Democratisation and Work Values: The South African Case, 1990-2001

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1) Introduction:

Recent literature on values reveals a marked shift in the nature and direction of major life values. Research indicates that advanced industrial societies[1] are showing a distinct shift away from more traditional secular[2], rational values that stress material prosperity, physical and economic security, towards values that are more expressive of individual freedom and growth (Inglehart, 1990). Processes of industrialization and globalization, coupled with the expansion of the welfare state have launched these societies on a path of rapid economic development, vastly improving the economic and physical conditions of the younger birth cohorts. Furthermore, processes of modernization have effected significant changes within the social, political and cultural landscape; ushering in a process if objective and subjective individualization, where the individual becomes emancipated from traditional bonds associated with class and gender. These processes of individualization will eventually lead to value change in all major life domains. Work values, as an expression of general values within the work context, are no exception to this process.

Work values are of particular importance in a multi-cultural society like South Africa. Over the last two decades, numerous internal and external forces have altered the nature and structure of the South African society, resulting in a vast array of human values that are of particular significance within the workplace. Forces of globalization and internationalization have exposed South Africa to numerous new challenges of cultural diversity such as race, language, religion and gender issues (Booysen, 1999: 25). On the domestic front, the new democratic dispensation and resultant affirmative action and equal opportunity programs have opened up the workforce to previously excluded groups of the population, prompting Booysen to argue that "the two most prevalent changes that the management corps and workforce of South Africa have undergone are the advancement of Black Africans and the advancement of women (Booysen, 1999: 26).

Although South Africa cannot be described as an advanced industrial society, and may, as a result, deviate from the predominant value patterns displayed by the majority of Western democracies, the country has experienced a decade of prolific economic, political and cultural change, largely brought about by the processes of democratization, globalization and internationalization. The majority of these changes have propelled South Africa on a path towards greater economic and social development and should affect a process of value change in the direction of individualisation.

The present study shall attempt to describe whether work values in South Africa have changed in the direction of more modern, individualized work values during the period 1990-2001. What kind of work value patterns can be expected, and in what direction are these changes likely to occur? Are to what extent have the social categories defined by gender, race[3] and occupational level impacted on the nature and direction of this change?

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[1] Societies where the agricultural and industrial sectors of the economy are gradually being replaced by the service sector and the information processing sectors (Van Deth and Scarbrough, 1995: 18)

[2] Secularisation is defined as the functional differentiation of society characteristic of industrialization and urbanization. It is characterized by the separation of economic, social, religious and political spheres and was perpetuated by the rise of the bureaucracy and division of labour (The European Values Group, 1992: 6)

[3] For the purposes of the study, the South African population will be divided into four racial categories, namely, White, Black, Coloured and Indian. These classifications are by no means intended in a discriminatory manner, but reflect the explanatory potential of race as indicated in a

2) Theoretical background

Modern advanced industrial societies have endured a period of significant social change, brought about by changes in the field of technology and informatics. These changes have ushered in a wave of modernization throughout the world, characterized by processes of rapid industrialization, rationalization and secularization (Inglehart and Baker, 2001: 17). Accompanying these processes of modernization are a multitude of systemic level changes such as rapid economic development, rising levels of education, a re-definition of gender roles, decreasing fertility rates, changing attitudes towards authority and broader political participation. These systemic level changes ultimately induce congruent changes at the individual level of subjective experience that incorporates human values and societal norms (Inglehart, 1997: 4).

In the social arena, primary relations have been drastically altered due to the decline of the patriarchal family, which amplified the division of labour upon which early forms of industrialization were dependent. The advent of post-industrial society, coupled with the sexual liberation movement, significantly improved educational opportunities to women and facilitated their entry into the labour market (Castells, 1997: 134). The passing of a number of anti-discrimination laws has opened up the workforce to a number of different cultures and value orientations. In the South African context, this proves particularly significant, as the majority of South African's that were previously excluded from equal opportunities within the labour market have now been afforded equal rights within the social arena.

The economic arena has also been significantly transformed by a number of systemic level changes. Processes of globalization and informationalisation have given rise to a new economy characterized by a dependency on its ability to "generate, process and apply efficient knowledge based information" (Castells, 1996: 77). Knowledge workers increasingly deal with people and symbols, rendering communication and information processing paramount. The hierarchical organization of the industrial era required little creativity and autonomous judgment on the part of the employee. The nature of service and knowledge work, however, requires that the freedom and autonomy of the individual be radically extended (Inglehart and Baker, 2000: 22).

These forces of modernization, globalization, informationalisation and commercialization have effected major changes in the nature and structure of wage labour (Beck, 1992; Beck, 2000; Beck and beck-Gernsheim, 2001: 60). During the industrial period, a largely standardized labour system was regulated through a labour contract that clearly stipulated task and working hours. Work was conducted within specific spatial concentrations and a clear distinction between work and non-work was maintained. The advent of information technology facilitated the emergence of business networks that could transcend the limits of space and time, resulting in an increase in the number of part-time, flexi-time and home workers (Beck, 1992: 142).

This "temporal and spatial flexibilisation of wage labour" (Beck, 1992: 143) holds profound implications for conventional concepts of occupation and organization. The concept of "organization man/woman," where loyal employees remain with an organization for the entirety of their economically active lives in order to climb the proverbial career ladder is vanishing fast. It is replaced by a breed of employees who are increasingly loyal to their professions and hold the organization liable for providing them with the necessary resources to facilitate individual growth and development.

The above mentioned changes in society and economy will result in stark work value differences between traditional employees of the industrial era and the emerging employees of the new knowledge economy. Inglehart (1977, 1990, 1997); Inglehart and Baker (2000, 2001); Inglehart and Abramson (1994, 1998); Halman and de Moor (1993); Ester and Roe (1999) and Harding and Hikspoors (1995) propose that work value change encompasses a shift from secular, rational work values to individualized work values.

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study by Chaids, which indicated the significance of race as a predictor for attitudinal variance. The use of these terms does not, however, suggest that the categorization of people into racial classifications is endorsed (Kotze, 2001: 8)

Individualisation implies an increased emphasis on the value and autonomy of the human being, coupled with an emphasis on self-development and a rejection of hierarchical systems of authority in favour of an environment characterized by greater worker participation and co-operation. Workers in the new economy are less motivated by material rewards, status and advancement; and instead seek opportunities for personal development, growth, change and stimulation. Job security and career advancement are no longer regarded as paramount, as new employees pursue a multitude of alternative jobs and careers in pursuit of constant new change and development (Izzo and Withers, 2001; Grantham, 2000; Zanders, 1993).

As mentioned previously, South Africa cannot be described as an advanced industrial society and we are by no means suggesting that the needs of the South African population are similar to those expressed by advanced industrial societies. Although segments of the South African population live under conditions of extreme economic and physical security, the majority of the population live under conditions of extreme poverty. We would, however, like to argue that South Africa has undergone a number of changes, largely brought about by democratization, that have dramatically altered the contours of inequality in South Africa, and may, as a result, have affected the nature, direction and distribution of work values in the country.

3) The South African Context

The negotiations of 1993 ushered in a new democratic system based on multi-party elections, universal suffrage and a Bill of Rights regarded as one of the most liberal in the world. In the elections of 1994, the African National Congress won a landslide victory over the National Party and the Inkhata Freedom Party and committed itself to the reform and transformation of a society that had been plagued by the injustices associated with colonialism and racism for decades (Van Aardt, 1994; Eades, 1999; Harvey, 2000; Marais, 2001; Shaw, 2001). As a result, the South African society has been subjected to a decade of rapid transformations that would undoubtedly have affected the nature of general life values and work values in the country. Societal policies and workplace practices have been systematically reformed allowing previously excluded groups of the population equal opportunity in both the public and private spheres (Marais, 2001). Educational levels have increased and traditional gender roles are being systematically re-defined. Economic and social reforms have increased access to basic amenities and the expansion of information technology has altered the occupational structure of the South African economy. It does, however, remain uncertain as to the direction and strength of this change.

With the advent of democratization, income levels in South Africa have undergone drastic transformation. Apartheid was characterized by a concentration of wealth in the hands of the White minority, plunging millions of Black, Coloured and Indian South Africans into poverty. Between 1991 and 1996, however, white share of income declined from 59,5% to 51,9%. The Black share of income rose from 29,9% to 33,7%, whereas the Coloured share of income rose from 6,8% to 7,9% and Indian share rose from 3,8% to 4,5% (Whiteford and Van Seventer, 1999: 11). In 1999, the percentage of white households in the richest 10% fell from 95% to 65%, whereas the percentage of Blacks in the top 10% of income earners climbed from 9% to 22%.

Similarly, educational levels in South Africa have shown marked improvements since 1990. Not only have literacy levels increased throughout the population, but the distribution of education throughout the various population groups is significantly more equitable than experienced during the apartheid era. Literacy levels for the total population improved from 74,4% in 1980 to 85,9% in 1996. Mean years of schooling have also shown improvements, from 3,8 years in 1980, to 5,4 years and 6.1 years in 1990 and 1999 respectively (HDR, 2000). The racial distribution of education has also shown improvement since apartheid. Between 1980 and 1996, the adult literacy rate for Black South Africans increased from 66% to 83,1%. For the Coloured population group this percentage increased from 84% to 91,4% and for Indians it increased from 91,6% to 95,6% (Stats SA as cited in De Souza, 2001: 242). Similarly, the representation of women throughout the South African education system has also improved. In 1999, for

instance, the number of women attending university, college and adult education institutions superseded that of their male counterparts (Stats SA, 1999: 35). Similarly, 5,5% of Black women and 26,6% of Coloured women had received higher education in 1999 compared with 5,3% of Black men and 6,3% of Coloured men (Stats SA, 1999: 39)

Since democratization, the South African business environment has also undergone a number of dramatic transformations. The introduction of the Labour Relations Act, the Employment Equity Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act have substantially reduced what has been referred to as "racial despotism" and "racial Fordism" in the South African workplace (Webster, 1999:28) and dramatically increased the number of women and previously excluded racial groupings in the South African economy. As a result, the demographic structure of the South African labour force has been dramatically altered.

Between 1999 and 2001, the proportion of Black, Coloured and Indian individuals that can be classified as economically active has increased dramatically and between 1996 and 2001 the percentage of economically active women in the South African population increased significantly. In 1995 for instance, women made up 43,6% of the economically active population in South Africa (SAIRR, 1996: 346). In 1999, this proportion increased to 33,2% (StatSA 1999 as cited in SAIRR, 2000: 342) and in 2001 it reached 54% (Stats SA 2001 as cited in Dimant, 2001: 201).

The demographic nature of the South African occupational structure has also changed considerably since democratization. In 1995, for instance, 34% of employed Black males and 50% of females were employed in elementary occupations. Less than 4% of Black males and 2% of Black females occupied managerial posts. Thirty five percent of all economically active coloured males and 42% of coloured females occupied elementary occupations, whereas 3% of Coloured males and one percent of coloured females found themselves in managerial posts. Fourteen percent of Indians were found in managerial posts and only one percent found themselves in elementary positions (Stats SA, 1998: 35).

Vast improvements have, however, been made to ensure a more equitable composition of the South African occupational structure. The proportion of Blacks employed in elementary positions decreased from 40,5% in 1995 to 33,3% in 1999, while the percentage of Blacks employed in artisan operator positions increased from 25% to 32% for the same period. Similarly, the proportion of Coloureds employed in elementary occupations decreased from 40% in 1995 to 32,7% in 1999, while the proportion of Coloured managers increased from 10% to 15,4%. The proportion of Indian managers increased from 29,6% to 34% between 1995 and 1999, while the percentage of whites occupying elementary occupations increased from 1,8% to 3,3%.

Although improvements have been made with regards to the representation of women throughout the South African occupational structure, statistics indicate that women remain polarized in the South African labour market. The proportion of women occupying elementary occupations decreased from 38,1% in 1995 to 37,1% in 1999, while the proportion of women occupying managerial/professional occupations increased from 21,8% to 22,6% (Stats SA, 2001:27)

But despite the improvements regarding the racial and gender composition of the economically active population in South Africa, the South African labour market is plagued by high and increasing levels of unemployment. In 1993, unemployment levels in South Africa stood at 12,7% increasing to 16.9% in 1995 (Natrass, 2000: 74). In 2001, unemployment levels in South Africa reached a high of 26,4%. Between 1995 and 2001, unemployment levels within all racial groupings increased. Black unemployment levels increased from 8,3% to 17,6%, while white unemployment levels increased from 2,8% to 6,8% (Dimant, 2001: 214).

The gender composition of unemployment displays a dismal picture. In 1995, female unemployment (expanded definition) stood at 38% while male unemployment stood at 22,5% (SAIRR, 1996: 359). In 2001, these percentages increased to 41% and 33,1% respectively.

Since "values are to a large extent derived, learned and internalized from society and its institutions" and since individual value change occurs as a result of "changes in self-conceptions due to changes in individual needs and perception of social goals and demands" (Rokeach, 1979: 4) one could assume that the systemic level changes that have taken place in South Africa over the last decade have facilitated a value shift in the direction of individualization.

4) Conceptualization and operationalisation

Most definitions of work values treat work values as the expressions of goals, rewards and outcomes within the work context. Ross et al (1999:50) describes work values as the expression of general life values within the work context that refer to the goals or rewards that individuals seek to attain through work. Similarly, the Meaning of Work project (1987) describes work values as the "significance of work for people as a vehicle for reaching important life goals." These end-states or goals are then used as standards by which certain work conditions, activities and outcomes are evaluated, and ultimately enable individuals to make choices amongst a variety of different work alternatives (Ross et al, 1999: 6). Dose (1997:210) carries the concept of work values as end-states or goals further by examining work values as a system of needs or ethics within the work context. She goes on to describe work values as "evaluative standards relating to work or the work environment by which individuals discern what is 'right' or assess the importance of preferences."

In order to measure work value change i.t.o. the individualization thesis, it is first necessary to reach clarification regarding the work value dimensions that need to be measured. Once these dimensions have been identified, they need to be converted into empirical terms so as to ensure accurate and valid measurement of the concepts. The current study shall attempt to measure work value change in terms of work values relating to power distribution in the organization, work preferences and goals, and authority in the workplace. The individualistic, modern orientation and the traditional work value orientations are the main concepts under investigation. Due to the secondary nature of the current analysis, use will be made of questionnaire items already developed for the world values survey that will serve as indicators for the relevant value orientations.

5) Research methodology

Values are indeed a difficult concept to measure. They are not directly observable and manifest themselves within equally complex concepts such as goals, needs, attitudes, preferences and behaviour (Rokeach, 1969). Van Deth and Scarbrough (1995:33) suggest the measurement of values through attitudes, due to the proximity of attitudes to behaviour. Individuals observe a value (stimulus) and respond with the appropriate attitude. These attitudes then ultimately inform values as individuals learn from their own experience.

The most appropriate instrument for the current study with which to measure individual attitudes is the survey. Use was made of the 1990, 1995 and 2001 South African component of the World Values Survey[4] to measure work values relating to the 3 dimensions under investigation.[5]

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[4] To ensure generalisability of the sample, the samples were stratified into homogenous sub-groups defined by province, gender, population groups and community size. Approximately 3000 respondents were drawn in all three waves, and data was collected through face to face interviews through fieldworker assistance. The sample was weighted and projected onto the universe in order to increase the representativeness of the sample.

[5] The World Values Survey is a world-wide investigation of socio-cultural and political change. It has completed representative national surveys of the basic values of more than 65 countries in all six inhabited continents. The four wave data set was started with the European Values Survey in 1981, was followed by a second wave of surveys for global use in 1990 and a third wave in 1995. The fourth wave was recently completed in 2001 (seewvs.isr.umich.edu/)

6) Data presentation and analysis

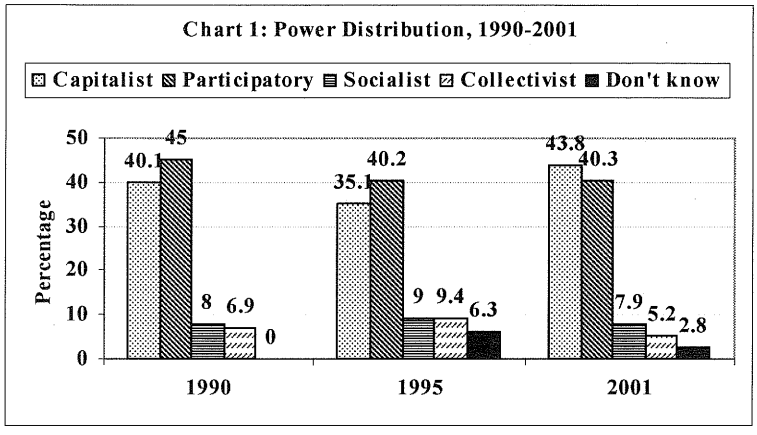
6.1) Power Distribution

According to the individualization thesis, support for participatory and capitalist models of power distribution will increase as societies become increasingly integrated into the global capitalist market. According to Gorz (1999: 52) wage labour is losing its emancipatory function of freeing workers from the relations of subjection which prevailed in traditional society-where social relations were fundamentally inegalitarian." As a result, traditional systems of socialism and collectivism are characteristic of the class identities associated with the industrial era and are becoming less applicable in modern societies.

In the 1990, 1995 and 2001 components of the South African World Values Survey respondents were asked: *There is a lot of discussion about how business and industry should be managed. Which of these four statements comes closest to your opinion?*

1) *The owners should run their business or appoint the managers (Capitalist)*
2) *The owners and the employees should participate in the selection of managers (Participatory)*
3) *The government should be the owner and appoint the managers (Socialist)*
4) *The employees should own the business and should elect the managers (Collectivist)*

According to the data presented below, the South African public displayed relatively strong support for both the capitalist and participatory forms of power distribution throughout the decade. Between 1990 and 1995, we do, however, witness a slight increase in support for the socialist and collectivist modes of power distribution. Trends reflected during this period may have resulted from the poor economic performance of the economy during the early 1990's, but could perhaps be better explained with reference to the political and social climate at that time.



During the apartheid era, the dual system of labour relations in South Africa was characterised by the "racially exclusive" capitalism of the White upper classes and the "social democracy" of the Black under classes (Human, 1991: 96). During apartheid, Black employees used the rights that had been afforded them in the industrial arena as a political platform and instrument through which to attack the apartheid government, resulting in strong socialist tendencies that were captured in the relationship between the ANC and COSATU. According to Bendix (1996: 74):

> *South Africa had, not by consent or consensus but by political expediency, an unusual mixture of raw capitalism and the free market enterprise on the one hand, and of socialism, targeted at white Afrikaners, as well as a large number of institutionalised controls on the other*

The rise in socialist and collectivist modes of power distribution between 1990 and 1995 can therefore be explained by reference to the political system, where the liberation struggle, spearheaded by the ANC and COSATU and propelled by ideologies of social democracy, brought an end to White minority rule in South Africa.

By 2001, however, the majority of respondents supported the capitalistic model of power distribution (43,8%), reflecting a shift in the direction of individualised work values in South Africa

6.1.1) Power distribution and race, 1990-2001

The effect that the above-mentioned political changes had on work values relating to the distribution of power in the organization can further be explained when comparing these values across the various racial groupings in South Africa. In 1990, Black respondents displayed the strongest support for the socialist and collectivist modes of power distribution in comparison to the other groupings. Support for the capitalist model of power distribution was relatively low amongst the Black respondents in comparison to the other racial groupings, while White respondents displayed the strongest support for the capitalist model.

Table 1) Power distribution and race

	White			Indian			Black			Coloured		
	1990	**1995**	**2001**	**1990**	**1995**	**2001**	**1990**	**1995**	**2001**	**1990**	**1995**	**2001**
Capitalist	54.5	61.3	62.3	45.7	46.5	61.8	34	27.8	39.1	45.8	45.7	46.7
Participatory	41.1	32.7	29.9	41.3	40.7	30.0	46.1	42.4	42.2	47.6	35.0	44.2
Socialist	0.6	0.9	1.0	4.3	4.3	0.5	11.8	11.7	10.6	1.2	2.9	0.5
Collectivist	3.9	3.6	0.8	8.7	6.9	0.2	8.1	10.9	3.5	5.4	7.5	6.3
Don't know	0	7.2	0.2	0	7.2	1.4	0	1.5	3.3	0	8.9	2.3
N	**1196**	**725**	**899**	**181**	**196**	**299**	**1031**	**1592**	**1303**	**166**	**386**	**499**

Between 1990 and 1995, Black and Coloured respondents displayed a decline in support for both the capitalistic and participatory forms of power distribution, and an increase in support for socialist and collectivist models. Between 1995 and 2001, however, Black respondents reflected an increase in support for the capitalist model of power distribution and a slight decrease in support for the socialist and collectivist models. According to Gevisser (1997: 24) the trade unionism characterised by the ideologies of social democracy, which was used by left-wing South Africans as a political tool in the struggle against apartheid, is fast transforming into a new form of unionism characterised by labour capitalism. The growth of Black economic empowerment, and the rapid emergence of a neo-liberal Black bourgeoisie have transformed the face of industrial unionism in South Africa and altered the nature and distribution of work values relating to the distribution of power in organisations.

The increase in the percentage of Black owned companies over the last decade is illustrative of this fact. In 1997, eight percent of equities listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange were owned by Black companies, compared with only 0,3 percent in 1995 (Gevisser, 1997:24). In 1999, new investments in established Black-controlled companies amounted to approximately R3.5 bn.(Enterprise, 2001: 78).

A number of South African trade unions have also bought into the market and almost every COSATU affiliated union, including the Communist Party, has set up investment companies headed by some of the most militant and pivotal players of the liberation movement (*The Economist*, 1994: 58), prompting Gevisser (1997:26) to argue that these trends have been

> *without a doubt, one of the quietest and most profound revolutions of post-apartheid South Africa: not just that former militants like Ramaphosa and Golding have become captains of industry, but*

that the ideology of this transformation is so a radical departure from traditional labour values. It reflects, many are beginning to say, a profound crisis in the South African labour movement.

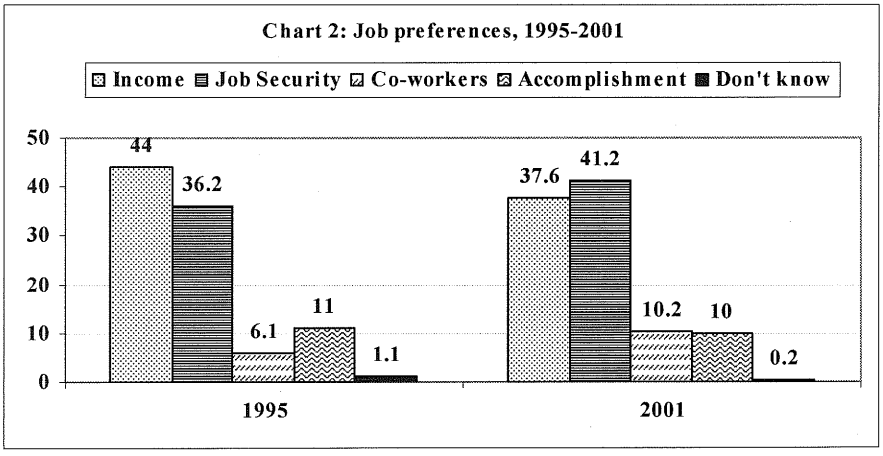
The rise of a strong Black middle class may also have facilitated this rapid shift towards capitalistic work values. According to Laurence (2002: 23) Blacks now constitute the largest racial component of South Africa's middle class and that this expansion has been mainly at the expense of the White and Indian populations. According to the Centre for International and Comparative politics at the University of Stellenbosch (as cited in Laurence, 2002: 23) the Black component of South Africa's middle class has grown from 29 percent to 49 percent between 1994 and 2002. The White component contracted from 53 percent to 34 percent, the Indian component contracted from 11 percent to five percent and the Coloured component increased from seven percent to 11 percent during this period.

6.2) Values relating to work preferences and goals, 1995-2001

According to Zanders (1993: 130) workers are currently emphasising that creativity and autonomy be expressed in their jobs; they are rejecting authority and placing self-expression ahead of status. They are also valuing new experiences in their participation in decision making, and, as a result, inner growth. As a result, extrinsic work goals, such as income and job security will become less influential in informing the choices and decisions made by individuals in the work context.

In the 1995 and 2001 South African component of the World Values Survey, respondents were asked: *here are some of the things that many people take into account in relation to their work. Regardless of whether you are currently looking for a job, which one would you, personally, place first if you were looking for a job:*

- *A good income*
- *A safe job with no risk of closing down or unemployment*
- *Working with people you like*
- *Doing an important job which gives you a feeling of accomplishment*
- *Don't know*



The data presented above, however, indicates that South African work values relating to preferences and goals in the work context remain relatively traditional and that little movement in the direction of individualisation occurred between 1995 and 2001. In 1995, income was regarded as the most important work preference, followed by job security, personal accomplishment and likeable co-workers. The 2001 data reflects a change in the order of value priorities expressed, with job security regarded as the most important job aspect, followed by income, accomplishment and likeable co-workers.

Between 1995 and 2001, the importance of *job security* increased by 5 percent, rendering it the most important job aspect amongst South Africans in 2001. The increasing unemployment rate in South Africa and the decrease in traditional forms of full-time permanent employment could arguably be the primary reasons behind this trend.

Over the last decade, South Africa has been plagued by numerous phases of employment losses. The period between 1990 and 1993 was characterised by substantial downsizing, followed by a period of stabilisation over the next four years. Renewed job losses were imminent from 1997 and have resulted in a 20 percent loss of formal jobs since 1990 (Makgetla, 2001(a): 16). Between 1994 and 2001, unemployment in South Africa increased from 20 percent to 26,4 percent. According to Slabber (2000:18) public sector posts fell by 102 000 between 1989 and 1999 and formal non-agricultural private sector posts fell by 780 000 jobs in the same period. The South African Reserve Bank estimates that 104 000 jobs were lost in the first half of 1997, while 186 000 jobs were lost during 1998 and between 1996 and 1998, posts in the public sector fell by 300 000 (Vermeulen and Wiesner, 2000: 387).

The reasons provided for these high levels of unemployment are numerous. According to Iraj Abedian (as cited in Hazelhurst, 2000: 42) "South Africa is becoming a knowledge and services based economy, with greater focus on technology, e-commerce, the Internet and services." The subsequent changes in the markets and economy have resulted in a number of policies that have impacted negatively on employment levels, such as unbundling, downsizing, rightsizing and privatisation (Woodd, 1999: 22 and Yanta, 2001: 13). As a result of globalisation and the volatile international markets that arise there from, employers are seeking greater job flexibility through the use of new technologies that reduce the need for full-time labour and introduce alternative forms of working arrangements (Brosnan et al, 2000: 749).

The increased use of alternative forms of working arrangements has also been fuelled by a number of supply side measures. The increasing number of women, students and unemployed seeking employment in the economy has resulted in a larger supply of temporary work, which employers are eager to utilise (Brosnan et al, 2000:749).

A number of socio-political and legislative changes have also resulted in an economic environment that is not predisposed to employment creation. Government regulation and the demands imposed by affirmative action have made it difficult and expensive to dismiss workers. As a result, employers are making increasing use of non-standard forms of employment in order to lower costs and avoid unionisation (Vermeulen and Wiesner, 2000: 387). According to the World Bank (as cited in *The Economist,* 31 October 1998), union membership increased an employees' wages by 35 percent. This wage raising effect decreased the number of jobs in the economy by 6,3 percent. As a result of these strong union pressures, pay raises have outstripped inflation for the past two decades, thereby increasing the financial burden of employers.

The data presented above, also reflects a slight increase in the importance placed on *likeable co-workers.* Between 1995 and 2001, the importance placed on likeable co-workers increased by four percent. According to Grantham (2000:18) the importance of likeable co-workers should increase with the advent of the knowledge economy. He argues that technology and new forms of organization are forcing individuals to connect more tightly with other communities of people, and that the new world of work should be referred to as the age of collaboration characterised by a loss of power and status structures.

This increase in the importance of likeable co-workers in South Africa may, however be better explained by the increased cultural diversity within the South African labour market. The cultural diversity of the South African labour market has also increased dramatically over the last decade. Affirmative action plans and employment equity legislation implemented in 1999 have improved the career opportunities of the previously disadvantaged groupings in South Africa. As a result, the labour market has been

characterised by the influx of women and previously disadvantaged racial groupings. Between 1999 and 2001, the labour force participation rate[6] of women in South Africa rose from 44,2 percent to 54 percent (Stats SA 1999 as cited in SAIRR, 2000: 342; Stats SA 2001 as cited in SAIRR, 2001: 201). Similarly, the labour force participation rate of the Black population group increased from 47,2 percent in 1999 to 57 percent in 2001; the Coloured labour force participation rate increased from 62,5 percent to 65,5 percent; and the Indian labour participation rate increased from 60,8 percent to 62,4 percent (Stats SA 1999 as cited in SAIRR, 2000: 342; Stats SA 2001 as cited in SAIRR, 2001:201). As a result, the South African workforce has become increasingly diverse, thereby increasing potential for conflict and the need for more likeable co-workers.

In a study conducted by Hofmeyr (1997: 82) measuring the extent to which employee attitudes have changed between 1994 and 1997, it was concluded that positive employee attitudes towards co-workers have displayed a definite decrease. The percentage of employees that regarded their working relationships as "favourable" decreased by seven percent between 1994 and 1997. According to Hofmeyr, this downward trend can be attributed to a decline in perceptions regarding the extent of co-operation between work groups and departments since 1994. Similarly, the percentage of employees that regarded their working relationships with people of different racial or ethnic groups as favourable also displayed a decline.

The data presented in Chapter three displays a slight decline in the importance of *accomplishment* values; a trend in direct opposition to the individualisation thesis. This decrease has undoubtedly occurred as a result of the large increase in the importance placed on job security and likeable co-workers, and should impact negatively on the development of intrinsic work values in South Africa. Although the systemic level changes reflected in Chapter two suggest that South Africans should display an increase in intrinsic work goals, the dismal employment situation may thwart the development of such values. As job security continues to decline and potential for conflict in the workplace increases, South African employees may continue to sacrifice personal growth and development in favour of greater job security.

6.2.1) Work preferences and occupation, 1995-2001

A comparison of work values relating to work preferences and goals across the various occupational groupings displays some interesting trends. In 1995, all occupational groupings displayed greater support for extrinsic work goals than intrinsic work goals. The importance of income increased as one descended the occupational ladder, with manual workers placing the most importance on income compared with the other occupational groupings. According to the individualisation thesis, individuals or groups of individuals living in conditions of scarcity and insecurity should place greater emphasis on extrinsic work goals. Individuals employed in occupations situated towards the bottom of the occupational ladder, will undoubtedly earn smaller average incomes and therefore display greater support for extrinsic work goals.

Similarly, support for *accomplishment* values increased as one ascended occupational ladder, with respondents in the professional occupations placing the greatest importance on accomplishment values compared with the other occupational groupings. Due to the better socio-economic conditions in which respondents in the higher occupational and educational categories find themselves, they are able to place greater emphasis on the development of intrinsic work values.

[6] The labour force participation rate is the proportion of working aged people (between 15 and 65) that are economically active (employed or unemployed).

Table 2: Work preferences and occupation

	Managerial		Professional		Office worker		Manual Worker	
	1995	**2001**	**1995**	**2001**	**1995**	**2001**	**1995**	**2001**
Income	33.1	34.7	28	37.6	38	40.7	49.8	38.7
Security	35.9	40	36.6	24.9	36.3	42.6	36.8	47.7
Co-workers	5.1	7.2	5.2	7.6	7.7	2.6	4.6	5.7
Accomplishment	25.7	18	29.4	28.1	17.4	14	7.4	7.7
Don't know	0.2	0.1	0.8	1.7	0.6	0.0	1.3	0.2
N	**336**	**377**	**262**	**237**	**197**	**241**	**1262**	**1254**

In 1995, support for job security was relatively similar across the various occupational groupings, while office workers placed the greatest emphasis on likeable co-workers when compared to the other occupational groupings. According to (Gowen, 1996: 37), affirmative action and employment equity policies implemented after 1994, have resulted in an increasingly diverse workforce, thereby increasing the potential for value conflict within the workplace. The diamond model proposed by Gowen (1996: 37) suggests that during the previous political dispensation, White employees were largely clustered around the top of the occupational structure, while Black and Coloured employees were clustered toward the bottom end of the occupational scale. Accordingly, the occupations situated at the middle of the occupational structure should be more prone to intercultural value conflict and therefore place greater emphasis on likeable co-workers than their counterparts at either end of the occupational scale.

Between 1995 and 2001, respondents within the managerial/supervisory, office worker and manual worker occupations displayed an increase in support for job security as work preference, suggesting that the recent job losses in the South African economy have affected perceptions of job security throughout the occupational structure. The job losses that have resulted over the past five years have occurred at all levels across the occupational structure. According to Hazelhurst (2000: 42)

> *top jobs in the declining industries have gone, and large numbers of middle-management jobs are disappearing as companies adapt to the changing economy. And each year there are fewer and fewer jobs at the bottom of the occupational level for people with fewer or no skills.*

According to the data presented above, the largest increase in the importance of *job security* can be found amongst manual workers. As mentioned earlier, the industries in which the majority of manual workers are employed are shrinking at a rapid rate. According to Yanta (2001: 13), the high unemployment rate in South Africa can largely be attributed to the massive decline in the agricultural and mining sectors due to the large shifts within these sectors. The manufacturing sector is suffering similar losses in employment due to the significant tariff reductions that have occurred within this sector.

Respondents situated within the professional occupations, however, displayed a decline in the importance placed on job security, probably due to the high number of self-employed individuals within this occupational category.

Accompanying this increase in the importance of job security, is an increase in the importance of income as job aspect amongst the managerial/supervisory, office worker and professional workers. As a result, support for *accomplishment* values have declined amongst the upper occupational categories, suggesting that the poor employment situation is indeed having an effect on the development of intrinsic work values at the upper spectrum of the occupational and educational ladder. Respondents in the manual worker occupations, however, have displayed a slight increase in support for accomplishment values, signifying a slight convergence of values between the various occupational categories.

Between 1995 and 2001, respondents in the managerial/supervisory, professional and manual worker occupations displayed an increase in support for *likeable co-workers*. Respondents situated in the office

worker occupational category display a moderate decline in support for likeable co-workers, despite the strong support they displayed for this work preference in 1995. As mentioned earlier, the increase in support for likeable co-workers can be explained through reference to the entry of previously excluded groups into the South African labour market. According to Statistics South Africa (2001), occupations situated towards the top and the bottom of the occupational ladder display a larger tendency towards occupational mobility than occupations situated towards the middle of the occupational ladder, thereby increasing the potential for intercultural value conflict amongst these groupings.

Between 1995 and 2001 elementary occupations[7] displayed a decrease in the number of Blacks and Coloureds employed in such occupations, and an increase in the percentage of Whites and Indians employed. Similarly, the managerial and professional occupations[8] displayed an increase in the percentage of Coloured, Indian and White workers employed between 1995 and 1999, thereby increasing the extent of cultural diversity within these occupational groupings and subsequently the potential for intercultural value conflict. The clerical/sales occupations[9], on the other hand, displayed very little change between 1995 and 1999.

6.2.2) Summary and implications for workplace policy and practice:

The data presented above suggests that the South African work force has indeed been characterised by a number of changes regarding work preferences and goals. Most notable, is the increase in the importance of job security and likeable co-workers and the subsequent decline in the importance of accomplishment values.

Unless adequately addressed by policy makers and human resource practitioners, the increase in support for job security and likeable co-workers may result in a number of unfavourable consequences in the South African workplace. Of primary concern, is the negative impact that these trends may have on the development of growth and accomplishment values in the South African workplace. If the proportion of individuals that place primary importance on job security and likeable co-workers continues to increase, the South African workplace may become characterised by increasing levels of distrust and conflict, thereby inhibiting the development of individualistic work values and the associated increase in productivity.

A workplace characterised by such high levels of insecurity and anxiety will undoubtedly carry a number of negative implications for productivity and employee morale. Recent literature on the implications of job security has expended considerable attention on the effects of the so-called "survivor syndrome" (Vermeulen and Wiesener, 2000: 388; Wiesner et al, 1999: 390; Noer, 1999: 281) on employee performance and morale. According to Vermeulen and Wiesener (2000: 390) the large scale job losses characteristic of the South African economy do not only impact negatively on the unemployed. Employees that are left behind in organisations that have undergone dramatic retrenchments experience feelings of extreme grief, shock, guilt, anger and uncertainty regarding their competence as employees. As a result, organisations suffer a loss of employee trust, commitment, and motivation, which, in turn, alters the terms of the psychological contract between employer and employee. According to Vermeulen and Wiesner (2000: 390), "survivor syndrome involves a decline in organisational commitment, a loss of morale, a lack of trust and a focus on personal security rather than corporate goals." As a result, companies experience a decline in performance, innovative capacity and organisational learning.

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[7] Between 1995 and 1999, the percentage of Blacks employed in elementary occupations decreased from 40,4 percent to 33,3 percent; the percentage of Coloureds declined from 40 percent to 32,7 percent; the percentage of Indians increased from 6 percent to 7,8 percent; and the percentage of Whites increased from 1,8 percent to 3,3 percent.

[8] Between 1995 and 1999, the percentage of Blacks employed in managerial/professional occupations declined from 14,9 percent to 14,3 percent; the percentage of Coloureds increased from 10 percent to 15,4 percent; the percentage of Indians increased from 29,6 percent to 34 percent; and the percentage of Whites increased from 41,8 percent to 51 percent.

[9] Between 1995 and 1999, the percentage of blacks employed in clerical/sales occupations decreased from 19,6 percent to 19,5 percent; the percentage of Coloureds employed increased from 22,4 percent to 22,7 percent; the percentage of Indians decreased from 34,9 percent to 33,3 percent; and the percentage of Whites decreased from 34,4 percent to 29,9 percent.

Individuals employed in occupations characterised by a high degree of insecurity avoid risk (Noer, 1999: 281), and subsequently sacrifice the attainment of intrinsic work goals such as personal growth and development, in exchange for extrinsic work goals that ensure greater security and freedom from anxiety. According to Korman (1999: 23) employees working under conditions of extreme insecurity are motivated through efforts of self-protection, rather than personal development and growth. This self-protective motivation is fuelled by the "desire to defend oneself from perceived threatening environmental and personal factors that may affect one's sense of identity."

Although the South African economy is characterised by unreasonably high levels of unemployment, it must be borne in mind that the new world of work is characterised by high levels of underemployment and the subsequent feelings of anxiety and insecurity associated with it. Human resource practitioners are therefore faced with the daunting task of reducing these high levels of anxiety and insecurity in order to ensure renewed levels of productivity and motivation. Such action would require the redefinition of the employment contract, as well as the philosophies of paternalism that have formed the basis of the traditional, life-long employment contract in South Africa (Vermeulen and Wiesener, 2000: 390).

Employee and employer will be required to develop a different set of assumptions based on the principle that there is no longer perfect congruence between the interests of the employer and the employed (Korman, 1999: 28). Human resource practitioners will have to facilitate the development of a "flexible workforce" (Woodd, 1999: 22) comprising independent professionals that sell themselves as a business, and not as "organization-dependent" job holders (Korman, 1999: 31). Furthermore, companies will have to empower individuals to take the development of their careers into their own hands; and provide employees with opportunities for continuous learning and multi-skilling. The concept of life-long career and the associated concept of "career dependence" will have to give way to philosophies of "career resilience" and independence (Woodd, 1999: 22) that focus on the notion of "employability" rather than employment (Callanan et al, 1999: 146).

As mentioned in previous paragraphs, South African trade unions have pushed the issue of job security to the forefront of labour negotiations. The restrictive labour policies that have been passed in the last couple of years, fulfil the notions of the traditional concept of work. These policies have created a labour market that benefits the employed, not the unemployed and does little to psychologically prepare the South African employee for the insecure world of work that seems inevitable.

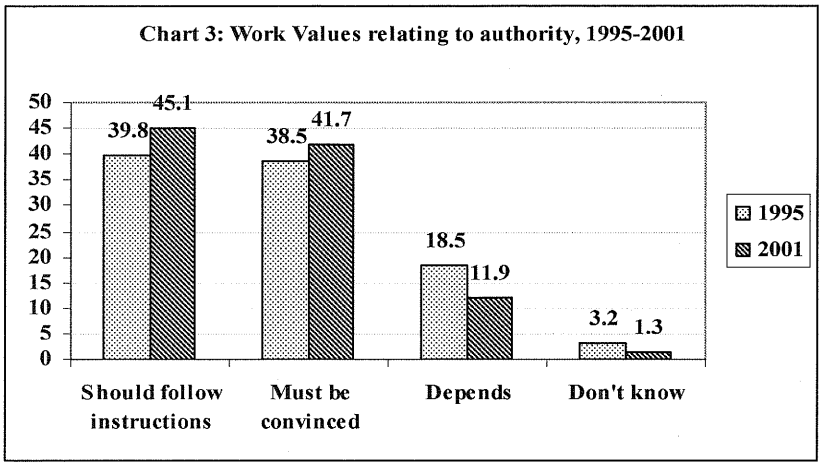
6.3) Work values relating to authority in the workplace

The poor employment situation in South Africa and the resultant perceptions of insecurity that characterise the South African labour market, have undoubtedly also affected the nature of work values relating to authority in the workplace. According to the individualisation thesis, the new knowledge economy implies less acceptance of traditional systems of authority as occupations become increasingly knowledge intensive and individual employees are empowered through greater levels of personal autonomy.

In the 1995 and 2001 South African components of the world values survey, respondents were asked whether or not people should follow the instructions of their superiors if they do not fully agree. Response categories were:

- *Should follow instructions*
- *Must be convinced first*
- *Depends (if volunteered)*
- *Don't know (if volunteered)*

The data presented below, however, suggests that South African work values relating to authority are displaying a slight shift in favour of traditional systems of authority characteristic of the industrial economy.



In 1995, respondents were relatively evenly distributed between the two response categories, with slightly more respondents asserting that one should first be convinced before following an employer's instructions. In 2001, support for both response categories increased, although the data reflects a slight shift in favour of traditional systems of authority.

The systemic level changes explored in section 3, however, suggest that South African work values relating to authority should display a slight shift in favour of individualised work values. The economy has become increasingly knowledge intensive, following the rapid expansion of the tertiary sector (SARB, 1999 as cited in Institute for Futures Research, 2000: 6/33)) and new forms of participatory management have accompanied the democratisation of the South African workplace (Webster, 1999: 3). Educational levels have improved, and general levels of affluence have increased. Despite these positive systemic changes, work values relating to authority in South Africa have become increasingly traditional. The high levels of unemployment and the increasing entry of previously excluded groups into the South African labour market that have rendered the workplace increasingly competitive, may have contributed to this trend.

As mentioned earlier, employees concentrated in industries where job security is continually threatened, suffer from "survivor sickness" characterised by "fear, insecurity, uncertainty, frustration, resentment, anger, sadness, depression, guilt, injustice, betrayal and distrust" (Noer, 1999: 281). As a result, such employees employ two primary coping mechanisms i.e. the avoidance of risk and diminished productivity. According to Wiesner and Vermeulen (2000: 390) individuals that are left to feel the brunt of large scale retrenchment programs became "afraid to put a foot wrong", rendering them extremely cautious, conservative and susceptible to traditional systems of authority.

The study conducted by Karl Hofmeyr (1997: 89) measuring the change in employee attitudes between 1994 and 1997, suggests that employee attitudes towards authority have indeed deteriorated since 1994. According to Hofmeyr, fewer employees felt that their supervisors recognised them for work well done, while the percentage of employees that felt their superiors where receptive to suggested changes also displayed a decline. Similarly, employee perceptions of management have become increasingly negative since 1994. Less than half of respondents surveyed in Hofmeyr's study felt that management was interested in their well-being, while four out of ten respondents felt that the decisions made by management are fair. Half of the respondents surveyed asserted that they did not believe what management said. It is clear therefore, that South African employee perceptions are indeed characterised

by high degrees of distrust and dissatisfaction, which may be affecting a shift towards more traditional systems of authority in the workplace.

6.3.1) Authority and gender, 1995-2001

When comparing work values relating to authority across the various gender groupings, slight differences are evident. In 1995, the majority of male respondents displayed slightly stronger tendencies towards individualised work values than the majority of female respondents. This may be explained through reference to the relatively privileged position afforded men in the South African labour market and occupational structure due to the strong patriarchal tendencies in the South African society. In 1995, South African women predominantly occupied professions situated towards the middle of the occupational structure (Stats SA, 1995 as cited in SAIRR, 1996: 351) and were largely concentrated in the service, retail and manufacturing sector, thereby engaging in jobs traditionally associated with the stereotyped domestic role of the female (Commission on Gender Equality, 1999: 9). As a result, female employees in South Africa were rendered extremely susceptible to traditional systems of authority in the workplace.

Table 3: Authority and gender

	Male		**Female**	
	1995	**2001**	**1995**	**2001**
Follow instructions	38.4	42.5	41	48
Must be convinced	40	45.2	37.1	37.9
Depends	18.9	11.4	18.2	12.4
Don't know	2.7	0.8	3.7	1.7
N	**1435**	**1500**	**1464**	**1500**

Between 1995 and 2001, however, the labour force participation rate of South African women increased significantly and the proportion of women occupying positions situated towards the top of the occupational structure swelled (Stats SA, 2001 as cited in SAIRR, 2001: 201). But despite these improvements in the representation of women in the South African economy, female respondents continued to display an increase in support for traditional systems of authority between 1995 and 2001. Between 1995 and 2001, female respondents displayed a seven percent increase in support for traditional systems of authority in the workplace, while male respondents remained relatively unchanged in the order of value priorities expressed.

At first glance, this trend may be explained through reference to the high unemployment rate of South African women and the subsequent high levels of insecurity experienced. Between 1995 and 2001, female unemployment in South Africa increased from 38 percent to 41 percent[10] (Stats SA, 1995 as cited in SAIRR, 1996: 359; Stats SA 2001 as cited in SAIRR, 2001: 213). Although the female unemployment rates are high compared with that of their male counterparts, the increase in the female unemployment rate is not nearly as high as that of male South Africans. Between 1995 and 2001, unemployment rate amongst male South Africans increased from 22,8 percent to 33,1 percent[11](Stats SA, 1995 as cited in SAIRR, 1996: 359; Stats SA, 2001 as cited in SAIRR, 2001: 213). Despite these increasing levels of unemployment, male respondents remained relatively unchanged in the order of value priorities expressed.

[10] According to the expanded definition of unemployment
[11] According to the expanded definition of unemployment

A number of cultural factors may be responsible for women's changing perceptions of authority in the workplace. South Africa can traditionally be regarded as a strong patriarchal society, where women have been afforded substantially less economic and occupational opportunities. With the implementation of the Employment Equity Act and the subsequent Affirmative Action programs, vast improvements have been made with regards the representation of women in the South African workplace. According to the Commission on Gender Equality (1999), however, women are continually relegated to the lower levels of the management structure and therefore still bear the brunt of a traditionally male dominated workplace. The upward mobility into occupations traditionally filled by men afforded to a large proportion of South African women over the last five years, may however, have subjected an increasing number of women to even stronger patriarchal tendencies in the workplace. Although the proportion of women occupying managerial and professional posts has increased from 20,2 percent in 1995 to 22,2, percent in 1999 (Stats SA) these occupations remain male-dominated (Stats SA, 1999 as cited in SAIRR, 2000: 345). The South African occupational structure is therefore characterised by an influx of women into occupations situated towards the top of the occupational structure, where strong patriarchal tendencies prevail. If not managed properly, such trends could inhibit the development of individualised work values amongst female employees in South Africa.

7) Conclusion

From the data presented above, it seems that in certain instances, the work values of South African citizens have undergone a change, albeit in a direction in contradiction with the individualisation thesis. It would appear that the changes have largely been as a result of the large levels of unemployment in the country and the increasingly diverse nature of the South African workforce and occupational structure. As mentioned earlier, however, underemployment seems to be characteristic of the new knowledge economy, and is unlikely to improve in years to come. Employee perceptions of unemployment and job security should, however, be transformed in order to reduce the negative impact that such systemic level factors could have on the South African workplace. Human resource practitioners and policy makers are therefore faced with the challenging task of reframing individual perceptions surrounding the meaning of work, so as to better equip the South African employee for the changing world of work that seems inevitable.

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