for the other person's face rather than one's own interest, while the avoiding style involves eluding the conflict situation altogether to avoid direct conflict with the other party to save face for both parties (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel 2003:140). According to Rahim, an integrating style should be adopted for conflict solution to produce a harmonious situation for both parties. For a midpoint agreement in conflict, the compromising style is proposed. The dominating style is regarded as a contributing factor to conflict and is associated with individualist cultures and independent self-construal.

It is clear that collectivist and individualist cultures prefer different conflict styles, namely an integrating conflict style and a dominating style respectively. The conflicting situation envisaged in this study also indicates that if either party adopts an integrating style, a harmonious conclusion will be reached with the face concerns of both being considered. See also Chapter 5.

2.4.3.5 African face

There is no literature indicating what face strategies Africans employ, but given the fact that Africans have been exposed to Western cultures for centuries, it is

assumed in this study that the connotation and contextual meaning of face-gaining and face-losing in modern African cultures are closely related with Western cultures. The researcher of this study names it the African form of face concern. The author's own experience and encounters and the anecdotes of other Chinese in Africa also support the view that Africans do not have the same face concern as the Chinese do.

According to Matondo (2012), the face awareness of black Africans is indicated in Africans' version of harmony, which reflects an acute sense of solidarity and communal life, as discussed above in Section 2.4.1. The literature review of Matondo and others noted above regarding individualism-collectivism, harmony and contextual communication illustrated that Chinese and Africans have different versions of this issue. It is assumed that components of African face concern are different from Chinese ones, making it an African form of face. On top of that, the above literature on conflict style and face-work tactics also confirms and endorses such differences. This constructs a potential communication barrier to their interactions because, as a sensitive area and prominent part of Chinese culture, Chinese 'lian' or 'mianzi' (face) will make it hard for Africans to work with Chinese without 'offending' Chinese.

In this spirit, the literature reviewed was used to indicate that Chinese and black South Africans have different 'face' cultures, constituting conflict potential, as postulated in this study. In addition, given a lack of real-life data on Africans' face concerns and their potential conflict with Chinese face strategy, this research on face concerns will bridge the gap.

2.4.4 Summary

The literature of this section mainly reveals and compares characteristics and structural components of communication strategies of harmony, politeness and face concerns of Chinese and Africans. The literature results presented different versions of communication strategies of harmony, politeness and face concerns, highlighting Chinese communication strategies and related behaviour. Inferences are drawn that Africans also employ such strategies but with different connotations

and in different forms, making it an African version of harmony, politeness and face. It is important to note that one of the big cleavages between Africans and Chinese in intercultural communication lies in the conceptual ways of thinking and dealing with things. That is, what is polite/harmonious/face-giving in African cultures might be offensive to Chinese and vice versa. It must be pointed out, however, that not every Chinese or black African shares the same communication strategies.

It is important to understand that Chinese communication strategies of harmony, politeness and face concerns are interlinked closely. 'Being polite' and appropriate 'face concern' ensure harmonious interaction, making it a salient part of Chinese communication. In addition, there is interdependence between the communication strategies and cultural dimensions of individualism-collectivism, PDI, and contextual communication as discussed above. Chinese communication strategies of harmony, politeness and face concerns are consistent with the constructs and characteristics of Chinese collectivism, HPD and HCC. On the other hand, Africans' communication strategies of harmony, politeness and face concerns are consistent with the constructs and characteristics of Africans' individualism, LPD and LCC. Neglect of these factors in communication might be problematic.

The salient communication strategies in Chinese culture constitute barriers to Africans. As such, this study regards the communication strategies as potential causes of problematical encounters between the two cultural groups.

2.5 Conclusions

The above literature review and theoretical background considered an exploration of four different cultural orientations widely applied in intercultural communication and three noticeable communication strategies, with emphasis placed on the communication modes of each cultural variable, highlighting where Chinese versions and African versions differ. The literature review has confirmed the importance of recognising the different versions of cultural variables and their roles in intercultural communication, which helped the researcher of this study to interpret and explain the responses to questionnaires, including result analysis and discussion and finally answering the research questions. The literature review also

confirmed the importance of recognising the roles the situational factors and contexts play in intercultural communication.

Within the theoretical framework of the functionalist approach, emphasis is placed on literature revealing the different views Chinese and Africans have of the cultural variables of individualism-collectivism, HCC, LCC, HPD, LPD and attitudes to time. In the same vein, this study applies the interpretative approach and emphatically reviews and looks at the African cultural variables discussed. In so doing, particular inferences were made to confirm the different versions of Chinese and African cultural dimensions. A reference point for comparison is applied to identify and explain why two cultural groups have two versions of a certain cultural dimension, for instance two different cultural constructs of collectivism noted in this literature.

Applying the system-thinking approach, the literature establishes and supports the notion that cultural dimensions, communication strategies and contexts are systematically interwoven; culture is not static but learned and can change and shift from one form of culture to another one, a claim similar to that made in the dialectical approach. Historical, religious, societal, cultural and political backgrounds are factors contributing to cultural changes or shifting, as happened to the traditional African cultural norms, values, worldviews and religious attitudes, which were changed or shifted by external and internal forces.

Important arguments are being employed in this study to counteract other researchers' claims that Africans are very collectivist and are categorised under HPD and HCC variables. The literature results show that Chinese and Africans possess different versions of cultural dimensions: in terms of behaviour and communicative preference, Chinese are very collectivist, whereas black Africans are individualist; China enjoys an HPD culture whereas Africa should be categorised under LPD; China subscribes to an HCC whereas Africa is marked with LCC; China has a long-term time orientation whereas Africa has a short-term time orientation. Such differences are indications of potential conflict between the two cultures.

Cultural variables of individualism-collectivism, HCC, LCC, HPD, LPD and attitudes to time are significant signs of interlocutors' communication strategies. Worth noting is that harmony, politeness and face concerns, though universal, carry more weight in Chinese communication. In addition, they are interwoven and interdependent in Chinese culture. On top of that, they are also closely connected with Chinese collectivism, HPD and HCC. In other words, Chinese communication strategies of harmony, politeness and face concerns are consistent with the constructs and characteristics of Chinese collectivism, HPD and HCC, making them a salient part of Chinese culture, in sharp contrast with that of black Africans.

As manifested in the literature review, harmony, politeness and face concerns also have cultural-specific forms: Chinese versions and African versions. No doubt there is a gap between them in terms of expressions of harmony, politeness and face concern, given their differing contexts. Differences as noted in the existing literature and inferences made with regard to these variables helped the researcher to identify the contributing causes of problematical encounters between Chinese nationals and black South Africans.

This study attempted to combine four cultural orientations with three communication strategies and regarded them as potential causes of problematic encounters between Chinese nationals and black South Africans in the building industry. This study is a first broad attempt to challenge those who claim Chinese and Africans have the same or similar cultural dimensions regarding collectivism, HPD and HCC. In so doing, this study establishes that (i) Chinese and black South Africans have their own versions of such cultural variables respectively and (ii) these differences could be the main contributors to problems between them.

Chapter Three

Research questions, research design and methodology

3.1 Research questions

As indicated in Chapter 2, given the two different cultures of Chinese and black South Africans, they will display cultural differences, overt or covert, in terms of communication behaviour, communication styles, worldviews and values attached to their traditional ideas. It is postulated and acknowledged that communication between cultural groups with marked differences is influenced negatively, which leads to potentially problematical encounters/conflicts between them. Please see Sections 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5. This study identified cultural differences and their negative influences on communication behaviour by looking at the cultural dimensions and communication strategies of black South Africans and Chinese and their influence on industrial operations between the two parties in the building industry in Johannesburg. Please also refer to Chapter 5.

Based on the literature review and theoretical background, the research questions were designed to cover a general question (i) and two specific questions (ii) and (iii):

- (i) What cultural dimensions do Chinese and black South Africans demonstrate differently in general and which one(s) might contribute to the problematic encounters of interest in the building industry?

Extending this point to communication between Chinese nationals and black South Africans, the researcher wanted to find out how the differences in cultural dimensions and communication strategies led to problematic encounters between the two cultures in the building industry. In view of this, this study attempted to provide answers to two specific questions, (ii) and (iii):

- (ii) In their interactions, do Chinese and black South Africans in the building industry in Johannesburg demonstrate cultural differences in terms of communication and practices? If so, what are these?

And particularly,

- (iii) What roles do cultural variables play in labour-related conflicts between Chinese nationals and black South Africans in the building industry in Johannesburg? Should both sides simply abide by the labour laws/regulations in SA in order to solve their problems¹⁹ or should more consideration be given to different cultural dimensions/communication strategies and interpretations in terms of working attitudes, attitudes to labour law and regulations and human/labour rights?

The research questions of this study are closely connected to each other, with the general research question, (i), serving as a stepping stone from which access to research question (ii) is provided to identify the cultural differences between the two groups in the building industry in Johannesburg. Research question (iii) is further addressed on the basis of research questions (i) and (ii), providing conflict resolution measures to address international/local concerns.

The research questions were designed to test/confirm the theories regarding the cultural differences between Chinese nationals and black South Africans in terms of cultural dimensions and to expose the potential roles such differences play in problematic encounters in the building industry. To fulfil the goals of the research and the objectives of solving the problem, an appropriate design and methodology should be in position.

3.2 Research design

¹⁹ Many Chinese and African scholars, politicians or policy makers hold more or less the same opinions on how to handle the previously unseen flaws in China's partnership with Africa. Some claim to create jobs by hiring more Africans and to improve working conditions (Ford 2013). Some suggest taking legal action against Chinese companies that fail to abide by the African labour laws (Cheng, 2013).

Research designs cover qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative research involves examination of data such as language (from interviews or open-ended questionnaires), while quantitative research involves the analysis of numerical data. As the word suggests, qualitative research is judged by its quality, implying its authenticity and source, whereas quantitative research is judged by its facts and figures. Qualitative researchers are basically interested in answering 'why' questions and are not prepared simply to accept and recognise quantitative answers. In view of this, the methodology and design used for this specific study were based on qualitative design methods. The goal was to receive results from respondents in the building industry in Johannesburg in order to provide a clear picture of the problem and possibly identify methods for resolution.

A feature of qualitative sampling is the fact that the number of cases sampled is often small, because qualitative investigation aims for depth as well as breadth. The issues that should be considered when determining the sample size for qualitative investigation depends on the heterogeneous or homogeneous nature of the sample population or requirements of the data collection methods employed; for example, focus groups tend to be more productive and manageable if participants have some commonality. In Chapter 2, general national identities of Chinese nationals and black South Africans are discussed and presented. The researcher of this study is of the view that the homogeneous nature/commonality of Chinese or black South Africans in general is an imperative necessity to compare and identify the general cultural differences between the groups. However, this generalisation does not mean that all Chinese nationals or black (South) Africans have the same cultural traits.

This research is based on qualitative data. Three research instruments were used to carry the research forward. Close-ended and open-ended questionnaires and interview questions were designed to maximise the validity and reliability of the information to answer the research questions. The researcher designed the project with a view to understanding and providing an explanation of the problematic

communication situations posed in the research questions. The goal of the data-gathering approaches was to collect data in such a way that the researcher would impose a minimal amount of his own bias on the data and would furthermore obtain first-hand information and evidence to facilitate the identification of the causes of the problematical encounters at issue.

Informants participating in this project were Chinese nationals and black South Africans who had been in a working relationship in the building industry. Considering the histories of Chinese migrants²⁰ to SA and their length of stay in South Africa, the term 'Chinese nationals' in this study refers to new Mainland Chinese migrants who moved to and worked in SA after China and SA established diplomatic relations in January 1998²¹. This is because the local Chinese, including those from Taiwan, have been acculturated in SA and their communication behaviour is different from that of the Mainland Chinese, judged by the author's experience, observation and communication with local Chinese. In this way, the information obtained from the new Mainland Chinese respondents reflected valid and reliable cultural phenomena, which made the research results more convincing and closely related to the noted miscommunication²². Given the potential value of this project and the good relationship and connection the researcher of this study enjoys with the Chinese communities in the building industry in Johannesburg, SA, the researcher encountered no problem to access information/data sources.

Control mechanisms have been worked out to ensure that the subjects or interviewees involved in this study closely cooperated with the researcher and that

²⁰ There are three distinct groups of Chinese migrants to SA: the Chinese South Africans (or local Chinese), the Taiwanese and the new Mainland Chinese migrants. SA is the only country with a significant population of Chinese South Africans (second-, third- and even fourth-generation South Africans of Chinese descent) and Taiwanese South Africans (<http://www.migrationpolicy.org>).

²¹ It is noted that before China's state policy of opening up to the world was adopted, few Chinese nationals had the opportunity to work overseas. This means that the majority of Chinese nationals working in Africa do not have overseas working experience (it is their first time of working in Africa) and they also lack knowledge of African culture.

²² Problematic encounters referred to in this study refer to the miscommunication occurring in companies run by Mainland Chinese.

the required information was obtained. These control measures include written consent from the respondents before proceeding with the questionnaires and interviews. See copy of consent letter in Appendix I. The managements of the Chinese companies agreed to select the respondents according to the research requirements and held meetings with them, asking them to assist the researcher, who explained the purpose of the questionnaires/interview and answered questions from them about the researcher's personal issues until the respondents were comfortable and reassured about the study.

3.3 Research methodology

3.3.1 Data

The purpose of conducting this research was to investigate the different versions and different cultural constructs Chinese and black South Africans have with respect to individualism-collectivism, the power distance index, contextual communication, attitudes to time and communication strategies and how such differences caused problematic encounters between the two groups in the building industry in Johannesburg, as indicated in Chapter 2. Please also see Chapter 5.

The researcher designed questionnaires and interviews for black South Africans and Chinese individuals respectively by employing the theoretical frameworks of the cultural variables noted above. The researcher regarded the three research instruments as valid instruments, ensuring the truthfulness of a piece of data. By asserting validity, the researcher asserted that the data actually measured or reflected the specific phenomenon it claimed to measure. Furthermore, the research instruments enhanced an accurate representation of respondents' real-life reality.

The researcher consulted a statistician at the University of Namibia on the sampling and questionnaires. The statistician was satisfied with the instruments. The researcher also communicated with Chinese building companies in Johannesburg and informed them of the questionnaires and the participant

requirements, asking them to make about fifty participants available to answer open-ended and interview questions and a hundred participants to answer close-ended questionnaires. However, the feedback received from them stated that the South African economic slump had compelled many Chinese companies to lay off quite a number of local employees or close down their businesses. This situation led to a shortage of participants (especially black South Africans) who could meet participant requirements, particularly for open-ended questions and interviews. Only sixteen participants could be obtained from the Chinese companies to answer open-ended questions and sixteen participants to take part in interviews.

Both questionnaires were designed to reveal respondents' social behaviour in their natural settings, linking them closely to respondents' social activities, social interactions and life experience in Chinese companies. Furthermore, the questionnaires were designed to reflect the general cultural traits of Chinese nationals and black South Africans in terms of cultural dimensions and communication behaviour.

Open-ended questions requested the respondents' own input and no answers were suggested. The open-ended questions aimed to reveal respondents' true attitudes, opinions or behaviour when they interacted with Chinese or black South Africans. Considering black South Africans' language proficiency and access to the internet, this group of participants was chosen from a demographic class that had a better educational background and worked for or had business links with Chinese construction companies. Such participants were in a position to complete the questions electronically. Chinese mid-level management staff working in Chinese companies were carefully selected for the sake of information validity and reliability²³.

²³ Many Chinese companies employ the relatives of the owners as managerial staff. Thus they might provide information tainted by stereotype and prejudice in an effort to safeguard the interests of the owners. Therefore, the Chinese staff who were chosen had to be unrelated to the owners of the businesses where they were employed.

Participants' age, educational background, English proficiency (Grade 12 or better) and the length of time they had been part of the workforce were taken into consideration for the sake of feedback validity. The researchers understood that respondents' older age, good education, good English proficiency and longer working periods in Chinese companies could facilitate and ensure useful and valid feedback. Information on them, including their personal information in some cases, is and will be kept confidential. However, black South African participants' educational background and English proficiency (Grade 12 or better) could not be strictly observed, because the number of employees meeting the requirements was insufficient, especially for the participants answering close-ended questionnaires. Interviews were not recorded because the interviewees would not allow it. However, permission to take notes was granted prior to interviewing. Some employees, especially two black South African interviewees, were sensitive about the interview and thus found it difficult to express themselves freely, which was the main concern the researcher of this study had during the interview period. This had a negative impact on the quantity of feedback from the respondents. It also explains why the researcher increased the number of respondents answering open-ended questions from 12 to 16.

3.3.2 Data gathering

As Appendix II indicates, there were 10 statements in the close-ended questionnaires. Except for statement 6, "Abiding by labour law is the best way to solve labour problems in Chinese companies", which was a general survey of participants' ideas about the role of labour law in labour-related problems, the other statements reflected Chinese and black South Africans' cultural features or behaviour in the building industry. The aim of the close-ended questionnaires was to explore and identify the communication behaviour of both Chinese and black South Africans in real-life situations and on the basis of the identification of such forms of behaviour, categorise them according to cultural dimensions. This method was employed to differentiate between Chinese nationals and black South Africans

in the building industry. The close-ended questions were distributed to forty Chinese and forty black South African participants who had been working for one year or more in Chinese companies²⁴. The response options for each statement were agree, neutral and disagree. Respondents were asked to circle one option. Questionnaires for the Chinese participants were presented in both Chinese and English to ensure conceptual consistency and information validity²⁵.

In order to complement the survey results obtained in South Africa, the researcher also organised a Namibian survey, though the Namibian survey results did not form part of the results of this study. In addition, it is noted that because of rich working experiences in Namibia, the researcher of this study will make use of some events/stories from Namibia for demonstration/illustration purposes.

The second group of questionnaires contained 6 questions; these questionnaires were distributed to eight Chinese and eight black South African supervisors/middle management level staff or foremen, thus involving sixteen participants. Questions 1 and 3 were designed to reflect black South Africans'/Chinese cultural features or behaviour in general, while questions 2, 4 and 6 were designed to deal with specific topics regarding saving face, individualist/collectivist interests and conflict styles. Question 5 was designed to explore the participants' views of strikes in Chinese companies in SA, which revealed participants' cultural identities indirectly. Participants in this group were requested to complete the questionnaires electronically and return them via email. The researcher requested written statements from the respondents, confirming that they were the real respondents who completed the questionnaires. These questionnaires took approximately 20

²⁴ Because of the similar history and culture, the researcher also distributed questionnaires with the same contents to respectively 20 Chinese and 20 black Namibians in Namibia in the building industry in Windhoek. The purpose of this was to compare the survey results with those obtained from the participants in South Africa. However, it is important to note that the survey done in Namibia did not form part of the current study.

²⁵ English is an official language in SA, but not in China. The English of the majority of Chinese builders working overseas is poor. This explains why questionnaires for Chinese participants were presented in both Chinese and English.

to 40 minutes to complete. The open-ended questions for the Chinese participants were presented in both Chinese and English to ensure conceptual consistency and information validity.

Face-to-face interviews (semi-structured) were designed to explore the research questions further. The researcher interviewed another eight Chinese and eight black South African foremen/managers. The interviews were conducted on the construction sites of Chinese construction companies in Johannesburg and lasted on average 50 minutes per interview. The questions for this interview were linked with the cultural dimensions used in this study and focused on communication styles and practices in business operations between Chinese nationals and black South Africans. Grievances regarding the strained labour relations between Chinese companies and their African employees were important considerations in designing questions for interviews.

3.3.3 Data analysis

According to Samovar and Porter (2003), language is not only a form of preserving culture, but also a means of sharing culture. Through linguistic forms, cultural traits of users are exposed. In this spirit, discourse analysis (He, 2003) was employed to analyse and interpret the data collected in this study. Discourse analysis is a method to study verbal exchange in both social and cultural contexts, the linguistic content of a discourse and the pragmatics of expression and comprehension. Discourse analysis seeks to describe and explain linguistic phenomena in terms of the affective, cognitive, situational and cultural contexts of their use and to identify linguistic resources through which people construct and reconstruct their lives, including their identity, role, activity, community, emotion, stance, knowledge, belief and ideology. It essentially asks why some but not other linguistic forms are used on a given occasion and how people live their lives linguistically (He 2003:429). The theoretical framework of discourse analysis was used in interpreting data, grouping and creating themes. Using the discourse analysis

theory, the researcher of this study has been able to determine and examine the linguistic lives these two cultures live in a business context. The respondents' linguistic forms revealed their roles, activities, emotions, stances, knowledge and belief from which cultural identities could be identified. The information obtained from the linguistic forms therefore facilitated data analysis, interpretation of content and creation of themes. Through the linguistic forms Chinese and black South African respondents used in their answers to the open-ended and interview questions, the researcher was able to identify and interpret the respondents' beliefs, perceptions and ideology ingrained in their cultures.

Questionnaires were designed according to cultural dimensions and communication strategies in the interest of meaningful data processing and efficient data analysis. Please refer to Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Appendix IV. Contexts and situational factors are regarded as important parameters, particularly in data analysis and interpretation. In other words, this research studies 'things'/data in their context and considers the subjective meanings that people attach to their situations.

The methodology with regard to data, data gathering and data analysis as noted above has enabled the researcher of this study to obtain information to answer the original research questions as unambiguously as possible to achieve the designed goals of this study. In the next chapter, the researcher will dwell on "data analysis and findings" to obtain information about the different constructs of the cultural dimensions of the two groups.

Chapter Four

Data analysis and findings

4.1 Introduction

The researcher approached the managements of Chinese companies and explained the aims and objectives of the research to them. The managements then had meetings with their administrative staff and supervisors who informed their subordinates about the research. After receiving approval from companies and permission from their employees, the field work of surveys and interviews was carried out from 12 to 16 April 2016 in Johannesburg.

The researcher of this study went through all the texts of the close-ended and open-ended questionnaires and interview questions. The number of 'agree', 'disagree' and 'neutral' responses was counted and percentages were worked out. Words, phrases and sections of texts that related to the research questions were labelled from the answers to open-ended and interview questions. Then the data were marked/grouped according to patterns or themes in relation to cultural dimensions. After labelling and marking, each answer was subsequently summarised for easy reference. Responses that were discursive or beyond the research areas of this study were also considered. By means of thematic analysis, the data were categorised into meaningful themes. In total, 115 meaningful themes were recorded from the data, but because of overlapping/repetition, the themes were combined into 19, which were again listed by prevalence.

4.2 Data analysis

4.2.1 Analysis of close-ended questionnaires

Except for statement 6, "Abiding by labour law is the best way to solve labour problems in Chinese companies", which was a general survey of participants' ideas about the role of labour law in labour-related problems, the other 9 statements reflected Chinese and black South Africans' cultural features or behaviour.

4.2.1.1 Statements and cultural dimensions

As indicated in Section 2.2.3, questionnaires were designed to reflect cultural dimensions. Statement 1, 'Chinese/black South Africans value their individual rights more than the company's interests', looked at one of the key cultural traits of individualist and collectivist people. Thus it fell under individualism-collectivism. Statement 2, 'Chinese/black South Africans have a lower sensitivity to South African law', looked at the respondents' attitudes to South African laws, especially labour law. Because of the different communicative preference of HCC (preference for overall context) and LCC (preference for a specific written document), this question was assumed to resort under HCC/LCC and individualism-collectivism as well, since it is claimed that individualism-collectivism is closely connected to LCC and HCC. See Section 2.3.2.

Statement 3, 'Chinese/black South Africans relate personal relationships with work', was closely related to individualism-collectivism and HCC/LCC in terms of relationships between persons and issues. See also Section 2.3.2. Statement 4, 'Chinese/black South Africans are evasive/indirect', was designed to reflect individualism-collectivism and HCC/LCC from the perspective of a "direct" or "indirect" communication style, since 'direct and indirect' are communication styles of individualism-collectivism and communication modes of HCC/LCC as well. See Section 2.3.2.

Statement 5, 'Chinese/black South Africans act respectfully towards authority and the elders', was designed to investigate hierarchy and the PDI of Chinese nationals and black South Africans as 'respect for authority and elders' is a parameter of power distance. Statement 6, 'Abiding by labour law is the best way to solve labour problems in Chinese companies', was designed to explore Chinese and black South Africans' attitudes to labour law and to reveal the theme of conflict resolution style. In an individualist culture, people are more rights-oriented and in their eyes labour law is the best way to protect their rights. They prefer a dominating conflict style. People from a collectivist culture prefer group interests and group harmony is their concern when addressing their problems. See Section 2.4.3.4.

Statement 7, 'Chinese/black South Africans are more harmonious/polite than black South Africans/Chinese' was obviously related to the communication strategies of harmony, politeness and face.

Statement 8, 'Chinese/black South Africans would simply quit a job and don't worry about tomorrow', was designed to explore the theme of time and it was also related to individualism-collectivism and HCC/LCC, since this statement exposed cultural traits of individualism-collectivism and HCC/LCC. See Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2.

Statement 9, 'Chinese/black South Africans are face-giving oriented/value face', investigated the issue of face and HCC/LCC as well. HCC/LCC is closely connected with face concerns in terms of conflict style. LCC values direct, explicit and confrontational communication, which is not a face-saving strategy. HCC values indirect, implicit, relational, and contemplative communication, which is face-saving. See Section 2.3.2.

Statement 10, 'Chinese/black South Africans would accept a job with little pay because it is better than no work' was formulated to look at the themes of individualism-collectivism, HCC/LCC and attitudes to time, since the content of this statement reflected the cultural traits of individualism-collectivism, HCC/LCC and attitudes to time. See Sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 5.2 and 5.4.

It is important to note that to a certain extent the statements and the dimensions they revealed and attempted to investigate were not clear-cut but related. To demonstrate, the dimensions statement 1 attempted to look at might not be strictly restricted to individualism-collectivism. Other statements might also reveal the same dimension in addition to other dimensions. See also Sections 2.3.1—2.4.

4.2.1.2 Analysis of data

In the questionnaires completed by black South Africans, 2.5% of respondents failed to circle statements 4, 5 and 7, while 2.5% of Chinese respondents failed to circle statement 1 and 5% of Chinese failed to circle statement 4. The reason could be that the respondents did not know which options to select. A high percentage of neutral choices was noticed among Chinese respondents for statements 5, 7

and 10 (57.5%, 55% and 47.5% respectively), while a high percentage of black South Africans circled neutral options for statements 4, 7 and 9 (42.5%, 42.5% and 40% respectively), with the 'neutral' option being circled for statement 7 by both groups. For statement 2, a high percentage of both groups circled 'disagree': Chinese, 62.5% (17.5% agree and 20% neutral) and black South Africans, 55% (20% agree and 25% neutral), meaning that both Chinese and black South Africans experienced high law sensitivity.

For statements 1, 3 and 8 both groups circled the choices the researcher expected, corresponding to those from two groups in Namibia. It was disclosed in the data of statement 1 that 62.5% of black South African respondents selected 'disagree', indicating that Chinese valued company rights more than individual rights, while 70% of Chinese respondents selected 'agree', indicating that black South Africans valued individual rights more than company rights. As the data of statement 3 revealed, 55% of Chinese respondents chose 'disagree', indicating that black South Africans would not relate a personal relationship with work, while 65% of black South African respondents chose 'agree', indicating that Chinese would emphasise personal relationship building at work. For statement 4, 45% of Chinese selected 'agree', while 35% circled 'neutral' and 20% selected 'disagree'; 45% of black South African respondents circled neutral while 30% circled 'disagree' and 25% circled 'agree'. The data of statement 5 disclosed that 62.5% of black South African respondents selected 'agree', indicating that Chinese act respectfully towards authority and elders; 40% of Chinese selected 'agree', while 57.5% selected 'neutral'. The respondents' choices for statement 8 indicated that black South Africans 'would quit a job and not worry about tomorrow', while Chinese would not, meaning that black South Africans and Chinese had different attitudes to time. Presumably, the Chinese had a long-term orientation while black South Africans had a short-term orientation.

For statement 6, 60% of black South African respondents selected 'disagree', whereas 87.5% of Chinese respondents selected 'agree'. It means that black South Africans disagreed that labour law was the best way to solve labour

problems in Chinese companies, while the Chinese agreed with the statement. For statement 7, both groups selected the 'agree' option (42.5%), with a big percentage of neutral choice, which possibly indicated that both groups thought they were harmonious and polite. For statement 8, 77.5% Chinese respondents selected 'agree', indicating black South Africans would quit a job without worrying about the future, while 60% of black South African respondents circled 'disagree', indicating Chinese would not do so. In respect of statement 9, more respondents chose 'agree': 70% of Chinese said black South Africans were face-giving/value face, while 42.5% of black South Africans said Chinese were face-giving/value face, with 17.5% selecting 'disagree'. For statement 10, 35% of Chinese selected the 'agree' option (with 17.5% choosing 'disagree'), which is lower than their neutral choice, 47.5%, while 80% of black South Africans selected the 'agree' option. The 35% of 'agree' responses from Chinese respondents indicated that black South Africans might 'accept a job with little pay because it is better than nothing' while in black South Africans' minds, Chinese definitely would 'accept a job with little pay because it is better than nothing.'

4.2.2 Analysis of open-ended questionnaires

4.2.2.1 Brief introduction

Like the design of close-ended questionnaires noted above, the design of open-ended questions attempted to explore answers to the research questions. Questions 1 and 3 were designed to reflect black South African/Chinese cultural features or behaviour in general, while questions 2, 4 and 6 were designed with specific topics regarding face, individualist/collectivist interests and conflict styles in mind. Questions 1 and 3 asked the participants to elaborate on circumstances/situations in which they felt offended or not respected.

The other questions, however, were categorised with particular cultural variables in mind, such as question 2 about face-saving and question 4 on the issue of individualist interests/collectivist interests, which fell under individualism-collectivism. Question 5 was designed to explore the participants' views of strikes

in Chinese companies in South Africa, which revealed participants' cultural identities indirectly. The researcher of this study categorised this topic under 'conflict style'. The last question was designed in the same spirit as question 5, to look at the participants' views of 'obedience to boss's instruction', which revealed participants' conflict style, face concern and attitudes to time as well.

4.2.2.2 Analysis of the data

Question 1

Under what circumstances/situations do you feel that you are not respected/offended in your interactions with Chinese/black South Africans?

This question was designed to look at certain circumstances/situations in which Chinese/black South Africans felt offended or not respected. Circumstances/situations listed by the respondents revealed their cultural behaviour. Chinese participants mentioned 13 circumstances in which they felt offended or not respected. There were five repetitions of circumstances: three repetitions of "black South Africans defend their wrongdoing" and two repetitions of "high consciousness of hierarchy".

The reasons given for Chinese 'not feeling respected' included that black South African employees make Chinese 'lose face' (mentioned four times), "black South Africans are impolite" (mentioned four times), black South Africans show 'no respect for authority' (mentioned six times), black South Africans have 'no harmonious manner' (mentioned four times) and black South Africans have 'no consideration for group interests' (mentioned four times). Obviously the Chinese were concerned about 'face', 'respect for authority' and 'group interests', making these three important themes and a key part of research questions because of their salience and sensitivity in Chinese culture. The other circumstances ('Blacks' strikes/going to the Labour Department' and 'They are outspoken/direct and never put themselves into another's shoes, and say whatever they like') were categorised under the theme of "high sensitivity to law" (South African labour law), "black South Africans are outspoken/direct."

Black South African participants mentioned eight circumstances in which they felt offended or not respected. Two participants mentioned no circumstances in which they felt offended or not respected because they said they had a good working relationship with the Chinese. Two participants mentioned that “communication with Chinese is problematic” and three mentioned the issue of “low salaries/payments” about which they were offended. Another complaint was under a theme of “Chinese liked shouting at local workers in the workplace”. A clear pattern was recorded that Chinese recorded more situations in which they did not feel respected, while black South Africans listed fewer situations; those they mentioned mainly concerned salaries and unfair treatment in Chinese companies.

Question 2

Is face-saving very important in your interactions with Chinese/black South Africans? Why? Why not?

The face issue was designed to investigate different versions of face between Chinese nationals and black South Africans. Three black participants disagreed that face-giving is important in interaction with Chinese. Two black South Africans agreed with the statement because: “Face is a relationship”, “One has to preserve reputation and dignity”. These two also admitted that Chinese valued face. One black person’s answer was not usable because he did not understand what face-saving means and another response was invalid because it gave no ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer to the question.

Five of the Chinese participants agreed that face-giving was important in interaction with black South Africans because face worked in tandem to respect, dignity and national identity. The reasons they gave for the importance of face included: “Manager needs face to fulfil his work”, “Human interaction needs face”, “Face is respect, dignity, and national identity”, all of which were categorised as a sub-theme of face concern. Two Chinese respondents were “detractors”, saying that face was not important, while one claimed that black people did not have a face concept and one Chinese response was invalid because it gave no ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer to the question. Still another Chinese responded that face was mutual,

which was still grouped under “Face is important”. Another theme emerging from the data was that face was not important because: “Black South Africans are polite and face is not necessary” and “We don't need face if we concentrate on our business”.

Question 3

In your encounters with Chinese/black South Africans, what behaviour from them is difficult to understand/accept?

The respondents were asked to list all kinds of behaviour of their counterparts that they found difficult to understand or accept. In asking this, this study attempted to obtain first-hand information instead of the researcher's own proposition about the causes of the problematic encounters. Chinese participants listed fifteen black South African forms of behaviour that they did not understand or accept. Five of these were repetitions. Five forms of black South Africans' behaviour discussed by Chinese fell outside this research topic. Six were related to punctuality, planning and the saving habits of black South Africans, thus making it a theme of attitudes to time. As discussed in Section 3.3.4, different attitudes to time lead to different communication modes regarding punctuality, planning and saving habits. Another theme recorded was high sensitivity to the law (going to the Labour Department and rights orientation), which was also related to LCC and individualist dimensions. Black South Africans' work ethics/attitudes (including poor work efficiency, irresponsibility about work) was a prevalent topic/theme among Chinese respondents, which was also related to short-term orientation. Refer to Section 4.3.2. Black South Africans “defending their wrongdoing” was also regarded as a theme, which was mentioned in question 1 as well.

A highly prevalent and repeated complaint emerged from the Chinese behaviour mentioned by black South African participants: Chinese had a poor working relationship with Africans (five repetitions). Another theme was, ‘Chinese have low sensitivity to law’. Two responses were related to the education level and poor English ability of the Chinese. Other forms of Chinese behaviour discussed by black South Africans included “Chinese are not easy-going”, “Chinese are self-

determined and hard to convince”, “Chinese are ignorant about/have no respect for black South Africans”. It is clear that the Chinese listed more forms of black behaviour that they did ‘not understand or accept’, mainly related to black South Africans’ time concepts and their strong sensitivity to law and rights. Black South Africans listed fewer forms of Chinese behaviour that they did ‘not understand or accept’, mainly referring to the work relationship and low sensitivity to law.

Question 4

When you have complaints to lodge to your Chinese supervisor, do you consider the company’s interests more than your individual interests? Why?

As the most frequently applied variable in the study of intercultural communication, individualism-collectivism played a big role in this study. See Sections 2.3.1- 2.4.3. Thus it was an inevitable parameter in the identification of cultural differences and causes of problematic encounters. This question was designed in line with this consideration.

Four Chinese participants strongly held that company interests had to prevail over individual interests, while three participants agreed that company interests should overrule individual interests. Hence, a theme of “group interests first” was created. One participant selected individual interests. Four of eight black South African participants agreed that individual interests prevailed over company interests, while two of them preferred company interests. One black respondent selected both, which was regarded as invalid. Another was more individualist-oriented and had a weak collectivist orientation. It appeared from these data that more black participants opted for individual interests. A theme of “individual interest prevails” was created. It was obvious from the data related to this question that Chinese respondents were strongly collectivist, while black South African ones had the tendency to be individualist.

Question 5

How do you find/understand workers’ strikes (in Chinese companies) in South Africa?

This is one of the core questions in this study. Africans' strikes in Chinese companies are a contentious issue in the China-Africa relationship, attracting broad attention from the international community, with the blame being put on Chinese companies. Respondents' opinions about strikes and the interpretation of these from a cultural perspective provided an anatomy of the causes of strikes, which was an input to answer the research questions. This was the aim of this question.

One Chinese participant supported the idea of strikes because "Workers' rights are violated so they strike". Thus, a theme of 'strike for rights' was created. Two Chinese participants did not favour strikes because a strike was seen as an irresponsible action for company operation, a theme of 'group interests first'. Four Chinese participants did not support strikes but proposed to sit down and "talk about complaints" to solve problems and avoid strikes. This led to the creation of a theme of an 'integrating or compromising conflict style'. Clearly a majority of Chinese respondents were against strikes and did not support them.

The results from black South African respondents were, however, significant. All black South African respondents supported strikes and listed 12 reasons and benefits of strikes, which included, "Striking talks and solves problems", "Striking is our right" and "Striking is legitimate", as some claimed. These fell under themes of 'dominating conflict styles', 'rights oriented' and 'high sensitivity to law'. It was a clear trend that black South Africans strongly supported striking while the Chinese were against it. The data revealed that the Chinese had low sensitivity to law, adopted a compromising conflict style and preferred 'group interests first'. On the other hand, black South Africans were highly sensitive to law, preferred dominating conflict styles and were individualist rights oriented.

Question 6

Do you agree that you have to obey your boss even if you are not comfortable?
Why?

This question was designed to investigate respondents' opinions about the relationship between individual rights and boss's instructions so as to reveal their attitudes to power, a harmonious spirit, face concern and attitudes to time.

One black participant agreed to 'obey the boss' because he was afraid of losing his job. One black South African's answer was invalid because he contradicted himself. Six black South Africans refused to 'obey the boss' because they cared more about their own rights/interests, although two of them were willing to 'obey' if there was no option. Among the six answers, two answers were about a description of the work/work scope, a theme of "work ethics/attitudes" (as also mentioned in question 3), and another two black South Africans responded: "no comfort, no work", thus creating a theme of an 'I' attitude or individual interest first.

The results from Chinese respondents were significant because all eight respondents agreed to 'obey the bosses even if they were not comfortable'. Three Chinese participants mentioned "group interests first" and two Chinese referred to a relationship with bosses who had the power to decide, a theme of high consciousness of hierarchy and group interests first. Another two Chinese participants related the question to the issue of morality and legality of the boss's instructions or treatment, a theme of looking at an issue from a big picture approach. One Chinese participant would go against his will to "obey the boss" just because he liked a challenge, making it a topic beyond the scope of the research. To him, "obeying the boss" had nothing to do with his work, but was related to his own character. There was common consensus among the Chinese respondents that to secure a job one had to obey the boss, a theme of long-term orientation. A clear pattern was that the Chinese were just the opposite of black South Africans in terms of "obeying the boss": the Chinese would obey the boss unconditionally, while most black South African respondents refused to do so.

4.2.3 Analysis of interview questionnaires

4.2.3.1 Brief introduction

In addition to a great amount of information obtained through interview questions, interviews also played a unique role in that a face-to-face interview provided a setting where the respondents' nonverbal indicators such as tones, gestures, and eye contact etc. could help the researcher collect more useful clues to interpret participants' responses more accurately. See Section 2.2.1. Like the questionnaires, the aim of the interview was to investigate cultural differences and to find out which differences would lead to problematic encounters, as noted in Sections 1.3 and 1.4.

As Appendix IV indicates, there were 10 questions in total, with some overlapping with open-ended questions. The questions were categorised and related to communication behaviour and practices, reflecting the cultural dimensions of Chinese and black South Africans.

4.2.3.2 Analysis of data

Question 1

What is your view of dignity as an employee/employer working in a Chinese company?

Linked with power distance and face concern, this question related to dignity, denoting "respect" and "status". Dignity is often referred to when it is felt that someone is not receiving a proper degree of respect. Both groups of participants discussed this issue from two perspectives: losing dignity and gaining dignity. Chinese respondents mentioned four dignity-gaining situations: receiving respect from their South African subordinates, discussing problems and establishing a good relationship with black South African workers, polite behaviour from black South African workers and an appropriate communication manner/channel from black South African workers. Thus, four themes of Chinese hierarchy were recorded: power/hierarchy awareness, face, politeness and conflict style. Four dignity-losing situations Chinese respondents mentioned were black South Africans refusing to admit their wrongdoing, black South Africans going to the Labour Department, black South Africans always asking for a salary increase

though they were not qualified for it and being looked down on by black South African workers. Thus four themes were created: black South Africans' defence of their wrongdoing, black South Africans' high sensitivity to the law, salary concerns and an outspoken communication style.

Black South African respondents also mentioned four dignity-gaining situations: receiving a good salary from Chinese companies, Chinese communicating with black South Africans in an appropriate manner, Chinese giving proper commands to black South Africans and understanding each other. These created three themes for black South Africans: salaries/payment concerns, low consciousness of hierarchy and mutual respect. Black South African respondents also mentioned four dignity-losing situations: Chinese deductions from black South Africans' salaries, Chinese foremen shouting at black South Africans during work, Chinese paying workers low salaries and Chinese companies' poor working conditions. Thus three themes were created: black South African salaries/payment concerns, Chinese shouting at local workers in the workplace and poor working conditions in Chinese companies. Clearly Chinese cared more about their status whereas black South Africans cared more about their rights.

Question 2

In what ways would you be easily offended in the workplace?

This question was related to Question 1 in that 'losing dignity' means 'being offended'. Feeling offended is interrelated with face concern, hierarchy consciousness/sense, individual rights and equality. The Chinese mentioned seven situations in which they felt offended, but two were invalid, since they were irrelevant to this study. The other five situations were: 1) 'Black South Africans failed to deliver' fell under the theme of failure to complete assigned work, Chinese high consciousness of hierarchy and face concern; 2) 'black South Africans losing their tempers' was put under the theme of losing face and dignity; 3) 'black South Africans did not follow my instructions' revealed themes of the Chinese high sense of hierarchy and face concern, meaning that Chinese respondents cared more about their status, demanding respect from the local workers by following their

instructions; 4) 'South African labour law is in favour of black workers', a theme based on the South African attitude to the law; 5) 'black workers often go to the Labour Court', which fell under the theme of sensitivity to the law.

Black South African respondents found four situations offensive: complaints about salaries/payment (mentioned by two respondents); salary and rights (mentioned by one respondent); salary and respect (mentioned by one respondent) and the fact that the Chinese liked shouting at local workers in the workplace (mentioned by three respondents). These issues fell under the themes of complaints about salaries/payment, salary and rights, salary and respect and Chinese shouting at locals in the workplace, which were related to individualism-collectivism and PDI.

There was a clear trend that the Chinese seemed to be offended more often while black South Africans were less frequently offended and the Chinese cared more about respect, authority/prestige and face, while black South Africans were more concerned about their rights and fair treatment.

Question 3

What behaviour from Chinese/black South Africans will be regarded as impolite in your communication with them?

This question explored a specific topic — 'impolite behaviour'. The respondents raised many forms of 'impolite behaviour' of their counterparts. Chinese respondents listed 12 forms of "impolite behaviour" of black South Africans, with two overlapping. Four of these related to the theme of consciousness/sense of hierarchy, three to attitudes to time, with one overlapping, two to work ethics, one to black South Africans losing their tempers about deductions from their salaries (face concern), one to striking, a theme of attitudes to striking, and one to black South Africans' individualist interests because 'they only consider their own interests', which Chinese respondents complained about. This is a typical trait of individualists who value individual interests rather than collective interests.

Black South African respondents, on the other hand, tabled nine forms of "impolite behaviour" of Chinese, with five overlapping. One respondent gave no answer and

another respondent gave an irrelevant answer, which was not related to this research topic. The topics mentioned mainly reflected Chinese attitudes to their subordinates, which included treatment of the locals in terms of dignity, working conditions and salary. The fact that the 'Chinese liked shouting at local workers in the workplace' was mentioned five times by black respondents, constituting a theme of Chinese shouting at local workers in the workplace. One answer was related to respect and politeness, one answer was about payment, under a theme of complaints about salaries/payments and one answer was related to working conditions, creating a theme of poor working conditions. A pattern was noted that the 'impolite behaviour' described by Chinese and black South Africans covered different aspects: the Chinese were more concerned about their status/prestige, black South Africans' poor planning/failure to save, work ethics and tendency to strike, while black South Africans were more concerned about fair treatment (not being shouted at) and legal rights of payment.

Question 4

As an employee in a Chinese company, do you feel you are part of their group?

As a typical and salient part of culture, individualism-collectivism is a sensitive area where interaction could cause problems between Chinese nationals and black South Africans. All eight Chinese respondents conveyed a sense of 'feeling like a family member' while working in Chinese companies, revealing a strong Chinese group sense, harmony and long-term orientation, three notable cultural themes of Chinese nationals. Three Chinese respondents also informed the researcher that black South African employees did not feel this way and cared about money only.

However, black South African respondents were divided on the matter. Five of eight black South African respondents regarded themselves as part of the group in Chinese companies. It indicated that they might also have belonged to a 'group interests first' culture, like the Chinese. Two black South African respondents had no such family member feeling because "it was not necessary", thus creating a theme of individual interests first or rights orientation. One black South African respondent was balanced when he said: "My rights must not disturb the company's

rights while the company rights must not abuse my rights.” However, interpreting his tone, his statement was still categorised under the theme of individual interests first. A clear trend was that all the Chinese fell under group interests first, while black South Africans were divided: five fell under group interests first and three under individual interests first.

Question 5

Do you think black South Africans work efficiently? Why not? What do you do then?
Do you think Chinese work efficiently? Why not?

Working efficiently is a heated topic among Chinese builders when black South Africans are the subject of discussion. The researcher’s experience in the building industry in Africa is that the Chinese are efficient, while black Africans are blamed for their poor efficiency, a known fact in the building industry. Question 5 was designed to investigate what was behind this phenomenon. According to Chinese respondents, the reasons why black South Africans were inefficient included laziness, a poor time concept, the cultural environment, not worrying about losing jobs and not being hard-working. “Laziness”, a “poor time concept” and “not worrying about losing jobs” were categorised under the theme of black South Africans’ short time orientation. “Not being hard-working” fell under the theme of “poor work ethics/irresponsibility at work”. However, “black South Africans can be efficient if they are contracted with a concrete and specified work target or workload”, according to Chinese respondents, thus creating a theme of working by precise and explicit document/contract, which is related to LCC. As the data disclosed, the reasons why Chinese workers were efficient included a work-first-enjoy-second work ethic/attitude, worrying about losing a job, a no-job-no-life attitude and I-am-paid-to-work attitude, all falling under the theme of long-term orientation. Other reasons were that Chinese work consciously (a theme of group interests first), being aware that they work for the benefit of the company; Chinese are hardworking and value the opportunity to work, a theme of work ethic/attitude.

Two main reasons given by black South African respondents for their own poor work efficiency corresponded to the ones given by Chinese respondents: no sense

of urgency/be patient (mentioned five times) and laziness (mentioned twice), a theme of short-term orientation. However, two black South African respondents mentioned “black South Africans could be efficient if they were given a workload”, the same response as given by the Chinese respondents, thus creating a theme of working according to a precise and explicit document/contract. The data/comments given by both Chinese and African respondents on the reasons why Chinese workers were efficient disclosed that the Chinese had group interests at heart, were long-term oriented and adopted a big-picture style.

Question 6

When a problem or a conflict situation arises, say a workers’ strike, do you take a straight-to-the-point approach or give a holistic view of the problem or conflict situation and work out a solution accordingly? Please give reasons for your answer.

As discussed in Sections 3.3.2 and 3.4.3, different cultures have different ways of addressing conflict. Question 6 discusses the conflict resolution style, one of the key areas of this study. Constituting the main part of the contentious labour issue in Chinese companies in Africa, striking is a weighty and sensitive subject in labour-related issues in Chinese companies in Africa. This question was intended to examine the reasons for striking and conflict resolution. Seven of the eight Chinese respondents took a holistic view of conflict situations, with two of them also suggesting improving working conditions to avoid strikes, thus creating a theme of the Chinese style of conflict resolution: looking at the big picture of an issue, which is characteristic of the collectivist style and long-term orientation. It means the Chinese would look at an entire issue and take an indirect approach to resolve conflict. One Chinese respondent complained that locals liked striking and that the South African government and the trade unions supported the strikes because striking was the workers’ right, thus creating a theme of a sense of right. In explanation of why strikes happen, the answers from Chinese respondents included 1) black South Africans strike for money, 2) black South Africans only look at the small picture (take a straight-to-the-point approach), and 3) striking is their right. This thus created the themes of black South Africans’ cultural dimensions of

rights orientation, an individualist style and short-time orientation. See Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.4. Worth noting is that Chinese responses were consistent with black South African respondents' answers with regard to reasons for blacks' strikes. However, only one black South African respondent took a holistic view of conflict situations, thus creating a theme of considering the big picture of an issue among black South African employees. Six of the black South African respondents mentioned "striking for money" and "striking for rights". Themes of high sensitivity to the law, rights orientation and considering the small picture of an issue thus emerged. "We don't think future, few think future" was mentioned twice by the respondents, revealing a theme of short-term orientation. A clear pattern was noted that the reasons for strikes given by the Chinese corresponded with those of black South Africans.

Question 7

Do you think that the Chinese strictly observe South African laws/related regulations in their businesses? Do you think that abiding by labour law is the best option to solve labour complaints? Why? Please be specific.

Some stakeholders suggest that abiding by labour law is the best way to solve the contentious issues in Chinese companies. The question on this issue was designed to test whether or not this suggestion was plausible. Four Chinese respondents said Chinese companies did "not follow the law 100%", while six of them said South African labour law was "not the best way", suggesting that it was better to talk about workers' complaints, thus revealing a theme of low sensitivity to the law and compromising/integrating conflict styles. However, one Chinese respondent said it was "the best way", thus creating a theme of high sensitivity to the law. "Labour law is good for locals but bad for foreigners" revealed some Chinese respondents' attitudes to South African labour law, a theme of low sensitivity to the law. One Chinese respondent said black South African workers would strike when they were not happy or satisfied and just cared about their own interests, a theme of rights orientation of black South Africans. Among the black South African respondents, three respondents said, "Chinese companies follow

the law 100%” meaning Chinese have high sensitivity to the law. Six black South African respondents said South African labour law was a tool and striking was their right, thus creating a theme of high sensitivity to the law and a sense of rights, and two black South Africans said “the law is a quick way to solve problems”, thus creating themes of dominating conflict styles, a sense of rights and high sensitivity to the law.

One black respondent did not support striking but said the labour law had to be honoured, a theme of high sensitivity to the law. An interesting pattern was recorded that one Chinese respondent favoured striking, while one black South African was against striking; four Chinese respondents said Chinese companies did not follow South African law 100% while three black South Africans said Chinese companies did. Another pattern was that the majority of Chinese respondents were against striking, whereas the majority of black South African respondents favoured striking.

Question 8

Black South Africans very much care about what they have today. They do not think and care about what they will have tomorrow. Do you think this attitude benefits their work/career? Please be specific.

In China a short-sighted person with no worry about the future is described as “a person who will finish their liquor today until they get drunk”, implying that such people easily become complacent and do not think about their future. In fact, this description is appropriate for black African people. As the researcher and his friends in Chinese construction companies across Africa can attest, a majority of black African employees tend to spend their whole salary without saving some for tomorrow; today they get paid, tomorrow they disappear from their work sites. This has puzzled the Chinese quite a lot and also made them complain a lot. This question was designed to investigate factors contributing to this phenomenon. This study established that such factors constituted one of the cultural barriers to communication with Chinese, as some Chinese supervisors would shout at these locals when they returned to work or sometimes made deductions from their

salaries as a punishment, which would elicit strong resistance from the local workers.

“No concept of the future” was the core of the question. “Look at today only”, “do not worry about the future”, “no awareness of the future” etc. were black people’s marked characteristics, according to Chinese respondents. This corresponded to the answers from black South African respondents themselves: “Do work if I can get a job today”, “No job tomorrow, no work. It is OK”, “Think today only”, “No idea about tomorrow”, “No one knows what will happen tomorrow”, “Don’t care what will happen tomorrow”. Therefore, short-term orientation emerged as a theme from this question. Four Chinese respondents said black South Africans “only know how to enjoy life today”, corresponding to four black South Africans’ answers, also a theme of short-term orientation. It appeared that both Chinese and black South African respondents thought black South Africans were short-term oriented.

Question 9

Suppose you are not happy with your current work in terms of work conditions or salary, will you still accept it without complaining because having a job is better than no job? What do you think of this?

Workplace attitudes have an effect on every person in the organisation, from the employees to the company owner. A staff member’s positive attitude brings about a positive mood, making him/her committed, helpful and harmonious. People’s attitudes play an important role in their lives and are closely related to their cultures. It is normal for employees to be concerned about their salary and working conditions, but employees from different cultures may have different approaches and attitudes to these. Salaries and working conditions are the key areas where Chinese companies receive criticism, blame and even condemnation. In view of this, question 9 was designed to explore the differences between black South African workers and Chinese with regard to individualism-collectivism, HCC/LCC and time orientation, which affect people’s workplace attitudes.

Six out of eight Chinese respondents “will accept it (the work) without complaining because having a job is better than no job”, a theme of long-time strategy, considering the big picture of an issue and applying a future reward approach. Eight Chinese respondents agreed that black South Africans liked complaining and would not accept it if they were not happy, creating a theme of short-term orientation in favour of present reward. However, three out of eight black South African respondents would accept such work without complaining, creating a theme of long-term strategy and a future reward approach, while four out of eight respondents would refuse to accept it, thus creating a theme of short-term orientation in favour of present reward. “To me, I can do a good work if I am happy. Why must I do it if not happy with the salary? It is better than nothing”. Thus a theme of a culture of individualism emerged, as expected. In an individualist culture, individual interests or rights are a top priority and cannot be compromised. What this respondent said matches Aristotle’s “Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.” One black respondent would accept such work with a condition: depending on what work it is. A clear pattern emerged: All Chinese respondents were on the side of collectivism, HCC and long-time orientation, whereas the majority of black South African respondents were on the side of individualism, LCC and short-term orientation.

Question 10

Do you agree that black South Africans are outspoken and do not care about “face” in communication? How do you find this behaviour? Are you happy with it? Why not?

As literature reviews indicate, face, harmony and politeness are closely associated and employed in Chinese communication. They form a salient part of Chinese culture, thus making it difficult for black South African workers not to “offend” Chinese supervisors in Chinese companies. Individualism-collectivism is also an important parameter for this question in view of its close relation with face, harmony and politeness. See also Sections 2.4.1—2.4.3.

All eight Chinese respondents agreed that “Black South Africans are very direct” while seven out of eight black South African respondents also agreed with this judgment. “Being direct” is a communication mode of individualist cultures, thus creating a theme of individualist identity for black South Africans. Five of the eight Chinese respondents claimed that black South Africans’ outspoken communication style made them lose face, while five out of seven black South African respondents disagreed with the Chinese respondents, creating themes of face concern and different versions of harmony and politeness. One black South African respondent failed to give his ideas about this question. Most of the Chinese respondents said: “If they (black South Africans) did not follow my instruction as a foreman to complete the work, I felt bad. So I fired them.” Not obeying supervisors was a challenge to Chinese authority and constituted face-losing to Chinese supervisors. This created a theme of Chinese high consciousness of hierarchy. It appeared that the Chinese had strong consciousness of hierarchy, and black South Africans adopted individualism, with both sides categorised under face concern, harmony and politeness.

4.2.4 Summary

To summarise, close-ended questionnaires investigated communication behaviour, attitudes and opinions of Chinese nationals and black South Africans in the following areas: individual interests and collective interests, sensitivity to the law, the relationship between person and work, a direct or evasive communication style, attitudes to authority and elders, attitudes to labour law, communication strategies of harmony, face concern and politeness, and attitudes to time. Obviously, these areas are related to individualism-collectivism, HPD/ LPD, HCC/LCC, attitudes to time and communication strategies of harmony, face concern and politeness. These variables intermingle with one another dialectically. All cultural dimensions of this study were covered in the questionnaires.

In total 19 themes were combined from the transcriptions of the open-ended and interview questions. Of these, “people have short-term or long-term time orientations” and “People have low or high sensitivity to the law” were most

prevalent (mentioned 13 times); “Individualist interests/rights are first” were in the second place (mentioned 12 times); “People adopt integrating/dominating conflict styles” was rated third (mentioned 11 times); “Group interests come first” ranked fourth (mentioned ten times); “People have a different consciousness of hierarchy” was rated fifth (mentioned eight times); “People have different face concerns” was sixth (mentioned seven times); “People have poor/good work ethics”, “black South Africans defend their wrongdoing” and “Employees complain about salary/payment” came seventh (mentioned six times); “Dignity means mutual respect” and “Harmony, face and politeness” were placed eighth (mentioned five times) and “Chinese like shouting at local workers in the workplace” and “Legal/contract documents are preferred” ninth (mentioned twice).

The themes with the lowest prevalence were: “Black South Africans are impolite”, “A normal working relationship is important”, “Poor working conditions in Chinese companies is impolite behaviour”, “People have different attitudes to South African labour law” and “People have different attitudes to South African workers’ strikes” (each was mentioned once). In the ‘face’ category, there were five subthemes: ‘A manager needs face to fulfil his work’ (prestige face), ‘Human interaction needs face’ (interaction face), ‘Face is relationship’ (relationship face), ‘Face is respect and dignity’ (respect face) and ‘Face is mutual’ (mutual face). A clear pattern indicated that the Chinese had more reason to complain about their local employees; their complaints involved mainly respect for authority, status, face, attitudes to law, strikes, work ethics, lack of a saving habit/future plan and the productivity of local black people, while black South African respondents mainly complained about salaries/payment, being shouted at in the workplace, unequal treatment and poor working conditions in Chinese companies.

4.3 Data findings

4.3.1 Findings of close-ended questionnaires

The response rate to close-ended questionnaires was 100%, with eighty participants taking part. The tables below show the findings from which the researcher of this study attempted to identify the cultural differences between

Chinese nationals and black South Africans. These findings, together with those of the open-ended and interview questions, constitute the findings of this study.

Findings of close-ended questionnaires (40 Chinese respondents)

	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree	Not Chosen	Not Chosen	Total
S1	28	70.0%	9	22.5%	2	5.0%	1	2.5%	40
S2	7	17.5%	8	20.0%	25	62.5%	0	0.0%	40
S3	3	7.5%	15	37.5%	22	55.0%	0	0.0%	40
S4	18	45.0%	12	30.0%	8	20.0%	2	5.0%	40
S5	16	40.0%	23	57.5%	1	2.5%	0	0.0%	40
S6	35	87.5%	3	7.5%	2	5.0%	0	0.0%	40
S7	17	42.5%	22	55.0%	1	2.5%	0	0.0%	40
S8	31	77.5%	8	20.0%	1	2.5%	0	0.0%	40
S9	28	70.0%	8	20.0%	4	10.0%	0	0.0%	40
S10	14	35.0%	19	47.5%	7	17.5%	0	0.0%	40

Findings of close-ended questionnaires (40 black South African respondents)

	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree	Not Chosen	Not Chosen	Total
S1	10	25.0%	5	12.5%	25	62.5%	0	0.0%	40
S2	8	20.0%	10	25.0%	22	55.0%	0	0.0%	40
S3	26	65.0%	9	22.5%	5	12.5%	0	0.0%	40
S4	10	25.0%	17	42.5%	12	30.0%	1	2.5%	40
S5	25	62.5%	11	27.5%	3	7.5%	1	2.5%	40
S6	7	17.5%	9	22.5%	24	60.0%	0	0.0%	40
S7	17	42.5%	17	42.5%	5	12.5%	1	2.5%	40
S8	10	25.0%	6	15.0%	24	60.0%	0	0.0%	40
S9	17	42.5%	16	40.0%	7	17.5%	0	0.0%	40
S10	32	80.0%	3	7.5%	5	12.5%	0	0.0%	40

S stands for statement.

Statement 1: 'Chinese/black South Africans value their individual rights more than the company's interests.' Both Chinese and black South African respondents circled options that indicated that Chinese did not fall under the individualist culture, whereas black South Africans did.

Statement 2: 'Chinese/black South Africans have a lower sensitivity to South African law.' Chinese respondents circled the 'disagree' option, meaning that black

South Africans had high sensitivity to the law. However, black South African respondents also selected the 'disagree' option, implying that the Chinese also had high sensitivity to South African laws. The conclusion is probably that the Chinese were individualist and LCC inclined.

Statement 3: 'Chinese/black South Africans would relate personal relationships with work.' Both Chinese and black South African respondents circled options indicating that black South Africans would not relate personal relationships with work, a communicative preference of LCC, whereas Chinese regarded work and relationship building as closely connected, a communicative preference of HCC. This finding reveals HCC and LCC communication styles. As discussed in the literature review and theoretical background, collectivists prefer HCC and would relate personal relationships with work, whereas individualists prefer LCC and would not relate personal relationships with work.

Statement 4: 'Chinese/black South Africans are evasive/indirect.' Though the number of neutral choices was higher, the data from the black South African respondents still disclosed that the Chinese were not 'evasive/indirect', implying that they were individualist. The 'agree' percentage of Chinese respondents revealed that black South Africans were evasive/indirect, a characteristic of the communication style of a collectivist and HCC culture, meaning that black South Africans were collectivist and HCC inclined. The results of this statement are against the expectations of this study, that black South Africans are individualist and adopt LCC, as indicated in Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2. They also contradict the results from the data of statements 1, 3, 8 and 10, as well as the results from the data obtained in Namibia. The results of statements 1 and 3 indicate that black South Africans are individualist, while the results of statements 8 and 10 indicate that black South Africans fall under LCC. See the analysis of statements 1, 3, 8 and 10 in Section 4.2.1. Also refer to Appendix VI, the questionnaires and tables of close-ended questionnaires completed in Namibia.

Statement 5: 'Chinese/black South Africans act respectfully towards authority and the elders.' 40% of Chinese respondents agreed that black South Africans acted

respectfully towards authority and elders, with a high neutral choice of 57.5%. This implies that black South Africans are likely to have a weak HPD, HCC and collectivist inclination. As indicated in Sections 3.3.1 to 3.3.3, people from HPD, HCC and collectivist cultures show due respect for authority and elders. However, 62.5% of black South African respondents agreed that Chinese acted respectfully towards authority and elders, which probably demonstrates that the Chinese adhere to HPD, HCC and collectivism.

Statement 6: 'Abiding by labour law is the best way to solve labour problems in Chinese companies'. Unlike other statements, which sought to compare two cultures, this statement asked two groups of respondents to give answers to one theme. The majority of black South African respondents selected 'disagree', which implies that black South Africans probably have a low sensitivity to law and might apply an avoiding conflict style. In contrast, as the data reveals, the majority of Chinese respondents selected 'agree', which implies that the Chinese are likely to have high sensitivity to the law and might apply a dominating conflict style. The results of 'Chinese having a high sensitivity to law' are the same as those of statement 2.

Statement 7: 'Chinese/black South Africans are more harmonious/polite than black South Africans/Chinese'. Both groups gave the same percentage of 'agree' responses (42.5%), that Chinese/black South Africans were more harmonious/polite than their counterparts, but 55% of the Chinese selected 'neutral', which probably implies that black South Africans are just moderate in terms of harmony/politeness. On the other hand, though the percentages of 'agree' and 'neutral' replies from black South African respondents were the same (42.5%), these were still much higher than the 12.5% "disagree" choice. This implies that black South African respondents agreed that the Chinese were more harmonious/polite than they were.

Attitudes to time are one of the key areas where conflicts could occur because of different approaches to time or patterns. From the responses to Statement 8, 'Chinese/black South Africans would simply quit a job and don't worry about

‘tomorrow’”, it was evident that the Chinese had a long-term and collectivist orientation and preferred the HCC style, while black South Africans were short-term and individualist oriented and preferred an LCC style.

It was revealed by the data collected for statement 9, ‘Chinese/black South Africans are face-giving oriented/value face’, that both groups were face-giving oriented/valued face, but the difference in the selection percentage revealed that the Chinese were less face-giving oriented, while black South Africans were more face-giving oriented. These findings were against the expectation of the researcher that Chinese would prove to be more face-giving oriented, as discussed in Section 3.4.3, and also contradicted the results from the data of statements 1 and 10, which indicated that Chinese are collectivist and black South Africans are individualist. Refer to the results of statements 1 and 10. Collectivists are generally more face-giving oriented, while individualists are less face-giving oriented. See also Section 2.4.3.

Poor working conditions and low salaries in Chinese companies are two important complaints from the international community, as noted in Section 1.4. Worth noting is the fact that Chinese employees in Chinese companies also worked in such conditions and did not get the salaries they expected. So the question is: Why did Chinese employees not complain about the conditions, as black Africans did?²⁶ The data from the respondents to statement 10, ‘Chinese/black South Africans would accept a job with low pay because it is better than no work’ in both SA (80% respondents selected ‘agree’) and Namibia indicated that Chinese respondents were collectivist, HCC and long-term oriented. On the other hand, 35% of Chinese selected ‘agree’, while the ‘disagree’ option accounted for 17.5%, and the neutral option for 47.5%. However, 35% ‘agree’ responses indicated that black South Africans were weakly collectivist, HCC and long-term oriented. The poor economic

²⁶ The researcher has worked in several construction companies during 15 years in Africa and has many friends working in Chinese construction companies in Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. He often communicated with these friends on this issue and thus gained this information from work experience.

conditions and high unemployment rate in SA could be the factor that compelled the local employees to accept the job. Also see Section 5.4.

To summarise, from the data analysis of close-ended questionnaires it was disclosed that Chinese and black South Africans differed with regard to individualism-collectivism and attitudes to time. This might mean that the Chinese in the current sample were collectivist and long-term oriented. On the other hand, black South Africans revealed themselves as individualist or weakly collectivist and short-term oriented. Furthermore, both groups were put under “harmony/ polite” variables with an equal percentage given by their counterparts and similarly, both groups were regarded as face-giving/valuing face. What was against the researcher’s expectation was the finding that black South Africans were classified as “evasive/indirect”, while the Chinese were classified as “precise/direct” by their counterparts.

The data on power distance also showed that both sides were categorised as HPD, but the difference lay in the degree of their sense and consciousness of hierarchy. That is, black South Africans were rated as weakly HPD whereas the Chinese were labelled strongly HPD. Similarly, although both groups were described as “more harmonious/polite”, the data revealed this variable to be moderate in black South Africans and strong in the Chinese respondents. The data on face issues revealed that the Chinese were rated less face-giving oriented while black South Africans were rated more face-giving oriented, a result contradicting the data of statements 1 and 10 and the literature review as well. The data also exposed contradicting results on ‘sensitivity to law’, as shown from the data of statements 2 and 6 and on the issue of a ‘direct’ or ‘indirect’ communication style, as shown from data relating to statements 1,3, 5, 8 and 10.

4.3.2 Findings of open-ended and interview questionnaires

The different linguistic forms through the answers from Chinese and black South African respondents constructed their identities, roles, emotions, stances, knowledge, belief and ideologies, which provided the researcher with insightful input to understand and discuss the findings of this research. Refer to Appendix V

for respondents' answers. The data analysis from the written answers to open-ended questions and transcripts of the interview revealed that Chinese and black South Africans displayed different dimensions in terms of behaviour and communicative preferences.

It was revealed from the data of open-ended question 1 that the Chinese had more perceptions of 'not being respected'. The linguistic forms (such as wording and expressions, etc.) through which Chinese respondents described 'not being respected' constructed Chinese respondents' roles as supervisors, emotions (unhappiness with black South Africans' behaviour) and the belief that black South Africans were their subordinates who should give due respect to Chinese supervisors. Please see the analysis of open-ended question 1 in Section 4.2.2. The so-called lack of respect involved mainly the following five aspects: 1) 'Chinese authority/prestige was challenged'. In an HPD culture, people are aware of their social hierarchical status. Respect for authority/prestige is seen as normal, while challenging authority/prestige is usually discouraged in the Chinese culture. This situation of 'not being respected' defines the high Chinese consciousness of hierarchy. 2) 'Black South Africans strike and go to the Labour Department'. Striking and going to the Labour Department are the workers' right, according to South African labour law. This defines black South Africans' high sensitivity to the law. 3) 'Black South Africans are impolite' and 4) 'Black South Africans are straightforward'; both (3) and (4) define black South Africans' direct communication style, which is regarded as offending Chinese authority/prestige, because being 'impolite' and 'straightforward' makes Chinese lose face ('mianzi'). 5) 'Black South Africans defend their wrongdoings.' This is regarded as a challenge and offensive to Chinese foremen and seen as poor work ethics in Chinese eyes.

Compared with Chinese respondents' complaints about 'not being respected', black South African respondents had fewer perceptions of 'not being respected' and these were mainly about salaries and unfair treatment in Chinese companies. Salary and unfair treatment are two important parameters of black workers' legal rights, thus revealing black South Africans' sense of having rights and high

sensitivity to the law, which demonstrate the marked traits of an individualist culture. Clearly Chinese respondents cared more about their prestige/status, while black South African respondents, on the other hand, cared more about their legal rights.

It was found from the data of open-ended question 2 and interview questions 2 and 10 that black South Africans' straightforwardness (direct communication style) was regarded by Chinese as an offensive, impolite and face-losing. Though the majority of Chinese respondents agreed that face is important in human interaction, two Chinese became 'detractors' who did not agree that face is important. Black South African respondents were divided on the face issue, but most of them agreed that they were straightforward and believed that their direct communication style should not have made Chinese people lose face. Claiming, 'We speak our minds', most black South African respondents expressed their tendency to be straightforward. The data revealed that both sides had the cultural traits of face concern, harmony and politeness, a similar result as that obtained from the close-ended questions. The findings of black South Africans' 'direct communication style' contradicted the result from close-ended question 4, which indicated that black South Africans were evasive/indirect.

It was found from the data related to open-question 3 that Chinese respondents listed more forms of black behaviour as hard to 'understand or accept'. These complaints were mainly about 1) black South Africans' poor planning/lack of a saving habit, a marked trait of blacks' time concepts, 2) black South Africans' high sensitivity to the law and 3) strong rights orientation. Black South African respondents listed fewer forms of Chinese behaviour as hard to 'understand or accept'; these mainly concerned the work relationship with black South Africans and sensitivity to the law.

The linguistic forms used by both Chinese and black South African respondents to account for hard-to-understand/accept behaviour revealed that Chinese respondents cared more about their 'face' and were more concerned about black South Africans' work ethics, while black South Africans cared more about equal treatment (not being shouted at in the workplace) and legal rights of payment. It

appeared that the Chinese had a high hierarchy consciousness and face concern orientation, which are closely connected with the HPD and HCC dimensions, while black South Africans had high law and rights sensitivity and complained about their salaries and being shouted at in the workplace. This indicates that black South Africans are individualist inclined and care about their legal rights. This also indicates that black South Africans carry more cultural traits of LCC, which would separate the issue and the person and therefore would not accept 'being shouted at in the workplace'.

Interview questions 1, 2 and 3 are dialectically interrelated. That is, what is dignity-losing to the respondents (as explained in interview question 1) is also 'offensive' (as revealed in interview question 2) and 'impolite' (as disclosed in interview question 3) to them. For example, the 'offensive manner' of black South Africans to Chinese is regarded as 'impolite'/'dignity-losing'/'not acceptable' by Chinese and vice versa. As the data discloses, black South Africans regard poor salary/payment from Chinese employers as 'impolite' or 'dignity-losing' or 'not acceptable', while the Chinese regard black South Africans' challenging of Chinese authority as 'impolite' or 'dignity-losing' or 'not acceptable' to them. The data indicate that Chinese care more about respect for authority/prestige and face ('mianzi') gaining, while black South Africans are concerned about their rights and equal treatment.

The data revealed that answers to open-ended questions 1 and 3 and interview questions 1, 2 and 3 were closely connected in relation to offensive situations (open-ended questions 1 and interview question 2), behaviour that was difficult to understand/accept (open-ended question 3), dignity-losing/winning situations (interview question 1) and impolite behaviour (interview question 3) for both groups. The linguistic forms used by Chinese respondents "... they (blacks) didn't listen to you, not follow you, but challenged my authority" revealed their cultural identities of power and face consciousness, while the linguistic forms used by black South African respondents, such as "Chinese just don't pay us nicely. But they want us to work and work", revealed their cultural identity of individual rights consciousness.

See also Section 4.2.2 for an analysis of open-ended questions 1 and 3 and an analysis of interview questions 1, 2 and 3, as well as Appendix V.

The data of open-ended question 4 and interview question 4 disclosed that the Chinese valued group/company interests 100%, which demonstrated that they were strongly collectivist, whereas black South Africans were rated as individualists or weakly collectivist. These findings corresponded to the findings of the close-ended questions and interview question 9. The data of interview question 9 also revealed that the Chinese were strongly collectivist and black South Africans more individualist. The data of interview question 9 further revealed that the Chinese adhered to HCC and a long-term orientation, whereas black South Africans favoured LCC and a short-term orientation. Refer to the communication modes of HCC/LCC and long-term/short-term time attitudes in Sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.4. The findings of interview question 9 about the respondents' 'time concept' also corresponded to those of close-ended statement 7, which showed that black South Africans are short-term oriented and Chinese long-term oriented. The findings that black South Africans are short-term oriented from interview question 9, however, contradicted those of close-ended question 10, which showed that black South Africans had a long-term orientation. The finding that the Chinese were rated as highly long-term oriented was complemented by the results of close-ended question 10.

As revealed by the answers to open-ended question 5 and interview question 6, Chinese and black South Africans adopt different conflict resolution styles. The fact that black South Africans strongly supported strikes while Chinese were against strikes demonstrated that black South Africans are probably highly sensitive to law, LCC, prefer a dominating conflict style and are individualist rights oriented, whereas Chinese probably have low sensitivity to law, HCC, adopt a compromising or integrating conflict style and place group interests first. That Chinese probably have low sensitivity to the law contradicts the results from close-ended questions 2 and 6, which revealed that the Chinese had high sensitivity to

law and preferred to apply labour law to solve labour-related issues²⁷. In addition, seven of the eight Chinese respondents agreed to take a holistic view of strikes, with two respondents suggesting the improvement of working conditions to avoid strikes. A theme of the Chinese style of conflict resolution thus emerged. However, only one black South African respondent agreed to take a holistic view of strikes, while six black South African respondents took a straightforward approach to strikes and advocated “strike for money” and “strike for rights” respectively, an indication of black South Africans’ individualist inclination, short-term and LCC orientations. However, the data also found ‘detractors’ from both sides: one Chinese respondent favoured strikes while one black South African respondent was against strikes. That black South Africans had an LCC inclination contradicts the results from close-ended question 4, which indicated that black South Africans were evasive/indirect, a cultural trait of HCC. See also Section 2.3.2.

On the issue of work efficiency, the data yielded by interview question 5 revealed that two main reasons for black South Africans’ poor work efficiency given by both black South African and Chinese respondents corresponded: no sense of urgency and laziness, a demonstration of black South Africans’ attitudes to time and work ethics. In addition, the data revealed that respondents from both sides believed that black South Africans could be efficient if they were given a specific workload, demonstrating that black South Africans are task-oriented and prefer precise and explicit documents giving job boundaries and descriptions, one of the marked traits of LCC cultures. Thus it is likely that black South Africans are short-term oriented, individualist and LCC inclined.

From the data of open-ended questions 5 and 6 and interview questions 5, 6, 8 and 9, it was further found that black South Africans only ‘think today’ and they ‘don’t have a saving habit’ and ‘future concept’, while Chinese are past-present-future oriented with a ‘good plan for tomorrow’. These findings probably demonstrate that Chinese are long-term oriented with polychronic rhythms and

²⁷ However, the findings correspond to those of a survey done in Namibia, which revealed that 55% of Namibian black respondents agreed that the Chinese had a low sensitivity to law.

have a relational and socio-emotional orientation, while black South Africans are short-term oriented with monochronic rhythms and effective conflict negotiation and that they are relatively less prone to saving or anticipating long-term rewards. See Section 2.3.4. These findings reveal and explain: 1) black South Africans are not efficient, possibly because Chinese employers fail to follow what the black South African culture requires them to do: to contract workers and specify work targets accordingly; 2) black South Africans prefer strikes, possibly because they are used to these as an effective form of conflict negotiation to reach and implement tangible conflict outcomes; 3) black South Africans spend everything they are paid and would refuse to take a job if they were not happy with salaries or working conditions, possibly because they 'think today' and do not have a 'saving habit' and 'future concept'.

As the data revealed above, the finding of collectivism (Chinese) disclosed by the data of open-ended questions 4 and 6 and interview questions 4 and 9 is related to the Chinese long-term orientation that is evident from the data of open-ended questions 4 and 6 and interview questions 5, 6, 8 and 9. The communicative preferences of collectivists are revealed through their long-term orientation. The Chinese would adopt a long-term strategy in relationship building, work performance, handling conflicts or lodging a complaint. In addition, this attitude is linked to Chinese HPD disclosed in open-ended question 6, HCC disclosed in interview questions 6 and 7 and face concern disclosed in interview question 10. See Sections 2.3.5 and 2.5. This possibly indicates that as a cultural variable, Chinese collectivism is dialectically associated with HPD, HCC, long-term orientation and face concern in this study. In other words, in a conflict situation the Chinese could employ a big picture/holistic view approach to resolve the conflict, a demonstration of collectivism and HCC. When they lodge a complaint to their supervisors, they would pay due respect to authority/give the boss face, which is an appropriate manner in HPD and face concern cultures. Between company interests and individual interests, they could consider company interests more important, which shows cultural traits of collectivism and long-term orientation. These communicative preferences of Chinese revealed by the Chinese responses

demonstrate that the Chinese in the sample for this study were probably collectivist and adopted a long-term orientation, HPD, HCC and face concern.

Likewise, the finding of individualism (black South Africans) disclosed in open-ended questions 4 and 6 and interview questions 4 and 9 is related to black South Africans' short-term orientation disclosed in open-ended questions 4 and 6 and interview questions 5, 6, 8 and 9. Communicative preferences of individualists are revealed through such short-term orientation. It is also linked to black South Africans' LPD disclosed in responses to open-ended question 6, LCC disclosed in open-ended question 5 and in interview questions 7 and 9, which revealed individualist cultural traits. This probably indicates that black South Africans' individualism is dialectically associated with LPD, LCC and attitudes to time of short-term orientation in this study. In other words, in a conflict situation black South Africans could take a straight-to-the-point approach to resolve a conflict, which is a manifestation of individualism and LCC. When they lodge a complaint to their supervisors, they could confront authority/management, an appropriate and accepted manner in LPD cultures. Between company interests and individual interests, they would consider individual interests paramount, which shows cultural traits of individualism and short-term orientation. These communicative preferences of black South Africans demonstrate that black South Africans in the sample were more individualist and probably belonged to a cultural cluster of short-term orientation, LPD and LCC.

It is important to note that this study also found some contradictory results. The results of close-ended questions 2, 4, and 5 contradict the results of close-ended questions 1, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10, the results of open-ended questions 2, 4, 5 and 6 and interview questions 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10. In other words, the findings that black South Africans have a lower sensitivity to law (as revealed in close-ended question 2), that black South Africans are evasive (as revealed in close-ended question 4) and that black South Africans act respectfully towards authority and elders (as revealed in close-ended question 5) fail to agree with black South Africans' attitude to strikes, their strong sense of rights and their individualist and short-term oriented

culture as revealed in the data of the close-ended questions, open-ended questions and interview questions noted above. Likewise, that Chinese have a high sensitivity to law (as revealed in close-ended question 2) and that Chinese are precise/direct (as revealed in close-ended question 4) also do not correspond to Chinese responses, which indicated that Chinese in the sample were strongly against black South Africans' strikes and going to the Labour Department, as well as the Chinese collectivist and long-term oriented culture as revealed in the data noted above.

It is also important to point out that more than one dimension was identified by one question, as revealed in the data. For instance, the data of Chinese responses about black South Africans' strikes (open-ended question 5) revealed Chinese group interests (collectivism) and their integrating conflict style (HCC), low sensitivity to law, harmonious spirit, face concern and long-term orientation. This indicates that the cultural variables of collectivism, HPD, HCC and long-term orientation are connected dialectally in this research. In other words, people from collectivist cultures are likely to have the tendency of HPD, HCC and long-term orientation. Likewise, the data of black South African responses about strikes (open-ended question 5) revealed black South Africans' strong sense of individual rights (individualism), LCC (dominant style), not giving due respect to company authority (LPD) and short-term orientation. It indicates that the cultural variables of individualism, LPD, LCC and short-term orientation are connected dialectally in this research. In other words, people from an individualist culture have the tendency of LPD, LCC and short-term orientation. Thus, the findings demonstrate that black South Africans probably have an individualist, LCC, LPD and short-term orientation, whereas Chinese are likely to have a collectivist, HCC, HPD and long-term orientation.

Similarly, from the "dignity winning and losing" circumstances (interview question 1) discussed by Chinese and African respondents, it emerged that the Chinese are marked for their cultural cluster of face (as revealed by respondent 4 (R4): "Black people refused to admit their wrongdoing by giving a lot of excuses"), HPD (as

revealed in R1: “Dignity means respect from local employees, obey my order/instructions”), collectivism/group harmony (as revealed in R6: “Labour disputes ruin my dignity, blacks never consider their own situation (non-productive), just ask for increases, go to the Labour Department”), HCC (as revealed in R2: “Dignity is to sit down and discuss problems and establish a good relationship” and politeness (as revealed in R7: “Politeness is an important part of dignity”). The data revealed that black South Africans are identified through their cultural traits of individualism (as revealed in R1, R6 and R8) and LCC (as revealed in R3 and R7). See also analysis of interview question 1 and Section 4.2.2.

To sum up, the findings demonstrated that Chinese nationals and black South Africans differ in terms of cultural dimensions and have different communicative preferences. A pattern emerged from the data that Chinese are more likely to be categorised as having low sensitivity to law, placing group interests first, applying an integrating/compromising conflict style, having high consciousness of hierarchy and long-term attitudes, often shouting at local workers in the workplace, while black South Africans are more likely to be described as having high sensitivity to law, placing individual interests first, having ‘poor’ work ethics/attitudes, applying a dominating conflict style, having low consciousness of hierarchy, and being ‘impolite’, straightforward and short-term oriented.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The research findings revealed that Chinese and black South African respondents in this study demonstrated different cultural dimensions; they employed the same communication strategies of harmony, politeness and face concern, but with different interpretations. As the findings revealed, these differences constituted different communication behaviour and were at the root of the problematic encounters between them, as mentioned in Sections 1.3, 1.4 and 2.1.

The findings of this study demonstrated that the Chinese in the sample valued more group/company goals, face ('mianzi'), authority, status and prestige, adopted a compromising or integrating conflict style, had low sensitivity to law, preferred an evasive or indirect communication style and had a long-term orientation. Such results probably indicate that the Chinese in the sample subscribe to collectivism, HPD and HCC and are long-term oriented with polychronic rhythms, relational and socio-emotional orientation. The findings of this study revealed that black South African employees in the sample cared more about their individual interests and human/legal rights, adopted a dominating conflict style, had high sensitivity to law, preferred straightforward communication and had a short-term orientation. These results probably indicate that black South African employees subscribe to individualism, LPD and LCC and are short-term oriented with monochronic rhythms and effective conflict negotiation, thus reaching and implementing tangible conflict outcomes within a clearly established timetable. In addition, they are relatively less prone to saving or anticipating long-term rewards.

The findings of this study are in line with the literature review and theoretical background. The differences between the two groups in relation to cultural dimensions and communication strategies, as noted in Chapter 4, constructed communication barriers leading to problematic encounters. See Sections 1.3, 1.4

and 1.5. The findings of this study support what the researcher originally proposed to find out through the research questions: Chinese and black South Africans have different cultural dimensions and these are the root causes of the problematic encounters between Chinese and black South African employees.

This chapter is divided into five parts: Collectivism vs individualism, HPD vs LPD, HCC vs LCC and long-term orientation vs short-term orientation, ending with the contributions of this research. Because of the close connection of three communication strategies with four cultural dimensions as indicated in the literature review and the data, the discussion of the three communication strategies will be combined with the discussion of the four dimensions. No provision is consequently made for a separate discussion of the three communication strategies in this part.

5.2 Collectivism vs individualism

The findings of individualism and collectivism are consistent with Hall's (1976) theory that people from a collectivist culture prefer group harmony and consensus to individual achievements. Group interests prevail over individual interests. According to Chinese responses to open-ended questions, the concept that "individual interests depend on company interests" was accepted and applied in their work by all eight respondents, which gives a significant indication that Chinese are strongly collectivist, corresponding to the theory of Schwartz et al. (2010). A Chinese respondent (R1) answered: "As far as work is concerned, I consider more company interests than individualist interests so as to make the company business operational. More individualist interests will affect company business negatively". A Chinese respondent (R7) even said, "I would rather give up my interests to save company interests". His use of 'so as to' as an indicator of purpose (R1) revealed his stance that company business operation is a top priority while 'would rather', 'give up' and 'to save' indicated that R7 strongly believed that company interests always prevailed over individual interests. Such linguistic forms

reflect the respondents' emotion, stance, belief and ideology about group interests (He, 2003:429) and they also buttress the theoretical claim of the collectivism theory of Landauer and Rowlands (Freedomkeys n.d.).

The interview findings (for question 4) also revealed that Chinese are strongly collectivist. All eight Chinese respondents expressed 'feeling like a family member' while working in Chinese companies. Chinese respondent R7 said: "I feel like a family member in the company especially when I am a manager. Company interests always prevail over individual ones." In the same vein, R4 agreed, "For sure working here I feel like a family member. Any one of us in the company must be a member for [the] sake of company growth", implying that the employees are responsible for company growth. He further pointed out: "But black South Africans don't take this (company) as their family, and money is their sole consideration. They care [about] their individual rights". Two more Chinese respondents also raised the same issue in the interview: that black South Africans only cared for their individual rights, which might be an indication that black South African employees are different from Chinese supervisors in relation to 'regarding the company as a family'. The Chinese group-oriented/collective spirit is in line with collectivism, harmony and HCC in that collectivism, harmony and HCC all emphasise "collective goals" rather than individual goals (Li, Zhu & Li 2001; Brew & Cairns 2004). The findings that Chinese are (strongly) collectivist are underpinned by the theoretical considerations of Ting-Toomey (1999), Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998), Guirdham (1999), Samovar and Porter (2003), Schwartz et al. (2010), Livermore (2013) and Anedo (2012).

As the data indicated, Chinese respondents were collectivist oriented. However, the findings did not provide a clear-cut demonstration that black South Africans were also (strongly) collectivist, as some researchers claimed. See Section 2.3.1. Seventy percent of Chinese respondents agreed that black South Africans value their individual rights more than the company's rights, as shown in Graph II. Though five of the eight black South African interviewees said they had a "family

feeling” while working in Chinese companies, similar to the Chinese response to the same question, implying that black South Africans are also collectivist, their tones of uncertainty about ‘family membership’ in the interview and their linguistic forms raised doubts in the researcher, especially when comparing their linguistic forms with the clear-cut linguistic forms of Chinese respondents. For instance, black participant R1 told the researcher: “I feel like a member of the group, working from morning to evening”, but the interpretation of this did not lead to the conclusion that he had the same ‘group sense’ Chinese respondents had. The top priority and purpose of R1’s ‘working from morning to evening’ were to satisfy his own individual demands; R4 also told the researcher, “Our goal is to make money.” R4 further told the researcher: “. . . but a majority of black South Africans do not feel like in a family group while working in [a] Chinese company”. Such utterances indicate that to ensure jobs for money is a key concern of black South African respondents. However, this does not mean Chinese employees are not concerned about their salaries like black South African employees. Analysing the discourses of Chinese and black South African employees in this regard, it was found that Chinese employees were well aware that their individual interests were dependent on company interests, while black South African employees just cared about their own interests. Compared with the Chinese strong sense of collective goals, it is not hard to understand that black South African respondents cannot be categorised into the same collectivist cluster as Chinese respondents.

Of course, based on the literature review and theoretical background, the researcher agrees that collectivism does exist in the black South African culture. That black South Africans did not favour individualist interests as overwhelmingly as Chinese respondents could be explained as weakly inherited traits of a collectivist culture in their psyche, as traditional communalism still exists in African cultures. This view is supported by the theories of Mbiti (1990) and Okonkwo (1998). See also Section 2.3.1. This result could also be due to participants who happened to be Africans with a cultural mixture between their traditions and Western cultures, as reviewed in the literature review. This perception is in

accordance with the theories of Mbiti (1990), Khoza (n.d.) and Okonkwo (1998) that African people remain a mixture of European and African influences.

Based on the overall data, it is not difficult to find that black South African respondents are more individualist oriented. According to the response to open-ended question 4, for instance, three out of eight black South African respondents valued their individualist interests, while two of the four (R2, R3, R6, R8) who placed group interests above their individualist interests actually demonstrated their individualist orientation. A comparison of the linguistic forms used by two of them indicates this: “Depends on the nature of the problem. If it is a personal issue, then I would consider my interest” (R2) and “Protect the company’s interest. But where is the company’s principle?” (R6). These remarks are in sharp contrast to those of Chinese respondents who unconditionally considered company interests first. By using “depend on” and “If it is a personal issue”, the respondent tried to convey that he had a precondition, and these expressions indicated that he preferred or prioritised his individualist interests. Likewise, R6 was not “happy” with company management. He had some complaints about it (from his answer to open-ended question 1, it was found his company did not pay him according to his qualification, which made him unhappy), though he agreed to consider company interests rather than individual ones. Thus, his expression of company interests first was not convincing.

The data revealed that some linguistic forms used by black South African respondents demonstrated a strongly individualist cultural feature — individual interests prevailed over collective ones: “Definitely I come first before the company because I cannot compromise myself” (R4). One respondent simply replied: “Yes. My own first,” (R5), a clear-cut demonstration of individualism, a perfect match with the individualism theory of Rand (Freedomkeys n.d). Obviously, by using ‘Definitely’ and ‘My own first’, these two respondents tried to send a strong signal that “they are 100% individualist. Full stop.” The findings are in line with the theoretical considerations of Ting-Toomey (1999), Hofstede (1984a), Gao and Ting-Toomey

(1998), Guirdham (1999) and Livermore (2013) in relation to 'individual interests come first.'

The findings that black South Africans prefer to be regarded as individualist are supported by the main assumption in the theories of Nkrumah (1967), Mbiti (1990), Bate (1998), Angula (2014) and Agwu (2011), who claim that foreign cultures, especially European cultures, have changed African traditional societies. African society is a new society enlarged by Euro-Christian influences during colonialism and afterward. 'I, me and myself' has replaced 'We'. Today's social-cultural environment in South Africa is a demonstration of this change, supporting the theory of Bate (1998). This individualist inclination of Africans is to a certain extent in line with the Ubuntu philosophy theory of Manda (2009), Cornell and Marle (2005), Metz (2011) and Kimmerle (2006), who claim that the community is always being formed through an ethic of being with others, and this ethic is in turn evaluated by how it empowers people.

Though collectivism exists in African culture, as the existing literature and the findings prove, the data indicated that black South African respondents are more individualist oriented, which is consistent with the researcher's original proposition. See also Section 2.3.1. However, not all researchers agree that Africans have shifted from collectivism/communalism to individualism, as noted above. The findings of this study fail to fit into the theories of Livermore (2013), Anedo (2012), Matondo (2012) and the well-known Chinese scholar Li (2014), who claim that Africans are collectivist because of African communalism/Ubuntu. However, what Anedo (2012) states in Section 2.3.1.3 indicates the individualist cultural traits of Africans. Similarly, Livermore (2013) agrees in section 2.3.2 that SA is the biggest outlier in his cluster of collectivist culture with Western cultural characteristics. It is obvious that the claims by Livermore (2013) and Anedo (2012) contradict themselves: to them Africans are collectivist and individualist as well. They probably failed to take into account the crucial influence African historical contexts had on Africans' culture.

Li (2014) claimed that Africa's ujama or communalism is collectivism. He further pointed out that Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism, Senghor's African personality, and Nyerere's ujama are all demonstrations of African collectivism. However, according to Gbadegesin (1998), Obadina (2008), Manda (2009), Cornell and Marle (2005), Metz (2011) and Kimmerle (2006), Prime (2010) and (Khoza n.d), African communalism/Ubuntu is different from collectivism. To reduce *Ubuntu* to the saying 'I am because we are' is schematic (Kimmerle 2006). "Like nationalism, communalism often extends from mere affirmation of the dignity of one's own 'people' to the proclamation of their superiority and the denial of the claims and needs of others" (Obadina 2008). Contexts are crucial factors in the understanding of cultures. Li (2014) failed to put his claim in the context of fundamental socio-cultural changes Africa has gone through. The perception of fundamental socio-cultural changes in Africa and their impact on Africans' behaviour justifies the theories of Nkrumah (1967), Mbiti, (1990), Bate (1998), Angula (2014) and Agwu (2011). This view also corresponds directly with the theories of Flammia and Sadri (2011) who claim a dialectical view of culture and context and relationship between them.

This difference between individualism and collectivism, as the data exposed, has proven to be a cause of problematic encounters in the building industry. Being strongly collectivist, Chinese employers would regard company interests as more important than employees' individual rights and intermesh person and issue, meaning that work, relationship and emotion are mixed up, as revealed, for instance, in the statement that 'Chinese like shouting at workers in the workplace' and Chinese strong opposition to strikes. This conflicts with the black South African individualist cultural orientation. In other words, black South Africans would not compromise and give up their individual rights for the benefit of company interests as Chinese would. Black South Africans' strong sense of rights in respect of complaining about low salaries and poor working conditions in Chinese companies often ended up with the Labour Department and/or strikes, which upset the

Chinese employers and left them disappointed and angry, as the data proved, thus creating a problematical encounter. The majority of Chinese respondents complained: “Black South Africans only know about their rights.” The fact that black South Africans are more individualist oriented or weakly collectivist and Chinese are strong collectivist partially explains why the two groups had problematic encounters in the building industry in Johannesburg. That black South Africans are more individualist oriented or weakly collectivist might be a useful finding for the intercultural communication study of Africa.

5.3 High power distance vs low power distance

Culture is a ‘system’ and not the sum of a collection of fortuitous traits. It is an integrated whole that must be understood by examining its components holistically, according to Aneas and Sandin (2009). As was found in this study, the dimension of individualism-collectivism is interwoven and closely related with other variables such as HPD/LPD, HCC/LCC and long/short-term orientation. The approach to combine closely connected dimensions to demonstrate and expose cultural behaviour of Chinese or black South Africans is regarded in this study as a meaningful initiative. Employing such a combination in the interest of investigation and judgment of cultural dimensions and communicative preferences of a cultural group is in line with the theoretical consideration of the system-thinking approach and dialectical approach (Flammia & Sadri 2011; Worldconnections n.d.). Also see Sections 3.1, 2.2.1 and 3.3.1.

As the findings revealed, in Chinese eyes, that a supervisor’s order or command is fully executed by the employees is a manifestation of respect of employees for supervisors. However, most black South African employees failed to finish their workload, as the data of this limited study disclosed, thus constituting a challenge to Chinese supervisors’ authority. The “feeling offended” situations mentioned by Chinese respondents further indicated that the Chinese adopted HCC and were more face oriented. Also see Sections 2.4.3 and 5.4.

What black South African respondents mentioned about 'not being respected' is Chinese shouting at them in the workplace and unfair treatment in Chinese companies. In black South Africans' eyes, Chinese shouting and unfair treatment cause offence, which indicates that black South Africans have low consciousness of hierarchy/belong to an LPD cultural group and LCC, with less face orientation in their communication with Chinese supervisors. According to Brew and Cairns (2004), people from an LPD culture have low consciousness of hierarchy and believe that emotion and work should be separated. To black South African employees, shouting is not part of the work, but an emotional outburst from Chinese supervisors. Such emotional outbursts should not occur in the work situation. In a similar vein, Gudykunst and Matsumoto in Anderson et al. (2002:95) claim that LPD culture would show respect for legitimate power. In black South Africans' eyes, shouting is not a manifestation of legitimate power and thus they would not accept 'being shouted at by Chinese supervisors', who, however, intermesh emotion and power and regard shouting as part of supervision power. By means of strikes, or going to the Labour Department or directly and openly confronting the Chinese supervisors to lodge/address their complaints, as reflected in the data, black South Africans demonstrate their low consciousness of hierarchy and LCC conflict style. See Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 for the different communicative preferences regarding HPD and LPD, HCC and LCC.

It is important to note that the different perceptions Chinese and black South African respondents have about 'respect for power' construct communication barriers, leading to problematical encounters. Lack of cultural knowledge/competence on both sides also contributes to this problematic phenomenon. Black South African employees fail to address the desired identity images of the Chinese supervisors/employers who have power and thus deserve respect positively and deal sensitively with these. Thus, the Chinese were unable to experience satisfaction in their interactions with black South Africans, and vice versa. This perception is in line with the effective communication theory of

Wiseman (2001) and Ting-Toomey (1999). It was tentatively established that Chinese and black South Africans are different in their communication approaches and attitudes to 'respect for power'. The findings that Chinese and black South Africans have different communication approaches and attitudes to power match the theories of PDI and contextual communication by Gudykunst and Matsumoto in Anderson et al. (2002:95), Ting-Toomey (1999), Hall (1976) and Brew and Cairns (2004:333).

As the data revealed, Chinese were highly conscious of hierarchy. "As an employee I agree to obey the boss even if I am not comfortable because I am paid by the boss of the private company. We must obey him" (R1 in response to interview question 2). Clearly, according to him, a subordinate must honour/show respect for his boss. Another Chinese respondent simply said: "The boss decides all" (R2 in response to open-ended question 6), implying that the boss has absolute power and employees should not challenge it, otherwise the challenger might be accused of not understanding things, reduced to a lower level or even dismissed. Using 'we' instead of 'I' in 'We must obey him' and 'The boss decides all', the Chinese respondents clearly demonstrated that they all expressed due respect for their "boss" who had the power to make decisions on everything. In visualising Ting-Toomey's power index culture of the Chinese, the researcher realises that these attributes are consistent with the theory of Khoza (1994) that duty, honour and deference to authority are prominent for collectivists. They also agree with the theory of Ting-Toomey (1999:75) who claims that two principles guide Confucian philosophy: (i) a superior in the workplace must act with virtue, and they should be respected by those in inferior positions; and (ii) one should act dutifully toward elders, reciprocally in one's obligations, and respect the fact of role differentiation.

Gudykunst and Matsumoto in Anderson et al. (2002:95) claim that members of HPD cultures regard power as a basic fact in society and promote coercive power to demonstrate the hierarchy of power. The findings correspond to their claim. Chinese supervisors or managers are quite aware of their power and make use of

such power in their workplace to ensure their instructions/commands are followed. A power holder has a strong sense of prestige and 'mianzi' (face) in Chinese culture. This study calls it a prestige face. This indicates that power and face are interwoven in Chinese culture. During interviews, the researcher could physically feel how Chinese interviewees valued their face and authority. The reasons for Chinese losing/winning dignity and being offended are related to subordinates obeying/listening to orders. Answering interview question 1, a Chinese respondent (R8) said that "When black people respected me I had the feeling of dignity because I am superior to them." Such a feeling of superiority is popular among Chinese foremen. Such utterances reveal Chinese emotion, stance, belief and ideology about prestige and face (He 2003). This finding is also consistent with the Chinese politeness system claimed by Storz (1999).

In Asia, status difference overrules social distance. A subordinate has to employ honorifics when speaking to a superior (Storz 1999; Ting-Toomey 1999:75; Lim 2003). 'Feeling respected' means that a superior's authority is accepted and he/she gains 'mianzi' (face). This perception has a direct correlation with the theory of the politeness system of Mirjaliisa (1996) and Storz (1999), the power index theory of Ting-Toomey (1999) and Guirdham (1999) and also with the face theory of Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998), who claim that in Chinese culture, gaining and losing face is connected closely with issues of social pride, honour, dignity, humility, trust, respect, prestige, shame, disgrace and mistrust (Gao & Ting-Toomey 1998:54). One site manager (R1) wrote in his answer to open-ended question 2: "From the perspective of a site manager, I think face is important in that face is about a manager's authority and prestige among the local workers. That the local workers complete the work assigned to them means face to me. For instance, I have to complete 100 m³ concrete work but local workers are not willing to do it because they need to catch train/bus for home. This is face losing to me." This perception is in line with the theory of 'face' in business success (Redding & Ng 1982:209). Such prestige challenging from African employees often happened in Chinese companies, according to him and according to the researcher's

knowledge and experience. It is obvious that black South African employees find it hard to get used to and accept Chinese perceptions about authority and prestige, which leads to problematic encounters between them.

As Chinese respondents (R1, R2) responded to interview question 2: “the workers not obeying instructions” or “no completion of the work assigned to the local workers” made them angry and disappointed, because to them, lack of obedience or failure to complete assigned work indicated that their authority/prestige was challenged and that local workers did not give them due respect, making them lose face, which is very offensive behaviour to Chinese. These findings support the theoretical understanding of “gaining and losing face” (Gao & Ting-Toomey 1998:54). Losing face is bad for supervisors in a workplace in Chinese culture because it means that they have lost power/authority to supervise, which makes it difficult for them to supervise. Hence, they would resort to coercive power. This is what Gudykunst and Matsumoto in Anderson et al. (2002:95) claim. Coercive power is essentially a tool or weapon when the superior employer threatens the inferior employee with a certain type of punishment if a task or an activity is completed incorrectly or not up to the standard of the employer. One such punishment is the controversial firing of local workers or salary deductions. A punishment like this would of course invite complaints from the local employees who would go to the Labour Department or strike to counteract the punishment, escalating the tense relationships. Such coercive power has been identified as one of the key causes of problematic encounters between the two groups.

Answering interview question 10, one Chinese respondent (R2) stated: “Black workers are direct. No care about our face. If they did not follow my instruction as a foreman to complete the work, I felt bad. So I fired them.” Chinese supervisors regard dismissing local workers as punishment. In interviews, the researcher heard several Chinese participants saying so and such dismissals happen in Chinese companies across the continent, creating contentious labour relations and potential conflict. When they made these remarks in the interview, their tones,

gestures and eye contact indicated they had no choice but to dismiss the local workers to gain their 'mianzi' (face) and build prestige/authority among the other employees. In February 2016, a strike among black employees happened in one Chinese company in Johannesburg as a result of such a dismissal. In 2012, the researcher was asked to be an interpreter in labour-related conflicts more than 10 times in Namibia as a result of such dismissal of Namibian workers.

The data clearly revealed the crucial role authority and prestige play in Chinese culture. These findings are underpinned by the theoretical considerations of Storz (1999) Mirjaliisa (1996), Lee-Wong (2002) and Matondo (2012). However, abusing the role of authority and prestige is problematic, as one can see from the dismissal of local workers. Without a legal procedure, any dismissal of local workers would lead to more complaints, with the direct result that local workers would go to the Labour Department, a situation which makes the Chinese lose face and offends them, as indicated in the data. Illegal dismissal of local workers was one of the main factors leading to labour disputes, according to the researcher's experience and research. It is obvious that Chinese consciousness of hierarchy/HPD culture has constructed a communication barrier, leading to problematic encounters between the two groups.

The emphasis on the Chinese strong sense of face and its related power and sensitivity to hierarchy as found in this study, however, is not without its Chinese 'detractors'. Two Chinese respondents, a translator and a manager, thought face was not important in interaction with black South Africans. To the translator, face is not important because "black people are polite, and they don't have face concept" while to the manager who has worked in South Africa for over six years, "face is not important because technical work doesn't need face concern and face is not given by others but yourself." These two respondents' remarks made the researcher understand that interlocutors with cultural awareness, knowledge²⁸,

²⁸ A translator is usually more knowledgeable about the culture of the host country and knows better how to deal with local people than other Chinese staff in Chinese companies.

long working experience in foreign cultural environments and appropriate attitudes have the potential to affect situations in which people from different backgrounds come together. According to them, they did not have problematic encounters with black South African workers. This finding corresponds with the theory of Samovar and Porter (2003), Wiseman (2001), Earley and Mosakowski (2004) and Piller (2011), who claim that a knowledgeable, experienced communicator with cultural awareness and intelligence play a positive role in intercultural interactions.

Chinese HPD culture is in direct contrast with that of black South Africans, whose responses to the six open-ended questions demonstrated that they belonged to an LPD culture. Six of the eight respondents refused to obey the boss if they were not comfortable, saying that “I don’t agree and refuse to do something I am not comfortable with” (R2) “No. I cannot overlook myself for boss benefits” (R5) “No. A good manager should know how to agree with employees” (R6). The linguistic forms “refuse to do something...” (R2), “I cannot overlook myself ...” (R5), “A good manager should know how ...” (R6) exposed their stance that they would not compromise their individual interests in order to make the boss happy. These findings are consistent with the theory of Khoza (1994) who claims that duty, honour, and deference to authority are less prominent for those with individualist starting points than communitarian ones (collectivists). Such findings further exposed the individualist cultural characteristics of black South Africans.

One significant issue black South Africans complained about and mentioned in open-ended question 1 and interview questions 1, 2 and 3 was “Chinese shouting at workers in the workplace”. To black South African respondents, ‘Chinese shouting at workers in the workplace’ is ‘offensive’, ‘impolite behaviour’ and ‘not accepted’. It is evident that Chinese supervisors like shouting: shouting for respect and prestige, shouting to demonstrate authority or power, meaning that through shouting, they want to gain dignity and respect from their subordinates.

But what culture does this shouting expose? In the Chinese mindset, person and

issue are intermeshed, implying that employees are part of the group, like a family member. It is normal practice for parents to shout at their children in Chinese cultural environments. In the eyes of Chinese supervisors, shouting at their subordinates is acceptable because of their dependency relationships. This is in line with the PDI theory of Anedo (2012). Quite often, such shouting is intuitive/emotional. This perception is in accordance with the HCC theory of Brew and Cairns (2004). These findings also match the HCC theory of Hall (1976), who claims that people in these cultures are governed by intuition or feelings rather than reason. However, a black South African (R3) complained in his answer to open-ended question 1: "I am not your son. Business is business." R3 conveyed his role as an employee who just came to work and would not accept a supervisor's intuition or feeling. What R3 said resonated among his fellowmen who regarded Chinese shouting as an insult and offensive and regarded such a Chinese as a bully and a weakling. "I am not your son" expressed employees' resentment of Chinese shouting and it revealed this respondent's stance, belief and ideology about power. In black South Africans' eyes, by shouting, Chinese abused their power as supervisors. These findings are underscored by the LCC theory of "separate person and issue" (Brew & Cairns 2004).

In addition, these findings are within the theoretical considerations of LPD or power tolerance cultures in that LPD culture claims "individuals assess authority in view of its perceived rightness" and "members of LPD cultures believe power should be used only when it is legitimate" (Anedo 2012; Guirdham, 1999). Answering interview question 10, one black South African interviewee (R6) told the researcher: "Chinese think they are the boss so they shout for respect. You shout for your reason. If I am not doing the wrong thing and you shout, I will not take it." Such attitudes to power from black South African respondents equally illustrate communication behaviour of an individualist/LCC/LPD culture as noted above (Guirdham 1999; Brew & Cairns 2004; Anedo 2012). It is clear that the Chinese culture to 'intermesh person and issue' constitutes a problem for black South Africans who would prefer to 'separate person and issue'.

Similar to black South Africans' complaints about 'Chinese shouting at workers in the workplace', they also complained about the lack of 'flat hierarchies and matrix organisations' in Chinese companies, saying that "Chinese are very much determined. If they say No, they mean it" (R1, open-ended question 3). This respondent's remarks resonated among his fellowmen R2, R4, R5, R6 and R8. The black South African respondents complained about the Chinese management under which they could not express their ideas equally and freely. This implied that these black South Africans experienced no satisfaction in their interactions with the Chinese. This finding reflected black South Africans' LPD culture, which prefers functional and unrestricted information flows; in this culture companies tend to have flat hierarchies and matrix organisations (Guirdham 1999). What the black South African respondents wanted was an organisational structure that facilitated the horizontal flow of skills and information. This also explains why black South Africans tried to 'defend their wrongdoing', as Chinese respondents complained. In fact it is not 'their wrongdoing' black South Africans tried to defend, but 'flat hierarchies and matrix organisations', which is of course a challenge to Chinese supervision and thus Chinese 'shouting' became an inevitable reaction. In Chinese eyes, supervisors' prestige/authority cannot be demonstrated through 'flat hierarchies and matrix organisations'. Clearly both 'shouting at workers in the workplace' and 'restricted information flows' are not consistent with the LPD culture, leading to contentious relationships.

As noted above, power is related to face and politeness. The findings revealed that black South Africans have different versions of 'face' or 'politeness'. According to them, it was hard to communicate with Chinese foremen because Chinese regarded black South Africans' straightforward communication as face-losing or impoliteness, while black South Africans regarded it as normal to speak their minds. Answering interview question 10, one black participant (R6) told the researcher: "Work, truth and rights should not make people (Chinese foremen) lose face." The tones, gestures and eye contact of the black South African respondents in the

interview conveyed their puzzlement about why speaking their minds made the Chinese lose face. These findings matched the LCC theories of Hall (1976) and Brew and Cairns (2004). It is noted that the black South Africans' face concern or politeness is different from that of HCC Chinese who "tend to be more indirect and more formal" and believe that "Words are not as important as context" (Hall 1976), as well as the Chinese politeness system described by Storz (1999). Storz (1999) claims that the way in which language is used, as well as the intonations of speech, and the ways people are addressed according to a status hierarchy are part of this politeness system. These findings support the researcher's proposition that Chinese and black South Africans have different versions of face and politeness. See Section 2.1 and Sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3.

It appeared that in Chinese supervisors' eyes 'Chinese shouting at local workers in the workplace' won them face, respect and showcased their high power. However, it planted the seed of a grudge among the black South African employees who complained about the Chinese not respecting them, as discussed above²⁹. It must be noted that black South Africans' lack of respect/deference to their Chinese bosses also really offended the Chinese and constituted a challenge to their supervision. Such problematic encounters simmered in their interactions, creating the potential of troubling situations for Chinese companies. The following story serves as demonstration: On 13 May 2016, a local worker had an accident while working for a Chinese company named New Era in Namibia and seriously injured himself. On the afternoon of the same day, the workers on that site and other sites of the company across the country went on strike, pouring out all their complaints about the company management, blaming the Chinese company for not respecting local workers, paying poor salaries and other mistreatment, which did not have any connection with the incident. In return, the Chinese management blamed local workers for not following the work regulations, unsatisfactory production and not honouring the supervisors' instructions (Coetzee 2016). The

²⁹ During the researcher's 15 years' working experience he often heard complaints from his African friends/trade unions who said that Chinese were very racist and did not show respect to Africans, which created tense relationships.

fact that the strike took place in such a short time illustrates that Chinese employers and their local employees had been in a problematic relationship for a long time and any small incident could cause big trouble.

5.4 High context communication vs low context communication

As Section 2.3.2 relates, HCC and LCC also describe a culture's style of communication and are closely connected with individualism-collectivism and face concern in Section 2.4.3. Different cultures employ different approaches to address their problems or conflicts, but this might create problems for another culture in intercultural encounters. See Sections 2.3.2 and 2.4.3.

The findings revealed that Chinese and black South Africans employ different conflict resolution approaches: Chinese prefer communication modes of HCC, whereas black South African employees prefer communication modes of LCC. For instance, Chinese attitudes to strikes are clear-cut: do not support them and adopt a sit-down-and-talk-about-complaints conflict style. These Chinese attitudes demonstrate that Chinese prefer collective harmony and prefer avoiding styles to resolve/address conflicts, which are typical communication modes of HCC. See Section 2.3.2.

This finding matches the theory of collectivism (Ting-Toomey 1999) and the theory of collectivist face and conflict styles of Ting-Toomey (2003) and Oetzel and Rahim in Ting-Toomey (2003), who claim that collectivism and interdependent self-construal led to other-and mutual face concerns; therefore, they prefer avoiding, obliging and integrating conflict styles. Also see Section 2.4.3. Both Confucians (philosophy of Confucius) and Taoists adopt a communication strategy of conformity, avoiding conflict and opposing extremism, preferring peace, harmony and compromise to address conflicts or problems. Black South Africans' striking or going to the Labour Court worsened conflict situations, since this behaviour is against the Chinese cultural doctrine. This view justifies the theories of Clyne

(1994:184) Burns (1998:47) and Li (1987:137) who claim that Confucian values lead to conformity being a central value in Chinese society, advocating collectivism, conformity, harmony, and avoiding conflict and extremism.

Furthermore, some Chinese respondents stated that black South Africans resorted to unnecessarily striking or going to the Labour Court, which made them feel disappointed because it caused them to lose face. This perception has a direct correlation with the theories of Li, Zhu and Li (2001), Young (1994:125) Gudykunst and Kim (1984:142) and Samovar and Porter (2003:9), who point out that the communication pattern Chinese adopt is regarded as reserved rather than boisterous (2003:9). This finding is further consistent with the HCC theory of Hall (1976) who claims that since these cultures are collectivist, they prefer group harmony and consensus to individual achievements. Group interests prevail over individual interests. To black South Africans, striking is a way to resolve their problems in Chinese companies, but it violates group harmony and consensus in Chinese eyes. According to the data, black South Africans have every reason to strike because people in LCC cultures value individualist goals and are governed by reason, while such strikes disappoint the Chinese because people in HCC cultures are governed by intuition or feelings. It is not hard to find that the two different attitudes to strikes are the cause of problematic encounters. Both Chinese and black South African cultures should therefore be held responsible for strikes.

Among black South African respondents, strong support for strikes was registered. This is consistent with the theory of individualism in that individualists employ a straightforward conflict style without looking at the big picture of the issue/the overall situation of the issue (Ting-Toomey, 1999), a typical communication mode of LCC. This finding also matches the theory of communication style of LeBaron (2003d) and the theory of individualist face and conflict style of Ting-Toomey (2003) and Oetzel and Rahim in Ting-Toomey (2003), who claim that individualism and independent self-construal cause self-face concerns, which result in dominating and competing conflict styles. As some black respondents said: "The salaries we

got from Chinese companies are not enough since prices of food increased. We strike because it is our right.” This logical, linear and action-oriented approach is in line with the LCC theory of Hall (1976), who claims that people from LCC backgrounds value logic, facts and directness. Solving a problem means lining up the facts and evaluating one after another. Decisions are based on facts rather than intuition, another communication mode of LCC. See also Section 2.3.2.

A striking difference in this respect is that Chinese are against strikes and apply a talk-rights approach, whereas black South Africans are in favour of strikes and apply a strike-rights approach. Furthermore, Chinese regard ‘resorting to strikes’ or ‘going to the Labour Court’ as confrontational, thus escalating conflicts. This finding is consistent with the views of Brew and Cairns (2004:333) and LeBaron (2003d), who claim LCC speakers may help prevent misunderstandings, but LCC speakers can also escalate conflicts because they are more confrontational than HCC speakers.

The findings that Chinese are against striking and black South Africans are in favour of it also confirm the theoretical assumption of harmony Li, Zhu and Li (2001) and Young (1994:125) claim. According to them, in Chinese eyes giving others face (‘mianzi’) is harmonious, while making others look bad is not. The data disclosed that blacks’ striking or going to the Labour Department made Chinese supervisors look bad and lose face. Gudykunst and Kim (1984:142) claim that collectivists tend to be concerned with the overall emotional quality of interaction rather than with individualist explicit messages such as the meanings of a contract or certain specifications of labour law.

Most Chinese respondents complained that black South Africans never considered the current economic situation and high unemployment rates in South Africa when they went on strike. The situation and environment of communication behaviour are important aspects of context in Chinese culture. That explains why this study found significant results from close-ended statement 10, interview question 9 and

open-ended questions 4, 5 and 6, which also demonstrated Chinese HCC and collectivism. The importance of context in communication is in line with the contextual theories of Anderson et al. (2002), Burns (1998) and Adair and Brett (2005), who claim that the culture's information in high-context situations is integrated from multi-layered contexts such as the environment, situation and nonverbal cues. In Chinese eyes, economic and employment situations are important considerations in job seeking and decision making in relation to employment. Thus, to accept work with a low salary or accept unindustrialised practices without complaint is better than nothing, a perception generally adopted by HCC and collectivist Chinese. As such, an inference could tentatively be drawn that there is a link between Chinese HCC and collectivism and the unindustrialised/low standard treatment of black South African employees. In view of the above, unindustrialised treatment of black South African employees would not be resolved by simply following South African labour law, as some people have proposed. See Sections 1.3 and 1.4. The cultural cause thereof should be looked at and considered instead, to cultivate cultural awareness and find a resolution.

However, this study did find from the data (close-ended statement 10, interview question 9 and open-ended questions 4, 5 and 6) that some black South African respondents would not resort to striking or would accept employment without complaining even if they were not comfortable or happy with the employers because having a job was better than no job. The reason for such change of perception is SA's poor economic conditions and high unemployment rate, in which situational factors reduce problematic intercultural interactions instead of creating them. This finding has been complemented by some Chinese interviewees who informed the researcher that the current economic situation and high unemployment rates had stabilised the labour market and the number of both strikes and complaints from the local workers had been reduced to a certain extent. Contrary to the claim by Blommaert (1998) that a situational context in which concrete interactions occur might "trigger ethnic style" or culturally marked aspects of communicative behaviour, a situational factor might be a reducer of problematic

intercultural communication, as noted in this study.

The literature review, the data and findings reveal that individualist/rights oriented people are LCC inclined and also have high sensitivity to law. On the other hand, the literature review, the data and findings reveal that collectivists are HCC inclined and also have low sensitivity to law. As such, sensitivity to law is tentatively regarded as a parameter of HCC/LCC in this study.

5.5 Long-term orientation vs short-term orientation

As the findings revealed, Chinese and black South Africans differed in terms of attitudes to time, which is in line with the expectations regarding attitudes to time and problematic encounters. This also resonates with LeBaron (2003d) and Samovar and Porter (2003), who state that time is one of the most central differences that separate cultures and cultural ways of doing things and could be problematic during intercultural interaction. According to the findings, Chinese have a long-term orientation, which corresponds to the theories of Guirdham (1999), Anderson et al. (2002) Ting-Toomey (1999), Brew and Cairns (2004) and Storz (1999), while black South Africans have a short-term orientation, which corresponds to the theories of Livermore (2013), Anedo (2012), Mbiti (1990) and Matondo (2012), who claim that the “African time dimension is related to social activities.”

As Chinese respondents complained, black South Africans would not return to work the day after they had been paid until they had spent their money. This reveals that they do not have saving habits. This is also true of Namibian black employees. As Chinese respondents and black South African respondents commented: “black South Africans only care [for] and enjoy what they have today.” This finding is supported by Anedo (2012), who claims that people from short-term cultures would love to maximise present rewards. The researcher encountered a scenario as a demonstration. When the researcher asked a close friend why he

had resigned his government job and worked for a private company, he simply answered: "More money." To a further question on how he would benefit from his current more highly paid job if the company dismissed him or stopped operating, he laughed and said: "I did not think about it." The researcher is aware of many such cases. This is consistent with the claim that African people want to maximise present rewards and are less prone to saving (Anedo 2012).

Another Chinese complaint about black South Africans is that black people are 'lazy' and have poor efficiency/are unproductive. Worth noting is that black South African respondents also admitted that they believed in "no hurry/being patient in Africa". Participating in or experiencing an event is more important than the final results. This finding is underpinned by the theory of Mbiti (1990:22), who claims that micro-time is meaningful to the individual or the community only through their participation in it or experiencing it and to African people, "time is meaningful at the point of an event and not at the mathematical moment." Thus going to work does not necessarily mean productivity. No productivity is the main reason Chinese supervisors paid low salaries or made deductions from black employees' salaries or dismissed them, which have caused numerous labour disputes according to this study and the researcher's own experience/knowledge. Blacks' 'no productivity' also explains why skill transfer became an issue, as reported.

The researcher has another scenario in Namibia to offer as illustration. In 2012, the researcher went to Namibian Steel Force, a steel material supplier, to load steel bars. Seeing one black worker carrying only two light steel bars and slowly approaching the truck, he asked: "Why not carry more and walk fast? I have 700 kilometres to drive from here." The worker looked at the researcher and said: "If I complete the work (as you suggest), what will I do next? Be patient. I will finish it." Africans' poor efficiency or lack of urgency has triggered anger in Chinese employers who emotionally criticised the black South Africans for only wanting better salaries, but not thinking about their work efficiency/productivity: "Why do they not ask themselves how much work they can complete?" is a question always used by the Chinese when a trade union or the Labour Department has a case

against Chinese companies. Black South Africans' work ethics of disappearing from the workplace after payday and their lack of urgency are some of the main reasons Chinese supervisors deduct money from their employees' salaries and dismiss them. Of course, black South African employees often raise objections against such punishment, leading to contentious relationships between the two groups.

According to the findings, black South Africans' complaints about Chinese employers in terms of working conditions are also due to their short-term orientation. While seven out of eight Chinese "would accept a job with little pay", as reflected in interview question 9, the majority of black South African respondents refused to accept it. This result corresponds to the findings of close-ended statements 8 and 10. It is clear that black South Africans just want to maximise their present rewards. This finding falls under the short-term orientation theory of Anedo (2012) and "no-future" time concept theory of Mbiti (1990:16). Given long-term orientation, Chinese would adopt a holistic view of situations in job seeking and decision making in relation to employment. Thus, Chinese would accept unindustrialised practices without complaint because it is better than nothing, a perception generally adopted by Chinese job seekers. This cultural difference explains why black Africans complained about unindustrialised practices of Chinese companies, which often triggered serious labour disputes, often with trade unions/governments intervening in such disputes, as broadly reported in the media.

Striking is a contentious issue among international concerns. That Chinese and black South Africans differ about strikes also reveals two different attitudes to time. According to the long-term orientation theory of Guirdham (1999:65) and Storz (1999:121) and theories of collectivism and face of Ting-Toomey (2003) and Oetzel (2003:140), collectivism and interdependent self-construal led to other-and-mutual face concerns, which would lead to the application of avoiding and integrating conflict styles. Chinese would consider the following before striking: Will

a strike cause me to lose my job? Will a strike break the relationships between employers and employees? Will a strike make the company/boss lose face? Can my problems be resolved through other means instead of striking? This means that striking would be the last resort.

However, a majority of black South Africans support strikes, regarding striking as their right. 'Strike for money and rights' is their sole aim. To them, striking is a quick approach to get money. These findings are consistent with the short-term orientation theory of Anedo (2012) and Guirdham (1999:65) and theories of individualism and face of Ting-Toomey (2003) and Oetzel (2003:140), who state that individualism and independent self-construal cause self-face concerns and is likely to lead to dominating and competing conflict styles, which are against the Chinese culture of harmony. Also see Section 4.3. It is clear that striking or not striking is determined by cultural factors.

As indicated in the existing literature, many scholars in China-Africa studies claimed that 'labour law is the best way to solve the tense labour issues in Chinese companies' (close-ended questionnaire). The data from the open-ended and interview questions, however, provided no support for this view. Nevertheless, the findings of close-ended statement 6 from Chinese respondents appeared to agree that labour law is the best resolution option, which was against the researcher's expectation. A follow-up inquiry revealed that Chinese respondents had some complaints about their bosses regarding salaries and other treatment. Thus they voiced their complaints by means of supporting the statement though they did not lodge their complaints as the local workers did, by striking or going to the Labour Court. The importance of this finding is its support for the proposition that Chinese regard group interests as more important and adopt HPD, HCC and long-term orientation in their approach to address complaints.

On the African side, 60% of black South African respondents disagreed with this statement, which was also against the researcher's expectation. As the data

indicated, the high unemployment rate compelled them not to use labour law as a tool or to strike or approach the Labour Court as often as before. Though the findings are contrary to other findings derived from the data of other close/open-ended and interview questionnaires, the importance of these findings lies in their demonstration that certain situations can reduce the potential of problematic encounters between two different cultures, as mentioned above. See Section 5.4. It is clear that the behaviour inspired by the short-term culture of black South Africans, such as 'disappearing from the workplace after payday', 'lack of urgency', 'poor efficiency'/'no productivity' or 'failure to consider the aftermath of strikes' is contrary to that of the long-term culture of the Chinese, who would take action (low pay or salary deduction or dismissal) to punish them, thus contributing to the problematic encounters between them.

5.6 Contributions of this research

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, because no research on this topic is reported in the literature, this study bridges the gap by investigating the cultural causes of the problematic encounters between Chinese nationals and black South Africans. Under the theoretical guidance of intercultural communication, this study represents the first attempt of its kind to conduct research on real-life interaction between Chinese nationals and black South Africans, demonstrating their cultural differences and claiming that such differences are the root causes of their problematic encounters. This study offers preliminary insights into how situational and contextual factors served to compare, infer and identify the cultural differences between Chinese nationals and black South Africans. The results obtained in this study may be considered useful resources and references for the intercultural communication research programme between Chinese and Africans.

Secondly, under the 'face' category, this study identified five sub-themes of face, namely prestige face, interaction face, relationship face, respect face and mutual

face. Among these, prestige face could constitute most problems for people from individualist cultures when they conduct business interactions with Chinese, an insightful finding of Chinese face concern in business relationship. Another new finding in this study is that 'sensitivity to the law' or attitudes to law were regarded as a parameter of HCC/LCC theory. As the literature review and the findings demonstrated, contextual communication, individualism-collectivism, power index and attitudes to time are closely interwoven. That is, Chinese respondents were found to be collectivist, HPD and long-term oriented and to have low sensitivity to SA labour law. On the other hand, black South African respondents were found to have high sensitivity to SA labour law and to be individualist and have LPD and short-term orientations. The findings of 'prestige face' and 'high/low sensitivity to law' enrich researchers' understanding of cultural variables of both Chinese and black South Africans and extend the knowledge of existent theories of face and contextual communication.

Thirdly, this study extends our understanding and/or knowledge of the cultural dimensions of black South Africans. It is noted that the findings of this study are contrary to the claim by a number of researchers in relation to black South African communalism/collectivism (Anedo 2012; Matondo 2012; Livermore 2013; Li 2014). Instead, this study has found that most black South Africans in the sample are more individualist inclined. On the issue of PDI, some researchers, such as LeBaron (2003c), Broodryk (2002) and Matondo (2012), studied the African traditional culture of respect for elders and traditional authority, while others, such as Mbigi and Maree, 1995, Nyasani in Lassiter (2000) and Mbiti (1990), claimed that Africa has gone through fundamental changes from its traditional power system to its present one. Yet only this study has made use of research data exposing the LPD inclination of black South African respondents. Likewise, in relation to HCC/LCC, Livermore (2013), Prime (2010), Thomas (2008), Matondo (2012) and LeBaron (2003c) acknowledged that Africans/black South Africans were HCC or weakly HCC, but none of them claimed that black South Africans were LCC oriented, as the data of this study indicated. That a majority of black

South African respondents have been identified in this study as more LPD and more LCC oriented is another meaningful finding worth referring to in any discussion of black South Africans' power index and contextual culture.

Fourthly, as a pilot study, this research combined the four dimensions and three communication strategies to explore their contributions to problematic encounters between Chinese nationals and black South Africans in the interest of accurate identification and interpretation of the cultural behaviour of interlocutors. This study regards this approach as a meaningful initiative in research on intercultural interactions. Given the dialectical and functional connection of the cultural variables in respect of problematic intercultural communication, a systematic and dialectical view of these cultural factors is required to identify and interpret the cultural behaviour of interlocutors. To illustrate this, black South Africans' strong sense of rights and their dominant conflict style demonstrate a dialectical and functional association of individualism, LCC, LPD and short-term orientation, as revealed in the data. Therefore, if the data obtained from one question, for instance, demonstrated that black South Africans were collectivist or HPD oriented, such findings cannot be taken as final and conclusive. Instead, a view of the overall findings of questionnaires should be in place to determine cultural identification. See Section 4.3.2. This is also true of Chinese. For instance, a result obtained from the data of close-ended question 6 cannot be taken as a conclusive finding that Chinese have high sensitivity to the law, since an overall perspective of Chinese cultural dimensions has demonstrated that Chinese do not have high, but rather low sensitivity to the law. An overall view of findings to identify a cultural dimension matches the theoretical framework of the system-thinking approach and dialectical approach (Blommaert 1998; Flammia & Sadri 2011), which requires that one examines issues from multiple and overall perspectives to gain a holistic view.

To sum up, the findings support the researcher' original propositions that Chinese and black South Africans differ in terms of cultural dimensions in respect of individualism-collectivism, PDI, contextual communication and attitudes to time, as

noted in Chapter 2. That is, Chinese are strongly collectivist and belong to strong HPD, HCC and long-term orientation cultures, whereas black South Africans are more individualist and belong to more LPD, LCC and short-term oriented cultures. It was also found that these differences are at the root of their problematic encounters, such as Chinese shouting at employees, dismissing them and making deductions from the salaries of black South African employees and black South African employees striking for money/rights and going to the Labour Department, among others. This has been supported by the theoretical considerations of the existing literature. This study has tentatively achieved its results in respect of cultural differences and contributes to a better understanding of the problematic encounters in a South African context. I believe that the preliminary findings obtained from the miniscule sample may provide some basic data for intercultural communication failure between Chinese and Africans at large using the cultural dimensions as potential causes.

Chapter 6

Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

As an important part of Sino-African relations, the China-South African relationship is complementary in terms of socio-economic growth. In that spirit, such a mutually beneficial relationship should be sustained for generations to come. However, while China's increased engagement with the African continent presented an opportunity for a valuable contribution to Africa's growth and development, it simultaneously presented a challenge, especially for Chinese companies in Africa, resulting in Africans' resentment of China's presence. Complaints about Chinese behaviour in Africa are often highlighted in the media with accusations of Chinese violating African employees' rights, poor working conditions, poor salaries and not necessarily transferring skills to African workers, among others (French 2014; Hunt 2013). These problems, caused by the different cultural perceptions and behaviour discussed in Chapter 5, have become conspicuous and constitute a potential challenge to China-Africa and China-SA relations (Baah & Jauch 2009).

Chinese companies in construction industries particularly experience great challenges. China's apparent lack of concern for human and labour rights has come under attack from unions and other civil society organisations (Baah & Jauch 2009; French 2014) and Chinese ambassadors in African countries have called upon Chinese companies to follow local culture, norms and customs and to abide by the local labour laws.

Generally speaking, culture actively influences how countries do business. According to Hofstede (2001) and LeBaron (2003d), there is a heightened chance of misunderstanding, miscommunication and mismanagement in intercultural communication, of which damage to business and personal interests can be the end result, if people are not well acquainted with one another's norms, values,

rules of life and communicative preferences. Hence, embracing problem resolution without a critical look at cultural dimensions may cause them to miss some important clues (LeBaron 2003d).

The existing literature includes a number of substantial studies contributing to knowledge of Chinese cultural dimensions (Burns 1998; Gao & Ting-Toomey 1998; Lee-Wong 2002; Spencer-Oatey & Jian 2003; Samovar & Porter 2003; Schwartz et al. 2010; Livermore 2013). Very little research has been done on black South African/African cultural dimensions, apart from a few studies on African historical events, changes and African traditional cultures (Mbiti 1990; Khoza 1994; Mbigi & Maree 1995; Harding 1998; Gbadegesin 1998; Broodryk 2002; LeBaron 2003c; Anedo 2012; Matondo 2012; Livermore 2013). Lack of relevant literature on African cultural dimensions was itself a challenge to this study, but the biggest challenge was that there was virtually no research examining cultural dimensions as potential causes of problematic encounters, which constituted an important research gap and justified the present study. Worth noting and worrisome is that Chinese scholars, who could have addressed the problematic encounters and provided an appropriate resolution system for Chinese companies in Africa, only offered some suggestions and reasoning with regard to the problematic encounters. However, as this study found, such suggestions by Chinese scholars and the limited studies noted above have offered resolutions to the problematic encounters.

This study was designed with a view to understanding and providing an explanation of the problematic communication situations posed in the research questions by means of data-gathering strategies of individual in-depth interviews and structured and non-structured questionnaires. In so doing, this study attempted to investigate the problematic encounters in a constructive and unbiased manner, identify their causes and propose a resolution.

The original propositions of this study aimed to establish whether Chinese and black South Africans demonstrated different cultural dimensions in general in terms of individualism-collectivism, PDI, contextual communication and attitudes to time

and whether all the differences were the root causes of the problematic encounters in the building industry in Johannesburg. This study found that Chinese and black South Africans in the study sample did demonstrate different cultural dimensions in respect of individualism-collectivism, PDI, contextual communication, attitudes to time (the Chinese demonstrated collectivist, HPD, HCC and long-term orientations while black South Africans demonstrated individualist, LPD, LCC and short-term orientations) and such differences gave rise to different behaviour, which in turn contributed to problematic encounters in the building industry in Johannesburg. The study further found that the different cultural dimensions were at the root of the labour-related conflicts between Chinese nationals and black South Africans in the building industry in Johannesburg and that simply abiding by the South African labour laws could not address the problems appropriately and effectively. The findings of this study have supported the researcher's initial propositions. The data revealed that the majority of Chinese respondents are likely to be categorised under a culture of low sensitivity to law, placing group interests first, applying an integrating/compromising conflict style, having high consciousness of hierarchy and a long-term attitude, as well as liking to shout at local workers in the workplace. In contrast, most black South African respondents are likely to be categorised into a culture of high sensitivity to law, placing individual interests first, having worrisome work ethics/attitudes, applying a dominating conflict style and having low consciousness of hierarchy and a short-term attitude. In other words, different cultural dimensions contribute to the problematic encounters, tense labour relations and Chinese 'unfair labour practices', including Chinese shouting at and dismissing local employees, and black South Africans' strikes and going to the Labour Department, among others.

The findings extend the researchers' understanding of the cultural dimensions of black South Africans. This study has found that black South Africans in the study sample are mostly individualist, at most weakly collectivist, and belong to LPD and LCC cultures. That black South Africans are individualist or weakly collectivist is contrary to the claim by a number of researchers in terms of black South African

communalism/collectivism (Anedo 2012; Matondo 2012; Livermore 2013) and in particular Chinese scholar Li (2014), who claims that China and Africa have similar cultural traits.

These findings are also contrary to the claims by researchers regarding African cultures of PDI and contextual communication, as discussed in this study. While LeBaron (2003 c), Broodryk (2002), Livermore (2013) and Matondo (2012) claim that there is an African traditional culture of respect for elders and traditional authority, Nyasani in Lassiter (2000) and Mbiti (1990) counterclaim that Africa has gone through fundamental changes from its traditional power system to its present one. None of them provides data or evidence to demonstrate and claim that black South Africans belong to an LPD culture, as this study does.

On the issue of HCC/LCC, Livermore (2013), Prime (2010) and Thomas (2008) agree that black South Africans are HCC oriented. Matondo (2012) and LeBaron (2003c), however, regard Africans in general as strongly LCC, while Prime (2010) claims white South Africans belong to the LCC group. Yet there was no claim in the literature that black South Africans are LCC, as this study has tentatively claimed. That black South Africans have been identified in this study as LPD and LCC is another contribution this research has made to the existing literature. All in all, given the nature and findings of this research, this study is a contribution to better understanding of the Chinese and black South African cultures.

The findings of this study mirror the rising importance of cultivating cultural awareness among different cultural groups. Given the important roles cultural variables play in the problematic encounters discussed in this study, cultivating cultural awareness of African cultural dimensions would assist Chinese companies, policymakers and even the Chinese government to reassess their broad stereotypes and adopt up-to-date views of African culture. Given the cultural differences between Chinese and black South Africans, it is especially important for Chinese individuals working in Africa to be aware of such differences in order

to accommodate and respect Africans' communication behaviour and take into account Africans' habits and mannerisms, to reduce problematic encounters. This also applies to Africans in relation to Chinese. In so doing, confidence in dealing with behaviour characteristic of an alien culture will grow and cultural intelligence will be cultivated, according to Earley and Mosakowski (2004), who claim that confidence is always rooted in mastery of a particular task or set of circumstances.

The first major practical implication of the present research is that it provides much needed answers for both Chinese and black South Africans to understand the root causes of their problematic interactions better. For the sake of real-life practice and the benefit of the companies whose employees completed the questionnaires, the findings of this study will be communicated to the managements of the companies for them to refer to in their management regulations and policy making on labour-related issues. This study also provides indications to government authorities from both sides on cultural contributions to the problematic interactions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce and Trade in China and some South African government authorities concerned will be notified of the findings of this study by means of publication or direct communication from the researcher in the expectation of making them aware of the cultural differences this study has found and the importance of these in problematic encounters. The findings of this study could be referred to in their communication. It is also envisaged that the problematic encounters caused by Chinese shouting, dismissal of local workers, unindustrialised practices, face and dignity concerns and black South Africans' strikes, poor efficiency, strong rights concern etc. will not be interpreted and judged as a symbol of Chinese new colonialism in Africa. It is likely that such problematic encounters could be reduced to a certain extent and even avoided if the parties concerned are equipped with the findings of this study. Thus, the results should be applicable to a wide population that is interested in Sino-Africa relations.

On the basis of the analysis, interpretation and judgement of the findings of this study, other research projects would benefit from this study in terms of the

theoretical considerations this study has established and in terms of the research design and methodologies it has employed. These findings may have reference value for intercultural communication between the Chinese and others who share cultural similarities with Africans and would sensitise the role players involved in interaction problems. As the ancient Chinese proverb says: 'Those who understand others as well as themselves will be granted success in a thousand encounters'. The findings of this study could also be used by other stakeholders to draw lessons and as reference material in CQ training programmes in China and South Africa. Cultural conflicts could thus be reduced and avoided in the interest of creating a peaceful and successful intercultural communication channel.

This study has met its expectation as initially set out and demonstrated that cultural dimensions have played a crucial role in labour-related conflicts between Chinese nationals and black South Africans in the building industry in Johannesburg. It is broadly claimed in political and economic circles (Ford 2013; Olander 2003) that to avoid labour-related problems Chinese companies should "simply abide by the labour laws/regulations in South Africa" or "ensure that there is sufficient local content and that local labour will be hired and trained, so that Africans benefit more." This study has established that such claims are unlikely to produce the desired results to remedy and mend the cracks in the China-SA relationship. In recognition of this, more consideration should therefore be given to the exploration of cultural variables and cultural interpretations in terms of work attitudes, attitudes to labour law and regulations, and human/labour rights when one addresses the international concerns and outcries about the Chinese presence in Africa. This understanding is extremely important, since biased and prejudiced comments and misunderstandings about labour-related issues in Chinese companies could probably be avoided, a new working relationship between Chinese employers and African employees could be established and a sound sustainable relationship between China and SA could be maintained for generations to come.

Shih (2013) claims that there is less excitement about China from the African side.

(South) Africans' resentment about Chinese engagements in Africa, especially perceptions about China's "soft power" affects the socio-political contexts of Chinese engagements in Africa. Such resentment has an impact on how (South) Africans respond to Chinese businesses and authority. The problematical encounters investigated in this study constituted an inevitable part of (South) Africans' resentment of China's presence. However, the findings of this study clearly signpost the possible causes of this phenomenon and hence would help improve to a certain extent socio-political contexts of Chinese engagements in Africa, which would further facilitate intercultural communication between Chinese nationals and black South Africans. It becomes evident that the existent theories of four dimensions, three communication strategies and theoretical inferences thereof can be applied to resolve the communication problems in the non-Western contexts of China and Africa, furthermore helping to construct a beneficial socio-political relationship between China and Africa at large.

6.2 Limitations and recommendations

While this study offers relevant insights into the roles of cultural dimensions in problematic interactions, it has some limitations that necessitate further investigation. The limitations of this study include that this research is only an in-depth study into a very tiny aspect of the field, involving a limited number of participants. Therefore, the findings might not represent all (black South) Africans and Chinese in terms of their cultural behaviour and their roles in cultural miscommunication. It would be relevant in future studies to obtain data from multiple sources, such as education, agriculture and mining, where Chinese and South Africans interact increasingly. This is because broader sampling will avoid difficulties in getting the required number of African employees to satisfy the education criteria, as in the case of this study.

Inconsistency in the findings of close-ended questions 2, 4, 5 and the findings of open-ended questions 2, 4, 5 and 6, interview questions 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 and other close-ended questions 1, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10 indicates that the design of close-

ended questions had some shortcomings. Certain wordings/expressions in close-ended questionnaires were not appropriate. For example, “abiding by” is difficult for black South African employees to understand. The Chinese version of Statement 5 is also misleading to careless respondents, because the Chinese equivalent of ‘authority’ looks and sounds like ‘rights’. This could be the reason why over 50% of Chinese respondents ticked the neutral selection, with 40% ticking ‘agree’ and 2.5% ‘disagree’.

Given the contradictory responses from the close-ended questionnaire in this study, more interviews should be beneficial, because it is easier to manage face-to-face interviews than close/open-ended questionnaires and thus prevent potential misinterpretation of interview questions, as happened in the close-ended questionnaire. It would also be relevant in future studies to carry out a pilot study to identify potential problems. Since the existing literature gives a general account of African cultures, it is finally recommended that future work should focus on building industries in more African countries in different regions across the continent.

Bibliography:

Adair, WL & Brett, JM 2005, 'The negotiation dance: Time, culture and behavioural sequences in negotiation', *Organisation Science*, vol.16, no.1, pp. 33-51.

Anderson, PA Hecht.ML, Hoobler, GD & Smallwood, M 2002, 'Nonverbal communication across cultures' in W. B. Gudykunst & B. Mody, (eds), *Handbook of international and intercultural communication*, pp. 89-106. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Angula, N. 2014, 'I am because you are', *The Namibian*, 7 Nov 2014, p.6.

Bennett, MJ (ed) 1998, *Basic concepts of intercultural communication*, Yarmouth: Intercultural Press.

Blunt, P. & Jones, M.L 1992, *Managing Organisations in South Africa*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin.

Brew, FP & Cairns, DR 2004, 'Do cultural or situational constraints determine choices of direct or indirect styles in intercultural workplace conflict?', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 28, no.5, pp. 331.-352.

Broodryk, J 2002, *Ubuntu Life lessons from Africa*, Ubuntu School of Philosophy, Pretoria, South Africa.

Burns, R 1998, *Doing business in Asia: A cultural perspective*, Addison-Wesley Longman Australia Pty Ltd, Melbourne.

Collier, MJ 1989, 'Cultural and intercultural communication competence: Current approaches and directions for future research', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 13, no.3, pp.287-302

Clyne, M 1994, *Intercultural communication at work: cultural values in discourse*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Coetzee, Y 2016, 'Workers on strike over site accident', *The Namibian*, 13 May 2016, p.3.

French, HW 2014, *China's Second Continent: How a million migrates are building a new empire in Africa*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

Gao, G. & Ting-Toomey, S 1998, *Communicating effectively with the Chinese*, Sage Publications Thousand Oaks.

Gbadegesin, S 1998, 'Yoruba Philosophy: Individual, Community, and the Moral Order' in Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, (ed), *African Philosophy and Anthology*, pp. 130-140. Blackwell Publisher Ltd.

Geertz, C 1973, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books, New York, NY.

Goffman, E 1967, *Interaction ritual: Essays in face-to-face behaviour*, Garden City, NY: Anchor. Google Scholar.

Goldman, A 1994, *Doing business with Japanese*, State University of New York Press, Albany.

Gudykunst, WB & Kim, YY 1984, *Communicating with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA.

Gudykunst, WB (ed) 2003, *Cross-cultural and intercultural communication*, Sage Publications, London.

Guirdham, M 1999, *Communication across cultures*, Palgrave, New York.

Halmari, H 1993, 'Intercultural business telephone conversation: A case of Finns versus Anglo-Americans', *Applied Linguistics*, vol.14, no.4, pp. 408-30.

Hall, E 1976, *Beyond culture*, Doubleday, New York.

Hammer, MR 2005, 'The intercultural conflict style inventory: A conceptual framework and measure of intercultural conflict resolution approaches', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol.29, no.6, pp. 675-695.

Harding, S 1998, 'The Curious Coincidence of Feminine and African Moralities' in Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, (ed), *African Philosophy and Anthology*, pp. 360-372. Blackwell Publisher Ltd.

He, AW 2003, 'Discourse analysis' in M Aronoff and J Rees-Miller, (eds), *The handbook of linguistics*, pp. 428-445. Blackwell, Oxford.

Hofstede, G 1984a, *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA.

Hofstede, G 1984b, 'National cultures and corporate cultures' in LA Samovar & RE Porter, (Eds.), *Communication between Cultures*, Wadsworth Belmont, CA.

Hofstede, GH 2001, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations*, 2nd ed. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Kroeber, AL & Kluckhohn, C 1952, *Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions*. Harvard University Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology Papers 47.

- Lee-Wong, SM 2002, 'Contextualizing intercultural communication and sociopragmatic choices' *Multilingual*, vol.20, no.1, pp. 79-99.
- Li, ZH 1987, *An introduction to Chinese civilization*, China Culture Books Publishing House, Beijing.
- Li, W, Zhu, H & Y Li, Y 2001, 'Interpersonal harmony and textual coherence in Chinese business interaction', *Multilingual*, vol.20, no 3, pp. 285-310.
- Lim, TS 2003, 'Language and verbal communication across-cultures' in WB Gudykunst, (ed), *Cross-cultural and intercultural communication*, pp. 54-71. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Lim, T & Bowers, J 1991, 'Face-work: solidarity, approbation, and tact', *Human Communication Research*, vol.17, no 3, pp. 415-450.
- Livermore, D A 2013, *Expand your borders: discover ten cultural clusters (CQ Insight Series Book 1)* , Cultural Intelligence Center, Michigan, Available from: Kindle Edition.
- Mbigi, L & Maree, J 1995, *The Spirit of African Transformation Management*, Knowledge Resource, Johannesburg.
- Mbiti, JS 1990, *African religions and philosophy*, Heinemann Education Publisher, Oxford.
- Mirjaliisa, C 1996, 'Business negotiations: interdependence between discourse and business relationship', *English for specific purpose*, vol.15, no.1, pp.19-36.
- Okonkwo, R L 1998, 'Cultural Nationalism in the Colonial Period' in Emmanuel

Chunkwudi Eze, (ed), *African Philosophy and Anthology*, pp. 255-258.
Blackwell Publisher Ltd.

Piller, I 2011, *Intercultural communication: A critical introduction*, Edinburgh University Press Ltd, Edinburgh.

Redding, GS & Ng, M 1982, 'The role of "face" in the organisational perceptions of Chinese managers', *Organisation Studies* vol.3,no.3, pp. 201-219.

Samovar, LA & Porter, RE 2003, 'Understanding intercultural communication: An introduction and overview' in LA Samovar and RE Porter, (eds), 2003. *Intercultural Communication: A reader*, pp. 6-17.Thomson, Wadsworth.

Schneider-Waterberg, E 2016, 'Harambee vs Ubuntu', *The Namibian*, 13 May 2016. p 12.

Spencer-Oatey, H & Jian, XY 2003, 'Managing rapport in intercultural business interactions: a comparison of two Chinese-British welcome meetings', *Journal of Intercultural Studies* , vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 33-46.

Storz, ML 1999, 'Malay and Chinese values underlying the Malaysian business culture', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol.23,no.1, pp. 117-131.

Taylor, I 2006, *China and Africa: Engagement and Compromise*, Routledge, London.

Ting-Toomey, S 1993, 'Communicative Resourcefulness – An Identity Negotiation Perspective' in RL Wiseman & J Koester, (eds.), *Intercultural Communication Competence*, pp. 73-115. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA.

Ting-Toomey, S 1999, *Communicating across cultures*, Guilford Press, New York and London.

Ting-Toomey, S & Oetzel, JG 2003, 'Cross-cultural face concerns and conflict styles: Current status and future directions' in WB Gudykunst, (ed), *Cross-cultural and intercultural communication*, pp.127-147. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Wierzbicka, A 2003, *Cross-cultural pragmatics: The semantics of human interaction*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.

Internet Sources

Abuodha, J & Simiyu-Wafukho,S 2008, *China- Africa Civil Society Dialogue*.

Available from:

http://www.hbfha.com/downloads/China-AfricanCivilSocietyDialogue_-_Proceedings.pdf. [19 October 2010].

Aneas, M A, & Sandín, M P 2009, *Intercultural and Cross-Cultural Communication Research: Some Reflections about Culture and Qualitative Methods*. Available from: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0901519>. [23 April 2016].

Anedo, O 2012, China - Africa culture differences in business relations.

African Journal of Political Science and International Relations, vol.6, no.4, pp. 92-96. Available from:

<http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/AJPSIR/article-full-text-pdf/04AE10840514>. [23 March 2016].

Aneja, A 2015, *China unveils details of ambitious Silk Road plans*. Available from:

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/china-unveils-details-of-ambitious-silk-road-plans/article7048921.ece>. [2 February 2016].

Agwu, F A 2011, *Shared Values in Africa's Integration and Unity*.

Africa Review, vol. 3, no.1, pp.1-15. Available from:

<http://www.au.int/en/sharedvalues>. [23 November 2015].

Baah, A Y and Jauch, H 2009, *Chinese Investment in Africa: A Labour Perspective*.

Available from:

http://www.fnv.nl/binary/report2009_chinese_investments_in_africa_tcm7-23663.pdf. [19 January 2010].

Bate, SC 1998, *Inculturation in South Africa*. Available from:

<http://home.worldonline.co.za/~20058871/Inculturation%20in%20South%20Africa.htm> [1 February 2010].

Blommaert, J 1998, *Different approaches to intercultural communication: A critical survey*. Available from:

<http://www.cie.ugent.be/CIE/blommaert1.htm>. [27 February 2016].

Brautigam, D 2015, *Five (5) myths about Chinese investment in Africa*. Available from: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/12/04/5-myths-about-chinese-investment-in-africa/>. [23 February 2016].

BusinessReport n.d., *'BRICKS viewed as new imperialists'*, Available from:

BRICKS viewed as new imperialists

<http://www.iol.co.za/business/international/brics-viewed-as-new-imperialists-in-africa-1.1492188>. [15 Dec 2017].

Chasi, C 2015, *Ubuntu and Freedom of Expression: Considering Children and Broadcast News Violence in a Violent Society*. Available from:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23736992.2015.1020378>. [15 Dec 2017].

Chasi, C 2016, *Provisional notes on ubuntu for journalists covering war*. Available from: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1748048516642730>. [15 Dec 2017].

Cheng, T 2013, *Jealousy and hatred leads to someone's advocating China's new colonialism in Africa*. Available from: <http://news.sohu.com/20130330/n371006595.shtml>. [31 March 2013].

Cornell, D & Marle, KV 2005, *Exploring ubuntu: Tentative reflections*. Available from: <http://www.ahrlj.up.ac.za/cornell-d-van-marle-k>. [17 Dec 2017].

Cottle, E 2014, 'Chinese Construction Companies in Africa: A Challenge for Trade Unions'. Available from: <http://column.global-labour-university.org/2014/07/chinese-construction-companies-in.html>. [17 Dec 2017].

The Hofstede Centre n.d., *Countries*. Available from: <http://geert-hofstede.com/china.html>. [26 January 2010].

Earley, PC & Mosakowski, E 2004, *Cultural intelligence*. Available from: <https://hbr.org/2004/10/cultural-intelligence/ar/1>. [26 June 2016].

Edinger, H Herman, H & Jasson, J 2008 *New Impulses from the South: China's Engagement of Africa*. Available from: http://www.ccs.org.za/downloads/CCS_-_New_Impulses_from_the_South_-_May_08.pdf. [2 February 2010].

Flammia, M & Sadri, HA 2011, University of Central Florida, Florida, USA *US-China Education Review*, vol.8, no.1, pp. 103-109. Available from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED519428.pdf>. [1 March 2016].

Ford, P 2013, *As China's Xi Jinping visits, Africa asks: What are we getting out of this?* Available from:

<http://news.yahoo.com/chinas-xi-jinping-visits-africa-asks-getting-143051966.html>. [26 March 2013].

Gettleman, J 2013, *China leader tries to calm African fears of his country economic power*. Available from:
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/26/world/asia/chinese-leader-xi-jinping-offers-africa-assurance-and-aid.html?_r=1 & CHRIS BUCKLEY. [9 January 2016].

Horsthemke, K 2004, *knowledge, education and limits of Africanization*. Available from:
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.03098249.2004.00405.x/abstract>. [17 Dec 2017].

Hunt, K 2013, *China's Xi promises equal trade relations with Africa*. Available from:
<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/03/25/world/asia/china-africa-xi>. [11 February 2016].

Khoza, R 1994, *Ubuntu Botho Vmunhu Vuhutho, African humanism*. Available from:
<http://www.reuelkhoza.co.za/index.php/ubuntu-botho>. [9 June 2012].

Kimmerle, H 2006, *Ubuntu and Communalism in African Philosophy and Art*. Available from: <http://rozenbergquarterly.com/ubuntu-and-communalism-in-african-philosophy-and-art/>. [17 Dec 2017].

Lassiter, J E 2000, *African cultures and Personality: Bad Social Science, Effective Social Activism, Or A Call To Reinvent Ethnology?* Available from:
<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v3/v3i3a1.htm>. [1 February 2016].

Freedomkeys n.d., *Definition: Collectivism vs Individualism*. Available from:
<http://freedomkeys.com/collectivism.htm>. [31 March 2016].

- LeBaron, M 2003 a, *Mediation and multicultural reality*. Available from:
<http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/pcs/lebaron.htm>. [8 August 2010].
- LeBaron, M 2003 b, *Communication tools for understanding cultural differences*.
 Available from:
<http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/pcs/lebaron.htm>. [10 September 2010].
- LeBaron, M 2003 c, *Culture-based negotiation styles*. Available from:
<http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/pcs/lebaron.htm>. [10 September 2010].
- LeBaron, M 2003 d, *Cross-cultural communication*. Available from:
http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/cross-cultural_communication/. [10
 September 2010].
- Louw, W 2010, *Africanisation: A rich environment for active learning on a global platform*. Available from:
<http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/4999/africanisation.pdf?sequence=1>. [17 Dec 2017].
- Manda, DS 2009, *Ubuntu philosophy as an African philosophy for peace*.
 Available from: www.africafiles.org/article.asp?ID=20359. [17 Dec 2017].
- Matondo, M 2012, Cross-Cultural Values Comparison between Chinese nationals and Sub-Saharan Africans. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3, vol. no.11, pp.38-45. Available from:
http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_11_June_2012/5.pdf.
 [23 February 2016].
- Metz, T 2011, *Ubuntu as a moral theory and human rights in South Africa*. Available from:
<http://www.ahrlj.up.ac.za/metz-t?highlight=WyJ0aGVvcnkiLCJodW1hbilsInVidW50dSIsImFzliwiYSIsIm1vcnFslIwicmlnaHRzliwiaW4iLCJzb3V0aCIsImFmcmliYSIsInVidW50dSBhcyIsInVidW50d>

SBhcyBhliwiYXMgYSIsImFzIGEgbW9yYWwiLCJhIG1vcnFsliwibW9yYWwgcmIn
aHRzliwicmlnaHRzIGluliwicmlnaHRzIGlulHNvdXRoliwiaW4gc291dGgiLCJpbiBz
b3V0aCBhZnJpY2EiLCJ 2005zb3V0aCBhZnJpY2EiXQ==.[19 Dec 2017].

Monyela. C 2015, *President Jacob Zuma hosts President of China*. Available from:
<http://www.gov.za/speeches/president-zuma-receive-president-people%E2%80%99s-republic-china-state-visit-south-africa-1-dec>.
[19 February 2016].

Msila, V 2009, *Africanization of education and the search for relevance and context*. Available from:
www.academicjournals.org/article/article1379611309_Msila.pdf. [17 Dec 2017].

Msila,V 2014, *Fostering africanization: A lesson of identity formation among youth*. Available from:
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/286f/d666f5da12a941fe3b132154f15d5d753bf8.pdf>. [17 Dec 2017].

Enterprises Technology n.d., *China's Business Process Evolution*. Available from:
<http://online.wsj.com/ad/article/enterprisetech-china>. [16 Dec 2017].

Nedu, 2015, 'How Much Are We Paying For The Wine Our Government Officials Drink In China?'. Available from: <https://buzzsouthafrica.com/how-much-are-we-paying-for-the-wine-our-government-officials-drink-in-china>. [17 Dec 2017].

Nkrumah, K K 1967, *African Socialism Revisited*. Available from:
<http://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/nkrumah/1967/african-socialism-revisited.htm>. [2010.06.23].

Obadina, T 2008, *The Pitfalls of communalism*. Available from:
<http://www.webcompanyinfo.com/africaeconomicanalysis.org>. [23 March 2016].

Olander, E 2003, *The China Africa Project*. Available from:

<http://www.chinaafricaproject.com/> . [2014.8.28].

Oyowe, AO 2013, *Strange bedfellows: Rethinking Ubuntu and human rights in South Africa*. Available from: <http://www.ahrlj.up.ac.za/oyowe-a-o>. [17 Dec 2017].

Park, Y 2012, *Living In Between: The Chinese in South Africa*. Available from: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/living-between-chinese-south-africa>. [27 February 2016].

Prime, N 2010, *Cross-cultural management in South Africa: problems, obstacles and agenda for companies*. Available from: <http://marketing.byu.edu/htmlpages/ccrs/proceedings99/prime.htm>. [6 February 2010].

Psychology Wikia n.d., *Collectivist and individualist cultures*. Available from: http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Collectivist_and_Individualist_cultures#Examples_of_Countries_with_Generally_Collectivistic_Cultures. [31 March 2016].

Schwartz, SJ, Robert S, Weisskirch, RS, Hurley, EA, Zamboanga, BL, Park, IJK Kim, SY, Taylor, AU, Castillo, LG, Brown, E & Greene, AD 2010, Communalism, Familism, and Filial Piety: Are They Birds of a Collectivist Feather? *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 548–560. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/47716903_Communalism_Familism_and_Filial_Piety_Are_They_Birds_of_a_Collectivist_Feather. [23 February 2016].

Shih, TH 2013, 'Experts differ on China's 'soft power' in Africa'. Available from: <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1287767/experts-differ-chinas-soft-power-africa>. [17 Dec 2017].

Thomas, AS 2008, *One message, many cultures: Best practices for global communication*. Available from:

<http://www.iabc.com/cwb/archive/2008/0408/Thomas.htm>. [18 January 2010].

Udeh, C 2017, '*Fighting SA Unemployment: ANC Supports Restriction on Jobs for Foreigners*'. Available from: <https://buzzsouthafrica.com/fighting-sa-unemployment/>. [17 Dec 2017].

Wiseman, R L 2001, *Intercultural communication competence*. Available from: <http://commfaculty.fullerton.edu/rwiseman/ICCPaper>. [26 November 2010]

Wild, F & Mbatha, A 2015, *China's Xi Pledges \$6.5 Billion to Support S. Africa Economy*. Available from: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-12-02/xi-s-south-africa-visit-starts-with-6-5-billion-in-agreements>. [19 January 2016].

Worldconnections n.d, *Literature review (1)*. Available from: http://worldconnections.wordpress.com/research/literature-review-1/#_ftn1 [3 April 2016].

Zhou, M W 2010, *Look at the economic and trade cooperation between China and Africa from Intercultural Communication Angle*. Available from: <http://finance.ifeng.com/news/special/zhongfei/20100528/2247232>. [2 Feb 2016].

Appendix I
Consent letter

University of Pretoria
Faculty of Humanities

Consent Form

I, _____, male / female, age_____, hereby declare and confirm that I am willing to participate in questionnaires / interviews organized by Mr Yang Ganfu and that the information I provide is to my best knowledge and authentic.

Signature

Date

比勒陀利亚大学
人文学系

同意书

我是_____, 男___ /女___, 年龄_____,在此声明并确认, 我愿意参加杨干福先生组织的调查问卷 / 面试活动, 我所提供的信息都是我所掌握的且真实可靠。

签名

日期

Appendix II

The questionnaires to be used in this study are designed to reflect the general cultural traits of Chinese nationals and black South Africans and the concomitant communication behaviors, which conform to the cultural variables being studied and further account for potential miscommunication that may arise.

A. Close-ended questionnaires completed by black South Africans

Name		Company			
Position		Highest Level of Education			
Time of Working in the Company					
Inclined Chinese Behavior			Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Chinese value their individual rights more than company's interests.					
Chinese have a lower sensitivity for South African law.					
Chinese would relate personal relationship with work.					
Chinese are evasive/ indirect.					
Chinese act respectfully towards authority and the elders.					
Abiding by Labour Law is the best way to solve labour problems in Chinese companies.					
Chinese are more harmonious / polite than black South Africans.					
Chinese would simply quit a job and don't worry about 'tomorrow'.					

Chinese are face-giving orientated / value face.			
Chinese would accept a job with a little pay because it is better than no work.			

B. Close-ended questionnaires completed by Chinese

Name 姓名		Company 公司	
Position 职务		Highest Level of Education 最高学历	
Time of Working in the Company 在公司工作时间			
Inclined behavior of black South Africans: 南非黑人的行为特征:	Agree 同意	Neutral 一般	Disagree 不同意
Black South Africans value their individual rights more than company's interests. 南非黑人重视个人权利胜于公司权利。			
Black South Africans have a lower sensitivity for South African law. 南非黑人法律意识淡薄。			
Black South Africans would relate personal relationship with work. 南非黑人常把个人关系和工作联系起来。			
Black South Africans are evasive / indirect. 南非黑人说 话绕弯子。			
Black South Africans act respectfully towards authority and the elders. 南非黑人尊重老人和权力。			

Abiding by Labour Law is the best way to solve labour problems in Chinese companies.遵守劳工法是解决中国公司劳资问题的最好办法。			
Black South Africans are more harmonious / polite than Chinese. 南非黑人比中国人讲和谐 / 礼貌。			
Black South Africans would simply quit a job and don't worry about 'tomorrow'. 南非黑人易轻易辞职，不考虑以后。			
Black South Africans are face-giving orientated/ value face. 南非黑人给面子/ 重视面子。			
Black South Africans would accept a job with a little pay because it is better than no work. 工资少南非黑人也接受，因为比没有工作好。			

Appendix III

A. Open-ended questions for the Chinese: 自由发挥题

NB: These questionnaires are written in both Chinese and English for Chinese participants to provide precise information.

1. Under what circumstances /situations, do you feel that you are not respected/offended in your interactions with black South Africans? 与南非黑人交往中, 你在什么情况下会觉得没受尊重/被冒犯。
2. Is face-saving very important in your interactions with black South Africans? Why? Why not? 与南非黑人交往中, 你认为面子非常重要吗? 为什么是? 为什么不是呢?
3. In your encounters with black South Africans, what behaviors displayed by them are difficult to understand / accept? 与南非黑人交往中, 他们的哪些行为让你难以理解/接受?
4. When you have complaints to lodge to your Chinese supervisor, do you consider the company's interests more than your individual interests? Why? 当你向负责人反映不如意事情的时候, 你是考虑到公司利益还是个人利益多? 为什么?
5. How do you find / understand workers' strikes (in Chinese companies) in South Africa? 你是怎么看待南非(中国公司)工人罢工的?
6. Do you agree that you have to obey your boss even if you are not comfortable? Why? 即使你不痛快, 也要执行老板的指令, 你同意吗?

B. Open-ended questions for black South Africans:

1. Under what circumstances /situations, do you feel that you are not respected in your interactions with Chinese?
2. Is face–saving very important in your interactions with Chinese? Why? Why not?
3. In your encounters with Chinese, what behaviors from them are difficult to understand / accept?
4. When you have complaints to lodge to your Chinese supervisor, do you consider the company’s interests more than your individual interests? Why?
5. How do you find / understand workers’ strikes (in Chinese companies) in South Africa?
6. Do you agree that you have to obey your boss even if you are not comfortable? Why?

Appendix IV

A. Interview questions for black South Africans

1. What is your view of dignity as an employee/employer working in a Chinese company?
2. In what ways would you be easily offended in the workplace?
3. What behaviors from Chinese will be regarded as impolite in your communication with them?
4. As an employee in a Chinese company, do you feel you are part of their group?
5. Do you think black South Africans work efficiently? Why not? What do you do then? Do you think Chinese work efficiently? Why not?
6. When a problem or a conflict situation arises, say a workers' strike, do you take a straight-to-the –point approach or give a holistic view of the problem or conflict situation and work out a solution accordingly? Please give reasons for your answer.
7. Do you think that the Chinese strictly observe SA labour laws in their business? Do you think that abiding by labour laws is the best option to solve labour complaints? Why? Please be specific.
8. Black South Africans very much care what they have today. They do not think and care what they will have tomorrow. Do you think this attitude benefits their work / career? Please be specific.
9. Suppose you are not happy with your current work in terms of work condition or salary, will you still accept it without complaining because having a job is better than no job. How do think of this?
10. Do you agree that black South Africans are outspoken and don't care about your "face" in their communication with you? How do you find this behavior? Are you happy with it? Why not?

B. Interview questions for Chinese

NB: These questions were translated from Chinese into English by the researcher of this study.

1. What is your view of dignity as an employee/ employer working in a Chinese company? 作为公司的职员/老板，你是怎么看待尊严的？
2. In what ways would you be easily offended in the workplace? 工作中什么情况下你会觉得别人冒犯你了？
3. What behaviors from black South Africans will be regarded as impolite in your communication with them? 与黑人交往中，你觉得他们什么行为是不礼貌的？
4. As an employee in a Chinese company, do you feel you are part of their group? Why? 你感到你是中国公司大家庭中的一份子吗？
5. Do you think black South Africans work efficiently? Why not? What do you do then? Do you think Chinese work efficiently? Why? 你认为黑人工作效率高吗？为什么不？那你怎么做？你认为中国人工作效率高吗？为什么？
6. When a problem or a conflict situation arises, say a workers' strike, do you take a straight-to-the -point approach or give a holistic view of the problem or conflict situation and work out a solution accordingly? Please give reasons for your answer. 如果有问题了或纠纷发生，比如工人罢工，你会采取头疼医头脚疼医脚的办法还是从全局的角度看待并解决问题或纠纷呢？请说说为什么？
7. Do you think the Chinese strictly observe SA labour laws in their business? Do you think that abiding by labour laws is the best option to solve the labour complaints? Why? Please be specific. 你认为中国人严格遵守南非劳工法规定吗？你认为遵守劳工法是解决劳工问题的唯一办法？为什么，请具体说说。
8. Black South Africans very much care what they have today. They do not think and care what they will have tomorrow. Do you think this attitude benefits their work/ career? Please be specific. 黑人是今日有酒今日醉，明天、以后有什么，他们不去想也不关心。你认为这对他们的工作职业生涯有利吗？请具体些。
9. Suppose you are not happy with your current work in terms of work condition or

salary, will you still accept it without complaining because having a job is better than no job. How do think of this? 假如你对现有工作不满意，如工作条件和工资，但你会接受而无怨言，因为有工作比没有工作好。你怎么看？

10. Do you agree that black South Africans are outspoken and don't care about your "face" in their communication with you? How do you find this behavior? Are you happy with it? Why not? 你认为南非黑人说话直截了当，不给面子？你对这怎么看？你高兴吗？为什么不？

Appendix V

Respondents' answers to open-ended questions and interview questions

Note: what follows the respondents' answers of each question is analysis/interpretation of the answers marked in red at the end of answers/statements. Conclusions, summaries, underlining/bold letters are also marked in red for easy reference. 'R' stands for respondent.

A. Chinese respondents' answers to open-ended questions

1. Under what circumstances /situations, do you feel that you are not respected/offended in your interactions with black South Africans?

你在什么情况下会觉得没受尊重/被冒犯。

Conclusions/Summary:

13 circumstances with 3 x repetition, 2x not useable.

Reasons of being not respected: 4 x lose face, 4 x impolite, 6 x no respect to authority, 4 x no harmony, 4 x no consideration of collective interest.

7 of the reasons are overlapping

Situational: Afraid of losing job (economic constraint/ respect)

Answers outlined:

R1

In current situation, the local workers tried to resolve issue of food/'hunger'. Thus, subjectively local workers are afraid of losing jobs and they are very careful not to offend us or did what we were not willing to see. Black South Africans failure to finish their work but still try to excuse themselves

Lose face, not polite, no respect to authority

R2

Poor manners including insulting gesture/ language to threaten you +1+1, these are very offending. Also SA police blackmailing us is also offending.

Not polite, lose face, no respect of authority

R3

SA policemen or government are biased in their dealing with Chinese and
blackmail +1 **Not useable beyond research program**

R4

Many examples of being offended working in Africa. Because of salaries, Black
South Africans went on strike / going to labour department. They did not put
themselves into others shoes, bad mannered. Very offending

No harmony, no respect to authority, no consideration of collective interest

Their complaint of minor issues

Not polite, no consideration of collective interest

They are straightforward and never put themselves into the other shoes, and say
whatever they like. Impolite

**Not polite, nor harmonious, selfish, no consideration of collective interest, no
respect to authority**

R5

Building industry is different from others. Work allocation and assignment are
changing. But I need 100 obeying of my order. Black South Africans not following
my instruction or work assignment, which is offending.

**No respect to authority, nor harmonious, no consideration of collective interest,
lose face**

R6

Chinese being called “new colonist” without seeing Chinese help to Africa:

feel wronged. Not useable, beyond research program

R7

No respect to religion: **impolite**

R8

Ignoring Chinese greeting:

No respect to authority, nor harmonious, lose face,

大多数情况下，解决温饱的收入，成为弱势群体的原因，主观上怕失去工作，与
我们相处处处谨小慎微，不愿意去冒犯我们或者做我们不认可的事情； **Respect us**

coz they are afraid of losing job; situational 他们工作中偷懒完不成应完工作，却找各种理由推脱，觉得有点不被尊重, **face lose, HPD;**

在遇到不文明警察将你手绑住、搜身敲诈时。2、黑人不文明手势向你示威。3、黑人不文明的言语攻击。

Black South Africans' unfriendliness to Chinese- offend. New angel match;

在非洲工作这么多年，经常感到被冒犯。因为黑人为了工资就罢工，找劳工部，为了点小事，就埋怨，让人不理解。他们说话不考虑别人感受，没有礼貌。放肆。

Match, reveal Chinese low law sensitivity, black South Africans' individualism: direct, rights;

和南非黑人交往过程中，他们的警察以及司法部门对外国人的区别对待，尤其是中国人经常性地被侵犯，会让我感觉被冒犯。 **New angel;**

我的工作行业是建筑业，也许跟别的行业在管理上可能存在不同点，我们是现场的动态管理，要求所有的员工时刻服从符合行业规范的工作调配，而不是随心所欲，每当哪一次员工无理取闹不服从工作安排，就符合第一条了。 **HPD. Match;**

When they judge us Chinese people as “modern colonists” without seeing the big picture of China’s intentions of helping them develop their own country.

Match but new angel;

对方大声辱骂怒吼，交谈时指指点点，动手动脚，不尊重对方宗教信仰。

Poor manner,

被嘲笑或礼貌问候被对方忽视就觉得被冒犯。 **Face losing**

2. Is face-saving very important in your interactions with black South Africans?
Why? Why not?

在和南非黑人交往中，你认为面子非常重要吗？为什么是？为什么不是呢？

Conclusions/Summary:

Face is important x 4 out of 8. Reason: face is respect, dignity, national identity, confidence.

Reveals Chinese HPD,

2 x not important. Reason: black South Africans are polite. Face is not necessary.

Technical issues do not entail face.

1 x not useable coz black South Africans do not have such concept, so face is not an issue.

1 x neutral

Answers outlined:

R1

从施工**现场管理者**的角度上说，我个人觉得面子还是比较重要的，这一定程度上关于我在项目所有黑人中的管理威信和地位；

From the point of view of site manager, face is important. It is my status and prestige in the minds of local workers.**HPD, face,**

在日常管理工作中，黑人对我发出的工作安排指令都可以不打折扣的完成，**本身就是所谓的给足了我们的面子**，比如我们现场浇筑混凝土 100 立方，黑人如果有一部分吵着要赶火车回家不愿意加班导致其他人也不愿意干，这应该说是很不给我们面子，让我们的临时紧急工作不好开展；

That the local workers complete the work assigned to them means face to me. For instance, I have to complete 100m³ concrete work but local workers are not willing to do it because they need to catch train for home. This is face losing to me. **match;**

R2 不重要，因为大部分黑人都很礼貌，你不觉得没有面子。**Against / out of expectation**

Face is not important. The black workers are polite. I never feel face lose.

R3

重要，不管在跟谁交往，我都觉得面子很重要，这是自然而然的事情，说不出来为

什么，总之觉得面子重于其它很多东西。

Face is important in our interaction with anybody. I cannot figure out why, but it is important. **Match;**

R4

不是非常重要。面子只是一个自信心的问题，面子的有无很多时候是自己给的。自己强大了，自然不觉得有任何丢面子的事情。面子是中国人的心病，有句话叫打脸充胖子。在和黑人的交往中，面子没必要看太重。

Face is not important. It is given by ourselves. The issue of face is related with confidence. But face is the Chinese problem. Face is not important in our interactions with black people. **Against / out of expectation**

R5

在我和当地人的长期交往中我并没有觉得面子是**非常重要**的一环，因为与人交往必须以诚相交尊重对方，假如你在与对方交往中并没有尊重对方，或损伤了对方，那么对方没有理由给你的面子，还有一点就是**办事情就是办事情**没有必要把过多的情感参杂在内。

In our interactions with black people, I did not find 'face' important coz interaction is based on mutual respect. If you don't respect others, others will not give you face. In my daily work communication, I follow 'business is business' principle.

LCC, against my hypothesis,

R6

I don't think face-saving important in my interactions with black South Africans. Actually I cannot feel their behavior of "face-saving" in my interactions with black South Africans. I have a feeling that they concentrate on the result of business activities. So I think there is no need for face-saving efforts when doing business with them. **Against / out of expectation**

R7

非常重要。与任何人交往都很重要。

Face is important in our communication with anybody.

Face dignity- confidence; HPD

R8

非常重要。关系到中国人在异国他乡收关注，尊重、欢迎是实际情况。民族的自尊心。

Face is extremely important in human interactions. It is also about our dignity and prestige. **Face-respect-dignity, national identity HPD**

2. In your encounters with black South Africans, what behaviours displayed by them are difficult to understand / accept? 你和南非黑人交往中他们的哪些行为让你难以理解/接受?

Summary:

16 behaviour with 5 repetition, 5 x out of research topic.

Reasons of being difficult to understand: 6 x time related, 2x individualism, 2 x LCC 1 x high law sensitivity: among them 2 x overlapping

Answers outlined:

R1

No responsibility for family and work: **individualism**

Not willing to do any work if it is not within job boundary/description **LCC**

Does not want to make extra additional efforts in work **individualism**

R2

Spent all they have, no consideration / plan for tomorrow / No saving / no thrift +1 +1 +1+1: **Individualism and short time attitude**

R3

Use law to protect themselves: to report to police or Labour Department even for minor issues. Whenever they are not happy with unfair treatment, the report it to the police or labour department. This is totally different from China.

High law sensitivity rights oriented

R4

Not hygienic, not wash hands before eating +1; **out of research topic**

R5

Some black South Africans are not intelligent. It is hard for them to understand you.

Asking for things but not deliver / assist you: **Not mutual/reciprocal, LCC**

Slow to learn something; **out of research topic**

R6

Whenever they made a mistake, they will not admit it. They will keep on finding excuses for their mistakes unless you point out all the evidences. **Match. Time attitude, finding excuse**

It is hard for them to keep time/promises; deny their wrong doing, not willing to admit their fault/ mistake; **LCC**

R7

Using dirty languages / ugly manner, lack of independent sense. Too submissive to white people; **out of research topic**

Black South Africans not punctual, no saving concept;

Time attitude, no future concept

R8

The black South Africans failed to understand you and tried their best to defend their wrong doing even if you produced evidence. **Partly related with LCC.**

Poor education. **Beyond research topic**

Xenophobia: **out of research topic**

南非黑人责任感不强，表现在对待工作和对待自己的家庭，对工作不会做任何超出工资的部分，**不愿意付出额外的任何努力**；对家庭不懂得适当的节衣缩食以改善贫困的现状，**花天酒地**；**match, reveals black South Africans's time attitude, LCC, Individualism (enjoy, no responsibility for family) match**

南非黑人生活困苦，运用**法律武器来保护自己**；比如工地上很简单的因为工作不到位扣几十兰特的工资，有的黑人理解就报告警察，只要是他觉得自己收到了不公正待遇就要去**警察局和劳动局状告**我们；这点与我们**中国截然不同**，或许国内的法律机器不热衷于这些小事或者办事效率不高吧；**too individualist, high law sensitivity, right-oriented**;

黑人吃饭前不洗手直接用手抓,觉得不卫生。 **Beyond this research topic**

一些没有受过教育的黑人很笨, 怎么解释他们都不知道怎么做。还有, 他们喜欢向别人要东西, 要了东西也不一定帮助你。

Asking for things. Slow to learn something. New angel;

不卫生。对于金钱没有长期的规划和安排。今朝有酒今朝醉的生活态度。 **Reveal black South Africans' poor time attitude. Match;**

在我和黑人的 4 年交往中我就觉得本地黑人往往做错事情不能在第一时间认识到, 总是会有一番的无谓的解释, 但是通过一些有根有据的证据前面对方才能认识到自己的错, 这些行为我是难以接受的。

Politeness: more connotation including harmony, HPD

New version of politeness, against my expectation;

Whenever they made a mistake, they will not admit it. They will keep on finding excuses for their mistakes unless you show them all the evidences. **Match. Time attitude, finding excuse**

It is hard for them to keep time/promises;

脏话、侮辱性的语言和动作, 对白人太过顺从, 独立自主意识不强, 没有储蓄概念、度过生存危机感到不解。

Reveal black South Africans short time concept, poor education;

与其交谈过程中摆事实讲道理也不明白, 受教育程度低、法律知识淡泊。对外来人或技术有排外性, 不理解。 **Xenophobia education is a factor. New angel**

4. When you have complaints to lodge to Chinese supervisor, do you consider your individual interests more than the company's interests? Why?

当你向负责人反映不如意事情的时候, 你考虑个人利益多于公司利益? 为什么?

Summary:

4 x strong collectivist, 3 x collectivist, 1 x 80% individualist

Also revealing Chinese HCC, a big picture, harmony and face concern

Answers outlined:

R1

As far as work is concerned, consider more company interests than individualist interests so as to make go the company business. More individualist interests will affect company business negatively. **Reveal strong collectivist and HCC**

R2

Consider more company interests than individualist interests because if company interests suffer, individualist interests also suffer. **Reveal collectivist**

R3

Consider more company interests than individualist interests as a member of the company. No company no individual interests. Would rather not make complaints coz it will make the boss lose face.

Reveal strong collectivist, face concerned is considered

R4

Consider more company interests than individualist interests provided that individualist interests are protected as when company interests are secured, individualist interests can be secured.

Reveal collectivist but with individualist concern

R5

As far as work is concerned, no doubt consider more company interests than individualist interests. **Reveal collectivist**

R6

As long as I am working for a company rather than my own, all my behavior relating to my job should be dedicated to the company solely. **Reveal strong collectivist**

R7

Consider more company interests than individualist interests as if company interests are damaged, individualist interests will also suffer a loss. I can give up

my interests if to save company interests. **Reveal strong collectivist**

R8

Individualist interests are linked with company interests. But I consider more individualist interests. It is nature of a human being, **80% individualist, balanced**

仅就我个人而言，我所反映的不如意的事情都是工作相关的事情，大多数这种情况也是因为其他部门的不配合而引起的沟通协调解决问题困难，在向上级领导反映的时候，我都是以工作基本出发点，考虑如何协调解决问题，**考虑公司利于高于其他**，会迁就其他部门，尽量以完成工作任务为最终目的；如果考虑个人利益多一些，势必会产生办公的明争暗斗因素在里面，会或多或少影响到工作进展，工作进展缓慢也一定程度上反映了个人的能力问题，于公于私都没有好处；所以说仅就**工作层面**，**公司利益高于个人利益； match, collectivism;**

考虑公司利益多于个人利益，因为公司利益受到大损失，个人也会受到损失。

Match, HCC and Collectivism: a big picture;

因为我觉得我是**公司的一分子**，个人的事情总是比公司利益小，公司利益大于个人利益。没有公司就没有个人。还有，向领导反映问题，会让领导丢面子。**Match; Collectivism, Face;**

都会考虑双方利益。但是在不损害自身利益的情况下，**会更加注重公司利益**。因为个人利益的体现是一部分由公司给予的工资体现的。公司在获得利益的同时，个人的价值也会体现，自然对个人利益有所裨益。**Match, collectivism;**

假如我向领导反映问题肯定是工作上的事情，那当然是**考虑的公司利益**，这是不容置疑的。**Collectivism, Match;**

No. As long as I am working for a company rather than my own, all my behavior relating to my job should be dedicated to the company solely. **Match. Collectivism;**

公司利益大于个人利益。必要的话可以牺牲个人利益来挽回公司利益。公司利益受损，个人利益得不到保障。 **Strong Collectivist**

个人利益是公司利益的一个体现，和公司利益息息相关，但最为人的本能，也是先考虑个人利益。 **Half collectivism half individualism balanced**

5. How do you find / understand workers' strikes (in Chinese companies) in South Africa?

你是怎么看待南非（中国公司）工人罢工的？

Summary:

2 x obviously against strike coz it encourage workers to be lazy... is much ado about nothing;

1 x workers' right but it is silly action, 1 x culture is the cause of strike, 1 x agreeing with strike coz Chinese failed to honour the labour law, 1 x neutral **claiming right by talking**, 1 x legal strike should be attended to and reach agreement to benefit both parties while illegal strike ruins both. So better **sit down and reach agreement** to avoid strike, 1 x mirror to check where Chinese are wrong and what the workers claim. It does good to Chinese company.

But if strike is illegal, it must be stopped immediately.

Conclusions:

1x support strike, 2 against strike, 4 x talk claims, 1 x support legal while against illegal strike.

Answers outlined:

R1

Strikes changed its original course. It stands for now black South Africans' being not satisfied any more with the employers and sit idle / do nothing but want for rewards. Work less and more benefits. No consider the high unemployment. Government also encourage strikes. Preferably employ black South Africans,

which make them lazy, no hardworking spirit.

reveal Chinese low law sensitivity; Reveal black South Africans' time attitude
new angle: government policy issue: encourage strike, motivate laziness

R2

It is normal coz Chinese companies did not honour labour laws. Workers' rights are violated.

Reveals Chinese low law sensitivity while black South Africans' individualism

R3

Black South Africans make much ado about nothing. Boss has the final say. Better do the work.

Reveals Chinese low law sensitivity. Black South Africans' rights oriented.

R4

Strikes demonstrate workers' rights but it is silly action. It places workers in a weak position and since no money when strike, so workers not responsible for themselves.

Reveals black South Africans' rights, short time attitude and LCC. Also Chinese Low law sensitivity

R5

Strikes reveal problems from both sides. Cultural differences including worldview, values etc.

Implying Chinese Low law sensitivity and black South Africans rights, short time attitude

R6

Every employee has his/her rights to display his/her dissatisfaction of payment, welfare against their employer, strikes are not the only way to do it. The better way of solving disagreement is to sit down and talk, not strikes.

Reveal Chinese Collectivism, HCC; black South Africans rights oriented

R7

Every coin has two sides. Legal strikes are good for both. Workers' rights are violated so they strike. It can avoid violence. Both sides sit and negotiate and reach agreement. But illegal strikes damage both workers and company in terms

of productivity and benefits. Better everybody has one voice and solve any problem and try avoid strike.

Reveal black South Africans right oriented and Chinese low law sensitivity. HCC, Harmony, Face

R8

Strike can make Chinese company progress to accommodate workers' rights, also reflect our own problem: violating labour law or not? If it is legal, solve the problem immediately. But if illegal strikes, stop it.

Reveal black South Africans right oriented and Chinese low law sensitivity.

大部分的罢工，由最初的不公正待遇和要求改善劳作环境，逐渐演变成黑人的欲求不满和坐享其成的感觉，相当一部分黑人都想尽量付出少一点的努力得到多一点的回报，他们不回去考虑南非现今的失业率有多高，工作是如何来之不易；2) 这也与政府的一些举措有关，比如合理合法罢工受政府庇护，也助涨了黑人的罢工潮，在相当多的部门同能力人选上优先选择黑人，即便是黑人能力欠缺也优先提供给他们工作机会，会让他们更加不思进取，好吃懒做，贪图享受；**reveal Chinese low law sensitivity; new angle: government policy issue: encourage strike, motivate laziness and enjoying life attitude. Reveal black South Africans' time attitude;**

我觉得黑人罢工是正常的，因为中国公司有的没有执行南非的法律、法规，工人的利益受到侵害。**fairplay: reveals Chinese low law sensitivity while black South Africans' individualism; New angle;**

觉得他们是没事找事干，权利都是掌握在老板手里，怎么可能因为他们的罢工就顺从他们了？还不如老老实实多做点事情。**Match. Reveals Chinese low law sensitivity. Black South Africans' rights oriented. Not beneficial to black South Africans;**

是个人权利的体现。但是是一种愚蠢的行为。罢工虽然是对自身经济权益的要求，但是罢工却把自己摆在了一个很低的位置。罢工的同时，缺少经济来源，是对自己

的不负责任。

Match, reveals black South Africans' rights. Chinese Low law sensitivity and short time attitude 摆在了一个很低的位置;

对于工人罢工的事宜我觉得双方可能都存在问题: **中西方文化的差异, 价值观的问题, 信仰和理念的问题**都会在这件事情上起到一定作用。 **Match;**

Every employee has **his/her rights** to display his/her dissatisfaction of payment, welfare against their employer, strikes are **not the only way** to do it. Strikes will drag the production process of the company while wasting the employees' own work time. The better way of solving disagreement is to **sit down and talk, not strikes.** **Match, Collectivism, HCC;**

任何事物都有双面性, 个人合理罢工, 说明其集体利益受到损坏, 因此采取这种方式谋取利益。这对公司和个人都有好处。公司可以消除罢工隐患, 避免暴乱, 双方达成协议, 提高工作效率。但如非法罢工会使得公司利益受损, 对罢工人员处罚。对双方都不好。最好的办法是上下一心, 遇事及时处理, 避免任何罢工。 **Reveal black South Africans right oriented and Chinese low law sensitivity. HCC, Harmony, Face**

南非工人罢工是帮助中国公司成长进步, 加快与当地融合的契机。可以看出工人的诉求, 我们有无违法。合理、及时处理。实际对中国公司利大于弊。但如果罢工存在恶意, 应该立即制止这种非法罢工。 **Reveal black South Africans right oriented and Chinese low law sensitivity.**

6. Do you agree that you have to obey your boss even if you are not comfortable?
Why? 即使你不痛快, 也要执行老板的指令, 你同意吗? 为什么?

Summary:

8 x agree: 2 x strong collectivist, 5 x collectivist, 1 x 80% collectivism

Answers outlined:

R1

Agree as an employee coz I am paid by the boss of the private company. Every coin is from the boss pocket. So I must obey him. Company interests overrule.

Reveal collectivism and HPD, HCC, harmony

R2

Agree as an employee coz the boss decides all. No other choice.

Reveal collectivism and HPD, HCC

R3

Agree as an employee coz I don't want break relationship with the boss.

Relationship is very important. Also worry about being fired by the boss and will lose a job. Reveal collectivism, HCC, HPD, time dimensions;

R4

Agreed. I like challenging. Reveal collectivism

R5

Since it is private company, I have to follow the boss coz he pays me. Even if not happy, but it cannot affect the work.

Reveal strong collectivism and HPD, HCC, harmony

R6

If this "not comfortable" concerns things illegal, or is against my moral principle, I will not obey my boss's order. I will try to avoid my personal judgments and follow his order if his intention is for the company. Match but 80% collectivism;

R7

If it is within the description of job, I will follow it strictly even if not happy. As an employee we must be dedicated to the work. But if is without the description of job, and illegal, I will make a proposal.

Reveal Collectivism (80%), HCC (conflict avoiding style) harmony, and HPD.

R8

Agree. As an employee, I cannot mess up the company operation because of my refusal to follow the boss order. Unhappiness can also be resolved after we

complete the work.

Reveal Chinese's strong collectivism, HCC (big picture, compromising conflict style), harmony.

首先，**同意**这个看法，即使不痛快，也会执行，因为我们是雇员，老板是雇主，尤其是在私企，我们的工资就是老板腰包里来的，我们应该在不违纪违法的情况下完成老板安排的任务，这似乎看起来也是合情合理的；2) 还要区分老板这个词，是公司的法人还是上级领导，如果我和所谓是上级领导的老板都是受雇于法人都是拿工资的就另当别论，因为**一切以公司利益出发**，如果个人认为上级领导的指令有**明显违背公司利益的地方**，就根据具体情况对待，不一定要执行；**match, reveal collectivism and HPD100% match, new angel and one situational;**

同意，因为现在都是私人公司，都是老板的个人意志决定一切，没什么好讲的。

Match;

同意，即使我自己不痛快也得让老板痛快啊，因为我不想跟老板的关系搞僵，关系很重要的。而且如果老板让我做的我不做，也许在以后的工作中会给我小鞋穿，再严重点，也许会把我炒了，我就没有工作了。

HCC, HPD, time dimensions match;

同意。因为我个人是比较热爱挑战的，喜欢去工作，不喜欢闲下来。而且我的不痛快从来不会带到工作中。**Match;**

怎么叫不痛快？假如由于自己的私事不痛快那绝对不能带到工作上，**老板的指令必须得**

执行，话得说回来现在都是私营企业，你拿了老板的薪水你就得为老板做事情，不管任何事情都一样，除非违法的事情不能做。这是我做人的原则。要不你就不做。**Collectivism, match;**

If this "not comfortable" concerns things illegal, or is against my moral principle, I

will not obey my boss's order. I will try to avoid my personal judgments and follow his order if his intention is for the company. **Match but 80% collectivism;**

老板所给出的指令是你工作范围内的必须完成的任务，即便不乐意，也要严格按照要求完成，秉承安岗敬业的职业操守，但如果指令是不合理的，非法的，或是你工作职责以外的事情，可以提出建议。

Reveal Chinese's 80% collectivism, HCC (conflict avoiding style) harmony, and HPD.

同意。如果我感到不痛快就拒绝指令会引发公司管理的混乱，作为员工，有不痛快也要等到执行指令让公司管理正常进行后向老板提出自己不痛快 的正当理由，同时，也是帮助公司纠正某些方面可能会存在的问题。

Reveal Chinese strong collectivism, HCC,(big picture, compromising conflict style), harmony.

B. Black South African respondents' answers to open-end questions

1. Under what circumstances /situations, do you feel that you are not respected in your interactions with Chinese?

Summary / conclusions:

8 x circumstances with 2 overlapping. 2 not useable.

Reasons for not being respected: 4 x LCC, 3 x rights, individualism (some overlapping), 2 x high law sensitivity, 1 x LPD

I have no situation whereby I feel not respected in any interaction with them+1

no useable

To interact with Chinese, can be cumbersome. They tend to play ignorance on certain issues.

Reveal black South Africans direct and no evasive communication (LCC and

Individualism)

Reveal Chinese complexity in communication, HPD,

For them to respect you, unless you work for the company they have interest on.

Reveal black South Africans LCC (not reciprocal and relationship building)

Reveal Chinese HCC (relationship)

Communication misunderstanding +1 : reveal cultural barriers

Their payment is not industrial and no benefits; reveal Black South Africans

Rights, Individualism

Low payment and not according to qualification, based on experience.

reveal Black South Africans high law sensitivity and LCC and individualism (small picture), reveal Chinese HCC (big picture)

Salaries are not protected, no local manager or supervisor.

Reveal Black South Africans high law sensitivity, rights (to share the positions is his right), LCC (not look at a big picture) reveal Chinese Reveal Chinese HCC and low law sensitivity

Shouting reveal black South Africans LCC (I am not your son. business is business)

LPD (Shouting is rude and not a part of the work, so not legitimate companies tend to have flat hierarchies and matrix organizations), reveal Chinese HCC and HPD less governed by reason than by intuition or feelings.

Answers (outlined):

R 1

I have no situation whereby I feel not respected in any interaction with them, they are very kind people and have good manners, well behaved people; **No use**

R 2

It is not easy to interact with Chinese, can be cumbersome. They tend to play ignorance on certain issues. for them to respect you, unless you work for the company they have interest on;

Reveal black South Africans direct and no evasive communication (LCC and Individualism) Reveal Chinese complexity in communication, HPD,

Reveal black South Africans LCC (not reciprocal and relationship building)

Reveal Chinese HCC (relationship)

R 3

I am not your son.

Reveal Chinese complexity in communication, HPD, HCC(relationship)

Africans' resentment of Chinese nationals

Communication misunderstanding —not respect;

Implying misunderstanding happens often.

R 4

Their payment is not industrial and no benefits;

Reveal Black South Africans rights, individualism

R 5

Salaries are not protected, no local manager or supervisor;

Reveal wellbeing (individualism), reveal Chinese unfair treatment to locals

R 6

Low payment and not according to qualification, based on experience; a very serious matter. But I need a job.

Reveal their concern of wellbeing and individualism **situational (not increase but reduce conflict)**

R 7

Misunderstanding, sometimes they are shouting; no respect.

Reveals Chinese HPD,

R 8

Have not been respected by Chinese: **No valid**

2. Is face-saving very important in your interactions with Chinese? Why? Why not?

Summary / conclusions:

3 x not important, 3 x important with 2 x admit Chinese value face,

1 x discursive, Seem don't understand the face-saving exactly.

1 x neutral coz 'it depends'.

Answers (outlined):

R 1

No, in most cases people working in Chinese companies, are fired instead of allowing them to resign. **Match reveals black South Africans' no face concern**

R 2

Yes. It is very much important esp in biz relation. Chinese use face-saving as normal practice; **Against / out of expectation but admit Chinese are face-saving**

R 3

Yes. Messing up one Chinese, messing up with all Chinese and hatred start; **Against / out of expectation but admit Chinese are face-saving**

R 4

No. I show my true face depending on the situation I am in.

Reveal not face concerned but individualism

R 5

No. express face on how I feel with due respect to boss;

Reveal no face concern. LPD

R 6

No ideas. But it depends. **Not valid, No required answer, neutral**

R 7

Yes because sometimes there face are all always in the smile

Discursive, Seem don't understand the face-saving exactly.

R 8

Yes. One has to preserve reputation and dignity: **Exposed face concerned,**

3. In your encounters with Chinese, what behavior from them are difficult to understand / accept? Why?

Summary:

9 x Chinese behavior with 1 x repetition. 6 x 'not accepted' coz of LPD or Chinese HPD.

2 x discursive with 1 x new angel (education makes manner),

They are too much self-determined. If they say No than they mean it. **Reveal black South Africans LPD and Individualism who do not respect authority and like arguing, express their rights. Information flows that are functional and unrestricted, and companies tend to have flat hierarchies and matrix organizations**

Most of them have difficulties to comply with rules and regulations. Not easy to convince them.

Reveal black South Africans high law sensitivity and individualism (rights oriented), LCC depends on precise and taken literally. high-context cultures depend less on language precision and legal documents

Different culture makes different behavior more educated good behavior, not educated, bad behavior.

Discursive. No tangible issue. But new angel: education cause behavior.

They are very ignorant of black South Africans +1

Reveal black South Africans LPD flat hierarchies and matrix organizations

Language is a problem: discursive

Most of Chinese have no mutual respect to black colleague.

Reveal black South Africans LPD flat hierarchies and matrix organizations

Hard to interact:

Reveal black South Africans LPD information flows that are functional and unrestricted, and LCC but reveal Chinese High-context communication tends to be more indirect and more formal.

No (working) relationship with locals.

Reveal black South Africans LPD flat hierarchies and matrix organizations

Answers (outlined):

R 1

In most cases they are too much self-determined...If they say No than they mean it. **Match reveal Chinese HPD, implying they r not happy with it**

R 2

Their refusal to change to adapt to system. Act differently. Most of them have

difficulties to comply with rules and regulations. Not easy to convince them;

Reveal Chinese low law sensitivity

R 3

Different culture makes different behavior, more educated, good behavior, not Educated/poor education, bad behavior;

New: education is factor in communication behavior

R 4

They are very ignorant of black South Africans and language is a problem;

Reveal Chinese HPD

R 5

Most of Chinese have no mutual respect to black colleague, difficult to interact, are very ignorant, **Reveal Chinese HPD**,

R 6

No (working) relationship with locals. Would you grow in such situation?

Reveal Chinese low law sensitivity and HPD

R 7

Poor English communication ability;

not relevant to topic/research question, not valid

R 8

Seems Chinese look down upon black South Africans. They are not easy going.

Exposed black South Africans LPD and Chinese HPD

4. When you have complaints to lodge to Chinese (supervisor) , do you consider your individual interests more than the company's interests? Why?

Summary:

1 x both half IC, 1 x more individualist, LCC, weak collectivism,

2 x group interests

3 x individual interests, 1 discursive

Answers (outlined):

R 1

No, I have to consider both parties interests. **Half match discursive**

R 2

Depends on the nature of the problem. If it is personal issue, then I would consider my interest, say if I am mistreated, discriminated by employer. I can consider both if it would have an impact on both;

More individualist orientation, LCC, reveal collectivism

R 3

No. to me company comes first. I don't consider my individualist more than company's interest; **Out of expectation, reveal his collectivism**

R 4

Definitely I come first before the company coz I cannot compromise myself;

Reveal very individualist

R 5

Yes. My own first. **Reveal very individualist**

R 6

Protect company's interest. But where is the company's principals?

Against/ out of expectation, reveal his collectivism

R 7

I am trying to say with my individual interest because it is better to make a better communication with a supervisor before I consider the company interest;

Reveal individualist

R 8

No. I consider the company's interest more than my individual interest.

Against / out of expectation, reveal collectivism

5. How do you find / understand workers' strikes (in Chinese companies) in South Africa?

Summary:

8 x support strikes listing 12 why and benefits of strikes revealing black South

Africans.

Revealing black South Africans LCC (dominant style, not harmony) reveal rights oriented, individualism, law sense (LCC). Wages, salaries and working conditions are at the root of the strikes

Chinese companies not follow labour law, all procedures

reveal black South Africans rights, LPD (not respect authority)

Strikes are driven by situations and to improve labour issues such as wages, conditions

reveal black South Africans rights, LPD (not respect authority)

because of the issue which was not solved.

Reveal black South Africans LCC (dominant style, not harmony) reveal black South Africans rights oriented, individualism, law sense

Also due to misunderstanding between union and Chinese companies.

Strike very reasonable, +1

Reveal black South Africans LCC (dominant style, not harmony) reveal rights oriented, individualism, law sense

The only way sometimes after very long time.

Reveal black South Africans LCC (dominant style, not harmony) LPD

Strike solves problems; Strike talks and solves problems +1

Reveal black South Africans LCC (dominant style, not harmony) LPD

A good step to unfair treatment.

Reveal black South Africans LCC (dominant style, not harmony)

Only way to force the company to deliver and respond immediately.

Reveal black South Africans LCC (dominant style, not harmony) LPD

Strike is legitimate. LCC precise, explicit.

Try to get them understand how South Africans work when it comes to the salaries and working conditions. Reveal rights oriented and law sense

Report the matter to the Labour Department to take the decision with the issue of strike. Reveal rights oriented and law sense

Answers (outlined):

R 1

Most of Chinese companies boss are very ignorant when it comes to **labor law** they don't want to follow all procedures that are been put by the government, or they want is to use people for their own interest. People are working even for five years as casual workers and are forbidden to have trade unions of their own. So the chances of having benefits in Chinese companies are very slim. And those are the things forcing workers to strike;

Match, reveals Chinese low law sensitivity, reveal black South Africans right

R 2

Strikes are driven by situations. As efforts made to express dissatisfaction or address situation or improve labour issues such as wages, conditions;

Reveal rights oriented, individualism, law sense, reveal Chinese low law sensitivity

R 3

It (Strike) was there due to the issue which was not solved. Also due to misunderstanding between union and Chinese companies;

New perspective: union and company, misunderstanding causes strike

R 4

Strike very reasonable, the only way sometimes after very long time, strike solves problems+1; **Reveal very rights oriented and individualist**

R 5

A good step to unfair treatment, only way to force the company to deliver and respond immediately. Strike talks and solves problems.

Reveal black South Africans short time, dominant conflict style (LCC) Individualism

R 6

Strike is legitimate, find answers to and or solutions to problems.

Reveal high law sensitivity, short time, LCC and individualism

R 7

Striking is to try to get them understanding how South African works when comes to the salaries and in working system. And if not possible we just report the matter to the Labour Department to take the decision with the issue of strike

Reveal rights oriented and law sense. Reveal Chinese low law sensitivity

R 8

I find them reasonable. Some Chinese companies are not friendly to locals.

Support strikes

6. Do you agree that you have to obey your boss even if you are not comfortable?

Why?

Summary / analysis:

Total x 8: 1 x agree (afraid of losing job), 6 x disagree but with 2 x also agree because of losing job, 1 x discursive

Individualism and LCC (business is business) and short time attitudes, no harmony and LPD are at the root of the disagreeing people.

Answers (outlined):

R 1

Yes, because one may be afraid of being fired in a minute without any compensation even. **situational: afraid of being fired**

R 2

No. I don't agree and refuse to do something I am not comfortable with;

Reveal Individualism, LCC,

R 3

No. In my case it is different. Reveal LPD

R 4

I will not agree if it is out of my job description. Sometimes you have to agree to certain things just to maintain relationship. Do it out of desperate.

Reveal individualism, and collectivism and HCC. Situational

R 5

No. cannot overlook myself for boss benefits. It is ok if within boundaries of my work.

Reveal individualism and LCC (business is business) and short time attitudes, no harmony,

R 6

No. A good manager should know how to agree with employees. Relationship has to be there first. **Reveal black South Africans LPD, rights oriented.**

R 7

I don't agree. Because the business relationship is more important itself because you can achieve more from Chinese business. **Discursive: contradicting**

R 8

I do not agree mainly because if I am not comfortable, then it won't be a conducive/happy environment for me to work in. So I will not be motivated to work hard. **Reveal individualism and LPD**

C. Answers to interview questions from Chinese and Black South African participants

(Note: Each interview question is followed by answers of Chinese nationals and black South African respondents)

1. What is your view of dignity as an employee/employer working in a Chinese company?

Chinese answers (outlined):

R1:

Dignity means respect from local employees, obey my order/instructions; **HPD**

R2:

Dignity is to sit down and discuss problems and establish a good relation;

Collectivism, HCC

R3:

Dignity is something given from the others, say respect, labours are different in terms of education, capacity and ability, you may also have different dignity from them, **dignity is mutual/reciprocal, boss and employees respect each other;**

New angle / perspective

R 4:

White people monopoly, +1

Black people refuse to admit their wrong doing by giving a lot of excuses;
Black South Africans refusing to admit their wrong doing made Chinese lose face

R 5:

To communicate but not shouting deserve dignity, black people hate

Shouting; LPD and individualism

R 6:

Labor dispute ruins my dignity, black South Africans never consider their own Situation/ability (not productive), just ask for salary increase, go to labor department;

Labour department-Face lose-no dignity, low law sensitivity, collectivism

R 7:

If I am not respected and was looked down, I lose my dignity.

Dignity is important than anything else +1. Politeness is an important part of dignity +1; **Black people respect-dignity, HPD, Politeness- dignity, face gain**

R 8

When black people respect me I feel dignity coz I feel superior to them + 1.

Revealing HPD

Summary of Chinese answers:

Situations of winning dignity:

Respect from black South Africans x 3 (coz I feel superior to them)

Discuss problems and establish a good relation x 1; politeness x 1

To communicate but not shouting deserve dignity

Dignity losing:

Black South Africans refuse to admit their wrong doing x 1; **face HPD**

Labour dispute, black South Africans never consider their own situation/ability,

But just ask for salary increasing, go to labour department x 1;

Labour department-Face lose-no dignity, low law sensitivity

I am not respected and was looked down x 1; **face, HPD**

Other views:

Dignity is mutual/reciprocal, labours are different in terms of education, capacity and ability, you may also have **different dignity** from them x 1;

Dignity is important than anything else x 2

Conclusions:

Winning or losing is related with face and HPD x 3,

Collectivism (integrating style) x 2, politeness x 1, Black South Africans rights x 1

Chinese are HCC (big picture, considering more factors: face and HPD, polite)

Collectivist: low law sensitivity, more on relationship, and face and power but less on salaries /working condition

Black South Africans' answers (outlined):

R1:

A good salary coz we have to survive out of the situation of high prices of food, taxi;

R2

Understand each other, simple words as one people work together;

R 3:

Shouting for the job from the foreman is not a respect, others don't feel right;

R 4:

Communicate properly, understand each other, proper command is key, otherwise lead to miscommunication, dignity is ruined;

R 5:

Being beaten is not a dignity, low salary is not a dignity. But company has its rules, so it is up to you, accept it and stay, otherwise leave the job;

R 6:

Working conditions, respect and salary are my concerns of dignity;

R 7:

They don't follow the labour law and pay us (reveal black South Africans LCC forgetting their skill, experiences while Chinese HCC, skill, efficiency, qualification)

R 8

Paying me a good salary is a dignity coz we are working hard in this company. No respect, no dignity. Chinese boss don't respect us coz they **shouted** at us.

Summary of black South Africans' answers:

Winning dignity:

A good salary x 2;

Understand each other, simple words as one people work together x 2

Communicate properly, proper command is key x 1

Losing dignity:

Salary deduction x 1; being shouted at by the foreman x 2

Low salary x 2; Poor working conditions x 1;

Being not respect x 1;

Conclusions:

Winning or losing dignity

8 x related with salaries, working conditions, respect related x 2,

Black South Africans take small picture (LCC: facts, logic and directness) and

Individualist (rights) lining up the facts and evaluating one after another. Decisions are based on fact rather than intuition.

2. In what ways would you be easily offended in the workplace?

Chinese answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

No obeying my instructions from the local workers;

R 2:

No completion of the work assigned to the local workers; **not productive**

R 3:

Police arresting me while I did nothing wrong, already adapted to situation, no such an offending case;

R 4:

Not follow you, not obey you, technical work must be done technically but the locals did not do so;

R 5:

Cheap goods from Chinese shops;

R 6

SA government labour law is in favor of local workers, this is offending.

Workers just go to labour court, this is also offending. Local workers failure to meet the target, also offending;

R 7:

Sometimes I feel offended in work. I cannot sometimes understand what the black South Africans mean and promised to do something. When I failed to deliver or eat my words, black South Africans lost temper and I feel offended;

R 8:

Black people promised but not deliver—I feel offended.

If you cannot, don't promise. Once you promise, don't eat your words.

Summary of Chinese answers:

Chinese: situations being offended:

No obeying my instructions from the workers x 2; **HPD lose face**

No completion of the work assigned to the local workers x 3

Police arresting me while I did nothing wrong x 1 **discursive**

Cheap goods from Chinese shops x 1 **discursive**

SA government labour law is in favor of local workers x1

Workers just go to labour court x1

When I failed to deliver or eat my words, black South Africans lost temper x1

Black people promised but not deliver x 1

Conclusions:

HPD / lose face x 4, black South Africans rights orientation x 2; 2 x discursive

HCC: role-oriented style, LCC: person-oriented style

Black South Africans' answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

No idea about it coz I had no such experience;

R 2:

Salary can be the issue of easily offended;

R 3:

Shouting from Chinese, it is a kind of abusing although they want to make things all right;

R 4:

No idea;

R 5:

Shouting, miscommunication is a reason of offending;

R 6

Your rights being abused, doing a good job and get paid. If not, it is offending to me;

R 7:

Salary and respect to me are areas of being easily offended;

R 8:

They don't pay us a good salary as the labour law says. And they shouted at us.

Summary of black South Africans' answers:

Salary x 3, shouting x 3, miscommunication x 1, rights are abused: work and get not the right salary x1, not being respected x 1, not useable x 2

Conclusions:

Related with salaries x 4 (LCC and Individualism), not respected x 4
(LCC: person-oriented, we are equal.)

3. What behavior from black South Africans will be regarded as impolite in your communication with them?

Chinese answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

No responsibility for work (1), consuming culture, get paid, no more come the next day but without notification (2);

R 2:

No completion of assigned work (3)

Subcontractors coming to office and taking cool drinks without permission or no ask for it (4). Strike: get what they did but not what they are supposed to get—very impolite (5). Deduction of salary made them lost temper (6);

R 3:

Don't listen to you, always cut you, esp. when you blame them (7);

R 4:

When you told black South Africans they are wrong they don't listen to you, not follow you, but challenge my authority (8);

R 5:

Local workers just consider their own interests (9), impolite;

R 6:

Black South Africans have a very bad time concept. They are not punctual. When they said they would come at 8, they turn up at 830 (10)+1+1. Very impolite;

R 7:

Black people has a bad time concept. When they say I am coming, you will wait for a long time, half an hour or one hour. They are not punctual. Always late. This is very impolite.

R 8:

Some black South Africans are straightforward, tell you directly what they think about you and the work. No consideration of our face.

Summary of Chinese answers

Chinese: list 12 behavior with 2 overlapping,

Conclusions:

(1) (3):

No group consciousness (Individualism) while Chinese are group consensus

(2)(10):

Enjoy what they have today, (short time)

People with 'Present' life attitude are while Chinese Long-time attitude and collectivism. Short-sighted and they will try their best to meet their present needs and reward without considering the future outcome of their present actions. Short-term oriented cultures (African countries) want to maximize the present rewards and are relatively less prone to saving or anticipating long term rewards.

(4):

Reveal black South Africans LCC, Chinese feel no authority

(5)(6) (9):

Reveal Black South Africans LCC, Individualism-rights to get my pay, Chinese C, low law sensitivity

(7) (8):

LPD, person-oriented LCC, No harmony, No face giving while Chinese HPD, HCC (role-oriented), harmony and face-giving

Black South Africans' answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

No idea; Chinese are ok. I don't know about it

R 2:

Xenophobia from SA (1);

R 3:

Short tempered, if you misunderstand Chinese, they shout and short tempered coz they want to catch time to complete the work (2)+1+1+1

Shouting for the work;

R 4:

Chinese like Shouting; Shouting at workers is very bad, not acceptable.

R 5:

Shouting is impolite; Chinese would shout at us. I don't like it. I work for you, but don't shout at me. I am not your son.

R 6:

No respect no polite (3). Poor working condition is impolite (4).

R 7:

Chinese just don't pay us nice. But they want us to work and work (5).

Respondent 8:

Gave no answers

Summary of black South Africans' answers:

Black South Africans list 8 behavior with 3 overlapping. One invalid coz did not provide any.

Conclusion: 4 x shouting reveal black South Africans LCC (**business is business, but Chinese intermesh person and business HCC**), LPD companies tend to have flat hierarchies and matrix organizations)

1 x respect reveal black South Africans LPD (have flat hierarchies and matrix organizations)

1 x discursive,

2 x working condition / salary reveal black South Africans Individualism (reveal Black South Africans LCC, Individualism-rights to get my pay)

4. As an employee in a Chinese company, do you feel you are part of their group?
Why?

Chinese answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

I regard the company as a family, a member of the group; but the black South Africans never have this belief.

R 2:

I regard the company as a family, a member of the group; we work together;

R 3:

As a family member more or less, sometimes feel so;

R 4:

For sure working here I feel like a family member. Any one of us in the company

must be a member for sake of company growth. Work is work, after work, we are family members, respect each other. **But black South Africans don't** take this as their family, money is their only consideration. They care their Individual rights;

R 5:

Part of the group. But black South Africans never have this feeling. Never care how long to work in the company. Chinese do at least within contract period;

R 6:

As family member. All people as a family and follow their contract. But some black South Africans do not treat company as their family. But some Chinese do not treat local people as family;

R 7:

I feel like a family member in the company esp. when I am a manager. Company interest always prevails over individual ones;

R 8:

Working overseas, feel like a family member. Esp. when you are a foreman or a manager. Company interests prevail over individual one. But black South Africans don't think so.

Summary of Chinese answers:

All 8 x feel they are part of the group in a company with 1 x having weak feel thereof. Two also point out that black South Africans don't take Chinese company as their family.

Conclusions:

Reveal Chinese Strong Collectivism, harmony and long term oriented.

And HCC (interpersonal relationship, intermesh person and business)

Black South Africans' answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

As a member of the group, working from the morning to evening;

R 2:

Nice treatment as a member working in this company;

R 3:

Feel like a member of family, wish to work with Chinese, they care you, we negotiate/discuss issues;

R 4:

Working a long time in the company, feel like a family. But not all people regard it as a family. Majority of them not, our goal is to make money. Something wrong or not is not their business;

R 5:

Family member, feel good. When I have problem they point out to me;

R 6:

Wish company to grow so that I can have a job. My rights must not disturb company's rights. Company rights must not abuse my rights;

R 7:

No. not as a member of the group;

R 8:

No. I found it hard to interact with Chinese. Cannot feel like a family member. I don't need to do that. I come and work for them and they pay me.

Summary of black South Africans answer:

5 x family group with 1x saying majority not. 2 x not at all, 1x balanced, but prefer his own rights: Company rights must not abuse my rights

Conclusions:

5 x attract suspension. Chinese comments: most of black South Africans are not, which match one black's statement too. **Reveal LCC and Individualism.**

5. Do you think black South Africans work efficiently? Why not? What do you do then? Do you think Chinese work efficiently? Why?

Chinese answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

Respondent 1:

Strong body but lack of skills due to poor education, training. Skill is much worse

than Chinese. Not hardworking, no worry about losing jobs. Chinese work hard, no holiday, just work;

R 2:

Depends on the skill. Some Chinese are, some are not.

Your eyes must be on them. Otherwise they are doing nothing. Lazy, no time concepts, so I have to deduct their salaries. Chinese work hard, no need to supervise them. They work consciously;

R 3:

black people are lazy, not efficient, no skills. But if to assign them work target, they will change it. Money stimulates them to work hard. Chinese value jobs. Do it better than black South Africans. To Chinese, job first. No job, no life;

R 4:

Skill is key. 1 hour job for Chinese, 3 hours for Africans. Bad time attitude: it is today' work so it is ok if finished today. If contracted, they can change. Chinese are born hardworking. I am paid salary, I have to work;

R 5:

Some are very efficient. Environment or culture, poor efficiency: be patient. No company is happy / willing to employ such people. Chinese procedure is complicated;

R 6:

Some are, some not. If skilled, they can complete the target. They move from this company to another; some get good salaries; Chinese are very efficient;

R 7:

Some are efficient, some are not. Those who are skilled are efficient esp when you contract them. Skills play a part in efficiency. Do more you will get efficient. Chinese are the same. Some are, some not;

R 8:

Black people are not efficient coz of their poor education. No skills. But skilled workers are efficient esp when you give them a target to complete. Chinese also the same. Some are, some not. It depends on your skill. Some skilled one are efficient.

Summary of Chinese answers:

Poor education and no training, no skill x 5, **not useable**

Not hardworking / lazy x 3; no worry about losing job x 1;

No time concept x 2; give them workload they will be efficient x 5 (LCC)

Environment / culture x 1; some are, some not x 3;

Practice makes perfect x 1; your eyes must be on them x 1.

Chinese: hardworking, no holiday, work consciously, value job, worry about losing job, no job no life, I am paid, I have to work,

Conclusions:

Reveal black South Africans short time (contract them, no future concept no worry about losing job), no group interests, LCC (explicit contracts)

Reveal Chinese HCC, collectivism (group interest), long time oriented (value jobs. No job, no life, no holiday, no present rewards)

Black South Africans' answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

SA workers do a nice job;

R 2:

SA workers lazy. No hurry-up;

R 3:

Not efficient if compared with Chinese. They are lazy coz it takes them time to understand things. For Chinese, tomorrow job is done today. For Africans, today's job, will finish tomorrow;

R 4:

Some are, some not. Some miss the target coz of power;

R 5:

If given the target, can be efficient. Sign the task, do it better. Chinese are efficient, they have a good plan. Chinese tell me how to do things. So they have a good future. But not black South Africans;

R 6:

Not fast, try to learn. Hard for black South Africans to think fast. They come for the job. As to what time to finish is another issue. Time is money to black South Africans coz they drag the work to tomorrow. That is another day pay;

R 7:

Hard but not smart. No skill due to poor education. Not use brain. Physically is ok. Chinese work long hours. Work to carry on;

R 8:

I came to work every day. I am not efficient but I am doing the work. Hurry will make mistake. Of course Chinese are hard working. They know how to work. To them work is the only thing.

Summary of black South Africans' answers

SA workers do a nice work x 1; SA workers lazy x 2;

No hurry-up x 5; take time to learn things x 2; some are, some not x 1;

Target/ contract will work x 1; no skill x 1;

Chinese have a good plan x 1; Chinese just know work x 1; Chinese work long hours x 1, Chinese are hardworking x 1;

Conclusions:

Reveal black South Africans short term time orientation (contract them, no future concept no worry about losing job); no group interests, LCC (explicit contracts)

Reveal Chinese HCC, collectivism (group interest), long time oriented (value jobs.

No job no life, no holiday- no present rewards)

6. When a problem or a conflict situation arises, say a workers' strike, do you take a straight-to-the-point approach or give a holistic view of the problem or conflict situation and work out a solution accordingly? Please give reasons for your answer.

Chinese answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

Black South Africans strike just for money. But they don't care their own ability. I gave a big picture of it asking how much do u want and how much work can you do accordingly?

R 2:

Black can leave the company if they want to strike. I will take a holistic view of the problem at hand;

R 3:

We should take a holistic view of strike. Should be strict with workers: punish or reward to avoid strike or problem. Improve working condition and increase salary to avoid problems. Attitude from both Chinese and Africans is key. But black South Africans just want to "strike" money;

R 4:

Holistic view of the strike. But black South Africans strike just for money coz of their individual right. But they don't think their skill and the money they asked for do not match. They don't care their skill, their efficiency. We contract them with work load but they fail to deliver;

R 5:

Holistic view of it. We should think about different issues: government, qualifications, skill, and trade union. External factors is problematic; black South Africans just think about themselves. Not the best way to solve the problem;

R 6:

SA locals like strike. Trade union, government encourages it and protects it. That is their legal rights. Salary is a key concern;

R 7:

If you deduct the salaries of the black South Africans, they will strike. So we will satisfy them to solve the problem. But strike has many reasons. We need to find out them. In fact just a few people want to strike. Majority don't. We will see if it is reasonable;

R 8:

Not all workers want to strike. Just a few. I will resolve strike straightforward first to

stop strike. To meet the workers' demands. Then take a big picture. To think about if the strike is reasonable. If it is salary issue or working condition issue, we talk and resolve it.

Analysing Chinese answers:

Explain why black South Africans strike:

Strikes for money x 4; small picture x 3; trade union/government support x 2;
Salary deduction x 1, not all workers strike x 2; strike is their right x 3

Solution:

To improve working condition x 2; to meet their demands and take holistic view x1;
Talk and resolve x 1

Attitude: x 1

Holistic view x 8 (HCC: qualification, government, skill, trade union, efficiency).
Integrating style, Collectivist approach, harmonious spirit

Black South Africans' answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

Strike is solve the problem; we just get more salaries. Not consider anything else;

R 2:

First time strike just for money;

R 3:

Holistic of view: sit down and discuss with the boss. If I can do, do it. If not, talk to the boss. I work for the boss and make a lot of money for the boss. But I get a little. What about my right? We have too many rights;

R 4:

Strike is the worker's individual right which is more than anything else. Of course, I don't like it coz I will lose a job and family will suffer. Others don't think about losing a job. So they strike for money;

R 5:

Strike so that we can get our salaries increased. We want to increase salary to get our point/ rights. Majority think now, few think future;

R 6:

Strike for money. Don't care about company. Strike is allowed but must follow procedure. Strike is our rights;

R 7:

When strike, no thinking about its outcome- lose a job. But court will still ask the company to pay. People follow strike like a sheep. It is a legal action. Ask for more coz we deserve it. When given a finger, they take your hand;

R 8:

We strike because we have rights to do it. We need a good money. We work for Chinese, Chinese should pay us. Don't pay, we have to strike. We don't think anything else. We only know it is our rights.

Analysing black South Africans' answers:

Explain why black South Africans strike:

Strikes for money x 5; small picture x 3; strike is our right x 5;

Holistic view x2; Talk and resolve x 1

7. Do you think that the Chinese strictly observe SA laws / related regulations in their business? Do you think that abiding by labour law is the best option to solve labour complaints? Why? Please be specific.

Chinese answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

Not 100% follow the law. Black South Africans want more but work less. When they are not happy or satisfied, they want to strike. But strike is not the only option. We can still discuss it;

R 2:

I don't know SA labour law. But I don't like strike. Not at all;

R 3:

Not follow labour law. But strike is not the best option. SA labour only care workers' interests. Just defend the locals;

R 4:

Yes, we follow the law. Labour law is good for locals but bad for the company. Will not solve the problem, black South Africans like it coz it favors them;

R 5:

Not follow the law. Best way to solve the problem;

R 6:

Not 100% follow law. Unions, workers are not stable. Cannot follow the labor law. We subcontract works to local companies. They are happy;

R7:

Chinese normally don't follow the law strictly. In fact we should follow the law. Labor law is the base. But labor law is not the best way to resolve disputes. Problem sort out, but next time, another problem comes; always problem;

R 8:

Depends on how government implement the labor law. We should obey labor law. But labor law is the not best way to resolve labor issues though labor is the base, foundation. Even if the problem is sorted out. Another problem appears next time.

Summary of Chinese answers:

Not 100% follow the law x 5; not the best way x 6, don't like strike x 1;

Labour law is good for locals and bad for foreigners x 2;

Labour law is a base x 2; best way x 1;

Conclusions:

Reveal Chinese low law sensitivity, HCC and collectivism

Black South Africans' answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

Yes, we can report our complaint to the office. But language is a problem. So we are straightforward to the problem. It is our right;

R 2:

Not support strike. Not a best option. We need to follow labour law to solve problem. We can talk to Chinese;

R 3:

Some follow, some not. Labour law is the best way. Law says how much people work and how much should be paid to them. Law is quick to solve the problem;

R 4:

Chinese companies followed the SA law. But I don't think it is the best option;

R 5:

This company follows the labour law. It is best way to solve problem coz it is easy; but no think about future;

R 6:

NO idea about it. Workers think it is the best way to solve their problems;

R 7:

Labour law is the best way. It is a tool. Prices go up, so increasing salaries is normal. They should follow the labour law;

R 8:

I don't think so. They don't follow the SA labor law. They paid us less. Labor law is the best way to address the labor issue with the Chinese companies. Labor law is a quick and easy way to solve our problems. That is our rights.

Summary of the black South Africans' answers:

Not 100% follow the law x 3; not the best way x 2, don't support strike but follow law x 1; labor law is our rights x 4; best way x 5; law is a tool x 1, law is a quick way to solve problem x 2; no think of future x 1;

Conclusions:

Reveal black South Africans high law sensitivity, LCC and Individualism,

8. Black South Africans very much care what they have today. They do not think and care what they will have tomorrow. Do you think this attitude benefits their work/ career? Please be specific.

Chinese answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

They get drunk today if they can afford to buy liquor. No future, no career. So they don't do a nice job and secure it. They strike if they want;

R 2:

Not all of them like that. Black South Africans really enjoy life. No consideration for future. To me I will consider future. I have a career concept. But not black South Africans. They have no career;

R 3:

Spent all they were paid and return to work. They don't care the consequence of strike. No future concept. No stable job for them. But Chinese save money for future;

R 4:

No saving for future. Spent salaries and back for work. No worry about future. No consciousness about future. They don't know the link between strike and its results—lose a job;

R 5:

Care only today. Today get the salary, spend it today. No career concept. No idea how to save money. This make them poor;

R 6:

No saving, just enjoy themselves today. The African natural surrounding makes them so. They don't want investment coz for example, if they invest in cattle business, once the weather becomes bad and not straws for the cattle. Money of investment is gone. So it is better to enjoy today. They do what they can survive, they stick to their basic living;

R7:

This attitude is very bad to their career. In fact no career at all if they have such an attitude. They don't know how to save how to invest. But natural environment ruin their investment, say drought may kill your cows or cattle. So it is better to enjoy today. Just to survive, to satisfy themselves.

R 8:

They got paid and spent it. No saving, no future consideration. They don't have future concept maybe. But it is bad for their career coz they don't care what they

have today. For example, they care nothing about their present work. They don't try to secure the job.

Summary of Chinese answers:

Get paid and spent it x 4, no saving habit x 4, no future no career x 7, no

Stable jobs x 2; no consciousness about future x 1;

Reasons: African natural surrounding x 1

Reveal Chinese long time oriented, HCC (consider more factors) reveal

Black South Africans short time oriented and LCC and Individualism (Enjoy-today's-life first)

Black South Africans' answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

Time concept is "only today", get the payment, spent it. Do a work if get a job today.

No job tomorrow, no work. It is ok. This gives us no career; some people even work for government, they also resign. They do not think it is a very stable job;

R 2:

Think today only. No idea about tomorrow. What happen tomorrow is not my baby.

Just get what you do. As to how much to get tomorrow, no concerns. For example, if I can get R20 for today, I get it. I will get R100 tomorrow if I do something else, but no care. I just get R20 for today;

R 3:

Some care only now, some think future. Business mind people do. But the people who strike don't have future concept. Just want to get for the period. No good for career. Don t have career strategy;

R 4:

No think about tomorrow;

R 5:

Life attitude is like that. Some thinks not far, some think future. Most people don't worry about future. They think only when things happen. No idea for those things which has not yet happened;

R 6

Some think future, some not, care no future. The people who strike don't mind future. Some just want to make them happy today, they don't care they will suffer tomorrow. Don't care what will happen tomorrow. So they enjoy themselves with the money;

R 7:

Don't see a big picture, only see a small picture. No future time concept, don't care future;

R 8:

I am happy if I have a job today. I don't think much about tomorrow. I see what I can do when tomorrow comes. I am not sure if I can get return if I invest in something. Anything can happen. We don't have a saving habit. So we spent all we have today. We will start from tomorrow.

Summary of black South Africans' answers:

Get paid and spent it x 2, Do a work if get a job today. No job tomorrow, no work x 2; Think today only x 6, some are, some not x 3; no care about future x 5; **resign government jobs** x1;

Results: strike and complaint

Reveal black South Africans short time oriented, LCC (consider more factors) and Individualism (enjoy life first)

9. Suppose you are not happy with your current work in terms of work condition or salary, will you still accept it without complaining because having a job is better than no job. How do think of this?

Chinese answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

Will accept it. But I believe more skilled will get more salaries even if it is not now. Improvement can still be made in future. But black people get what they did;

R 2:

Accept it coz it is better than nothing. To survive, will do it, no complaint;

R 3:

If I like the job, I will take it. Not coz of condition or salaries. I like challenge environment. We Chinese are born accepting poor working conditions or with poor salary. Chinese break the law, westerners follow the law;

R 4:

Black South Africans do not have such understanding. Boss must give me the money I ask for, otherwise no work. Of course, no work, no food, no rights. It is a problem;

R 5:

Chinese but not black South Africans will take it. Black South Africans will not do it if they are not happy with it, esp those skilled ones coz they know they will get the money they are supposed to get. Chinese are not strong -orientated.

But black South Africans are;

R 6:

Better than nothing. But majority of black South Africans don't think that way. They must get what they are happy with. Since they don't have future concept, they don't worry about "no job no money";

R 7:

When I am young, I will complain. When I am getting older, will not. But I will consider it. Once I accept it, I will try my best to do the work to the satisfaction of the boss. But black South Africans like complaining, they would sabotage and become "lazy". You pay them Rand 90 but the labor law says Rand 100, which the black South Africans don't know. They will do the job. But once they are aware of it, they will strike. If there is a chance/opportunity, they will strike. Strike is related with complaints during working time;

R 8:

Age is a factor. If I am young, I will complain. When I turn over 30, will accept it and no complain. I will take a big picture. But once I accept it and sign a contract, I will not complain. But black South Africans complain. Sabotage and become lazy

deliberately. If you offer them R90 while they ask for R100, they will accept it. But once there is a chance of strike, they will grab the chance. But nowadays economics problem also reduce strikes and complaints.

Summary of Chinese answers:

Accept it x 6 out of 8, two out of 8 agree black South Africans like complaint and they will accept it when turning old (30yrs) (Long time plan); 8 agree black South Africans like complaint and will not accept it if they are no they r not happy.

Reveal Chinese long time oriented and HCC (enjoy-late attitude) while black South Africans short time oriented, LCC and enjoy-today's-life attitude.

Black South Africans' answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

Accept it; currently, employment is problem. I have to survive;

R 2:

I have 7 people in the family. They will survive, so I will take it.

Most people don't take it if money is not enough. Few people will accept it.

People want easy money. Refuse to take Rand 50 even if they have nothing.

Only 20 % are hardworking. Don't have mind for future;

R 3:

Don't have other choice; have to accept it.

R 4:

Agree. But with condition to increase salary. Must also see what work it is. If it is not ok, will not accept it;

R 5:

Between big thing and small thing to choose, choose big thing. Between small thing and nothing to choose, choose small thing. So it depends;

R 6:

No culture of saving and investment. So not accept it. Coz each day if to get R10, R10 + R10+ R10, it will be R30. But Africans can't see R30 after three days.

Africans don't have a picture of future;

R 7:

To me, I can do a good work if I am happy. Why must I do it if not happy with the salary from the boss? It is better than nothing. But it means nothing if I am not comfortable with the working condition. So I will complaint coz complaint is also my right. Is normal and natural to express myself.

R 8:

I work for the company to get paid. I cannot sacrifice myself to make my boss happy. No. won't take it.

Summary of black South Africans' answers:

Accept it x 3 out of 8; 1 out of 8 depends on what work and under what situation; 4 out of 8 refuse to accept it.

Reason of accepting: economic conditions are bad.

Reason of not accepting: people want easy money, 20% are hardworking, don't have mind for future, individualist (rights),

Reveal black South Africans' short time oriented, LCC and enjoy-today's-life attitude. Present rewards, not future.

10. Do you agree that black South Africans are outspoken and don't care about your "face" in their communication with you? How do you find this behavior? Are you happy with it? Why not?

Chinese answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

Black South Africans are very direct which is good to me coz **I am used to it.** (**The longer a Chinese stays in Africa, the less interaction problems he has with the local workers**). But to other workers/foremen, it is not easy. They cannot accept it coz they felt face lose. So they just fired locals,(HPD) which created labor problems. It also depends whether being direct is good or bad. Sometimes it is very bad coz as a manager, if you don't follow me, you don't give me face. It makes me **angry; face and HPD**

R 2:

Black workers are direct. No care about our face. If they cannot follow my instruction as a foreman to complete the work, I feel bad and lose face. So I fire them; **face and HPD**

R 3:

钱 Black South Africans are direct and give you no face concern. But I don't think face and work relates. We just work, no necessary to think about face and dignity. Work and relation are not the same issue. Contract locals for face concern so that locals complete their work and make foremen happy;

Young Chinese has poor understanding of face and power.

R 4:

林 I **am used to it** already so I don't feel lose face. They are direct. Technically speaking, being direct is good. But to Chinese, relation, **face and dignity** must not be ruined. Black South Africans don't know this;

R 5:

Black South Africans just say what they mean. They are not hiding. Straight. I feel lose face when sometimes they talk to me. I don't like that.

R 6:

洪杰: Black South Africans are direct but not feel lose face coz I **am used to it**. Chinese **value face and mutual respect**. We should learn from each other. But black South Africans really have bad time concept. They have no plan in whatever they are doing. They also try not to admit their wrongdoing. This is bad. They don't have face concern like Chinese do;

R 7:

Xu: Black South Africans are direct coz it is their culture. They are more direct than Chinese. Chinese are evasive. But I don't feel lose face when black South Africans are outspoken coz it is their culture and I **am used to it**;

R 8:

Black South Africans are outspoken. Maybe this is coz of their different culture. They are polite and direct than Chinese. Chinese are evasive, ambiguous. But I don't feel lose face coz it is their culture. I am not angry.

Summary of Chinese answers:

Black South Africans are direct x 8, used to it (manager, translators) x 4 out of 8;

Chinese value face x 5, directness makes face losing x 5 out of 8;

Two think directness is black South Africans culture, black South Africans are polite and direct.

Chinese: face, relation, indirectness, hiding.

Reveal Chinese face concern, HPD, mutual respect, dignity

Black South Africans' answers outlined as follows (1-8 respondents):

R 1:

I think we are polite. Being direct is not a bad thing. We speak out our minds; no think of face for the Chinese;

No idea about face; being direct is polite

R 2:

It is hard to communicate with Chinese foremen. Language problem. We are direct, giving direct speech but it is not offending to them. **Why lose face?** Foremen are **angry coz we don't understand them and they felt lose face**; face and HPD

R 3:

I agree that black South Africans are direct speaking out their minds and don't care others' face. At the beginning, **don't care Chinese face**, but gradually change that. But not all Africans are like that. Some are also indirect, going around. Of course losing face make me no happy; **some black South Africans are indirect**.

R 4:

Thobo hostile: refuse to answer;

R 5:

We need to be direct and straightforward when we need to fix a problem. Sometimes not, it depends. But I like straightforward; I don't know Chinese face.

Majority are direct but some black South Africans are also direct

R 6:

Albert: we are straightforward to make sure of what we want to say. **Work, truth**

and right should not make people lose face. You shout for your reason. If I am not doing wrong thing and you shout, I will not take it. (Black South Africans LPD)

Chinese think they are the boss so they shout for respect. (Black South Africans LPD) But black South Africans think why I must obey you if I am not wrong;

R 7:

Nicholas: generally, black South Africans are direct and straightforward. Africans are direct but not give them two commands at the same time otherwise confused like a monkey picking up a millet (maize). But Chinese are also direct. Chinese get work done as required, no delayed;

Both Chinese and black South Africans are direct

R 8:

I don't hide. Just express myself openly. Say if I am not happy with the payment, I will approach you and say I am not happy. Straightforward. I have no idea about Chinese face. But I think it is polite to speak out your mind clearly. Why Chinese are not happy? With what?

Summary of black South Africans' answers:

Black South Africans are direct x 7 out of 8, one not useable coz of refusing to talk;

Directness in black eyes did not make face losing x 5 out of 7;

Directness is polite and natural x 4.

Reveal Black South Africans LPD, LCC (business is business). Explicit and precise

Appendix V

Close-ended questionnaires done in Namibia and its results

A. Close-ended questionnaires completed by black Namibians

Name		Company			
Position		Highest Level of Education			
Time of Working in the Company					
Inclined Chinese Behaviors	Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Chinese value their individual rights more than company's interests.					
Chinese have a lower sensitivity for Namibian law.					
Chinese would relate personal relationship with work.					
Chinese are evasive/ indirect.					
Chinese act respectfully towards authority and the elders.					
Abiding by Labour Law is the best way to solve labour problems in Chinese companies.					
Chinese are more harmonious / polite than black Namibians.					
Chinese would simply quit a job and don't worry about 'tomorrow'.					
Chinese are face-giving orientated / value face.					
Chinese would accept a job with a little pay					

because it is better than no work.			
------------------------------------	--	--	--

B. Close-ended questionnaires completed by Chinese in Namibia

Name 姓名		Company 公司	
Position 职务		Highest Level of Education 最高学历	
Time of Working in the Company 在公司工作时间			
Inclined behaviors of black Namibians: 纳米比亚黑人的行为特征:	Agree 同意	Neutral 一般	Disagree 不同意
Black Namibians value their individual rights more than company's interests. 纳米比亚黑人重视个人权利胜于公司权利。			
Black Namibians have a lower sensitivity for South African law. 纳米比亚黑人法律意识淡薄。			
Black Namibians would relate personal relationship with work. 纳米比亚黑人常把人情和工作联系起来。			
Black Namibians are evasive / indirect. 纳米比亚黑人说话绕弯子。			
Black Namibians act respectfully towards authority and the elders. 纳米比亚黑人尊重老人和权力。			

Abiding by Labour Law is the best way to solve labour problems in Chinese companies.遵守劳工法是解决中国公司劳资问题的最好办法。			
Black are more harmonious / polite than Chinese. 纳米比亚黑人比中国人讲和谐 / 礼貌。			
Black Namibians would simply quit a job and don't worry about 'tomorrow'.纳米比亚黑人易轻易辞职，不考虑以后。			
Black Namibians are face-giving orientated/ value face. 纳米比亚黑人给面子/ 重视面子。			
Black Namibians would accept a job with a little pay because it is better than no work. 工资少纳米比亚黑人也接受，因为比没有工作好。			

C. Results of close-ended questionnaires done in Namibia

Chinese respondents (20)

	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree	Total
Q1	16	80.0%	1	5.0%	3	15.0%	20
Q2	4	20.0%	9	45.0%	7	35.0%	20
Q3	3	15.0%	6	30.0%	11	55.0%	20
Q4	5	25.0%	7	35.0%	8	40.0%	20
Q5	6	30.0%	8	40.0%	6	30.0%	20
Q6	15	75.0%	3	15.0%	2	10.0%	20
Q7	5	25.0%	6	30.0%	9	45.0%	20
Q8	17	85.0%	2	10.0%	1	5.0%	20
Q9	7	35.0%	1	5.0%	12	60.0%	20
Q10	9	45.0%	1	5.0%	10	50.0%	20

Namibian respondents (20)

	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree	Total
Q1	10	50.0%	3	15.0%	7	35.0%	20
Q2	11	55.0%	8	40.0%	1	5.0%	20
Q3	11	55.0%	6	30.0%	3	15.0%	20
Q4	7	35.0%	10	50.0%	3	15.0%	20

Q5	11	55.0%	6	30.0%	3	15.0%	20
Q6	13	65.0%	4	20.0%	3	15.0%	20
Q7	10	50.0%	8	40.0%	2	10.0%	20
Q8	7	35.0%	3	15.0%	10	50.0%	20
Q9	5	25.0%	11	55.0%	4	20.0%	20
Q10	13	65.0%	2	10.0%	5	25.0%	20