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STUDIES

INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY

**CHANGES IN ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES:
THE ROLE OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONER**

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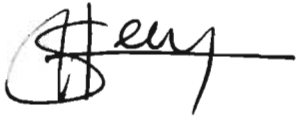
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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work, unless it is specified to the contrary in the text. This dissertation has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henry', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

SONJA HENRY (MISS)

University of Natal, Durban
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The observations and opinions expressed in this research are the author's own and may not necessarily reflect those of the University of Natal, Durban or the various organisations represented.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF TABLES	i
ABSTRACT	ii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Locating the Research in Theory	4
1.1.1 Systems Theory	5
1.1.2 Competing Values Approach	8
CHAPTER 2: THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING ORGANISATIONS – THEIR POLICIES AND PRACTICES	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Global Developments and their impact on South African Organisations	12
2.2.1 Technological Revolution and Globalisation	12
2.2.2 Management Practices	14
2.2.3 Industrial Relations	16
2.3 National changes affecting South African organisations – Social and Cultural Developments	17
2.3.1 The Issue of Skills	18
2.3.2 Productivity Levels	19
2.3.3 Immigration and Emigration	20
2.3.4 The Issue of Women	20
2.3.5 The Issue of Diversity	21
2.3.6 Employment Equity Act	22
2.4 The Case of the United Kingdom	23
2.4.1 Discrimination at the Workplace	23
2.4.2 The Issue of Women	24
2.4.3 Immigration to the United Kingdom	25
2.5 Concluding Remarks	26
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW	27
3.1 Human Resource Management vs Personnel Management	27
3.2 Organisational Change and Development: A Model for Managing Change	29
3.3 Human Resource Policies and Practices	34
3.4 Decision Making Process and Participation by Employees	38
3.5 The Impact of Values	40
3.6 The Culture of the Learning Organisation	44
3.7 The Emerging Role and Future of the Human Resources Department	45
3.8 Past Research	48
3.8.1 Gillian Godsell – CSIR Special Report (1983)	49
3.8.2 Lynn Ribton-Turner – Unpublished Masters Thesis (1995)	50
3.8.3 Bruce Hiddleston – Unpublished Masters Thesis (1976)	51

4.1	Introduction.....	53
4.2	Qualitative vs Quantitative Research Methods.....	53
4.3	Sampling.....	55
4.3.1	Population.....	55
4.3.2	Sampling Methods.....	55
4.3.3	Maximum Variation Sampling.....	56
4.3.4	Convenience Sampling.....	56
4.3.5	Research Sample.....	57
4.3.5.1	Location.....	57
4.3.5.2	Composition of the Sample.....	58
4.3.6	Response Rates.....	59
4.4	Research Design.....	60
4.4.1	Designing the Interview Questionnaire.....	61
4.4.2	The Interview Questions.....	62
4.4.3	Standardised, Short Questionnaire.....	64
4.5	Data Collection Procedures.....	64
4.5.1	Before the Interview.....	65
4.5.2	Interview Setting.....	65
4.5.3	During the Interview.....	65
4.5.4	After the Interview.....	66
4.5.5	Ethical Interviewing.....	67
4.6	Data Analysis.....	68
4.6.1	Analysis of Qualitative Data: The Interview Questionnaire.....	68
4.6.2	The Analysis Begins.....	68
4.6.3	Organising the Data.....	69
4.6.4	Content Analysis.....	70
4.6.5	Analysis of Quantitative Data: The Short, Factual Questionnaire.....	71

5.1	Interview Responses for South African Subjects.....	72
5.1.1	Major Theme: Policy Development Process.....	72
5.1.2	Major Theme: Legislation or Organisational Values.....	75
5.1.3	Major Theme: Personal and / or organisational values and beliefs.....	75
5.1.4	Major Theme: Value Shifts.....	76
5.1.5	Major Theme: Racial and Gender Issues.....	79
5.1.6	Major Theme: Policy Awareness.....	80
5.1.7	Major Theme: Management Accountability.....	81
5.1.8	Major Theme: Basic Individual Needs.....	81
5.1.9	Major Theme: Management / Employee Relationship.....	82
5.1.10	Major Theme: Role of Human Resources.....	83
5.2	Interview Responses for United Kingdom Subjects.....	84
5.2.1	Major Theme: Policy Development Process.....	84
5.2.2	Major Theme: Legislation or Organisational Values.....	85
5.2.3	Major Theme: Personal and / or organisational values and beliefs.....	86
5.2.4	Major Theme: Value Shifts.....	87
5.2.5	Major Theme: Racial and Gender Issues.....	88
5.2.6	Major Theme: Policy Awareness.....	89
5.2.7	Major Theme: Management Accountability.....	89

5.2.8	Major Theme: Basic Individual Needs.....	90
5.2.9	Major Theme: Management / Employee Relationship.....	90
5.3	Presentation of Results for Standardised Questionnaire.....	91

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS **95**

6.1	The Human Resource Policy Development Process – Co-Determined or Unilateral?.....	96
6.1.1	Parties to the Process.....	96
6.1.1.1	Relationship between the actual level of employee participation and the Human Resource Practitioner’s view of participation.....	98
6.1.1.2	Relationship between the management-employee relationship and the nature of the policy development process.....	99
6.1.2	External Consultation.....	100
6.1.3	Policy Awareness.....	100
6.1.4	Legislation as the driver of policy development.....	103
6.2	The Impact of Human Resource Practitioners on the Process – Their Personal Values, Beliefs and Opinions.....	105
6.2.1	The Role of the Human Resource Practitioner.....	105
6.2.2	The Personal Values, Beliefs and Opinions of the Human Resource Practitioner.....	107
6.2.3	Primary Influences on the Values, Beliefs and Opinions of the Human Resource Practitioner.....	109
6.3	Concluding Comments.....	112

**CHAPTER 7: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HUMAN RESOURCE
POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA AND
THE UNITED KINGDOM** **113**

7.1	The Policy Development Process – United Kingdom vs South Africa.....	114
7.1.1	The Parties to the Process.....	114
7.1.2	External Consultation and Policy Awareness.....	117
7.1.3	Primary Driver of Policy Change.....	118
7.1.4	Policy Content – Racial Issues.....	118
7.2	The Personal Impact of the Human Resource Practitioner – United Kingdom vs South Africa.....	120
7.2.1	Shifts in the Values, Beliefs and Opinions of Human Resource Practitioners.....	121
7.3	Concluding Comments.....	124

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION **126**

8.1	Problems with the Research.....	130
8.2	Generalisation of the Research Results.....	131

APPENDIX A : INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

A-1 : SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTIONNAIRE

A-2 : UNITED KINGDOM QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX B : STANDARDISED SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX C : MAP OF SOUTH AFRICA SHOWING THE DURBAN REGION

**APPENDIX D : MAP OF THE UNITED KINGDOM SHOWING THE LONDON
REGION**

REFERENCES

TABLE OF TABLES

CHAPTER 4

Table 4.1 : Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods from Patton (1990) and Mouton and Marais (1990).....	54
Table 4.2 : South African Sample Description.....	58
Table 4.3 : United Kingdom Sample Description.....	59

CHAPTER 5

Table 5.1 : Presentation of results for South African and United Kingdom subjects – Section 1: The Subject.....	92
Table 5.2 : Presentation of results for South African and United Kingdom subjects – Section 2: The Organisation.....	92/ 93
Table 5.3 : Presentation of results for South African and United Kingdom subjects – Section 3: The Human Resources Department.....	94

ABSTRACT

The Human Resources department, through the policies and practices that it develops, stands as a steering function for the rest of the organisation. Human Resource policies and practices, dealing with issues that most often directly affect every employee, set out the guidelines which govern the behaviour, thinking and action of all members of the organisation. The extensive influence of these policies, therefore, make it an interesting subject of research to explore the process that is conducted to develop these policies, the individuals involved and the personal impact of practitioners from the Human Resource department who are often the leaders of this policy development process. Through face to face interviews, coupled with short, factual questionnaires, subjects from information-rich organisations were questioned regarding the nature of their policy development process and the role that individual Human Resource practitioners play in this process. It has been determined through the results of the study that Human Resource practitioners primarily influence the development of policies, with some input from management and very little, if any, participation by employees. Essentially, these practitioners draw up the policies themselves and suggestions are then given and the policies ratified by top management before being implemented in the organisation. In most cases, no involvement of employees is permitted although in some instances, partial participation through representatives is allowed. The theoretical basis of the study rests primarily on systems theory which identifies how changes in one part of the organisation system, such as Human Resource policies and practices, has an effect on every other part of the system, in other words, every employee. This is important when considering that only a small group of individuals, and primarily one Human Resource practitioner, develop policies that affect an entire organisation. The competing values approach also impacts on the study here where it must be identified that the values of one, or a group, of individuals should not dominate an entire organisation where individuals are guided by different values and goals. The research addresses this issue by examining the impact that the personal values, beliefs and opinions of the Human Resource practitioner, who predominantly has the main influence on the process, has on the policies developed. The study reveals that when developing policies, practitioners are in fact guided by a balance between their personal values and the values and beliefs of the organisation. This means that they try to remain neutral in the process, not allowing either their personal values or those of

the organisation to dominate the policies. This means that practitioners do not allow their own personal values and opinions to guide the way they influence the process and develop policies which affect the entire organisation. This study, therefore, is an exploration aimed at the discovery of the current practices that dominate South African organisations, with the focus on the Durban region, concerning Human Resource policy development. The study then extends beyond the South African borders to consider the first world situation in the United Kingdom, allowing a comparison between the first world and South African third world policy development process. This allows an opportunity to identify where the first world and third world differ regarding this process and whether there may be anything that can be learnt from the United Kingdom which could be adapted to the South African situation. The results of the study reveal, however, that although differences could be identified, these were neither suitable nor viable to be transferred to the South African situation. Therefore, through the use of current literature, past research and the exploratory interviews, this study has gathered a picture of how the process of Human Resource policy development functions in South African organisations today. Although the focus has been on the Durban region, the results can be generalised, both between industries and nationally.

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

Change is a necessary element present in all organisations throughout the world including South Africa. The changing social trends in society at large which include the political and legal arenas; the changing nature of the workforce; increased competition; the rapid upsurge in new technologies and the ever widening of the global marketplace, make it an imperative for all organisations to adapt to these changes in order to remain viable entities in the marketplace. The primary aim of organisational change and development in the global economy is to improve the ability of an organisation to adapt to change. This is necessary if an organisation is to survive both the internal and external environments within which it is located.

To effectively extend the change process throughout the organisation in response to all forces of change acting upon it, it is important that change practice takes place in the department of Human Resources. Change and development efforts have implications for Human Resource processes and practices around areas of recruitment, training and development, industrial relations as well as the Human Resource policies and practices that govern the organisation and its employees. Human Resource policies and practices are concerned with the future functioning of the organisation. Their objective is to set up a framework within which action, and more specifically action towards change, can take place. (Torrington & Hall, 1991) Organisations and their Human Resource departments need to be alert and flexible to engage in decision making around policy change as a demand from and a response to changes in its internal and external environments. Therefore, for organisations to adapt to the changing environments, there needs to be corresponding changes in the organisation's Human Resource policies in order to channel the thinking and action of organisational members.

These changes to Human Resource policies and practices may come about as a result of the reviewing and development of current policy for reasons such as a demand from employees or unions; changes to legislation or simply a desire by the organisation to change its policies to improve the quality of work life for employees and respond effectively to the changing organisational environment. Alternatively, changes to Human Resource policies may involve the development of a brand new policy because of new legislation that has been brought to bear on the organisation or through societal changes that demand a policy at Human Resource level. The aim of this chapter is to give a brief overview of these contextual issues that impact

on the policy development process. The following chapter on context will elaborate on these issues in more depth.

No matter what the drive for policy change, it is important to identify who is involved in the decision making process to develop and change policies and what impact they have on the policies. This research study focuses specifically on the role of the Human Resource practitioner, whether it be a Human Resource Director, Human Resource Officer or outside Human Resource Consultant, in the policy change and review process. It aims to consider the impact and influence that such an individual has on the formulation of policies and what influence their values, beliefs, opinions and assumptions have on the decision making process towards policy changes.

French & Bell Jr (1995: 68) identify that “a set of values, assumptions, and beliefs constitute an integral part of organisational development” and change. But we need to ask – whose values and whose assumptions and beliefs? In reviewing and changing Human Resource policies which effect *all* members of the organisation, is it the values and beliefs of the organisation that influence the change or is it the values and beliefs of the individuals involved in the decision making process, primarily Human Resource practitioners? Although all people share basic needs, they often differ when it comes to their values. This is especially evident in South African organisations where there is a great potential for value conflict to occur between people from different cultural, religious, educational, and class backgrounds. Individuals involved in the decision making process towards policy change need to be fully aware of these value differences and should actively work to incorporate them into the policy development process. Organisations also need to be flexible enough to allow new values that may develop from the changing society to be incorporated into their policies if they wish to adapt successfully and remain a competitive entity in the market place. This research will investigate to what extent people with possible value differences are allowed to participate in the policy decision making process in organisations.

Even though the majority of change and development efforts often result in positive outcomes of improved communication between management and employees; improved organisational effectiveness etc, where decisions have been made at a management level without involving employees, there may be a strong likelihood of resistance to that change process. This is especially true where the change will result in some sacrifice and pain for employees. (French Bell Jr, 1995) This research aims to identify the importance of engaging in a collaborative decision making process between employees and management towards

Human Resource policy change efforts. This ensures that the change decisions take into account the best interests of the organisation and all its stakeholders and not just the Human Resource individuals and other top management who are involved in making the policy decisions. A “participative/influence process ... will minimise unneeded resistance, and ... (urge) top management to pay attention to matters of fairness and full communications” (French & Bell Jr, 1995: 290).

This research aims to go beyond past research into work values to look at the role that the Human Resource practitioner as an individual plays in the policy decision making process and the impact that their values, beliefs and opinions have on this process and the new policies that are developed. Human Resource practitioners often have the sole responsibility for drawing up and shaping policies and practices. This means that their personal values and beliefs, which may not be shared by other members of the organisation, may often be carried through into the policies. Where top management are involved, their role in the process is often simply one of ratifying what the Human Resource practitioner has stipulated after a review of the policies as well as possibly putting forward any suggestions they may have. This means that individuals who may have different values, assumptions and beliefs to other members of the workforce have an enormous effect both on the workforce as well as on the culture of the organisation through the decisions that they make about Human Resource policies. Therefore, the research will consider this primarily unilateral policy decision making process which will be investigated in light of the great diversity of the South African workplace where people have different values and experiences as well as the fact that the individuals governed by these *Human* Resource policies are often not included in the process at all.

It will also be important to look at what drives organisations to institute policy change and to identify how organisations hold management accountable to these policies to ensure consistency of behaviour and decision making. The research will also consider how the Human Resource policies meet the challenges of societal changes to provide for the basic needs of individuals through, for example, the elements of personal development and family life.

Finally, the very nature of organisational change and development exists as part of a learning process within the organisation; learning how to adapt its workforce, structures, technologies and resources to the ever-changing internal and external environments. This study will consider what South Africa as a third world country can learn from the first world

experiences in the area of change and development of Human Resource policies and practices. It will conduct a comparative analysis between South Africa and a group of Human Resource practitioners from the United Kingdom who are from different backgrounds and experiences to the South African experience but who are also involved in the change process through the development of Human Resource policies. It is invaluable to gain an insight into how first world organisations approach Human Resource policies and the policy decision making process and a careful examination will be required to identify what can be learnt from the first world experience and what would not work in the South African experience.

The process of changes to policies and practices and the role of Human Resource practitioners needs to be examined in light of a number of different impacting elements. It will be important for this study to investigate what the present situation in South Africa in fact is and how we can move forward from here; what improvements we need to make in order to further provide for more effective South African organisations.

1.1 LOCATING THE RESEARCH IN THEORY

This exploratory study seeks to understand two broad issues:

- Organisational development and change through the Human Resource policy decision making process and, more specifically, the nature of this process - who is involved? Is it unilateral or co-determined decision making that results in the change? Are all parts of the organisation affected by the policies involved in the process and how do changes to the Human Resource policies affect the organisation as a whole system?

Considering these issues from the point of view of the whole organisation affected by the policy decisions, the element of accountability also requires analysis. There is no point in developing policies and practices that stand as a “law” governing individual behaviour and action if there is no consistency in the carrying out of this “law” throughout all parts of the organisation. Organisations must ensure that all members, but especially management, are held accountable in their execution of these policies.

The impact that changes to policies will have on the culture of the organisation and the relationship between management and employees also needs to be considered. Due to the largely human as opposed to profit-based nature of many of the Human Resource policies, relationships throughout the organisation as well as the spirit of the organisation are greatly

affected by changes to one part of the system in Human Resource policies and practices. Therefore, it is essential to consider how all the parts of the organisation system work together to create the whole and to consider how changes to one part, such as changes to Human Resource policies and practices, have an important and necessary effect on the other parts.

- The second issue is that of values and beliefs and essentially how the values and beliefs of individuals involved in the development of Human Resource policies may impact on these policies and, therefore, on every member of the organisation who is governed by them. The study considers how individuals such as Human Resource practitioners go about making policy decisions. Is it simply through doing what the organisation requires of them or are they influenced by their personal values, beliefs and opinions? If the latter is true, South African organisations face a serious problem as very often not all members of the workforce share the same values and beliefs, including those held by the Human Resource practitioner.

In attempting to identify the impact of personal values and beliefs on Human Resource policies, it is vital to understand what it is that shapes and influences the values and opinions of Human Resource practitioners towards making a particular decision around policy and practice. Not all members of the organisation will have had the same background and life experiences that have shaped the values and beliefs of the policy decision makers. This leads to an important question: how do we deal with competing values in terms of policies that will govern all individuals in the organisation?

By identifying these two important issues, it is evident that there are a number of other interrelated domains that also need to be taken into account and examined. These issues can be located in two principle theories: the Systems Theory which relates primarily to the first issue and the Competing Values approach which relates to the second issue under discussion.

1.1.1 Systems Theory

Systems theory is part of the foundation of organisational development and provides insight into how organisations function. Robbins (1983:9) defines a system as being “a set of interrelated and interdependent parts arranged in a manner that produces a unified whole.” This theory does not just apply to organisations as economic entities but also to the wider society. In understanding a system, it is important to identify the individual parts first and

then try to understand how these individual parts interact with each other. In organisations, the individual parts of the system include employees and managers, their departments and functions, teams and individual workers.

Organisations exist as *open systems* because they involve themselves in dynamic interaction both between their individual parts and with their environment. This means that in the present study, the development of Human Resource policies as part of the organisation system, will not only affect and be influenced by the individual parts of that system, but the external environment – including political, social, legislative and economic influences - will also impact on these policies. Organisations could never exist as closed systems because they depend on their external environment to provide them with raw materials, personnel resources and customers who will ensure that the organisation remains viable. Senge (1990) acknowledges that organisations need to develop a shift in mindset from viewing themselves as entities separate from the world, to identifying their connectedness to the world through their interaction with their external environment. Therefore, in order to ensure survival, organisations need to interact internally and with their environment. In relating this to the development of policy, parties involved in the policy development process as part of the organisation system need to ensure that they do not simply allow one set of values and opinions, either those of the organisation or their own personal views, to dominate. If there is no interaction with other parts of the organisation, such as employees and trade unions, as well as with the external environment in terms of legislation and social views etc, then the system becomes closed. Policies developed in this way may not have the commitment from all parts of the organisation that it may have had if the system had remained open and all points of view consulted. (Radford and Glaser,1993)

All open systems are dominated by three primary elements:

Input -> Throughput (Transformation) -> Output

Organisations as open systems take in information, people, money, raw materials – *inputs* – from their environment. Through the *throughput* or transformation process, the inputs are changed and converted into goods, services, profits, waste etc – the *output*. Organisations as open systems “have purposes and goals ... (in reaching their output but) it is important to note that these purposes must align with purposes or needs in the environment” (French & Bell Jr,1995: 90). If what the organisation is producing is not needed by the environment,

then the organisation may not survive so it is important that it aligns itself with what is needed in the environment.

Possibly the most important aspect of organisations as open systems, however, can be summarised in the quotation by Hoelson & Stead (1998: 1):

“(In) systems characterised by a complex network of interconnections between all subsystems and components of the system, it is understood that change in any part of the system will influence the rest of the system in a constant process of interconnected cyclical interaction.”

This indicates the vital interconnectedness between all parts of the system. For example, even though Marketing, Finance, Production, Human Resources etc exist as single functions in the organisation system, a change in one department – part of the system – will have an effect on the other departments – parts of the system. Senge (1990) identifies that to understand organisational change requires having a view of the whole system that generates that change. To understand the change, sometimes the whole system to be considered may be the interaction between departments, at other times the whole industry may need to be considered as the system. Where a policy change deals with an issue relating specifically to an organisation’s internal departments, such as eating at the workplace, then the whole system to be considered in terms of this change is the interaction between the departments. However, if a policy change is required because of new wages set down by the registered trade union for the entire industry, then the system involves the interaction between the industry (external environment) and the organisation..

In relation to this study, with the rapidly changing external society as well as internal organisational issues, the Human Resource department often needs to change and adapt its policies and practices. This in turn has an effect on the other parts of the organisational system. A change in one part of the organisation system will always have some effect or influence on the other parts. For example, changing the structure of salaries and benefits through developing the Human Resource policy on this issue will effect not only the personnel in the organisation but will also have an effect on the finance department. It may result in increased employee morale which may encourage improved productivity and sales affecting these departments as well. So it is easy to see that a change in one part of the organisation will have an influence on the other parts because of the interconnectedness of the organisation’s parts as a whole open system.

Senge in French & Bell Jr (1995) believes that to bring about change in the organisation system, it is not acceptable to simply change selected parts of the system. Instead the whole system must be changed so that the culture, the employees and all other aspects of the organisation 'fit in' with this new goal/ purpose for the entire organisation. Senge's view is important in the development of Human Resource policies and practices where simply developing and implementing the policy at Human Resource level will not be sufficient to ensure the acceptance of and commitment to that policy. Instead the goal of policy decision-making in terms of systems theory should be to ensure that policy decisions taken by Human Resources and/ or management also take into account individuals in other parts of the system that will be affected by the change, such as employees and unions. This will result in a greater probability of the policies being supported by all parts of the system affected by them. In maintaining the position of an *open* system, the Human Resource department may also need to interact with the external environment through consulting parties such as experts on the issue as well as current legislation that may give information and guidance to the change process affecting the whole system. (Radford and Glaser,1993)

The latter discussion results in the question being posed by this study - if changes to Human Resource policies and practices affects all parts of the organisation system, then why is it that often the decision making process is unilateral and takes place solely between the Human Resource practitioner and top management? All parts of the organisation work together to create the whole system. The debate is whether they should all have some input into the policies that will directly effect them as part of the organisation system or whether policy decisions should remain the prerogative of management and Human Resources.

1.1.2 Competing Values Approach

This theoretical approach identifies that different people hold different values and that "what you value ... depends on who you are and the interests you represent" (Robbins,1983: 33). The first part of this statement implies that what individuals value, their standards, is a product of who they are as individuals which has been shaped by their past and present experiences as well as their background, where they have come from. The second part of this statement can be applied to the organisational context where people may consider the organisation to be effective or ineffective; profitable or unprofitable; have good working conditions or poor working conditions depending on which department or interest they represent. Their values differ according to the interests that they represent and they see the organisation in a different light to members of other interest groups.

The competing values approach is based on the assumption that competing values exist within organisations which can create conflicting goals. It makes the assumption that there is no one, single goal in an organisational context and it also assumes that there is no consensus around those goals that can be identified in an organisation. (Robbins, 1983) The reason for these conflicting goals stems from the values of those individuals that define the goals. Due to the different values that individuals hold, different things will be important to them and as such, the goals that they will want to achieve will differ. The theory suggests that there is no one goal in an organisation because there are a number of individuals in an organisation with competing values and, therefore, competing goals.

For example, in attempting to create a more effective organisation through change efforts, the Human Resources department, which values the human aspect of the organisation, will have the goal of hiring competent employees and working towards a positive relationship with unions to decrease strikes and improve the effectiveness of the organisation. On the other hand, the marketing department will value the organisation's position against competitors. Their goal may be to improve the organisation's effectiveness through gaining a greater percentage of the product market than what the company already holds. This example gives a clear indication of the conflicting values and goals that may exist in an organisation. It is vital that these be identified and effectively dealt with. (Robbins, 1983)

The competing values approach evolved through the discovery of three basic sets of competing values that dominate organisations. (Robbins, 1983)

- The *structure of the organisation*, ranging from an emphasis on flexibility to an emphasis on control. In this competing values set, the values of change, adaptability and innovation compete against the values of control, authority and order.
- The *focus of the organisation*, ranging from an emphasis on the people within the organisation and their development to an emphasis on the development of the organisation itself. Here the concern for the needs of the people compete against the concern for productivity and achieving results for the organisation
- The *means of an organisation and its ends* ranges from the processes that it follows to an emphasis on the final outcomes that the organisation achieves. The competing values here look at "whether the organisation should be evaluated on long-term criteria (means) or short-term criteria (ends)" (Robbins, 1983: 35).

These values can be combined to create a framework within which the organisation functions. The combination of values that will dominate an organisation at any one time will depend on what stage the organisation is in in terms of its life cycle. Organisations move from the entrepreneurial stage dominated by innovation and creativity, to the collectivity stage of informal communications and strong employee commitment. This then progresses to a formalisation stage manifested through stability, the introduction of rules and procedures and more efficient operation of the organisation. Finally, organisations reach the stage where they are fully aware of the changes that are occurring in the external environment and they actively work to adapt, renew themselves and grow. (Robbins,1983) The competing values approach identifies that there are conflicting interests, values and goals that underlie any organisation and a change in the activities and characteristics of the organisation as it goes through its life cycle will often determine what values, interests and goals will dominate at each point.

Quinn (1988), considering the issue of competing values, argued for a balanced approach to values which incorporated all orientations. He identified that, taken too far, each value orientation would become an extreme and the results would be disastrous. For example, if the value orientation of the Human Relations model, including discussion and participation, commitment, focus on morale and human development, was taken too far and was the only value dominating an organisation, the results would be permissiveness and uncontrolled individualism. Likewise, an extreme emphasis on the values of goal clarification, regulation and authority would result in a complete lack of individualism where the 'boss has the final say'. Therefore, Quinn (1988) argued that each value orientation held by individuals or groups in an organisation has both negative and positive attributes which need to be balanced. No one orientation can be taken to its extreme eliminating all other value orientations. Rather, the optimum position in any organisation is the ability to wrestle with the dynamic of balancing the positive aspects of each value orientation.

An important problem with the competing values approach lies in the fact that it is not supported by much research. Whilst it does identify some important elements, these do need to be ratified by further research. The view also does not take into account the number of individuals in the organisation who come from different backgrounds and experiences and whose personal values and beliefs are shaped by these and are carried through into their role in the organisation. Even if individuals represent certain interests in the organisation, their personal values and beliefs also have an important part to play in the goals that they wish to achieve.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING ORGANISATIONS – THEIR POLICIES AND PRACTICES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is important to establish a context within which changes to Human Resource policies and practices can be examined. Various literary resources as well as changes that organisations have experienced through the development of new managerial practices; improvements in technology - its implementation at the workplace and the subsequent restructuring of work as well as the effect of globalisation, need to be taken into account. Whilst considering where we have come from provides a sound platform to identify why organisations exist and function as they do, it is also essential to look at the current situation of South African organisations; the elements impacting on them and on the managerial members who are involved in the development of policies and practices.

Since the 1994 elections, South Africa has experienced astronomical change in all sectors. There have been immense legislative changes aimed at eliminating the discriminatory elements of South Africa's past; cultural and societal changes have also come to the fore and organisations have had to adapt to issues such as diversity and employment equity. The latter elements especially have resulted in important changes to managerial practices and activities. It should be remembered, however, that although giant leaps have been taken towards eliminating the destructive elements of South Africa's past, these changes will still continue for many years to come, both in society as well as at the workplace. South Africa still has the negative results of the apartheid era to deal with such as the high level of unemployment; the shortage of skills and the high level of illiteracy amongst many workers. There is also a real problem of immigration and emigration in the country. (Barker, 1995) Whilst foreign individuals are flocking to South Africa to look for work and are occupying jobs that would otherwise be given to South African citizens, there is also a vast number of highly skilled, trained South Africans that are leaving South Africa for 'greener pastures'. Organisations have to deal with this growing shortage of highly skilled and educated individuals and are increasingly having to put effort and finances into training up individuals to fill these positions.

Therefore, both a country's historical and current situation creates the context that impacts on the position in which organisations and management find themselves. Context is important in light of the decisions that Human Resource practitioners and management need to make when developing Human Resource policies and practices which govern the entire workforce. Understanding the context gives greater insight into the thought processes and contemplation of these individuals towards their final decisions around policies and practices.

This research study also considers the role of Human Resource practitioners in the policy decision making process within the first world country of the United Kingdom. A comparison of organisations and their Human Resource practitioners within this first world scenario and the South African third world situation will provide insight into the differences that exist between these two different developmental conditions as well as identifying elements that can be learnt from the first world experience. Due to our different histories, however, whatever can be learnt from the United Kingdom experience, needs to be adjusted to the particular South African situation before attempting to apply it. It is important, therefore, to understand what context has impacted on organisations in the United Kingdom. This includes not only the global changes mentioned earlier, but also changes which are 'personal' to the country.

2.2 GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS

2.2.1 Technological Revolution and Globalisation

Both Wynne (1998) and Mitchell (1998) consider the writings of Castells around the changing nature of work; the development of the network society and its impact on both organisations and the general functioning of society. Throughout the past two centuries, society has experienced technological changes and revolutions, from the Industrial Revolution to the information technology revolution of the late twentieth century. What is important is that they have penetrated not only the world of work, but have affected all areas of human life and activity. The information technology revolution has caused some of the most important changes to organisations and society. It has been characterised not only by a number of technological breakthroughs but also by constant innovation around new technologies. A negative effect, however, has been that because many under-developed, poorer countries are not connected to the global system, more dominant societies are gaining increasing power through these developments whilst poorer countries are failing to benefit.

Through these technological advancements, organisations have been transformed and have had to cope with the uncertain effects on both production and labour. One of the major trends that emerged in the 1980's was a move from mass production (Fordism) to flexible production (Post-Fordism). Due to the changing markets and demand for products, organisations found that they could no longer be rigid and inflexible. They needed to be able to adapt to this changing environment through cheaper, more flexible production. Post-Fordism identifies that in order to promote this flexibility, there needs to be a form of participatory management with the aim "to increase productivity and quality by encouraging workers to use whatever ideas and skills they might have to increase production" (Webster, 1995: 12). The inclusion of participatory management into current managerial practices in South African organisations is something that has been encouraged by trade unions and even some employment legislation. However, due to both management's desire to maintain their prerogative over business decisions as well as the breakdown in the trust relationships in many organisations as a result of the apartheid past, this aspect of global change and Post-Fordism has been slow in its development.

Another trend in the transformation of organisations through this technological revolution is the rise of small businesses. These small businesses are able to adapt effectively to the changing environment and are, therefore, more flexible and innovative. In South Africa, the number of self employed people and entrepreneurs in small businesses has risen significantly although this has mainly been in the informal sector of the economy. This rise of small businesses did not result in a decline in large organisations but rather a decrease in the "large, vertically integrated corporation as an organisational model" (Castells in Wynne, 1998: 3). A new, more horizontal structure of the organisation is starting to develop replacing the bureaucratic, vertical structure of traditional organisations. Castells in Mitchell (1998) also identifies the development of networks and the role of technology in the creation of these networks. Networks exist between suppliers, producers, customers and have revolutionised the nature of organisations, extending across international borders and facilitating the globalisation of markets and the emergence of a global economy. Networks allow organisations to be more flexible and to adapt more easily to the changing environment.

Technological developments have entered organisations not only through networks that encourage increasing global communications and sharing of information but more importantly, through the automation of methods of production. In other words, manual labour as supplied by humans is being replaced by automated machines. Machines (or robots) enable higher productivity levels and are often able to produce higher quality products. This

situation does, however, have social implications as workers fear job loss and unemployment figures may rise. (Cunningham & Haines,1995) Workers fear that they will be replaced by machines and this may result in them becoming demotivated and possibly hostile towards the organisation leading to a resistance of the new technology. The technological revolution has also resulted in an employment profile that has changed considerably with a new division of labour. In South Africa, employment has increased in the services sectors whilst having dropped in the manufacturing and mining industries. The nature of the workforce has also changed as some older employees' skills have become outdated and less educated workers suffer considerably with the introduction of these new technologies.

2.2.2 Management Practices

Technological change and the rise of globalisation has had an important effect on management practices. Due to the decrease in the number of employees because of new technology, management has been able to increase their power of control both over the production process and over the workers. The new technology and globalisation enables management to manage 'at a distance' through the use of communication technology. This also means that workers are able to work from home and, therefore, the need for constant supervision and the costs associated with this are decreased. These new developments also allow for "shorter working hours and greater flexibility in work time and location" (Cunningham & Haines,1995: 125) which means that there is more time for leisure activities than in the past. This is important as the last few years has seen a new generation of workers entering the workplace who value a balance between leisure and work time. Management needs to be able to accommodate this within organisations.

Ferreira (1998) identifies four distinct managerial activities that have developed out of the new information technology drive and its impact on organisations.

- Managers are now responsible for developing the intellectual skills in an organisation through encouraging a learning organisational environment, supporting both the teachers and the learners. In South Africa, whilst we may have the potential for learning in our workforce, the country's education for disadvantaged groups has been such that at present most employees are illiterate and concentrated in the area of manual labour. The education system and literacy programmes are becoming more dominant and effective, however, and there is a move to produce a population of workers that will be literate and able and willing to increase their knowledge through learning. Organisations still need to

encourage the development of workers' skills through training either on the job or outside of the organisation.

- Management also need to focus on developing new technologies for the organisation. They need to encourage innovation towards developing new information technology opportunities. Through allowing employees to be involved in this innovation process and to use their creative thinking to make improvements to their job/ function, the organisation will benefit overall.
- Management still remains ultimately responsible for strategic planning and for 'plotting the course' of the organisation. Due to the increasing uncertain nature of consumer demands, it is difficult for organisations to plan too far ahead. It is important for management to form networks with subsidiaries, sister-companies etc to work together to learn and develop new technologies and share information that is of strategic value to the organisation.
- Finally, the role of management is most certainly a social one – one of developing social relationships with employees. This means that managers need to work to obtain a high level of commitment from employees through increased sharing of information especially with regards to business decisions. They need to know how to motivate this commitment and sustain it. Therefore, they need to be actively involved in developing a flat organisational structure that will facilitate increased levels of communication and participation so that management, supervisors and employees can work together to solve problems. Although there is also the need to develop a high trust relationship with employees, because of South Africa's past, this may be a difficult and slow process to achieve. (Ferreira,1998)

More importantly, beyond these four managerial activities, management needs to change their view of workers as simply a means of production and embrace a more people-orientated approach along with being more flexible and practical in dealing with the changing society. In South Africa, management need to start building on the negative relationship that has often existed with employees in the past, spurred on by hostile unions and labour relations. For organisations to be successful, management needs to ensure the commitment of employees to the organisation and their jobs. This can only be achieved through the development of trust and commitment between management and employees. This will come from "a more participative/ consultative approach to managing employees and then giving them the rewards that they really want" (Ferreira,1998: 6) as well as through the regulation of the relationship by legislation such as the Labour Relations Act of 1995 and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997. What is acceptable to management in terms of a participative

approach, however, will need to be determined. Managers need to focus a committed workforce towards reaching a vision and ensure that that focus is maintained in the years to come. This will ensure that South Africa can build companies that are internationally competitive and are no longer lagging behind the rest of the world.

Changes to the composition of management in South Africa also has an important impact on organisations. These developments have been encouraged through the legislative requirements of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity which work to ensure that previously disadvantaged groups, especially Blacks, Coloureds and Indians but also women and the disabled, are moved up into the levels of management. It is important that top management modify any negative attitudes they may have towards these changes so that they support the new approach; are seen to be totally committed to it and incorporate it into the company's culture. Due to the fact that the majority of new managers will be black, it can not be expected that they manage within an organisation whose culture is completely white Anglo-Saxon. Companies, therefore, need to ensure that they take into account the values and culture of these individuals taking up managerial positions. (Birkin,1993)

2.2.3 Industrial Relations

To identify the context of South African industrial relations, it is important to understand the nature of employee-management relations historically and, therefore, why a presence of trade unionism is still felt in many South African organisations today. South Africa is one of the few countries in the world where trade unions have in fact grown over the past decade. In many progressive organisations, however, where employees are allowed to participate both in decisions as well as within their particular functions, the power of the trade unions is waning, although it has not disappeared altogether.

Industrial relations has been played out between employers and employees for many years in South Africa either through all-out strikes and action against management or through "a very uncomfortable toleration of each other" (Barker,1995: 28). Things are changing, however, and especially since the 1994 elections, an attitude of joint co-operation and search for solutions has developed at the national level through the establishment of bodies such as the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). At an industry level, organisations and unions are spending more time negotiating with each other and are jointly trying to find ways to help the organisation perform better; increase productivity and become globally competitive whilst also protecting the jobs of the union members. (Barker,1995)

Shifts in the social and political arenas as a result of the 1994 elections, led to important changes in the area of industrial and labour relations. The result was the development of the Labour Relations Act. This Act was conceived through a negotiated agreement between the three powers dominant in this process – labour, represented by the trade union federations of COSATU, FEDSAL and NACTU; business, represented through Business South Africa; and the government, represented through NEDLAC. The primary aims of the Act are to promote and encourage co-operative relationships between business and labour by promoting economic development, social justice and peaceful labour relations. It also works to resolve industrial conflict which has long dominated the workplace due to inequalities; discrimination; a lack of trust and a high degree of hostility. (Jenkins,1998) The decrease in trade union hostility through negotiations and the fact that their power is seen to be waning in many organisations, coupled with the application of the Labour Relations Act, has meant that the relationship between management and employees is fast changing towards one that is more co-operative and participative. However, this change is a day to day process which must be continually worked at by both parties.

2.3 NATIONAL CHANGES AFFECTING SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS – SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

Along with the effect of issues mentioned above, changes to Human Resource policies and practices have also been influenced by the social and cultural context in which they find themselves. South African society as a whole has undergone a massive amount of change over the past decade and especially since the country's democratic elections in 1994. The country has been through major social changes with the release of Nelson Mandela; the abolition of apartheid and the move to accept all people as equals. South Africa has become an open society, both economically where it has become internationally recognised and part of the global market place as well as through changes in the cultural and political sphere. Organisations are certainly affected by these external environmental changes and indeed, they have an important influence on the organisations' activities; how it functions and the policies and practices that it develops and follows. (Du Toit,1993) Due to the fact that organisations depend on their external environment for its resources of raw materials and manpower, the rapid social changes and political situation may have an effect on the ultimate survival of the organisation. "The three main drivers for change in South Africa are political and economic policies and demands for cultural change. These three drivers are interwoven and interdependent" (Du Toit,1993: 21). The political (and legal) changes are currently exerting the most dominant demands for change in organisations. With the abolition of apartheid and

the new democratic government in power, organisations now have to abolish all forms of discrimination - racial, gender and other – both in their practices and their company policies. The legislation also requires organisations to enforce the practices of affirmative action and employment equity.

Many cultural changes have also occurred in South Africa, through changes to values, artifacts and accepted ways of behaving. Perhaps the most obvious cultural changes have been those to do with artifacts such as the development of a new national flag and anthem, but these have also been substantiated by changes to people's attitudes throughout the country as well as their behaviour. Although these cultural changes are still taking place and some members of society may not be as eager to make the changes as others, organisations have been obliged to determine how and to what extent they need to adjust the organisation to the changing cultural environment. Most notably, this means that the levels of power and authority in organisations, specifically top management, need to undergo crucial change in order to be able to manage an increasingly cultural diverse organisation effectively.

(Du Toit,1993) This is important in terms of developing policies and practices as they need to acknowledge the presence of cultural diversity in organisations and adapt to cultural changes that are occurring outside of the organisation.

So then, what is the situation that South Africa and South African organisations are faced with now? Many of the elements that have been discussed are still impacting on organisations but there are other elements, most of them stemming from the social issues of the past, that have an important effect on the way that businesses function and the policies and practices that provide the framework within which action and behaviour take place. Possibly, the most notable elements include Affirmative Action and Employment Equity issues.

2.3.1 The Issue of Skills

The technological advances of the electronic age has meant that there is a need for skilled labour in organisations. Low-skilled jobs have begun to disappear as they are replaced by automation. Possibly the most important hindrance to widespread and accelerating economic growth in South African organisations, is the country's severe lack in **SKILLS**. This is as a result of poor education and training for most of South Africa's black, coloured and asian citizens because of apartheid policies which restricted the use of all population groups to their full potential. Due to this poor educational background of many South African employees, there is a very serious problem of illiteracy which has a negative effect on organisations.

(Makhanya, 1995) It means that attempts to improve productivity levels and make innovative adjustments to functions in the organisation are difficult to accomplish. Organisations have, however, taken steps to eradicate the effects of this educational limitation. Through adult basic education and training as well as on the job training programmes, organisations are attempting to raise the education and skill levels of their employees so as to encourage an improvement in the productivity and market capability of the company.

To reach the full potential of South Africa's economy, it is also essential that organisations reassess their previously unrepresentative management profile and begin to tap into the skills and potential of black management candidates. The recruitment and training of both blacks and women is necessary to address the shortage of skilled labour in the business sector. "The development of a skilled black workforce would allow black people to compete on equal terms for managerial jobs" (Makhanya, 1995: 166).

2.3.2 Productivity Levels

Another important factor is the **PRODUCTIVITY LEVELS** within South African organisations. "South Africa's productivity record is not very encouraging. Even though there has been an increase in labour productivity, this can be ascribed more to the replacement of labour with machines (capital), than to the better utilisation of labour" (Barker, 1995: 30). Coupled with this, labour costs are increasing at a higher rate than productivity levels and with the devaluation of the rand, South African companies are struggling to compete in the international markets. An increase in productivity is vital because not only does it contribute to economic growth and encourage international competitiveness, but it also results in the improvement of wages and, therefore, of living standards for employees. Despite these positive benefits, employees do have, in a sense, the 'final say' in terms of productivity as the quality of the workforce is possibly the most important factor influencing productivity. The attitude of the unions is also a factor as they are able to engage in strike activity if they do not like the behaviour of the organisation towards their members. This has a highly negative effect on the productivity of an organisation.

The lack of productivity has in the past been blamed on the 'inadequate performance of black workers' and was explained in terms of cultural differences between blacks and whites. Webster in Martin (1995: 64) argues that "these studies ignored the economic, political, historical and ideological context in South Africa in which this problem occurred." Productivity levels are also affected by managerial styles and the degree of employee

participation. The use of approaches such as quality circles and just-in-time managerial practices, work to improve productivity by encouraging workers to participate and use their ideas and skills to increase production. Although South African organisations have attempted to use these approaches and involve employees towards improving productivity, employees still remain powerless in many organisations; allowed only controlled participation by management. This has a negative effect on the productivity levels of workers who may not feel valued by the organisation because they are unable to participate.

2.3.3 Immigration and Emigration

IMMIGRATION and *EMIGRATION* are two further issues facing South Africa and its organisations today. Not only are they dealing with a flow of immigrants into the country looking for work but a number of highly trained, educated and skilled individuals are leaving South Africa for 'greener pastures'. Particularly due to the democratic government now present in South Africa and the high economic growth the country experiences, citizens of neighbouring countries are flocking to South Africa to find work. These migrant workers enter both in legal and illegal capacities and a significant proportion of the illegal immigrants become involved in the agricultural, taxi and hawking industries. The majority of these individuals are unskilled labour and many of them remain unemployed in the country. (Barker, 1995) This has a negative social impact on the country and on organisations who are now faced with an increasing number of unskilled, often uneducated individuals rather than the skilled individuals that they need to make their organisations competitive. Many highly skilled individuals of all races and genders are leaving the country because of, amongst other things, the high crime rate; lack of employment (for white males in particular) as well as other social and economic problems within South Africa. This has been termed the 'brain drain' and has meant that companies are becoming desperate for skilled individuals to take up these positions which are of importance to the survival of the organisation. (Barker, 1995)

2.3.4 The Issue of Women

The nature of the workforce is also changing. Organisations are now having to employ more women and individuals from disadvantaged groups. "*WOMEN* have entered the labour market in unprecedented numbers during the last decade" (Du Toit, 1993: 22). No longer are the lowest paid, unskilled jobs reserved for women in South Africa without any access to positions of authority or power. No longer are skills training and professional qualifications only in the grasp of men. Although the process is still working to employ more women in

powerful positions, already, a large percentage of highly educated women, both married and unmarried, are following careers and are competing with men for positions that were in the past reserved only for male employees. This is indeed a huge step forward for organisations who in the past have been dominated by males in their managerial ranks and which has been largely influenced by the Employment Equity Act of 1998. Now women are also filling these positions and are bringing their values, beliefs and opinions to the organisation and the policies and practices they develop.

Women have been propelled into the workplace through the changing nature of work with the introduction of flexi-time/ part time work; the increased access to education, especially for black women, which equipped women to enter the workplace on a competitive basis; the economic crisis which forced women to enter the workforce so as to add to the family income and withstand rising inflation rates in the country. (Finnemore & Cunningham, 1995) With the influx of women into the workforce, organisations have had to adjust and change their policies and ways of thinking. Through the Labour Relations Act of 1995 and Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997, organisations have had to provide for the protection of women in the workplace and for issues around family life including maternity and compassionate leave etc.

Despite all these advances, an element of division still exists in organisations. In many cases, women are still paid less than men for doing the same job. Women also still predominate in the service sector and where they are considered professionals, they are mainly found in teaching, nursing and secretarial positions. Women still suffer from forms of discrimination and there is still much that needs to be done to ensure women's rights at the workplace. (Finnemore & Cunningham, 1995) The Employment Equity Act of 1998 provides the basis for eradicating this discrimination and effecting the equality of all at the workplace. This Act also serves to promote the position of disabled employees who were also previously denied positions in organisations. However, due to the fact that none of the practitioners interviewed in the study are from this designated group, for the purposes of this research, this group will not be considered.

2.3.5 The Issue of Diversity

Combined with the issue of women is the fact that *DIVERSITY* has a very important impact on the functioning of South African organisations as a whole. South Africa has been a diverse, multi-cultural country for generations but this has only become a reality to

organisations in the last decade or so. Due to the wide variety of genders, races, religions, cultures, languages and nationalities evident in our organisations, management has had to acknowledge that these differences exist and that they need to manage this diversity effectively. It is a mindset change that needs to happen within organisations amongst *all* members because “it is out of diversity in background, experiences and thinking that must come (South Africa’s) competitive advantage” (Daniel,1994: 19). It is a challenge to all sectors of management to utilise the diverse talents that exist in the organisation to its advantage. They need to do this by valuing and accepting the differences between employees and giving all employees equal opportunities based on their talents and contribution to the organisation. They also need to work to remove any behaviour motivated by stereotypes or biases on behalf of management as well as other employees. Managing diversity needs to become a way of life in the organisation and all employees need to be involved in and committed to this process. The management of diversity also needs to be distinguished from action that is required by law such as Affirmative Action. Diversity and its management is voluntary and they need to be used to support a professional, quality work culture because diversity makes good business sense. (Daniel,1994)

2.3.6 Employment Equity Act

A legislative requirement that South African organisations must abide by is to provide for the employment of previously disadvantaged groups – Black, Coloureds, Asians, women and the disabled – as set out in the **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT**. Organisations who do not comply with the Act in terms of employment equity are faced with severe penalties, such as loss of state contracts. Although Affirmative Action is often seen as black empowerment, Employment Equity seeks to improve the employment situation of all disadvantaged groups. It works towards realigning the constitution of management away from traditional white male structures to including more females and people of colour. (Charoux & Moerdyk,1997) Most organisations are simply *doing* Employment Equity because it is a requirement of law and it would allow access to government contracts as well as increasing the skills base in the company. Few, however, conduct the process because they see it as the morally right thing to do. Therefore, in many cases, the attitude of top management has not changed and this is vital if an organisation is to embrace employment equity and reap its benefits. The implementation of the requirements of the Act has, unfortunately, also resulted in a number of pitfalls for organisations. Due to fears of white employees and the ceiling that Affirmative Action has placed on jobs, there has been a mass exodus of a number of experienced, highly skilled white employees. This has had a hugely negative impact on the functioning of organisations.

Due to scarcity of good candidates from disadvantaged groups, there is also a tendency for those individuals who are highly trained and educated to job hop and be poached by other organisations. These issues need to be dealt with effectively and quickly by management as the process of Employment Equity is indeed here to stay. (Charoux & Moerdyk,1997)
Organisations need to include it in their policies and practices, conducting the process not just as a requirement of law but because it makes good business sense.

The issues discussed all impact on organisations in some form or another and will have an important effect on the way the organisation functions and the policies and practices that are developed to co-ordinate behaviour and action within the company.

2.4 THE CASE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

Whilst this study considers South African organisations and their Human Resource policies and practices initially, it also takes consideration of the same research conducted in the United Kingdom. First world organisations have a lot to teach third world organisations. It is important that the positions in both countries on the issue of the development of Human Resource policies and practices are compared in order to determine what we can learn from the first world experience. The culture, society, past experiences and history of South Africa, are, however, in some ways, completely different to those of a first world country. Therefore, the issues that South Africa is dealing with now and that may have an important impact on policies and practices that are developed, may not have an influence on first world organisations at all.

2.4.1 Discrimination at the Workplace

One area where both the United Kingdom and South Africa do hold some common ground is that of discrimination. Discrimination has been dominant in the United Kingdom for many years and while racial discrimination has been much higher than discrimination against foreign employees, there is also a high degree of gender discrimination in the country. Programmes to do away with discrimination in the United Kingdom have moved from trying to do away with obvious elements of discrimination to providing for equal opportunity for all races and genders. This equal opportunity applies both to opportunities in the workplace and education and training. (Naidoo,1997)

Since the early 1970's, government departments and Labour institutions in the United Kingdom have set out various conditions and requirements towards promoting employment equity. (Naidoo,1997) Practical suggestions have been offered to organisations on how to operate employment equity programmes and how to manage a multi-racial, multi-cultural workforce. Furthermore, various laws have been passed to regulate this process – the Equal Pay Act (1970) and Equal Protection Act (1975) against gender discrimination; the Race Relations Act (1976) and the Employment Opportunity Commission's Code of Practice (1977, updated 1988) against racial and gender discrimination. Some institutions have also adopted quotas of women and ethnic minorities to be employed by a specific date but organisations are not bound by them.

Despite all these attempts to eradicate the discrimination in United Kingdom organisations, not much has changed. Employers are not obliged to follow quotas or actively employ members of these groups and there is no official sanction that can be levied against them as in South Africa. It is only where an employee may accuse the employer of discrimination and they are found to have done nothing to comply with employment equity, that they are more likely to be found guilty. (Naidoo,1997) Therefore, despite the fact that the United Kingdom is a first world country as compared to South Africa, the latter has indeed taken more concrete steps to ensure the eradication of discrimination at the workplace and the equal opportunity of all.

2.4.2 The Issue of Women

Following on from the discussion on discrimination, the issue of women and their participation in the United Kingdom workforce should be considered. Since World War II, there has been a steady increase in the female labour force in this country. Although the proportion of women in manual labour has remained relatively unchanged, the proportion of women in the 'non-manual' labour force has increased steadily. There has been segregation within this section of the labour force, however, as women have in the past been confined to more clerical and sales positions. (Price & Sayers-Bain,1988) Women have also in the past been in the majority in the 'lower professional' category. This is because of the two majority female occupations of nursing and teaching. In recent years, however, there has been a large influx of men into these professions. In recent years, women have been obtaining positions on managerial, higher professional and supervisory levels. Although there has been a major improvement in the representation of women in this area of the United Kingdom labour force,

it “still remains at levels that imply substantial under-representation of women in these occupations” (Price & Sayers-Bain,1988: 167).

In line with the South African issue of women in the labour force, it has been noted that the increase of women in the labour force in the United Kingdom has predominantly arisen from the fact that there has been a huge increase in the participation of married women. More and more married women are continuing to work in their professions. Coupled with this, a large proportion of mothers are also returning to work after having their children. This has an important impact on both the composition of the workforce as well as the values and beliefs held by the labour force which are no longer dominated by male employees.

2.4.3 Immigration to the United Kingdom

Over the years, there have been many changes to the population of the United Kingdom. Possibly one of its most important changes is the growth in the United Kingdom’s third world, ex-colonial population. This group includes South Africans who have immigrated to the United Kingdom. The size of this group in total reaches 5% of the total population and this is still increasing. Besides the immigration of this group into the country, there have been two other kinds of immigration: that of migrant labour, especially from Ireland, and refugees. In 1973, the United Kingdom also became a member of the EEC (European Economic Community) which allowed free movement of European nationals within the Community and, therefore, within the United Kingdom. Although many of these nationals did not ultimately immigrate to the United Kingdom, many of them do come to the United Kingdom to work. (Peach et al,1988)

The result of this significant influx especially of third world populations and refugees, has been a significant change in the racial mix of the country. The growth rate of the black population in the United Kingdom is dramatic and is increasing. Although legislation has been passed to regulate race relations in the country, unemployment and bad living conditions of many black immigrants has led to riots and unrest. It has been noted, however, that the riots also had a lot to do with the racism of the British population. Therefore, the immigration of many third world populations to the United Kingdom has meant that racial issues have been highlighted as well as the fact that the United Kingdom has ‘inherited’ many low or unskilled individuals, many of whom remain unemployed within the country.

2.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Therefore, the context that forms the basis for organisations and the Human Resource policies and practices that are developed, is contained both in global changes and developments as well as social, cultural, political and legislative developments that are personal to a country. South African organisations have been affected by increasing globalisation and the opening up of global markets as well as technological advances. These developments have been coupled with domestic changes to society and the culture of South Africa as well as political and legislative advancements which have had an important influence on the way organisations function. Organisations need to be fully aware of these changes and developments so that they can be effectively translated into policies and practices that are progressive and in touch with the changing society.

CHAPTER 3 : LITERATURE REVIEW

This study has as its focus changes to organisational policies and practices, but more specifically – *Human Resource* policies and practices. As we have seen, the organisation exists as a whole system with interrelated parts and this study considers one of these parts – the Human Resource department – and looks at organisational policies and practices within this department. Human Resource policies and practices are vital in any organisation as they aim to keep the organisation successful and productive as well as being focused on the people in the organisation, the culture of the organisation and continuously adapting to changes in the wider society.

3.1 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT vs PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

In order to know exactly what is involved when we speak about ‘human resource policies and practices’, the debate around the nature of human resources and human resources management as opposed to personnel management needs to be considered. Personnel management is focused mainly on the employees – workforce centred. The people who work in the organisation is the starting point. The role of personnel management is to ensure that they employ and train employees; pay them correctly; satisfy their work related needs; deal with their problems and explain the expectations of management to them. Therefore, the role here is not just to act for the employer but to understand and deal with the needs and interests of the workforce.

Human Resource management on the other hand, challenges the practice of personnel management. Hollinshead, Nicholls and Tailby (1999: 8) state: “*HRM (Human Resource Management) is said to be a central management activity which should be integrated fully with business planning ...One of the aims of HRM is to generate a strong employee attachment to enterprise objectives and goals through extensive employee consultation, communication and involvement.*” Human Resource management is more management focused where human resource issues are discussed primarily with management rather than employees and Human Resources, being seen as a general management activity, is largely separate from the workforce. (Torrington and Hall, 1991) Personnel management on the other hand involves direct intervention within the employee/ management relationship in order to ensure that the job needs of the employee are met and that they are treated properly by management. More and more, this personnel management role is being undertaken by line management and human resource management has begun to re-position the personnel

function to ensure that it has more influence in the overall functioning of the organisation. The emphasis on the effective implementation of employment legislation as well as ensuring that personnel activities are justified in terms of costs, has meant that many organisations have placed the human resource function at a more managerial level and so Human Resource management has become more dominant.

In South Africa, the drive in organisations has been to train and advance members of disadvantaged groups into jobs that are more challenging and meaningful and to allow them a certain amount of participation within these positions. Human Resource departments have been pressurised, especially through employment legislation, to develop more humane and participatory policies to eliminate past discriminatory practices. Therefore, South African companies are increasingly being faced with a workforce that wants greater responsibility and participation. The Human Resource department needs to work towards changing management's approach to becoming more participative. This, however, has often resulted in a controlled form of participation with management still holding the majority of decision making power. (Fullagar,1983)

It is in this regard that some of the basic flaws of the Human Resource management approach can be identified. Human Resource management provides an obstacle for the proponents of participatory management as often where the interests of individuals at the top of an organisation (ie. management) are threatened by, for example, participation by employees, they will attempt to protect their own interests and maintain the inequalities in the organisation, rather than involving employees in the decision making process. The approach also holds the view that the goals of employees are compatible with the goals of the organisation and that, through the work situation, all the needs of employees can be satisfied. It does not take into account that often, in order to reach the goals of the organisation, employees have to sacrifice their own interests and needs. The essence of South Africa's troubled past has also meant that many organisations lack the trust and openness needed for a successful, participatory organisation. (Fullagar,1983)

What can be concluded from this discussion of Human Resource management and personnel management, is that organisations really need to strive for a balance between the two. It is necessary for the Human Resource function to manage and develop the human resources of the organisation so that it can function more effectively and maintain its competitiveness. However, the employees as the *human* aspect of the organisation cannot be ignored. The Human Resource department must take into account their personal needs and goals as well as providing a good quality of work life for them, including a measure of participation. The

Human Resource department cannot simply maintain a position in the top hierarchy of management because they will then alienate the people they are meant to be supporting and managing – the workers. However, they cannot only exist as the voice of employees, putting all their interests first, as this may have a negative effect on the productive functioning of the organisation. They need to balance the two. In terms of the Human Resource policies and practices that this study is concerned with, they need to be policies that are geared towards both the management of the organisation and providing for the interests of employees.

3.2 ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT: A MODEL FOR MANAGING CHANGE

For Human Resource departments to manage their human resources; provide for productive, effective employees that will work towards a successful organisation and deal with the needs and interests of employees, they need to continuously change and adapt to the forces of change impacting on the organisation. They need to adjust to changes in legislation; the changing society and changing nature of the workforce as well as developments in technologies. This study considers the changes and developments that take place in relation to Human Resource policies and practices which impact on all individuals in the organisation.

Organisational change and development is “intended to further the well-being of the organisation as a whole” (Drory,1983:130). Where change is introduced in one part of the system, the impact is felt in other parts of the system and indeed throughout the organisation. In terms of this approach, therefore, changes to Human Resource policies should be aimed at furthering the well being of all members of the organisation. This, however, does not always happen especially where the managerial role of Human Resources dominates over its role of providing for employees.

While the focus of change in many change processes is the perceptions and behaviours of individuals within the organisation, the need for change, especially to Human Resource policies and practices, stems from a number of different elements, including:

- The *nature of the workforce* - this has gone through massive change over the last decade or so. Human Resource departments need to learn to manage the diversity that is now present within organisations. There has been an increase in women as well as previously disadvantaged groups and “human resource policies and practices will have to change in order to attract and keep this more diverse workforce” (Robbins,1994: 262). In many South African companies, this change has already taken place whilst many others have at least begun the process to manage the diversity. This has been further encouraged by

changes to employment legislation. Organisations have had to provide improved family policies because women are now an important part of the workforce. They have also had to introduce training programmes in order to upgrade the skills of disadvantaged groups so that they are able to have an equal opportunity to be successful in the workplace.

- Changes in the nature of work through *advances in technology* has meant that there have been changes in the skill levels required from employees. So as organisations adapt to these new technologies, their employees also need to adapt especially because jobs are being redesigned.
- *Increased competition* means that organisations need to continuously change to keep up with competitors and remain successful. (Robbins,1994)

Whatever the drive for change, organisations and Human Resource departments need to be able to adapt to changes in the external and internal environment in order to improve organisational effectiveness and employee well being. The organisational change and development approach is built on the values of participation and collaborative decision making; making use of teamwork to learn and produce effective change and seeing the change process as ongoing. (Robbins,1994) Does this happen in organisations with respect to changes in Human Resource policies and practices? Is there a measure of collaborative decision making and team work in the process or is the change as a result of one individual or group of top management initiating the change? The nature of the change process with regards to Human Resource policies and practices will be investigated further in this study.

In order to provide for a successful change process, Cummings and Worley in French and Bell Jr (1995) have suggested a *model for managing change*. There are five key activities that have been identified to provide for effective and successful change:

- Motivating change
- Creating a vision
- Developing political support
- Managing the transition
- Sustaining momentum

The first step in the change model is to *motivate people to change* – encourage them to believe that change is necessary and that they need to commit themselves to the change process. To create this readiness for change, people need to be informed about why the change must happen, through for example, sensitivity workshops around diversity or other areas that require change; what the inconsistencies are between the present state and the

desired future state and the positive advantages of the change process. Loss in profits, market share etc and threats to the survival of the organisation all provide an element of 'pain' that motivates people towards change. A relevant example here is the loss of state contracts that South African companies will experience if they do not comply with the Employment Equity Act. Finally, it is important to overcome people's resistance to the change. This is done through continuously communicating with individuals about what is happening in the change process; dealing with feelings of anxiety about the change and encouraging individuals to participate in the change process. (French & Bell Jr,1995)

The second step is to *create a vision*. This is done by providing a picture of the future – what will happen and how people will fit into that future. This creates more certainty for individuals; shows them that the future will be beneficial and can be reached and creates goals to energise people and their behaviour. The third activity is crucial to any change process because it is vital that the powerful groups and individuals, which are often management and the unions, are convinced that the change is positive and that it will not harm them. It is vital to *develop this political support* because otherwise these powerful groups may resist the change process and may even attempt to do away with it. Therefore, it is important that in any change process, the key individuals are identified and persuaded that the change will be positive and may even benefit them. This will ensure that they will be committed to the change process.

The change process goes through three stages: the current state; transition state and desired future state. (French & Bell Jr,1995) Three important activities are required to *manage the transition* state for the change process to be successful. Activity planning –designating the sequence of activities and events that must occur during the transition; commitment planning – obtaining the support of the key individuals because their resources and support are essential for a successful change process; management structures – setting up 'parallel learning structures' to facilitate and monitor the change process. (French & Bell Jr,1995)

Finally, it is important to maintain the *momentum* of the change. Cummings and Worley in French and Bell Jr (1995:133) suggest four ways of doing this – “providing resources for change; building a support system for change agents; developing new competencies and skills; reinforcing new behaviours.”

(A diagram of this change model follows)

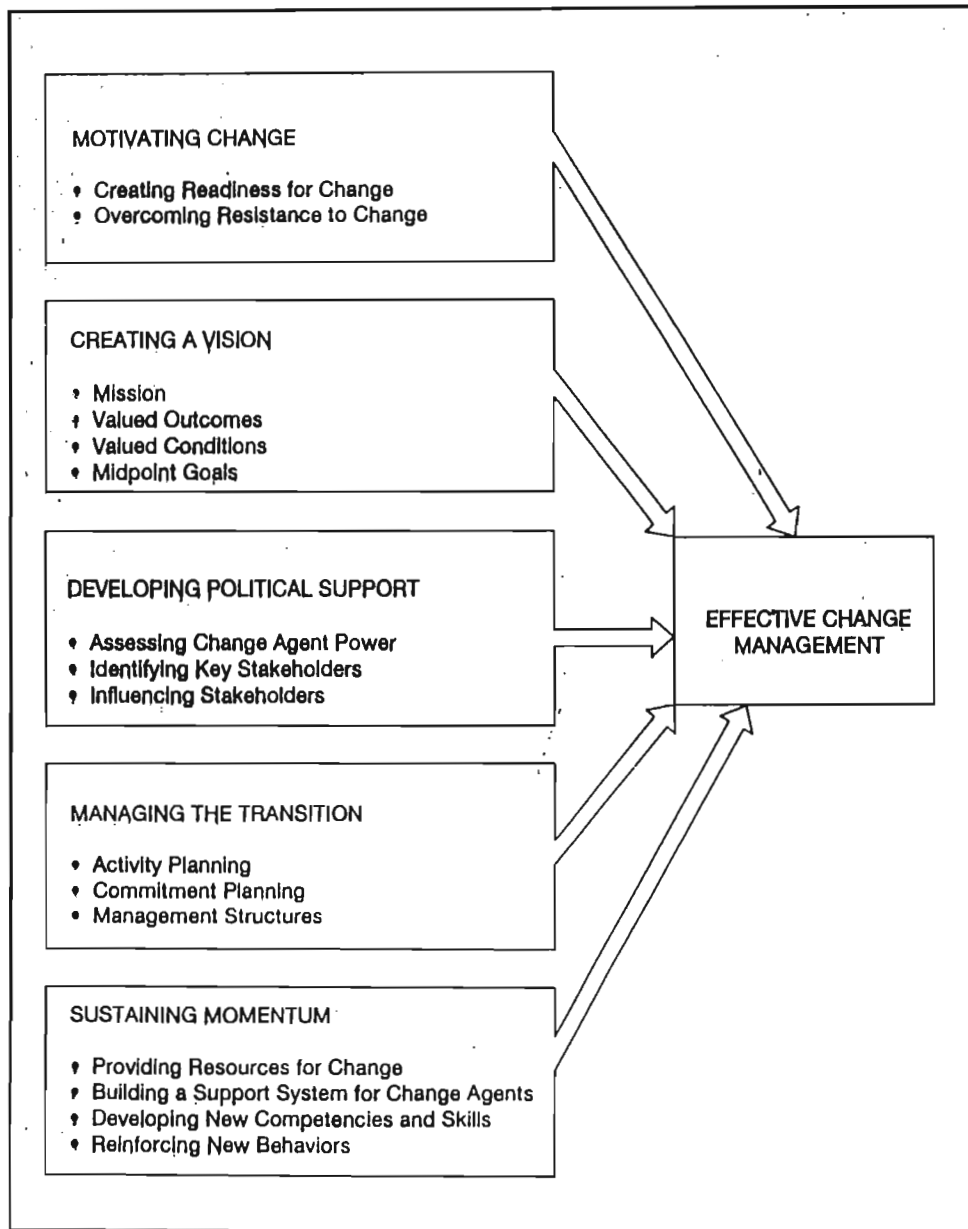


Figure 6-3 Activities Contributing to Effective Change Management

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As has been noted, a vital factor in any change process is to get all the key players involved and committed to the change. It should be identified that some individuals, especially at management level, are not as ready for change as others and may, therefore, resist it. A recent study done by Kleynhans, Schmidt and Schepers (1999) from the Rand Afrikaans University, considered management's readiness or resistance to change in relation to their personality characteristics. They concluded that certain personality characteristics can be linked to a more positive attitude towards change. Therefore, individuals who are more prone to accept change will often have the characteristics of flexibility; high levels of tolerance; future orientation; adaptability; high levels of internal locus of control; ability to operate at an autonomous level; a preference for diversity and are able to observe possibilities, interconnections and implications of actions. Furthermore, it was found that people that are more positive about change have a higher degree of intuition and perception. Although the research does indicate that there is a definite difference in people's attitude to change – either positive or negative – it does warn that we should not be hasty to predict an individual's readiness for change based on only one personality characteristic. Rather it should be a combination of characteristics which may even extend beyond those determined in this particular study. (Kleynhans, Schmidt, Schepers, 1999) Therefore, the success of any change process may be affected by the personality characteristics of the key players and so the importance of having individuals in the organisation who are open to change becomes more evident. In terms of the current study, it is important that Human Resource practitioners have some, if not all, of these characteristics so that they are able to institute change with regards to Human Resource policies and practices and support and maintain that change effort which has implications for the rest of the organisation.

Due to the accelerating pace of change, organisations need to keep adapting and effecting transformation to provide for lasting changes in the organisation's relationships and the behaviour of individuals in the workplace. Pascale, Millemann, Gioja (1998) believe that in order to achieve this kind of change through transformation, employees need to be fully incorporated into the process. They must contribute in a meaningful way through generating initiatives established by employees and involving every employee from the top down. To maintain the commitment of employees, leaders also need to lead from a 'different place'. There needs to be a different approach to leadership where leaders (management) shift their mindset and allow employees to come up with solutions to problems themselves. This will in turn encourage greater commitment from employees. Because the starting point of change is with people's perceptions and behaviour, individuals in organisations need to internalise new principles that will change their behaviour and sustain new behaviour. Therefore, to achieve

change through transformation, employees need to understand where the organisation is going and should have some say in its destination. (Pascale, Millemann, Gioja, 1998) This should also apply to change through developments in Human Resource policies and practices. However, is this happening in organisations – are employees able to come up with solutions on their own and be involved in the change process or is it controlled participation that is confined to their immediate tasks rather than with matters of policy?

3.3 HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Considering organisational change in terms of developments to Human Resource policies and practices, it is important to explain what these policies and practices in fact are; what do they involve. Torrington and Hall (1991:33) have defined policy as “a declared mode of action for the future.” The primary characteristic of any policy is that it is concerned with the future and it sets out a framework within which the ‘declared mode of action’ can take place.

Management operate within this framework and although they may at times use their own discretion to make decisions around it, most Human Resource departments will play the role of watchdog and ensure that they do adhere to the policies. Policy statements also stand as an expression of what the company believes coupled with the reflection of employment legislation which all organisations are required to enforce. Therefore, “personnel policies are written statements of an organisation’s goals and intent concerning matters that affect the people in the organisation. Policies are stated in broad, long-range terms that express ... the philosophy or beliefs of the organisation” (Seybold, No.169: 9).

Human Resource policies fit into the total organisational policy framework and work towards meeting the changing requirements of the markets, technology and the labour force in the future. Human Resource policies will differ according to the nature of the organisation, its size, workforce and status on union recognition because they will each have different challenges and changes to meet. Human Resource policies encompass issues around staffing and development; employee (industrial) relations; terms and conditions of employment; equal opportunity; participation of workers and disclosure of information.

Geneva Seybold in her report on Statements of Personnel Policy (Report No. 169) sets out seven criteria or characteristics that identify what a policy is. A policy is:

- *A statement of the goal of an organisation according to their beliefs and which serves as a guide especially to management in terms of their behaviour.* It has a future orientated focus and the goal of the policy implies “a weighing of values and a conclusion that the

particular objective will be best for the interests of the particular company”(Seybold, No.169: 5). A policy cannot be enforced by law; it is not a legal obligation but rather a commitment by management to make decisions according to what is set out in that policy.

- *In writing.* Setting a policy down in writing helps to ensure consistency because individuals in the organisation can see exactly what is involved in the policy and behave accordingly. A written policy is a firm commitment by the organisation to that issue.
- *Stated in broad terms.* Policies set out general guidelines and goals and allow for a certain amount of judgement when exercising policies. They set up boundaries around decisions and work towards channelling the thinking of organisational members to remain consistent with the goals of the organisation. Circumstances do change, however, and there needs to be room for flexibility whilst still working towards the same goal.
- *Not disregarded or broken as long as this is within the power of management.* In other words, “policies are designed to apply everywhere throughout the company, at all times, with no deviation and no exceptions” (Seybold, No.169: 7). There should be no exceptions within policies; the moment an exception is allowed, the door is wide open. This does not apply, however, to circumstances where management has no control such as forces of nature; the law of the land etc.
- *Formulated through a high level of thinking and contemplation.* Policy developers need to think ahead and plan for any future obstacles. The company’s intent needs to be contemplated and decided so that a frame of reference is provided for future decisions.
- *Approved by the highest authority in an organisation.* Because policies apply to the Board of Directors as well as shopfloor employees, the top members of the organisation need to be actively involved in developing these long-range goals of the company.
- *Long term.* Policies extend right through the foreseeable future. They provide stability and assurance for workers that they can depend on.

What are the reasons for having policies? Management makes use of policies to clarify what the guidelines for action or behaviour in fact are. Most importantly, however, is that policies produce consistent behaviour. They force management to behave in a consistent way and this benefits employees because they know what to expect from the organisation as well as from management. This provides a greater sense of security for employees. (Torrington and Hall, 1991) Policies also provide for continuity in management so that when members of management leave the organisation and are replaced by new managers, the business is still conducted in relatively the same way because the new managers have to abide by the

company's policies. Often organisations will want people to join their company who believe in their values, beliefs and policies so that the status quo can be more easily maintained.

Policies also save time for supervisors and line managers. Instead of having to always refer to their superiors for final decisions, the policies will guide them and save time through often avoiding consultation with senior managers. This also relates to the different units in the organisation which operate away from the organisation's headquarters. Policies provide the guidance necessary so that managers within those units can make decisions with the assurance that they will obtain top management approval. This cuts down the constant consultation which would usually be necessary with head office. Policies also simplify the decision making process as it allows the decision maker to rule out a number of alternatives at once because they do not measure up to the policy. It means that decisions are not based on what an individual believes is right but on what the principles within the policy set out. No matter what the reason for policies, it is vital that management continuously communicates its policies with employees. Employees should be involved to the extent that they will in fact want to work towards the goals and beliefs established through the policies.(Seybold,No.169)

Now that it has been established what Human Resource policies are and why they are necessary, it is important to consider how policies are developed and implemented.

Organisations can develop policies either through using the policies of another organisation as a guideline or starting with a blank piece of paper. The latter option, however, does pose the problem that the writing of the policy will be largely influenced by the values and beliefs of the person who drew up the policy rather than the values and beliefs of the organisation. This is vital for the present study as it considers the impact that the author of the Human Resource policies, the Human Resource practitioner, has on the policies that he develops. Do policies reflect the values of the organisation or are they a reflection of the practitioner's own values and beliefs?

Torrington and Hall (1991) establish a four pronged procedure to developing policies:

1. *Identify the topic.* A policy needs to be drawn up around a topic at the right time which can either be as a result of new legislation; a management initiative or questions from employees about the issue.
2. *Selling the idea.* Support needs to be gained for a policy to be developed. Organisational members must be consulted and their reactions tested in order to ascertain whether there will be commitment to the policy or not. It is important that the policy is seen as relevant to the organisation otherwise gaining commitment from employees will be difficult.

3. *Determine the key features.* The general idea first needs to be accepted and developed before the key features of the policies can be determined.
4. *Agree the details.* Lastly, the exact details of the policy need to be agreed on. These will later be interpreted and implemented.

Following the development of the policy, it then needs to be implemented or put into operation within the organisation. The policy needs to be *made public* so that everyone knows what it entails, understands the policy and accepts it. Most companies do not send a copy of the new policy to everyone but it is often posted on the office walls and is explained to employees by their managers. Along with the development of the policy, the *procedures and practices* needed to implement that policy also need to be developed. The practices and procedures help the policy to operate and where policies may not readily be accepted, the procedures need to be simple and understandable so as not to discourage individuals completely. It is also important to constantly *monitor* the policy and its implementation to ensure that it keeps to its original intention and goal. Human Resource departments also need to ensure that they *modify* the policies where they are seen to be wrong in some way. Policies do become out of date, and coupled with external and internal changes, they often need to be constantly developed and changed. (Torrington and Hall, 1991)

When looking at Human Resource policies and practices, it is important to identify who is involved in the drawing up of these policies and with whom they consult. One approach to this question is to center the development of policies on one person – often the Human Resource practitioner. This approach has been substantiated by saying that allowing one person to be involved means that they will ensure a single style in the policy no matter how many different suggestions are taken into account. This approach is not held by all, however, as there is the threat that with only one individual involved, their personal values, beliefs and opinions may have an important effect on what is included in the policy. In terms of who they consult with, this will “obviously depend on the subject of the policy, but we repeat that the involvement of those affected by the policy will improve its chances of translation into practice” (Torrington and Hall, 1991: 44). This relates to the debate in the present study as to whether employees who are affected by the Human Resource policies and practices should in fact participate in the process to draw them up or not.

3.4 DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND PARTICIPATION BY EMPLOYEES

One of the most pertinent changes impacting on South African organisations today is the need to enhance quality of work life and employee well being through a change to management style towards being more inclusive of employees. Involving employees through participative management is a worldwide trend that is especially growing in South Africa because of the 'spirit of democracy'. The need for workers to have more of a say in terms of their working conditions and issues that affect them directly on the job, has gained more support in South African organisations. Each organisation, however, will determine how far this participation will extend. Participative management can be defined as "an approach which recognises that organisational decision-making must take place in such a way that the input and responsibility be extended to the lowest level as applicable to the decision being taken" (Odendaal & Roodt, 1998: 14). The present study questions whether participation by employees is being extended, including to the decision making process around Human Resource policies and practices which directly affect them but which are often kept as part of the managerial function.

There are a number of reasons why South African organisations are moving towards greater participation by employees. *Globalisation* is a strong force on organisations towards participation of employees as organisations, people and countries are now linked through the internet, fax, telephone. Therefore, it is no longer only top management that should engage with people and organisations outside of the workplace. *Information* is also becoming more and more available to employees which means that they are able to manage their activities and participate in the process without much guidance from management. Finally, the rise of *new technologies* has meant that the nature of work has changed and employees can become more involved and participate in what they are doing.

There are two types of participation by employees that can exist in organisations. Direct participation is when individual employees participate personally in the decision making process. They are given equal power and status to all other members of the decision making process and are allowed to speak for themselves. On the other hand, indirect participation exists where employees participate in the decision making process through representatives. (Khumalo, 1999) In South Africa, the most common type of participation is through representatives. Workers are represented either through trade union officials and shop stewards who negotiate with management or through individual workers who are elected by the workforce to represent them on works councils or committees that are involved in

discussions with management. Where decisions need to be made about their direct task, some form of direct participation may be given to the employees.

Participation by employees both in their immediate tasks as well as in organisational decisions that effect them, has a number of positive advantages for employees and for organisations. Employees are more motivated in their jobs; they are able to share their knowledge which often provides valuable input towards organisational success and employees may become more creative in their outlook and work if they are able to be more involved at the workplace. Participating in decisions and tasks also gives employees a sense of acceptance and accomplishment as they see that their contribution really does have an impact. Participation also encourages commitment; job satisfaction and improved performance by employees as well as working towards improving individuals' loyalty to the organisation and their personal self esteem.(Khumalo,1999) French and Bell Jr (1995) also suggest that decisions are more accepted when they have been part of the decision making process. Allowing employees to participate also means that they are more open to change; stress levels are reduced and they generally feel better about themselves and their quality of work life. Ultimately it can be said that participation in the organisation and in decisions often produces a happy, satisfied employee and this in turn results in improved individual and organisational performance and productivity. So the benefits of at least some participation are evident both for employees and employers.

A study by Odendaal and Roodt (1998) considered the concepts of participation by employees and the corporate culture. They tried to determine whether the two concepts could exist independently of each other, however, they concluded that they were in fact inseparable. The culture of the organisation determines whether there will be any form of participation and whether that participation will be successful or not. Traditionally the culture of South African organisations has been dominated by an autocratic management style which did not allow for much participation. With changes in society and attitudes, this management style has become dysfunctional and there is a move to change the culture of these organisations to reflect more openness and participation. Odendaal and Roodt (1998) found that for participation to be truly successful, employees need to be empowered and involved in the organisation. This also needs to be transferred into the values of the organisation which are put into practice through management practices.

Although the benefits of employee participation are evident and the move in many South African organisations is towards improved participation, this is being achieved very slowly. It

is evident that management is not very eager to give up their control over the decision making process. This situation will be considered further in light of the decision making process around developments to Human Resource policies and practices. Is management still maintaining their control over that process or are employees being allowed to participate in decisions that will affect them directly as part of the organisation?

3.5 THE IMPACT OF VALUES

Having considered the participants in the decision making process around Human Resource policies and practices, it is important to identify that the values of individuals involved in that process may have an effect on the content and style of policy that is developed. The impact of individuals' values on the process and the policies that are developed needs to be identified as well as what influences their values to begin with.

Values are at the core of what constitutes an individual. Understanding a person's values will help you to understand their attitudes and actions that shape their behaviour. Locke in Godsell (1983: 104) defines values as being "what a person consciously or subconsciously desires, wants, or seeks to attain ... they are standards in the person's conscious or subconscious mind." Values have a moral tendency and they can be seen as the underlying convictions that are held either by an individual or by a group. Therefore, although people may share the same basic needs, they do not always share the same values. Values are beliefs both around things that are positive or desirable as well as around what is negative and undesirable. They impact on our actions and the results of our actions. Values are also relatively stable elements because they are strongly held and deep rooted, influenced by an individual's parents, upbringing and social experiences. This means that individuals may find it difficult to adjust to changes in their environment which challenge their values. (Hollinshead, Nicholls & Tailby, 1999)

Values exist in an individual's value system where they are ranked according to how important the individual perceives them to be. Within the workplace, different individuals and groups will hold different values and value systems. The challenge to organisations is to understand these differences and establish behaviours that will work towards finding a measure of compatibility between these different values. Separate to individual values are the core values of the organisation. These are essentially the guiding principles of an organisation and they hold importance to individuals inside the organisation. They define what an organisation stands for and they are values that an organisation will maintain even if it

becomes a 'competitive disadvantage' to them. "Only a few values can be truly core – that is, so fundamental and deeply held that they will change seldom, if ever" (Collins and Porras, 1998: 147). Even where organisations are made up of individuals from a number of different cultures etc that hold various value systems, they can formulate a set of core values for the organisation. They need to work from the individual through to the overall organisation in order to determine values that will extend far into the future, even if they become a disadvantage to the organisation at some point. (Collins & Porras, 1998)

An organisation's values need to be internalised, become beliefs and gradually become automatic in the behaviour of individuals. The values also need to be consistent with the strategy of the organisation. "Culture and values are a key part of defining the company philosophy, which provides the organisation with a framework against which it can assess the extent to which business decisions fit with the company philosophy" (Hollinshead, Nicholls & Tailby, 1999: 553). The culture of an organisation does not remain stable, however. It evolves as a result of the changes in the environment and countercultures with different value systems, such as the culture of the trade unions, gender cultures, religious cultures etc, that impact on the culture and values of the organisation.

To understand the role that values play in the organisation, it is important to look at how individuals' values operate within the organisational context. Values that individuals form early on in their life are carried through to the workplace. Values that dominate individuals at the workplace will differ depending on the era in which they grew up. So whereas the values of older employees may reflect the need for job security and career opportunities within the organisation, other employees from a different era may value their quality of life and personal freedom more. In the 1990's, a new group of individuals has entered the workplace with a significantly different set of values to other employees. These primarily younger employees value individual rather than collective values and view the concept of having a job for life as outdated. The dominant value in this group of employees is that they desire a holistic lifestyle which encompasses a balance between work life and personal growth and development. What is also significant is that these employees will often join organisations that to an extent share their own values and beliefs. (Hollinshead, Nicholls & Tailby, 1999) Organisations need to be flexible enough to incorporate these new values if they want to adapt successfully to external changes. The challenge is also, however, to incorporate the individual values whilst still ensuring that the values and beliefs of the organisation are adhered to.

There are a number of forces in an organisation that impact on an individual's values. When an employee first joins an organisation, there is an expectation of what the job entails and linked with this is also the work values that they bring to the organisation. Where the individual differs in their value framework to the organisation, they may not value the behaviours within their job that the organisation values and will, therefore, not be able to produce the 'correct' behaviours. As the individual becomes more socialised in the organisation, their work values may be altered to an extent. This is as a result of interaction with their 'peer group', team or unit within the organisation who serve as a model of the organisation to the new employee who may follow their example. Due to the increased employment of individuals from designated groups in South Africa, it is important that they are fully integrated across all levels and functions. This will omit the possibility that homogeneous units may form that hold values which challenge the organisation's values. This has occurred in many South African organisations in the past where top management has been made up solely of white males who have brought their values and beliefs to bear on the organisation. (Godsell,1983)

Management's values have shaped organisations and have effected how organisations relate to their employees. Management's values should reflect both their personal values as well as the values of the organisation and how it sees itself, especially in light of the many organisational theories that have been developed. From the work of Taylor, who regarded people as part of the machine and not as individuals, to the motivational theories of the 1960's, where employees were now seen as human beings, management's thinking and organisational values have shifted and adapted. Management are informed by what they value and this influences their behaviour. This may be extended to the present study where Human Resource practitioners and management are involved in the development of policies that will affect all employees. However, their personal values and thinking will inform their behaviour and what they put into those policies. (Hollinshead, Nicholls & Tailby,1999)

The importance of values tends to increase as people attempt to exert more power within the organisation. Schein in Godsell (1983: 109) identifies that "advancement into the higher levels of management is as much or more a function of having the right attitudes, values and perspectives as it is a function of having the right skills and abilities." Therefore, in order for individuals to move into positions of power, they need not only have the relevant skills and competencies but they also need to fit in with the values of the organisation. This extends to decision making processes within the organisation where management will often exclude employees from that process. Vroom in Godsell (1983) suggests that whether employees are

included in the decision making process or not depends on the nature of the decision that is being made and whether the goals and values of the employees are in line with the goals and values of the organisation. In other words, often organisations will only involve employees in certain decision making procedures where they are perceived to follow what the organisation wants and are compatible with the values of the organisation.

The problem with this thinking is that there is a great potential for value conflict, especially within South African organisations, as often the values of employees differ considerably to that of management and the organisation. Does this mean that, for example, in decisions around Human Resource policies and practices, employees will not be able to participate in the decision making process unless their values and goals are compatible with those of the organisation and with the Human Resource practitioner and management who are developing the policies? South African organisations are made up of a variety of individuals from different educational, cultural, class, racial and gender backgrounds and these give rise to different sets of values. These value differences are as a result of different life experiences and while they may share certain common values, these often exist within a specific context. (Godsell,1983) At an individual level and within their immediate surroundings, employees may be able to manifest their own values and attempt to find some compatibility with those with whom they are working. However, at a greater organisational level, their values may not be included and they may not be able to articulate them. Does ensuring an harmonious organisation through allowing only people with similar values to the organisation to participate in decisions provide the optimal situation or is a mix of values more positive especially in light of an organisation's adaptation to change?

There is a danger in stressing only the dominant values within an organisation and ignoring other values that may be present there. This produces a distorted view of the values of the organisation as a group of employees and may alienate certain employees. This is particularly important as the values of the Human Resource practitioner involved in the development of Human Resource policies and practices, may be different to many employees in the organisation. If they allow their own personal values to influence the policies they develop, then this will mean that a group of values not shared by all will govern everyone's behaviour in the organisation whilst neglecting certain other values that may be present in the organisation. Human Resource practitioners need to be aware of the individual and group values within the organisation as well as have a respect for the value differences of individuals when drawing up these policies and practices. They also need to be increasingly sensitive of their own personal values and how they may influence the process and should

complement their influence as an individual on the organisation with the influence of the organisation on them as individuals. (Godsell,1983)

3.6 THE CULTURE OF THE LEARNING ORGANISATION

In trying to obtain a fit between the different values prevalent in the organisation, the culture of the organisation is also important to consider. The essence of culture stems from the way people understand and interpret the world. This means that as there are different values that exist within and impact on the organisation, so there cannot be one best way, or best culture because people in the organisation see the world in different ways. Cultures exist on a scale of national, corporate and organisational functions. Therefore, when developing Human Resource policies, especially when these policies effect all branches of an organisation nationally, Human Resource practitioners need to be careful that they take into account the various cultures and ensure that the policies have the same meaning for employees throughout the organisation. (Trompenaars,1993)

Senge (1990) puts forward the view of a successful organisation as one that adopts an overall culture of learning impacting on all employees. He says that organisations need to create a culture where “new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured” (Senge,1990: 3); where employees can work collectively within a culture of learning to achieve the results that they desire and continually learn together. Organisations need to develop the ability to learn in order to maintain their competitive advantage and to develop excellent organisations where employees at all levels are encouraged and have the capacity to learn and develop. This learning culture has a blanket effect over all employees and all other cultures that have an impact on the organisation. It works towards building an organisation that looks beyond people’s basic needs to meeting their higher aspirations.

In order to establish this learning culture in an organisation, Senge (1990) suggests five vital disciplines that can help an organisation to learn.

- *Personal Mastery*. This is the spiritual foundation of an organisation where people grow through “continually clarifying and deepening (their) personal vision, ... focusing (their) energies, and ... seeing reality objectively” (Senge,1990: 7). Organisations need to encourage their members to grow personally because the extent of an organisation’s learning is only as big as that of its members.
- *Mental Models*. These relate to assumptions and ideas that influence the way individuals see the world and how they then behave. It is important that those internal ideas and

assumptions are identified and that individuals allow others to influence these as it may have an important effect on how they act. For example, with regards to Human Resource practitioners, their assumptions and ideas may influence the action they take in terms of drawing up Human Resource policies and unless they are open to influence by others, their mental models may restrict the change process through Human Resource policies.

- *Building a shared vision.* Vision and goals serve to connect people in an organisation through a common identity and sense of where the organisation is going. Organisations need to develop a shared vision that encourages real commitment from members rather than simply following it because they are forced to. Organisations need to ensure genuine commitment so that they will learn and excel towards that vision.
- *Team Learning.* Team learning happens when not only are teams producing results but when the individuals within the team are also learning and growing from the experience. The team work together to gain new understandings that they would not have attained as individuals. Therefore, as Senge (1990: 10) notes: “the intelligence of the team exceeds the intelligence of the individuals in the team.”
- *Systems Thinking.* This is known as the fifth discipline and it works to combine all the other disciplines; integrating them together so that the organisation, through learning, can achieve its potential. Systems thinking allows a shift in mindset to occur where everything is seen as interconnected both within the organisation and interconnected with the world. This is important in order to see and understand the impact that globalisation has on an organisation.

Organisations need to be focused on the future and it is important that they develop a culture of learning in order to survive and adapt to changes that impact on them. Both management and employees need to be involved in this learning through nurturing new patterns of thinking which can also be incorporated into organisational policies and practices in order to provide for an excellent organisation. Learning must involve all employees. Therefore, in terms of Senge’s (1990) outlook, organisations may need to involve all members of the organisation in developing Human Resource policies if they are to gain the commitment of the *whole* for decisions made in a *part* of the organisation.

3.7 THE EMERGING ROLE AND FUTURE OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

As has been discussed, organisations in the modern era exist in a constant state of learning, adapting and changing in order to remain flexible, competitive, excellent entities in the marketplace. The same is true for the subsystems which make up the organisation. In this

regard, the face of Human Resource departments as we know them is changing rapidly. Human Resource practitioners are having to continuously appraise their activities to ensure that they are achieving both the results required of them and the results that they, as a department, wish to achieve. The nature of the workplace today has caused a shift in the focus of Human Resource departments in many areas.

- There has been a renewed focus on the importance of quality of work life. In order to remain successful, organisations have in the past concentrated more on providing work and achieving organisational efficiency rather than on the quality of the work life and taking care of their employees. Now, however, there has been a shift towards improving the conditions of employment for employees in order to create a culture that will encourage employee commitment.
- Organisations have seen the need and almost 'emergency' for skills in the workplace. In South African organisations, Human Resource departments have had to respond to the problem of developing the skills and competencies that are needed in order to remain competitive as well as providing job enrichment for employees.
- With the vast number of people of different cultures, races, genders and even nationalities joining South African organisations, Human Resource departments need to be able to adapt and develop their practices and procedures to manage this diversity.

(Torrington & Hall,1991)

It should also be noted that more and more, the personnel management function is being performed by individuals in all levels of the organisation, especially at line management level. "All managers, including the personnel manager, have highly important roles in the effective utilisation of human resources" (French,1978: 562). The Human Resources department is simply the department that spends a higher percentage of its time dealing with Human Resources than any other part of the organisation. It is important to involve the entire organisation in human resource matters because Human Resource policies, procedures and practices extend throughout the organisation and effect all subdivisions.

Recently, a new approach to Human Resources has been documented by David Ulrich(1998). The new role of Human Resource professionals has begun to emerge and there has been a radical move away from Human Resources simply being the watchdog and 'policy police'. Human Resources, whose activities have often been disconnected from the real work of the organisation, are now becoming actively involved in helping organisations to better serve their customers and shareholders. Human Resource practitioners can now help the organisation to achieve excellence through forming partnerships with senior and line

managers towards carrying out the organisation's business strategy; becoming a champion for the employees through representing their concerns and giving them a voice and working towards improving the contribution of employees through encouraging commitment and delivery of results. Ulrich (1998) proposes that many employees do not feel valued by the organisation so they are reluctant to share ideas or work harder than the minimum. Human Resources needs to step in here and train line managers to see the importance of employee morale and how they can best achieve it. This ensures that employees will feel more committed to the organisation and will contribute fully. Ulrich sees the new role of Human Resource practitioners as being the voice of employees; representing employees views to both management and in the policy decision making process. This role of Human Resources proposed by Ulrich (1998) has, however, been disputed by many of the subjects involved in this research study but this will be discussed further in the analysis of the results.

Finally, Human Resource practitioners can work towards achieving organisational excellence through becoming an "agent of transformation" (Ulrich,1998: 29), in other words, shaping the organisation's culture and processes to improve its capacity for change and development. To fulfil this role, the Human Resource department should be the first to be flexible and adaptive to forces of change impacting on it.

Human Resource practitioners, therefore, play the important role of change agents. They are involved in facilitating the change process through involving the right people at the right time and ensuring that the key decision makers are involved in the process. The question can be posed, however: who are the key decision makers and who decides who they are? Human Resource practitioners also need to set the example in their own departments through redesigning their systems and procedures to be aligned with the change and ensuring that their department fully reflects the practices that they are recommending to other departments. For example, if they are encouraging the awareness of diversity in the organisation, then diversity should be reflected in the Human Resources department.

Ulrich (1998) also shifts the focus of Human Resources away from being focused on activities, what people do, towards results, the results of doing Human Resource practices. It is also important to look at how those results are achieved. This is primarily through Human Resource capabilities which involve the skills, abilities, expertise and other competencies of individuals. Capabilities are the organisation's ability to reach its goals through using its resources. Capabilities are the transition from mission, vision, strategy and values to action. (Ulrich,1998) This new Human Resource focus on results and the achievement of these

results through capabilities has resulted in new Human Resource practices and tools that have developed in response to cultural and technological changes – replacing paperwork with automation, as well as the effect of ‘global Human Resources’.

This new role of Human Resources requires both a change from the Human Resource practitioners as well as from senior management. Human Resource practitioners need to change the way they think and behave but senior management also needs to change the way they see Human Resources and how they behave towards them. Senior management needs to show that they support Human Resources and believe that it is a critical part of the functioning of the organisation. They need to be willing to invest both in new Human Resource practices and staff in order to ensure that the people have the skills to effect real change in the organisation. This approach is vital so that Human Resource practitioners will act with confidence; can deliver results and achieve their full potential. (Ulrich,1998)

3.8 PAST RESEARCH

When conducting any research, it is important to place it in its context. Research studies will often be an extension of research that has been done in the past and may consider issues from a different angle or take a completely different approach to a topic. Past research can often lay the groundwork on which to base a study and will often provide valuable guidelines towards conducting the research process. It is, therefore, important that researchers are aware of other studies done in the past that relate to the present study and which can have an important influence on the way that the study is carried out; the results and interpretation of those results.

In terms of the present study that considers the Human Resource policy decision making process; the influence that Human Resource practitioners with their personal values, beliefs and opinions have on the policies and what in fact influences their values etc, there are a number of related research studies that can provide a context in which to situate the study. Although none of the studies which will be discussed concentrate on exactly the same topic as the present study, they each look at elements that relate to the study and will, therefore, have at least some impact on the research.

3.8.1 Gillian Godsell – CSIR Special Report (1983)

“Work Value Differences in South African Organisation: A study and some conclusions”

This exploratory study conducted by Gillian Godsell (1983) who, at the time, was a member of the Human Development Division of the CSIR, considers the issue of different work values that exist in South African organisations which may lead to conflict in organisations. This ties in with the competing values approach which forms part of the theoretical basis for the present study. Through the use of research methods such as open ended questions and group discussions, subjects were given the opportunity in this study to examine and clarify their own values.

Value differences are especially important in South Africa because of the vast differences that exist in cultures, social classes, religions, political opinions, occupations etc. These all produce underlying values and value systems. The influence of class, race, nationality and culture on values has been well researched and documented and Godsell (1983) may have used these past studies to provide a basis for her own research. Her study, however, looks at differences in work values in South African organisations with an emphasis on senior employees because values at these levels are expected to have the most important impact on the organisation. Individuals at these levels have also more than likely experienced major Westernising influences such as urbanisation and education, and “value differences which have withstood these influences are likely to be particularly important” (Godsell, 1983: 6). Godsell’s study (1983) suggests that a consideration of these value differences, and an identification of possible areas of value conflict and compromise, will help to understand how disadvantaged groups, such as blacks and women, are incorporated at a managerial level; how values can be used towards organisational change and to provide culturally compatible solutions to organisational problems.

In analysing the results of the research, Godsell (1983) concludes that to ensure the successful implementation of what she calls ‘culturally synergistic strategies’ in an organisation, you need enough difference in the values within an organisation to make the incorporation of different values worthwhile coupled with some similarity to ensure that some consensus is possible. An important result of the study is that while value differences are almost always seen as black vs white, this study found that value differences between male and female were also dominant. Linked to this, Godsell (1983: 114) found that there should be “an awareness that any grouping within an organisation which has undergone significantly different socialisation experiences to the dominant grouping, could potentially

make a unique contribution based on unique values, and could also experience particular problems of assimilation and performance, due to value differences.”

The study goes on to emphasise the need for further research in this area and to extend this to looking at *how* value differences develop from people’s socialisation experiences. Godsell (1983) also identifies that the same research should be conducted on a larger sample so as to accurately generalise about South African work values and that future research should be of practical benefit to Human Resource management.

This past research by Gillian Godsell (1983) gives insight into the issue of values in the South African workplace and has an important impact on one of the areas of research in the present study. The present study goes beyond values to also consider the nature of the Human Resource policy decision making process and the influence of Human Resource practitioners and their different values, opinions and beliefs that impact on this process. Godsell’s work also looks at what influences individuals’ values which is one of the areas which the present study also focuses on. She also identifies the fact that even though people differ in their values, they can still make unique contributions. This may need to be considered in the present study where workers, who possibly share different values to the Human Resource practitioners that develop the policies, are often not involved in the policy development process even though they may have much to contribute. She also found that it is important to find solutions that balance conflicting values in the organisation. Finally, the present study goes beyond Godsell’s research (1983) through considering these issues not only within South African organisations, but also within first world organisations in the United Kingdom.

3.8.2 Lynn Ribton-Turner – Unpublished Masters Thesis (1995)

“An exploratory study of the related perceptions, values and attitudes of Human Resource Managers in the New South Africa: A focus on organisational climate and productivity”

An important comparison between Ribton-Turner’s study and the current research is that they both focus on Human Resource managers/ practitioners and their values, attitudes and perceptions. However, whilst the current study considers this in light of the development of Human Resource policies and practices and how the values, beliefs and attitudes of Human Resource practitioners impact on this, Ribton-Turner’s study (1995) explores the perceptions and attitudes of Human Resource managers to determine the type of organisational climate they believe will increase productivity and promote workplace identity. Her research found that the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture, still present in many South African organisations,

was viewed as being counter-productive in terms of human relationships. The need was identified for it to be adapted and integrated with African values and traditions. It was also found that to address the issue of productivity, organisations need to look both at the culture of the organisation as well as the material interests of employees. Workers need to be encouraged through more disclosure of information and business education to understand the competitive nature of business and, therefore, work to improve productivity.

The main objective of this research was to investigate the perceptions, values and attitudes of Human Resource managers to their organisational climates. The current study also seeks to identify the values and assumptions of Human Resource practitioners but here it is to identify how these may be carried through to the development of Human Resource policies and practices which influence the entire workforce. Ribton-Turner's research (1995) provides a context for the current research where the Anglo-Saxon culture may still be carried through by predominantly white male top management and Human Resource practitioners to the Human Resource policies and practices. She has already shown this to be a negative influence on human relationships within the organisation and this needs to be considered in light of the current research study. The study will need to build on this past research by considering how the approach by Human Resource practitioners to policies and practices may have an effect on organisational productivity and effectiveness in the future.

3.8.3 Bruce Hiddleston – Unpublished Master Thesis (1976)

“Risky Decision Making and Personality”

This study, although it does not look at the Human Resource policy decision making process specifically, considers how an individual's personality, including attitudes, beliefs, opinions and values, influences the way they approach decision making. Researchers have found that there may be an influence of personality variables on decision making behaviour. This study specifically focuses on the process of making risky decisions. Hiddleston's study, however, failed to find a meaningful relationship between the two elements of personality and risky decision making. His results were inconclusive and provided only a weak association between personality variables and risky decision making.

These results could, however, have been as a result of the small size of the sample as well as the fact that the data may have been unreliable because subjects were relatively young students and naïve in terms of decision making. Had there not been these limitations, the study may have gained less ambiguous results. However, the results are consistent with

previous research and, therefore, it may be that the relationship between personality and risky decision making just is weak.

Although the current research does not focus on risky decision making, it can, however, build on Hiddleston's research (1976) by considering the impact of personality variables(values, attitudes and beliefs) of individuals such as Human Resource practitioners on the Human Resource policy decision making process.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ✓

4.1 INTRODUCTION

To be successful, a research study needs to establish a methodological approach and develop a research design. This chapter considers the research methodology of the present study – what type of approach was adopted; what sampling methods were used to select the research sample and what that sample in fact is; the research design and how this was developed; the collection of the data – who was involved and how was it collected; and finally, how the data is to be analysed and assessed. Mouton and Marais (1990) stress that any methodological approach needs to be seen in light of the fact that specific choices will result with regards to methods of data collection, data analysis and inference depending on the methodology that is chosen. In this particular study, although both qualitative and quantitative research methods are being used, the research design and methods are primarily geared towards qualitative research as this is dominant in the study.

4.2 QUALITATIVE VS QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS ✓

With regards to qualitative and quantitative research, it is not always vital that one research method be chosen over another. Rather, both methods can be used to inform a study. As Patton (1990: 14) states:

“Because qualitative and quantitative methods involve differing strengths and weaknesses, they constitute alternative, but not mutually exclusive, strategies for research. Both qualitative and quantitative data can be collected in the same study.”

In order to understand the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods in this study, a comparative look at the two approaches needs to be conducted.

Table 4.1: Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods from Patton (1990) and Mouton and Marais (1990)

Qualitative Methods	Quantitative Methods
1. Study of selected issues in depth and detail with no predetermined categories	1. Standardised methods used to fit people's perspectives into predetermined categories
1. Detailed information about smaller number of cases reducing generalisability	2. Broad set of findings that can be generalised
3. Focus is on seeing the world through the subject's eyes	3. Focus is on facts and/ or reasons of social events
4. Small samples selected purposefully	4. Large samples selected randomly
5. Everyday, natural setting; can observe behaviour as and when it occurs	5. Controlled setting/context
6. Researcher is very involved in events	6. Researcher is distant from events
7. Validity is dependent on the skill and competence of the researcher	7. Validity is dependent on appropriate, standardised administration of instrument
8. Open ended questions – longer, detailed, not standardised so difficult to analyse	8. Standardised questions – succinct, easily analysed and presented
9. Approach is not strictly formalised and the scope is more undefined	9. Approach is highly formalised; strictly controlled. The scope is exactly defined
10. More philosophical	10. Closer to the physical sciences

The present research makes use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather data. The qualitative aspect of the study concerns in-depth interviewing of a small group of subjects, selected specifically for the purpose of providing information-rich data. Gathering the data through this method will ensure that detailed information is collected by using open-ended questions in the interviews. These elements support the qualitative approach to research in this study. The interviews are then complemented by a short, factual questionnaire which forms the quantitative aspect of the research. Questions are standardised for the subjects and answers can be sorted into categories. The researcher is not actively involved in this aspect of the research as the subject is given time to complete the questionnaire on his own. The lack of open-ended questions also allows for a focus on facts and ensures that the process is both formal and controlled. Making use of the quantitative short questionnaire means that the interviews are not slowed down by the many factual questions set out here. Rather, the interviews allow for a more in-depth consideration of the topic through the eyes of the subjects. Employing these different methods of data collection allows the researcher to neutralise the limitations of each of them so as to obtain the best possible data for the research.

4.3 SAMPLING

4.3.1 Population

Population in research methodology is the large group of subjects that would need to be assessed if the views of everyone in a particular situation were to be measured. In the present study, however, researching the views of the total population that fit into the category or experience being researched is not possible. The study considers the process of change to Human Resource policies and practices and the role that Human Resource practitioners play in that process. Therefore, the population group would be all the Human Resource practitioners involved in this process and the number of these individuals is innumerable. For the purposes of this research study, sampling methods have been used to select relevant subjects from this population group.

4.3.2 Sampling Methods

In making decisions about samples – both the size of the samples as well as the methods of selecting a sample – the unit of analysis of the research study needs to be identified. The unit of analysis for a study can consist of individuals, groups, university students, communities etc. This is the primary focus for the collection of data and each unit of analysis requires a different form of data collection. (Patton,1990) In the present study, the unit of analysis which forms the research sample is the individual Human Resource practitioner involved in the process of change to Human Resource policies and practices. Although the study does consider the process as it occurs within organisations, the unit of analysis is not a group of managers or shop stewards that are involved but rather the Human Resource individuals. Analysing the unit of the individual Human Resource practitioner will give insight into the process through their personal experiences. This can then be compared with other Human Resource individuals in other organisations that are part of the study.

Qualitative and quantitative methods of research do have different sampling approaches when selecting their research sample. Where quantitative research usually uses large samples which are selected randomly, qualitative research, on the other hand, focuses in-depth on a very small sample which are selected purposefully for the research. (Patton,1990) Although this study includes both of these methods, a qualitative sampling technique will be used. This is because the information required to inform this study needs to be in quite extensive detail and a standardised, factual questionnaire completed by a large group of subjects will not suffice.

Although a short, factual questionnaire is to be administered in order to gain background information on both subjects and the organisations that they represent, this quantitative method is insufficient and a qualitative approach of interviewing a small sample of subjects – in depth – needs to be dominant.

In order to conduct purposeful qualitative sampling for in depth study, it is important that the subjects are chosen for a purpose. In this case - they are chosen because they are 'information-rich'. "Information-rich cases are those from which we can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (Patton,1990: 169). This means that the individuals selected would need to come from organisations where the process of change to Human Resource policies and practices is an active part of the organisation; where much can be learnt and productive information gathered from these subjects to inform the study. These are cases that are worthy of study.

4.3.3 Maximum Variation Sampling

A degree of maximum variation sampling was used in this study to select the sample. This method is used to gain a maximum variation within a small sample for qualitative research by selecting a sample of great diversity. This ensures high-quality, detailed descriptions from each subject and the researcher needs to then identify shared patterns that may exist across cases despite their vast differences. By considering a great diversity of subjects, the researcher is able to describe the variations in the sample and understand the different variations in experiences whilst also identifying important elements central to most subjects, if not all. (Patton,1990) Human Resource practitioners were selected as subjects from a wide variety of organisations. The study was not focused on one industry but sampling was done across industries, with all organisations, no matter what the nature of their business, being eligible for the sample. This means that the resultant sample consists of both profit and non-profit organisations; both manufacturing and service organisations; both internationally competitive and nationally competitive organisations.

4.3.4 Convenience Sampling

Coupled with the maximum variation sampling method, this study also made use of the convenience sampling method to select the research sample. This has been cited as the most common sampling method as it is fast and favourable. Cases are selected because they are easy to access and often inexpensive to study. In this study, this sampling method was used to

an extent. Personal contacts in organisations as opposed to cold calling of subjects to engage them in the study was primarily used. These were selected, however, in the context of maximum variation sampling as well as being cases identified as being information-rich and worthy of research as they were from relatively large organisations who are one of the leaders in their fields. Some purposive sampling through cold calling was attempted and although this did result in one particular subject being included in the United Kingdom sample, cold calling was unsuccessful in selecting the South African research sample.

4.3.5 Research Sample

The research sample for this study consists of 10 subjects selected from South African organisations and 7 subjects selected from United Kingdom organisations. The latter's results will be used in the comparative consideration of the first world (United Kingdom) and third world (South Africa) scenarios. All the subjects chosen were from 'information-rich' organisations that are either dominant in their sector of the marketplace or are at the least, highly successful. The organisations were often internationally competitive companies in the region although 3 of the South African subjects come from organisations that are not internationally competitive (1 non-profit and 2 other); only 1 United Kingdom subject comes from a non-internationally competitive company (a non-profit). Due to the general nature of the issue being discussed, as has been mentioned, no specific industry was selected as a focus. Maximum variation sampling was conducted to consider individuals that represent a variety of different organisations. The study is looking at the individuals involved in the process rather than the actual business of the organisation. To this end, both profit and non-profit organisations were considered.

4.3.5.1 Location

Due to the nature of the topic being researched and the vast number of people that could be included in the sample, it was decided to focus the study on two geographical regions – the Durban region in South Africa and the London region in the United Kingdom. In South Africa, 3 individuals in the sample were included from the Johannesburg region. This inclusion was done for two reasons –

- The policy review and change process for some of the large organisations in the Durban region are done at the Head Office for that company which is in Johannesburg and
- As part of the convenience sampling technique, because of the contacts in Johannesburg at some of the large organisations.

Limiting the sample to a region means that it may be difficult to generalise the results of the study beyond those borders. However, because of the nature of the issue being studied, the location of the organisation usually has little effect on the process of policy change and development. The study could still provide information that is useful for Human Resource practitioners countrywide even if it is not exactly applicable. And with the comparison between South Africa and the United Kingdom, the results of the study could also provide some relevant information on an international scale.

The sample was focused to consider only large organisations. It was proposed that smaller organisations may not even have a Human Resources department or conduct the necessary policy reviews and developments that are necessary to inform the study. In this study, the definition of a ‘large organisation’ means organisations with 100 employees or more and who have a practitioner that deals with Human Resource issues. An important issue in this regard is that the individual selected from an organisation to be part of the sample did not have to be the Human Resource Manager or Director, although the majority of them were, as long as the individual is a Human Resource practitioner involved in the policy decision making process.

4.3.5.2 Composition of the sample

The sample composition for both South Africa and the United Kingdom can be illustrated as follows:

Table 4.2 : South African Sample Description

Variable	Range	No. of Respondents
Age	20-29	10% (1 respondent)
	30-39	60% (6 respondents)
	40-49	10% (1 respondent)
	50+	20% (2 respondents)
Race	Black	20% (2 respondents)
	White	80% (8 respondents)
Gender	Male	60% (6 males)
	Female	40% (4 females)

All subjects are English speaking although for some, this is possibly not their mother tongue.

Table 4.3 : United Kingdom Sample Description

Variable	Range	No. of Respondents
Age	20-29	29% (2 respondents)
	30-39	29% (2 respondents)
	40-49	13% (1 respondent)
	50+	29% (2 respondents)
Race	Black	0%
	White	100%(7 respondents)
Gender	Male	29% (2 respondents)
	Female	71% (5 respondents)

All subjects were British and spoke English.

In terms of the composition of the South African sample, there is a good male-female distinction between the subjects so the views of both men and women could be obtained. More black individuals and individuals from other races should have been included, however, in order to gain a wider perspective on the issue from people of different race groups. The age range is also very equally spread out allowing insight into both the views of older individuals who have had more experiences in South Africa and in Human Resources as well as the views of younger individuals who may have fresh, new ideas about the way that organisations function.

In the United Kingdom sample, a possible flaw is that the respondents are all whites. The study does not gain an insight into the views of black individuals or people of other races who, as we have seen earlier, have been discriminated against in the past in Britain in terms of employment. In terms of gender, however, a number of women are included in the sample which provides a good insight into the view of women who have also been discriminated against in the past.

4.3.6 Response Rates

When attempting to set up interviews with individuals for the study either through contacts or cold calling, responses from prospective subjects were not always positive. More people declined to be part of the study in the United Kingdom than in South Africa. 30% of people asked to participate in the study in the United Kingdom declined whilst only 15% of people asked in South Africa declined. All, but one, of the individuals declined to be part of the sample when the request was made through cold calling rather than through personal contacts.

Reasons that most people declined to participate were:

- That the organisation does not have a Human Resources department or that they only have a Human Resource administrator with the remaining Human Resource functions being outsourced. This response was mainly found in South African companies.
- That they were too busy. This response was mainly from organisations in the United Kingdom.
- That they do not participate in research projects.

In terms of the short questionnaires, in the United Kingdom all of the questionnaires were completed and returned at the interview. In South Africa, all the questionnaires were e-mailed to individuals in the sample. 60% of the questionnaires were collected at the interview whilst 40% were returned by e-mail.

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

In designing a research study, due to limited time and resources, there are often trade-offs that need to be made. In terms of qualitative studies, it is important to decide whether to study one or a few questions in depth or to look at many questions but in less detail. Although it is often easy to develop a number of potential questions for the research at the beginning of the research design, establishing a focus for the research and prioritising the questions does pose a difficult problem for the researcher. Decisions around this issue, however, will be influenced by the theoretical contribution that the study wishes to make. It may also help to focus the study by considering the relevant literature around the topic and how other researchers have approached the topic or similar issues. Patton (1990: 163) does warn, however, against conducting the literature review before designing the research as it may “bias the researcher’s thinking and reduce openness to whatever emerges in the field.” The literature review should either take place after the data has been collected or alternatively, at the same time as the data collection so as to allow a “creative interplay” between the literature, the data collected and the reflections of the researcher. (Patton,1990)

There are further trade-offs when considering the use of qualitative or quantitative methods in a research study. These trade-offs relate to the breadth and depth of the study. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to obtain detailed data about a smaller number of subjects (depth) whereas quantitative methods make use of a standardised approach to obtain responses from a large number of individuals according to a set of predetermined categories (breadth).

As Patton (1990: 166) notes:

“There is no rule of thumb that tells a researcher precisely how to focus a study. The extent to which a research question is broad or narrow depends on purpose, the resources available, the time available, and the interests of those involved.”

The purpose of the present study is to obtain an in-depth look at the process of Human Resource policy change and development in organisations and the influence that Human Resource practitioners have on that process. To gain the insight necessary to inform the study, a qualitative approach through face to face interviewing is essential. The focus of the interviews is a few questions relating to the topic under research which were developed after a brief consultation of the relevant literature. Due to the length of time needed to conduct the interviews, a relatively small sample is essential for this study. Accompanying this qualitative interviewing will be a standardised quantitative questionnaire administered to all subjects.

This will bring some breadth to the data collected as it gathers factual and background information about the subjects and their organisations which is not obtained through the interviewing but, nevertheless, is vital to inform the study.

4.4.1 Designing the Interview Questionnaire ✓

(see Appendix A)

According to Patton (1990), there are three primary methods of collecting qualitative data through interviewing: the *informal conversational interview*; the *general interview guide* approach and the *standardised open ended interview*. Essentially the design of this research questionnaire is made up of a combination of both the second and last options. The interview guide comprises a set of questions or issues to be discussed during the course of the interview. Although the issues do not need to be discussed in a particular order, the researcher prepares this guide to ensure that essentially the same information is gathered from all the individuals in the sample. Through the interview guide, a number of topics and subjects are provided which the interviewer uses to ask questions and explore the responses of the particular subjects whilst also deciding which topics demand more depth from the subject. The interview still remains relatively conversational with the interviewer being able to be spontaneous whilst also focusing on topics that have been predetermined before the interview. “The advantage of an interview guide is that it makes sure that the interviewer / evaluator has carefully decided how best to use the limited time available in an interview situation” (Patton, 1990: 283).

The standardised open ended questionnaire is made up of a set of questions which are carefully worded and placed in a particular sequence. The interviewer takes every subject through this exactly, asking the same questions in the same words of every individual. The questions are written down before the interview in exactly the way that they will be asked. This approach to interviewing is beneficial when time is limited and it is necessary to obtain the same information from every individual interviewed. It also decreases the effect of the interviewer because each subject is asked the same questions. The main drawback of this approach is that the interviewer cannot be flexible to follow up topics not included in the interview questionnaire when it was designed.

Despite the obvious differences between these two approaches, it is possible to make use of a combination between the interview guide approach and the standardised open ended approach. This is indeed the case in the present study. The combination allows the interviewer to word a number of questions exactly whilst still permitting a degree of flexibility to probe and explore certain subjects in more depth and even ask questions around areas that were initially not included in the questionnaire. The interview questionnaire in this study made use of this combination approach through developing a questionnaire that was worded exactly and written down as the basis for the interview. However, due to the nature of the topic being researched, some questions became invalid after certain others had been asked whilst subjects may at other times answer a number of questions at once resulting in it becoming futile to ask those questions again. This means that there was a flexibility on the part of the researcher to leave out certain questions if need be and to, at times, ask only part of a question if the other part had already been answered. Where subjects did not answer a question to the extent necessary for the study, the research design also allowed the interviewer to probe and explore the subject's response more deeply. Therefore, even though a standardised open ended questionnaire was set up for the interview, the interviewer will follow these questions as far as possible and then have the flexibility to move between questions, omitting some whilst bringing new topics into the discussion if necessary.

4.4.2 The Interview Questions

In designing the interview questionnaire, four types of questions were used:

- Experience/ Behaviour questions – regarding what the individual does or has done so as to gain descriptions about experiences, actions and activities.
- Opinion/ Values questions – looking at what an individual thinks about an issue; what their desires, goals and values are.

- Knowledge questions – looking to find out the factual information that the subject may possess; things that the subject knows – facts and not just their opinions and feelings.
- Background/ Demographic questions – regarding the characteristics of the subject (and the organisation). Although the interview questionnaire did ask about the era in which the subject grew up, these questions were primarily included in the factual questionnaire.

The interview questionnaire begins with a number of direct descriptive questions. These require “minimal recall and interpretation” and “encourage the respondent to talk descriptively” (Patton,1990: 294). These questions require the subject to relate the process of developing Human Resource policies and practices – how it is done and who is consulted. The subject is also asked to provide factual information regarding the means that are used to make employees aware of the policies; whether there are policies that cover the focus areas of family life and personal development and how management are held accountable to these policies. These descriptive questions allow an easy conversation to develop between the interviewer and the subject and ensures that the subject is well acquainted with the topic under discussion before any of the thought-provoking questions are asked. These factual questions are followed by questions regarding the subject’s opinions, feelings and interpretations which can be expressed within the context established from the previous questions.

Although questions about the present are often easier for subjects to answer than past or future orientated questions, these are still relevant to some of the issues being studied. Subjects were asked how the relationship between workers and management had changed over the years as well as how they thought their values, beliefs and opinions may have changed since being in Human Resources, amongst other questions. Future orientated questions do result in speculation on the part of the subjects which can be unreliable and, therefore, subjects were only asked one question: what would they do if new legislation was passed which they had to enforce but which was against their values and beliefs?

The primary aim of qualitative interviewing is to gain a response from the subject being interviewed. It is important that the interviewer or the questionnaire do not impose predetermined responses on the subject but allows them to answer exactly in the way they wish to respond. Questions need to be open-ended so that subjects can answer in whichever way they feel will most effectively represent what they think, feel and know. (Patton,1990)

4.4.3 Standardised, short questionnaire

(see Appendix B)

The factual questionnaire that accompanies the interview is based on quantitative methods of research. The questions are standardised and each subject is asked the exact same questions in the same way. There is no involvement of the interviewer as respondents are able to complete the questionnaire in their own time and no explanation of the questions by the interviewer is needed. The questionnaire is divided into three sections which consist of:

Section 1: General, factual questions about the subject themselves including characteristics such as their name; job title and their length of service in that position; age category and qualifications. This section also requires the organisation name and nature of the business to which the subject is affiliated.

Section 2: Questions regarding the organisation and the composition of its workforce are included here. These relate to how old the organisation is; the number of employees it has and the nature of the workforce in terms of race, gender and foreign employees; whether the organisation is a multinational or not and if so, how many branches does it have globally; and finally, what the organisation's position on trade union recognition is.

Section 3: Questions relating to the Human Resources department of the organisation. These include how many people there are in the Human Resources department; whether the department's functions are decentralised or not; whether the Human Resources department at the organisation's Head Office (which is where the large majority of the subjects were based) determines the policies and practices for all the branches of the organisation and finally, how often the department conducts policy reviews.

These closed-ended questions require either one word or short sentence answers and because of their standardisation, the results are easily analysed and reported. The questionnaire obtained answers to the exact questions being asked and responses did not deviate from what was required.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Although the research schedule had advocated a month for the data collection process, this was to a large extent regulated by the individuals being interviewed. Due to the busy nature

of their positions, the interviews had to be arranged at times that suited the subjects. This posed a problem in two of the South African interviewing situations where the individuals were only available for interview a month and a half after the data collection process had already begun. This caused a significant delay to the whole research study. A few of the subjects also had time constraints which they placed on the interviews because of meetings or other appointments that they needed to attend to. This meant that although the interviews were supposed to last for approximately an hour, some of the interviews only lasted for half an hour to 45 minutes. Although this may pose a problem in terms of the depth of information obtained from interviews of different lengths, it should be emphasised that all questions were asked and sufficiently answered in all of the interviews.

4.5.1 Before the Interview

After obtaining the names of relevant Human Resource practitioners for the study from a number of personal contacts as well as through some cold calling, these individuals were contacted by telephone to set up an interview. Once they had agreed to an interview and a time, in the South African situation, a copy of the short questionnaire was then e-mailed to them for their completion. In some cases, the completed questionnaire was returned via e-mail before the interview.

4.5.2 Interview Setting

The interview was always conducted at the individual's workplace, either in their personal offices or in a general boardroom available for meetings. It was found that when the interviews took place in the individual's offices, there were often many interruptions by other staff members and telephone calls. However, when they took place in the boardroom, there were no distractions or interruptions. The setting, however, did not have any important influence on the length or depth of the interviews.

4.5.3 During the Interview

To ensure that the actual quotations of subjects were recorded and to enable the researcher to be more attentive to the subject being interviewed, a dictaphone was used to tape the interviews. Before beginning the interview, the researcher explained the use of the dictaphone to the subject and asked if they minded that the interview would be taped. In all cases, subjects were very willing to be taped. The interview then began with the researcher

explaining a little about the topic of research; the fact that everything said would be held in the strictest of confidence and what exactly the purpose of the interview was.

The interviewer then followed the interview questionnaire asking the subject the questions set out but also being flexible to change the wording and sequencing of questions to suit the interview. It was also important to occasionally let the subject know that what they were saying was worthwhile to the interview and it was often noted to the subject that their response was exactly what was being looked for in the research study. The researcher also needed to be attentive to what subjects said in order to follow up on issues mentioned; to skip questions that may already have been answered; to move between topics easily and link topics together as well as provide constant feedback to the subject in order to maintain the flow of the conversation. Where subjects were giving long-winded responses to questions, it was the task of the researcher to focus the interview onto the more important questions for the study.

Probing is also important in interviews to “increase the richness of the data being obtained” (Patton, 1990: 324). In a number of these interviews where probing was used, however, the subject was unresponsive and nothing more was gained other than the original response. Where probing was successful, this was mainly in response to both clarification probes, where the subject is asked to clarify their answer by providing more information, and detail-orientated questions gaining factual knowledge by asking when, who, where, what and how questions.

Taking notes during an interview is considered an important part of any interview process. They help to avoid any omissions or distortions to the information given by the subject after the interview as well as capturing the responses in the subject’s own language. Subjects may also expect interviewers to take notes to ensure that they are accurately documented. (Millar, Crute & Hargie, 1992) In the present study, although some notes were taken during the interview, the tape recording was found to be sufficient and taking notes simply became distracting to the interviewing process.

4.5.4 After the Interview

Having completed the interview, in the United Kingdom situation, the subjects would take a few moments to complete the short, standardised questionnaire given to them at the interview. In the South African situation, where completed questionnaires were not returned

by e-mail, these were given to the researcher at the interview having been completed before hand. Immediately after this, having thanked the subject for their time, the researcher would write up some notes both regarding observations about the progress of the interview as well as some of the subject's responses that were felt to be important. The tape was also checked to ensure that it was functioning properly. Where the tape was found to have recorded rather unclearly (this was the case in 3 interviews for the study), extensive notes were then made regarding what was said in the interview.

The tapes were then transcribed by the researcher. This was often done on the same day as the interview as where the taping of the interview was not very good, then the information was still fresh in the researcher's mind. Each interview of approximately one hour in length took about four hours to transcribe. Most of what the individual had said was written down exactly although some unimportant words or phrases such as "you know" or "um ..." were left out. Subjects were also e-mailed following the interview to thank them for their time and participation in the study.

4.5.5 Ethical Interviewing

It is vital that ethics be at the core of the research process. Researchers need to be open and honest to subjects ensuring that any promises made are kept and that interviews do not put any subjects at risk. The issue of confidentiality is essential especially with regards to this research study, as information about policies and practices are often highly confidential and organisations do not wish for it to be made public. It was important that the researcher ensured that first of all, subjects gave informed consent to the interview after being told exactly what the interview will entail and what the purpose of the interview was and that secondly, requests for confidentiality were upheld. The assurance of confidentiality helps to establish a more open conversation. Subjects share in-depth about their thoughts, feelings and experiences because they feel that the interviewer has respect for the confidentiality of their responses. It is the responsibility of the researcher not to misuse this confidence that the subject has placed in them. (Garrett,1972) Richardson, Dohrenwend & Klein (1965: 287) suggest a number of ethical considerations that interviewers should adhere to:

"Interviewers must maintain a professional attitude towards the study; ... must maintain confidences; ... must refrain from criticism and gossip. In addition, they should refrain from passing judgement on other's behaviour or on social situations, and they should be able to keep their own convictions and be committed to the scientific approach."

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

4.6.1 Analysis of Qualitative Data – The Interview Questionnaire

Qualitative data analysis is a term applied to a number of methods used to handle data that is relatively unstructured and often cannot simply be reduced to a set of numbers; analysis is the interpretation of data through the explanation of the findings/ data collected. Researchers need to ensure that they sensitively explore and interpret the data instead of simply reducing it to numbers. Through the in-depth descriptions that subjects give in their own words, the researcher needs to develop a new understanding of the situation or process that is being studied. Through analysis, significance is attached to certain results and patterns are put together in an ‘analytical framework’.

“Analysis of such data requires sensitivity to detail and context, as well as accurate access to information and ways of rigorously and carefully exploring themes and discovering and testing patterns” (www.qsr.com.au).

To assist the analysis process, it is necessary that throughout the research process, researchers make a record of their growing understanding of the data through the writing of notes or summaries as well as the researcher’s reflections on what has occurred during the research. The literature which has informed the research design should also be considered in analysis as this may help to focus the analysis in different areas.

Different research methodologies require the researcher to handle and interpret the data in different ways and this will depend on the goal of the research study; what it is trying to achieve. The present research study aims to obtain information-rich descriptions of the process of Human Resource policy development and a new understanding of how Human Resource practitioners fit into and affect this process. This primary goal means that the use of coding, identifying themes and patterns will be the most appropriate way of analysing and interpreting the data. (www.qsr.com.au)

4.6.2 The Analysis Begins

In beginning to analyse the responses to the interview questionnaire, the decision should be made about whether to begin with single case analysis or cross-case analysis. Where a single case analysis is conducted, then the process of analysis begins by considering each subject’s

case study or transcription from the interview. With cross-case analysis, answers from different subjects to the same question are grouped together and the different viewpoints on an issue are analysed. (Patton,1990) Due to the combination of open-ended questions and general topics found in this interview, the answers from different subjects can be grouped together and cross-case analysis carried out even if those answers are not found in the same place in all the interviews.

The questions asked of subjects were all open-ended which allowed the researcher to gather the descriptive data through the responses. This data is needed to gain a new understanding of the topic under discussion. It should be noted, however, that there were two slightly different questionnaires – one for the United Kingdom and one for South Africa. The questionnaire was altered slightly for the South African situation so as to include questions relating to both the Employment Equity legislation as well as the issue of diversity because these two issues are having an important effect on organisations at present. The different questionnaires will mean that the South African answers to these two questions will not be included in the comparative analysis between the United Kingdom and South Africa as they have been omitted from the United Kingdom questionnaire.

As Patton (1990: 377) suggests:

“There is typically not a precise point at which data collection ends and analysis begins.”

Within the data collection process, ideas around ways of analysing the data will occur. These are the beginning of the analysis procedure. In the present study, the quality of the data collected was improved after a measure of analysis was done during the process of data collection and possible themes, patterns and ideas were identified which were then explored in future interviews conducted. Researchers need to be careful when involved in this type of approach, however, as initial interpretations may misdirect further data collection.

4.6.3 Organising the Data

The nature of qualitative interviews and qualitative data collection often results in sizable amounts of data being collected. This can be overwhelming for any researcher trying to make sense of it. The first task was to ensure that all the data was in fact there; this means ensuring that all the short, factual questionnaires had been completed and returned by the subjects and that all the interviews had been transcribed from the tapes. Where some responses may have been omitted from the short questionnaires, the subjects were contacted and asked to provide

a response to that question. The data was then organised with transcripts being placed together with short questionnaire responses providing an overall view of each of the subjects.

4.6.4 Content Analysis

“Content analysis is the process of identifying, coding, and categorising the primary patterns in the data” (Patton, 1990: 381). To do this, researchers need to consider the actual content of the interviews, in other words the words spoken by the subjects and recorded in the interview transcriptions. Through content analysis, the researcher reads through the collected data (interview transcriptions) and begins to organise the data into topics through labeling or naming the data on the actual transcriptions. It is important that where topics are assigned to sections of data, they are clearly written down and marked so that the researcher can easily refer back to them at any time. Some passages of the transcript may encompass a number of different patterns or themes and each of these themes needs to be identified and recorded. It is important that the researcher does not simply read through the material once but numerous times before declaring that the data has been completely labeled and topics assigned.

Having classified the data, responses from the different subjects can then be organised into the themes and topics that have been identified and then analysed. Even though subjects were not always asked the questions in the same order, the data could still be separated into the different questions and then analysed in terms of the responses to each question. This process would have to be done in conjunction with the analysis of the themes, patterns and topics, however, as because the interviews were not completely standardised, different topics may have been covered with some subjects, and in more depth, than with others. (Patton, 1990)

The themes and sub-themes identified in the present study were attained through a consideration of the various questions asked during the interview. Some of the questions represent themes on their own, such as the first question (see Appendix B-1 and B-2) which considers the theme of ‘Policy Development Process’. Other themes were determined from a combination of questions and at times, from a combination of the responses from subjects; for example – ‘Racial and Gender Issues’. These themes were recorded through an in-depth reading of the interview transcripts and a consideration of the interview questionnaire.

4.6.5 Analysis of Quantitative Data – The short, factual questionnaire

The aim of the short, factual questionnaire was to obtain information about the subject and the organisation they were affiliated to, to provide a background or context in which to place the information gathered through the interview. The responses recorded in these questionnaires are used in the discussion of results obtained through the qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts to help the researcher understand the subject's responses in light of who they are and the type of organisation that they represent and to locate the subject in relation to other respondents. Due to the routine nature of these questions, it was decided not to include them in the interview itself but rather to gain responses through a self-administered questionnaire. The short questionnaire responses will be used to make inferences about the subject in conjunction with their interview responses. It should be acknowledged that all of the respondents answered all of the questions and none were omitted.

CHAPTER 5: DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

This chapter gives insight into the data collected through both the qualitative interview process and on the standardised, short questionnaire. The descriptive nature of the interview data means that themes and sub-themes can be identified and the interview results are presented in terms of these themes. Data from the short, standardised questionnaire is presented through tabulation of responses in order to identify the number of subjects who responded in a particular way to questions asked.

5.1 INTERVIEW RESPONSES FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SUBJECTS

A number of major themes can be identified from the interview data gathered. Within each of these themes, there also exist a number of sub-themes. Some of these may have been covered directly in response to questions on the major themes whereas other subjects may have been probed by the interviewer to elaborate on these sub-themes. The responses from the ten South African subjects presented here will be discussed in the following chapter.

5.1.1 Major Theme: Policy Development Process

The first major theme identified in an analysis of the interview data was that of process and in particular – the nature of the policy development process. The theme considers how organisations approach the development of Human Resource policies and practices; what drives changes to existing policy or the development of new policies, who is involved in the process and to what extent and what position employees take in the process. This theme was covered in a direct question to subjects and also links up to one of the primary aims of the study. Within this theme, 100% of the subjects said that they already had Human Resource policies in place and that these were either reviewed or new policies drawn up. Two subjects stated that they were currently in the process of reviewing their policies in order to bring them in line with the Employment Equity Act. One sub-theme to the theme of process considers *drivers of policy change* which explores what it is that propels organisations towards policy change and development. 80% of subjects said that the main driver of policy change is changes to legislation whereas 20% stated that policy development happens when there is a need for a certain policy in the organisation and that particular policy has not yet been developed. Other drivers of policy change were identified as being changes in the market; the company's desire to be more favourable to employees and pressure put on organisations for a policy by employees.

Significantly, in terms of the policy development process, 40% of subjects identified that some form of outside consultation is done before the policy is developed. This consultation is either through the consideration of market surveys involving similar organisations or through the consultation of experts on the law or issues included in the policy. One subject stated that internal surveys of employees were also consulted before developing policies. It was also found that 50% of the subjects' organisations have set up an Employment Equity Committee to oversee the development of policies and to ensure that they are both in line with the legislation and non-discriminatory.

A further sub-theme is *involvement* which explores the participation of management, Human Resources, employees and the trade unions in the policy development process. In 70% of the cases, the Human Resources department develops the policies. According to a further subject, the functional heads of department, reporting to the Human Resource Director at the organisation's Head Office, "*are responsible for initiating (policy) if there isn't one; updating, constantly reviewing etc.*" Where policies are needed regarding their function, these functional heads will develop the policies themselves after consultation with market and internal employee surveys. In 60% of the cases, these draft policies are then presented to the Board of Directors or Executive Committee who will make any necessary suggestions and changes to the policy before it is approved. 20% took suggestions from their Employment Equity Committee before implementing policies. In one case, both the Board and the Equity Committee are consulted for recommendations and changes.

One subject stated that in their organisation, a policy development process has been devised whereby everyone in the organisation, through representatives, works together to develop policies. Representatives of employees, unions and management as well as the subject, meet and work together to draw up and structure a policy. This is then given to top management to consider and ratify. This organisation has found that "*with the involvement of the workers in the initial stages, you will find it very easy that (the policy) is acceptable to them because they have been there in the initial stages and they own the policies.*"

In terms of employee involvement, 50% of subjects stated that there is no participation at all by employees in the process. Two subjects gave the reason for this as being because the policies are highly favourable to employees and, therefore, there is no need for them to be involved. Another subject stated that employees are not consulted if the policy relates to an issue that is not expressly stipulated by legislation but rather arises out of an organisational need. 20% of subjects stated that employees are involved through their representatives in the

Employment Equity Committee which puts forward employees' suggestions and thoughts about the policy. 30% of subjects stated that employees were consulted and that they try to negotiate on issues directly affecting the workers. However, in 100% of cases, the final decision and adoption of policy is made by top management/ Board of Directors.

The issue of trade union involvement in the process is limited to the eight respondents who recognise a trade union in their organisation. In 50% of cases, some trade union input into the process was identified, usually through annual negotiations, although in one case, the unions are actively involved in the policy process from the start. No subjects stated that there have ever been any negative consequences, in terms of strikes etc, as a result of union involvement in the policy development process.

A sub-theme linked to the issue of employee involvement in the process is that of **value clashes**. This refers to the conflict that may arise where the values of employees in the development of policies differ to the values of the organisation. 80% of subjects stated that employees have never disagreed with management over policies or at least, that they have accepted the decision made by management. In one case this has been reflected in the fact that *"the turnover is extremely low because in general people feel that their lot is very good. So I've never confronted a situation where people have not been happy with the policies."* One subject stated that they were unaware of any value clashes ever taking place between management and employees over policies and, therefore, concluded that these probably did not happen. In another case, the subject stated that where employees' values have clashed with the organisation's values in the past, they have gone through the relevant dispute settlement procedures but these have simply 'fizzled out'.

Finally, under the theme of the policy development process and linked to the issue of employee involvement is the sub-theme of **employee rights and power**. This considers whether employees are aware of their rights in the organisation and exert their power to participate in the process and whether employee rights and power are encouraged by the organisation. In all cases, employees are aware of their rights either through common knowledge; being informed of their rights by the organisation or including them in the organisation's policies. 70% of subjects stated that their organisations actively encourage their employees to exercise their rights and power and to say what they think. In one case, employees are actively encouraged to exercise their rights and power through speaking out about any behaviour or policy that contradicts the values of the organisation. This is done

through the grievance procedures although it was acknowledged that many people are often too scared to raise these issues.

5.1.2 Major Theme: Legislation or organisational values

Subjects were questioned regarding the extent to which policy development was driven by legislation and changes to the law or whether it was as a response to the values and beliefs of the organisation. Subjects had to identify whether the main motivation for policy change came from the country's legislation or what the organisation desired through its values, beliefs and objectives. 70% of subjects said that whilst their policies complied with the law, policy development is primarily driven by the values and beliefs of the organisation. One of these subjects stated that many of the changes in the law were in fact valued by the organisation and, therefore, it made business sense to incorporate them into policy. One subject stated that it is a combination of the legislation and the organisation's values and beliefs and that it is important to ensure that the policy is aligned with both of these elements equally. A further two subjects said that they are primarily guided by legislation when developing policies. However, where there is no legislation on a particular issue, then the organisation's values and beliefs are considered.

Three subjects stated that their policies were brought in ahead of the legislation and that they consider their policies to go beyond the legislation, in other words – providing more than what is set out in the law. One of these subjects stated that they believed their organisation's progress in terms of policies and practices around Affirmative Action and skills development even before the legislation had come about, had had an influence on the Skills Development Act that was promulgated.

5.1.3 Major Theme: Personal and / or organisational values and beliefs

Subjects were asked in the interview if, when drawing up Human Resource policies and practices, they were driven more by the values and beliefs of the organisation or by their own personal values and beliefs. This theme aims to identify whether individuals involved in the development of policies are guided more by their own values and beliefs or by those espoused by the organisation. 70% of subjects responded that it was a bit of both and that they were guided by both the organisation's and their own values in developing policies. Three subjects stated that their own values were in fact very similar to the organisation's values and that it is quite easy to put policies together because there is no conflict between

the practitioner's personal values and the values of the organisation. One of these subjects, who has been employed by his company for 27 years, stated that he would not have stayed at the organisation for so long had he not shared the same values and beliefs. Two subjects noted that although their personal values did have an influence on the policy development process, it was known whether something would be accepted by the organisation or not and it was also acknowledged that a policy would not be developed on the basis of one Human Resource practitioner's values and needs. One subject stated that the responsibility of the Human Resource practitioner in developing policies was both to ensure the profitability of the business and be a representative of employees. The challenge is to balance the values of the organisation and employees to ensure the development of an agreeable policy.

30% of subjects said that their own personal values "*play much more of a subservient role to what the organisation stands for and where the organisation needs to be.*" These subjects felt that because there is a business need, there can be no real influence of the Human Resource practitioner's personal values on the policies. Where their personal values are not in line with what the organisation wants to achieve, then the organisation's values dominate.

5.1.4 Major Theme: Value Shifts

This theme considers whether there have been any shifts or changes to subjects' values, beliefs and opinions since being in the Human Resources profession; in what way these have changed and what the main influences on these value shifts have been. 60% of subjects stated that their values, beliefs and opinions have changed since being in Human Resources whereas 40% stated that there had been no change whatsoever in their values, beliefs and opinions. Reasons for the change in subjects' values varied. One subject gave the changes within South African society as well as the change to a more positive management / employee relationship as the primary reason for a change to his values and beliefs. Another subject stated that her values had shifted when the organisation changed towards a more progressive, participative management style and the policies progressed along with this change. The change created new challenges for the subject in Human Resources which affected her beliefs and opinions.

Subjects gave various indications of the way in which their values, beliefs and opinions had changed. One subject noted that he had become more conservative and less generous in terms of giving bursaries etc, the reason for this being that "*working in a large company, you sort of tow the line in a sense in terms of what the company's objectives are.*" Because he has been with the organisation for many years, he feels he has impacted on the organisation and

the organisation has impacted on him. Due to this, he is careful to consider all consequences of decisions before making them and has become far more conservative compared to the younger managers joining the organisation. A further subject feels that he has matured since being in Human Resources and has become more neutral and balanced in his approach. Another subject stated that she had become more practical since being in Human Resources and that her view of Human Resources has now changed to seeing it more as a service to the company. Interestingly, two subjects acknowledged that their values and beliefs have developed so that they have realised the importance of perseverance and that everyone is able to contribute and make a difference in the organisation. Both subjects stated their firm belief in the ability of designated group members and the need to judge employees in terms of what they can do, not in terms of their colour.

A sub-theme of this shift in values, beliefs and opinions is the *effect of era* – in other words, the impact that the era that they grew up in and their background had on the subject's values, beliefs and opinions. All subjects stated that their era or background had an important influence on their values and beliefs. Three subjects said that their family had had the greatest influence while one subject stated that her religious beliefs were the most influential in shaping her values, beliefs and opinions. All three subjects who have been influenced by their families hold non-discriminatory beliefs and values and non-racist thinking. One of these subjects is very outspoken about his beliefs in the organisation and has pushed for changes to policies in accordance with his belief in employment equity. Another of these subjects, however, stated that although his values and beliefs are non-racist, he sees the Affirmative Action legislation as definitely race based and sees its implementation as negative because a time limit has not been placed on the enforcement of this legislation. He believes it will, and already has, have a negative effect on the qualified, white population in South Africa. With the effect of era, one subject also stated that even though her background and experiences have had an impact on her values and beliefs, this does not mean that they will affect policy. Even if her values and beliefs are not in line with what is included in the policy, if it is for a business need, then it will be included no matter what her values are.

A further sub-theme with regards to the values, beliefs and opinions of subjects is their view of the *work ethic* that has begun to dominate organisations in recent years – where especially younger employees are wanting to balance work life and leisure / family time, possibly working flexible or shorter hours. 50% of subjects said that they believed in the work ethic and thought it was positive whilst 30% of subjects said they thought the ethic was negative.

Where subjects agreed with the work ethic, two stated that this was on condition that the needs of the department are still met even where employees work flexible hours and that employee output is more important than hours worked. One subject who disagreed with the work ethic stated that its presence has meant that there is no longer a life long commitment to an organisation and that with the new generation, organisations have to 'milk' employees dry of any knowledge and abilities they bring before they leave the organisation after a few years. Another subject stated that he disagreed with the ethic because employees try only to do the minimum that they have to for the money they earn because of the influence of the unions.

Three subjects commented that the presence of this work ethic is really dependant on the organisational environment. For example, in a manufacturing environment where workers are on shifts, there is little space to be flexible in terms of work time. Three subjects suggested that the reason for the work ethic was due to globalisation which has meant people are spending more time at the office because business is taking place faster and faster and expanding on a global level. This has also resulted in more pressure on individuals and the need for flexi-time has become more important.

A final sub-theme in terms of the values and beliefs of subjects is that of ***employee participation***. 90% of subjects stated that they valued employee participation in decision making (such as policy development) and thought it was positive. One subject said that he did not believe there was a need for employees to participate because the organisation always provided what was best for it's employees. Four subjects who valued participation by employees stated, however, that this participation needs to be controlled and management should not give up their prerogative in decision making. Because management are the ones that are held accountable, they "*need to have a measure of control over the decisions that they make*" and need to decide when to allow employees to participate.

One subject stated that employee participation is vital for the policy development process because it ensures that everyone owns the policy and will, therefore, accept it more readily. Two further subjects said that Human Resources also needs to help employees to participate by being in touch with them; hearing their voice and allowing it to be heard.

"I do believe that employees need to be informed and I do believe that employees need to be guided. Employees need to be provided with competencies to be able to participate."

5.1.5 Major Theme: Racial and Gender Issues

Under this theme, two questions were asked pertaining to the influence of the Employment Equity Act on Human Resource policies with regards to issues of race and gender and the subjects' assumptions regarding diversity in the workplace. This theme, therefore, explores both the organisations' position on racial and gender issues and the subjects' opinions and beliefs regarding race, gender and diversity. The *role of the Equity Act in policy making* is a sub-theme of this subject regarding racial and gender issues. In considering responses, 80% of respondents said that they already had a policy in place regarding Employment Equity with half of these having a policy in place even before the Act was passed; whereas 20% of subjects said that they were in the process of developing an Employment Equity policy. Two subjects stated that their policies involved Employment Equity not simply in terms of head count but also partnering with small black businesses to buy services as well as social responsibility.

The first step cited by all subjects in terms of Employment Equity and policies was that subjects and their organisations ensured that their policies were not discriminatory. In one case, the subject noted that the most that was done in terms of employment equity was to remove anything discriminatory from the policy documents. It was added that this was because the organisation had *"been an equal opportunity business for a long time so there wasn't major change required."* Although Employment Equity covers all disadvantaged groups including women and the disabled, generally, subjects focused on the issue of blacks in organisations rather than these other groups. A final comment from one subject with regards to Employment Equity was that managers in the organisation were given incentives to hire and promote blacks and women which resulted in the achievement of quotas but a lack of moral commitment to the process.

Subjects were also questioned about their *assumptions around diversity* and how diversity is managed in their organisation. All subjects acknowledged that their organisation values diversity and that it is seen as something positive which is encouraged. One subject discussed his thoughts around diversity saying that the workplace is somewhere where very different people spend the better part of their day. Therefore, because of the differences in background, race, status and culture, it is not possible to have one value system governing everyone because the values that it espouses may not be right for everyone. Therefore, he sees diversity as being something that works towards a common goal – what the organisation wants to achieve – and he acknowledges the importance of finding out what is common between the

different value systems that can be brought to the process to ensure that results are achieved for the organisation. In other words, according to this subject it is important to determine what can be maximised for the organisation from each diverse group.

70% of subjects acknowledge that respect and understanding of other cultures is important, not only in relationships within the organisation, especially between management and employees, but also in terms of policy making. It was also stated by 60% of subjects that they have either had or are going to hold value sharing/ inter-cultural understanding workshops and managers especially need to be informed of these different cultures through the workshops so that they can manage effectively. One subject stated that in her organisation there were managers who did not genuinely 'buy into' the element of diversity. However, she did note that *"once the older generation of managers who are probably those more inclined to window-dress their support for this kind of action, once they have moved on and moved out, I think as your younger generation gets through, there'll be more of a genuineness."*

5.1.6 Major Theme: Policy Awareness

This theme relates to how employees are made aware of the policies and practices of the organisation; what measures organisations have taken to inform employees about policies and whose responsibility it is to ensure that employees are well informed. In 20% of the cases, employees are primarily informed of the policies and practices either within their contracts of employment or through the induction programme held for new employees where policies are outlined and explained. 70% of subjects stated that policies are available for all employees to access over the organisation's Intranet – personal, internal web page – with one subject also identifying that there is a centralised computer drive which most employees have access to. In one case, the organisation did place the policies on the Intranet but this resulted in *"a number of lawyer types who then wanted to start giving their own interpretations of aspects of the policies and it actually didn't do us any favours."* The policies were subsequently removed from the Intranet.

A further means of ensuring that employees are aware of the policies and practices is through the publishing of a policy manual. In 30% of the cases, a hardcopy of the policies and practices can be found in the organisation's policy manual. In two cases, the policies are reflected on both the Intranet and in a policy manual for those workers who do not have access to a computer. Two subjects stated that where employees are directly affected by any change to policies, then they are informed directly about the change. 30% of the subjects also

said that employees will consult with the Human Resources department if they are unsure or need information about a particular policy or practice. One subject said that in their organisation, it is ultimately the responsibility of the managers and supervisors to ensure that their employees understand the policies and practices; to ensure that they have all either read the policy or have had the policy presented to them. *“So there is an obligation on the employer to make sure that everyone understands and knows what the policies and procedures are.”*

5.1.7 Major Theme: Management Accountability

It is important that management remain consistent in their behaviour and decisions made around Human Resource policies and practices. The theme of management accountability looks at how the organisations represented by the subjects ensure that management are held accountable for the way that they enforce these policies. 60% of subjects said that the Human Resource department takes the role of watchdog in ‘guarding’ the policies and ensuring that management are held accountable for their actions. 50% of subjects said that the employees were involved in ensuring that management were consistent in terms of how they carried out policies and practices with one of these subjects saying that it is the Employment Equity Committee, with some representatives from employees, that plays watchdog over managers.

In one case, the subject stated that the situation is self-policing because everyone in the organisation is aware of the policies and practices and anyone, whether it be Human Resources, employees or management can challenge managers’ interpretations of a policy. A further subject said that the measure of consistency between managers in terms of their behaviour and decisions around policy is risk. The organisation has a policy which sets out clear boundaries about making a decision where the risk of setting a precedent is large. Still another subject said that to ensure consistency, decisions around certain policies need to be signed off at various levels. Two subjects stated that their managers are well disciplined in keeping to the rules and ensuring that policies are consistently enforced.

5.1.8 Major Theme: Basic Individual Needs

This theme is indirectly linked to the main aims of the study in that it deals with the contents of some Human Resource policies with a primary focus on the basic individual needs of personal development and family life. A consideration of these issues in the context of Human Resource policies allows an insight not only into how important these individual

issues are to the organisation but also to what extent employees are involved in developing policy around their basic needs. The sub themes of *personal development* and *family life* can be identified. 90% of subjects said that they did have a policy covering personal development. 60% of these policies included an education scheme where employees can further their education; 60% included career development issues.

In terms of family life, all subjects said that they had a policy concerning family life. 60% of subjects stated that their family life policies only reflected what was required in terms of the Act, ie. maternity, paternity, compassionate leave etc, and that there was no formal encouragement of family life beyond that. 40% of subjects said that family life is valued by the organisation and is encouraged. One subject gave the reason for encouraging a positive family life to be because *“we want people to be happy in their family lives and as a consequence of that possibly to show more commitment at the workplace.”* Another subject stated that family life is encouraged especially with regards to female employees where the organisation goes out of its way to retain the skills base of female employees by providing flexible work for women. Finally, two subjects stated that their organisations have incorporated family life as a core value and have encouraged family events and interaction at the workplace for its employees.

5.1.9 Major Theme: Management / Employee Relationship

Subjects were asked whether there had been any change in the relationship between management and employees over the past 10 years or at least, since the subject had been at the organisation. The sub-themes within this theme are *trust, shared responsibility* and *commitment* from employees to the organisation. This question was used to identify any conflicts that may have existed between employers and employees which may have had an effect on the policies that were developed. 70% of subjects responded that there had been positive changes to the relationship between management and employees over the last few years; 20% of subjects stated that there had been a negative change in the relationship between management and employees and one subject stated that there had been no change to the relationship between management and employees.

Six of the first set of subjects noted that the reason for the positive change in the relationship between management and employees was because of a change to management. Managers were said to have developed a more open, informal relationship with employees which has become more collaborative and participative. It was acknowledged by many of these subjects

that the introduction of new, younger managers has brought a new style of management to the organisation and managers now also have to earn respect from employees. A further subject noted that a change to their organisation's CEO has led to positive changes in the relationship because of his more open and informal approach. One subject also said that before, there was a very adversarial shopfloor in the organisation because "*business tended to be associated with apartheid and largely because management was white male.*" Now, however, the management profile has changed and managers have begun sharing information with employees which has improved the relationship.

The two subjects who stated that there had been a negative change to the relationship between management and employees cited their reasons as being because of a breakdown in the trust relationship. One subject said that trust was down because of restructuring happening in the organisation and the accompanying loss of jobs which caused a negative attitude towards management. The second subject stated that trust was down because of a lack of understanding between management and the shopfloor as a result of the 'corporate grapevine' where opinions were expressed in ignorance creating confusion. The subject who stated that there had been no change to the relationship said that "*the basic level of trust and commitment has always been in this organisation; it is very high compared to other organisations.*" There is also a shared responsibility felt between the management and employees within this organisation although the subject does comment that this may have been negatively affected recently (in the past 5 years or so) by the work ethic where some employees have begun to work as little as possible for the money they earn.

In terms of shared responsibility between management and employees, 90% of subjects stated that this does exist and that there is a shared vision. One subject stated that this shared vision is encouraged through incentive agreements for every member of the workforce whilst another stated that the reason for the shared responsibility is because of the nature of their jobs and the industry. Two subjects said that to encourage this shared responsibility, the organisation was actively trying to involve employees through getting them to understand the business and to see how they impact on the organisation and where their responsibilities lie.

5.1.10 Major Theme: Role of Human Resources

A final question asked of subjects was where they placed themselves in the debate about the role of Human Resources – whether they saw it as being a management tool or the voice of employees. This theme explores where the subjects position themselves and their role within

the organisation. There are varying views on this issue with 40% of subjects stating that Human Resources should be a neutral function in the organisation although there was an acknowledgment that the balance did tend more towards the employer rather than the employees. 20% of subjects said that Human Resources must understand and meet the needs of employees within the organisation's context and even in terms of policies – “*to adopt a bit of a paternalistic approach to look after our employees.*” Two subjects see Human Resources as a support function or service to the organisation along with the departments of Finance, IT.

5.2 INTERVIEW RESPONSES FOR UNITED KINGDOM SUBJECTS

Responses from subjects in the United Kingdom can also be presented in the form of themes and sub-themes. Due to the fact that certain questions were asked of South African subjects and not of United Kingdom subjects, some issues presented in the section above will not be covered here. In this case there are seven subjects and their results will be discussed in a later chapter where a comparison between South African and United Kingdom results will be presented.

5.2.1 Major Theme: Policy Development Process

As mentioned above, the subjects were asked to describe the process that is followed in the development of policies considering what motivates policy change and development; who is involved in the process and to what extent. Five subjects stated that they already had policies in place for many years whilst two subjects stated that they had only recently, within the last five years or so, begun to develop policies for the organisation. Before then, very little had been in place in terms of policies and practices. In terms of the sub-theme of *drivers of policy change*, all subjects stated that the main drive towards the development of policy was changes in employment legislation and importantly, the directives issued by the European Union / EEC to govern organisations within the United Kingdom. One subject stated that along with changes to legislation, a further driver of policy change was the new CEO in the organisation whose values have been incorporated into policies and who has been the main drive behind the development of the Human Resources department which deals with the core issues in terms of policy.

The sub-theme of *involvement* by both management and employees also needs to be considered in light of the process of policy development. Five subjects stated that they themselves, as a Human Resource practitioner, drew up the policies. A further subject stated

that policies were developed by a team of Human Resource practitioners from the various business units in the organisation and the final subject said that policies were developed by a team comprising of Human Resource practitioners and line managers. In five cases, experts on the policy issue; certain managers and the Industrial Society are consulted to obtain guidance regarding policy content. In less than half of the cases, the drafted policies are then taken to the Executive Board for ratification. One subject stated that drafted policies are sent around a signatory list of the main function heads who all need to approve the policy before it becomes operative. Two further subjects stated that it is their sole responsibility to develop policies and that no reporting to top management for approval of those policies is necessary. Another subject stated that although management does have the final say in terms of whether a policy is approved or not, they do not give any recommendations or input into the policies.

In terms of employee involvement in the process, four subjects stated that there is no participation at all by employees although one of these subjects did note that if employees have a problem with a policy, then they are welcome to raise this with the Human Resources department. One subject stated that the involvement of employees is dependant on the type of policy being developed. Where the policy directly affects employees, then they are involved in the change process. However, in terms of commercially based policies, employees are not consulted. Two subjects stated that employees are able to participate to the extent that they provide feedback or opinions about the policies in terms of whether the policy is working or not. However, there is no involvement of employees in the decision regarding policy content.

5.2.2 Major Theme: Legislation or organisational values

To understand the primary drive behind developments to policy, subjects were asked whether policy development was first and foremost as a result of legislation or as a result of the values and beliefs of the organisation. Six subjects said that policy change is primarily driven by legislation and developments in employment law. These subjects all stated that their first frame of reference when developing or changing policy is the current legislation. One subject noted that Human Resources is now being seen more as employment lawyers that simply welfare, as they were in the past. Another subject commented that the values of the organisation are only really considered if the organisation needs to develop a policy that is not covered by law. In two cases, subjects commented that the legislation will be consulted considering what is compulsory and what can be omitted from policy and whether the organisation wishes to go beyond the legislation or not.

The final subject stated that there is a fairly relaxed view in terms of the law and incorporating it into policy. This organisation follows the sensible implementation of the law rather than going exactly to the letter of the law. And, therefore, although *“there is a strong feeling of not going against the law, ... it’s being seen to do the sensible thing rather than to the letter.”*

A further sub-theme that can be brought under this category is that of **value clashes** between the subject’s values and the legislation that needs to be enforced. Subjects were asked to respond to a hypothetical question regarding how they would respond if their personal values clashed with a piece of legislation that they were required to implement. Responses varied considerably with one subject stating that even if she did not believe in the law, it would still be enforced in policy. Another subject said that he would implement the legislation and only if he felt very strongly about something, would he feel compelled to challenge it and make his voice heard. Three subjects stated that where legislation was in conflict with their values, they would simply implement that which was absolutely necessary and not go anywhere beyond the law. A further subject said that the main aim in terms of policy is to ensure fairness to employees and that *“if there was a piece of legislation that (she) fundamentally did not agree with, (she) would draft it to comply with the legislation but with as many provisos and disclaimers and what we could do and what we couldn’t do away from it.”* The final subject stated that because of the generous values held by both the subject and the organisation, it would not be difficult to implement legislation which benefited the employee.

5.2.3 Major Theme: Personal and / or organisational values and beliefs

In terms of their role in the development of policies, subjects were asked whether they were guided more by the values and beliefs of the organisation or their own personal values and beliefs. The exploration of this issue gives insight into what motivates Human Resource practitioners towards the development of policy. Five subjects stated that it was a combination of the organisation’s values and beliefs and their own personal values and beliefs that guided them in terms of developing policies. One subject stated that there is not much in conflict between her personal values and those of the organisation. Therefore, it is quite easy to develop policies in line with the values of the organisation as these are also her personal values. It was also noted by two subjects that whilst the values of the organisation did influence them, their main guide towards policy change is what they think is fair and reasonable; the use of common sense whilst also being aware of what they know would and would not be acceptable to the Executive Board.

A further subject stated that her personal values had no influence whatsoever on the development of policy. The subject stipulated that she only considers the organisation's values and what is best for the organisation and the employees in developing policies. It was felt that personal beliefs should not dictate in terms of policy and that it "*makes no difference what (she) believes in, whether (she) agrees with it or not.*" This is because the subject identified that she was ultimately employed by the organisation and, therefore, its values and beliefs should come first.

The final subject stated that he is completely influenced by his own values when drawing up policies due to the fact that the organisation's values have not yet been fully developed. Even though the subject's organisation is fairly well established, they have not defined their values clearly and, therefore, according to the subject, the policies are primarily influenced by his personal values and beliefs. There was no indication from the subject whether these policies will be reviewed once the organisation's values have been properly defined.

5.2.4 Major Theme: Value Shifts

This theme aims to identify whether subjects' beliefs, values and opinions have shifted at all since being in Human Resources; in what way their values etc have changed and what has been the main influence on any shifts that have taken place. Five subjects stated that their values, beliefs and opinions had changed whereas two subjects stated that there had been no change to these elements. Three subjects stated that their values and beliefs had changed simply through life experiences whilst the two other subjects stated that their values had changed as a result of legislation and changes to the law.

How their values and beliefs have changed varied but one subject commented that because of changes to the law and the fact that staff are now more informed about what their entitlements are, she has become more encouraged to improve communication between staff and management and increase information sharing with employees. Two subjects stated that they have become a lot more flexible since being in Human Resources for a few years. For one, this is because her background is in law and this meant that in the beginning, her policies were always exactly to the letter of the law. Now, however, she has seen the need to be more flexible in policies whilst still ensuring that employees do not abuse them. For the second subject, in the beginning, everything had to be justified and worked out in his head exactly before it was done or anything said. Now, he has become a lot more open and flexible especially around policies relating to women and part time work. Another subject said that

her values and beliefs have changed as she has grown older and matured. Although they have changed positively as she now respects people who value other things besides work, they have also changed ‘negatively’ because she is no longer willing to share information with competitors in terms of Human Resources as she was in the past.

Of the two subjects who said there had been no change to their values and beliefs, one said that although his values had not changed, through changes to legislation etc, the nature of his job in terms of developing policy had changed. He now has to be more organised and thorough in developing policies than he has been in the past and he views his job as much more interesting now.

The effect of the *era* in which the subject grew up is an important sub-theme as it explores whether era had any influence on the values and beliefs of the subject. Five subjects stated that their era or background had an effect on their values and beliefs while two subjects stated that their era had no effect on them at all. Two subjects affected by era stated that this was as a result of life experiences and growing up. Another two subjects stated that their previous career before Human Resources had the most important effect on them. Both worked in caring professions and said that this had moulded their beliefs; guided their values and influenced their way of thinking. A further subject cited her upbringing as having the most important effect on her values and beliefs especially with regards to race and gender and believing in people’s ability.

5.2.5 Major Theme: Racial and Gender Issues

Although United Kingdom subjects were not asked about the role of Employment Equity in their policies and how they viewed diversity and the management of diversity in their organisations, this theme was still considered to discover how the organisations represented approach racial and gender issues. Two subjects stated that they were balanced in terms of race and that they had no racial issues in the organisation. The reason given for this situation by both subjects was the international status of the organisations which meant that the race, religion, culture etc of an individual was not an issue and equal opportunity policies were followed. It should be noted, however, that both of these organisations are male dominated and, therefore, while they are balanced in terms of race, they are discriminatory in terms of gender. One subject noted that again this is the case because of the nature of the organisation. This organisation sends its employees on international projects in various countries and the hardships of many of the places that individuals are sent to are more applicable to male

employees. Some policies may even need to be changed in terms of allowances for hardships etc when female employees are involved.

It is interesting to note that the remaining five subjects stated that they are balanced in terms of gender in their organisations but not in terms of race, with one subject claiming that there was racial discrimination within the organisation. Three subjects stated that they are constantly aware of the need to be seen as fair in the recruitment of non-white employees and that they are actively trying to recruit more ethnic minorities and non-white employees.

5.2.6 Major Theme: Policy Awareness

The above theme looks at how employees are made aware of the organisation's Human Resource policies once they have been developed. Four subjects stated that their employees are made aware of the organisation's policies through their contract of employment / terms and conditions. One of these subjects commented that employees are also able to consult the Human Resources department to find out about policies. Two of the subjects said that their policies were set out in the staff handbook which is made available for staff to consult at any time. The final subject stated that each time changes to policies are implemented, the Human Resources department conduct a 'roadshow' where they present the policies to employees and inform them about any changes or new policies that have been developed.

5.2.7 Major Theme: Management Accountability

It is important that organisations maintain consistency in action and decision-making around policies. To do this, management needs to be held accountable for the enforcement of these policies and this theme explores how this is achieved in United Kingdom organisations. Six subjects stated that the Human Resource department take the role of holding management accountable and ensuring that they do not overstep the boundaries of policy. In two of these cases it was noted that the subject, the Human Resource practitioner, was the one to reprimand managers and arbitrate difficult situations. One subject stated that ensuring consistency of management behaviour is dependant on the type of policy being enforced. Some policies, such as compassionate leave, where circumstances can be very different and managers need to make a personal decision, are more flexible. However, important issues like dismissals need to go through the Human Resource department first before any decisions are made by management. A further subject indicated that on the whole, in their organisation, there is uniformity amongst managers in terms of policy decisions.

One subject stated that the accountability of managers is maintained by the Executive Board who allow line managers “*a huge amount of responsibility and authority to run with things but there’s a nice accountability back into the Board as well.*”

5.2.8 Major Theme: Basic Individual Needs

In terms of this theme, subjects were asked to identify the extent to which their policies provided for the basic needs of employees. The sub-themes of *personal development* and *family life* can be identified here. Six out of the seven subjects interviewed stated that they did have policies around personal development and family life and most said that they encouraged these elements. The final subject stated that although personal development and family life are implied and are valued by the organisation, there is no formal policy around these issues.

Two subjects stipulated that even though personal development and family life were encouraged, these were balanced with the business side of the organisation and that costs and budgets needed to be taken into account. A further subject stated that whilst there was a formal policy in place, the onus was on employees to access the information; ask questions and sort out any concerns regarding these two issues. In another case, the subject said that the organisation’s policies on these issues were only in line with what the legislation and directives from the EEC required and they did not extend beyond the law.

5.2.9 Major Theme: Management / Employee Relationship

In determining the relationship between management and employees, subjects were asked whether they thought the relationship had changed since they had been in the organisation. The issues of trust, commitment and shared responsibility were considered under this theme. Three subjects said that there had been a positive change in the relationship between management and employees whilst two subjects stated that their had been a negative shift and a further two subjects stated that there had been no change in the relationship at all. Subjects indicating a positive change all had different reasons for the change. One said that this was due to the presence of a new CEO who had caused a shift in the values of the organisation away from being paternalistic towards an increased focus on the bottom line. The subject indicated that although this had caused an unsettled feeling within the organisation, trust and commitment were much higher because employees are now more informed about the business and where they are situated in it. A second subject cited the encouragement of social

events for all members of the organisation as a dominant element in the positive change in the relationship. The third subject who noted a positive change commented that the relationship had improved as a result of increased communication between top management and employees.

Of the two subjects who had experienced a negative shift in the management-employee relationship, both indicated that this was due to a change in the structure of the organisation. One stated that his organisation had moved from a “*close-knit family type company*” to a larger, more corporate company. This has caused a decrease in trust between managers and older employees who have been at the organisation for many years as well as a lack of commitment and shared responsibility from these employees. The second subject stated that the arrangement of the organisation into independently functioning business units and the retrenchment of some staff through this process had caused an unsettled relationship to develop. Finally, two subjects stated that no change in the relationship could be identified. However, it was noted by one subject that they expected a change to develop when the organisation formally recognises a trade union in the next few months.

5.3 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS FOR STANDARDISED QUESTIONNAIRE

Due to the fact that the main aim of this short questionnaire was to gain factual, background knowledge on the subjects and their organisations to provide a context in which to place the interview responses, there are no themes or categories that can be identified. Rather, the questions asked and the numerous responses given to them have been identified and tabulated as well as the number of respondents that gave a specific response to a particular question.

The questionnaires can be divided into those completed by South African subjects and those completed by United Kingdom subjects with the contents of the questionnaire being divided into three sections. The first section includes questions that relate to the subjects personally and seek information about the Human Resource practitioners themselves. The second section involves questions about the organisation that the subject represents in terms of its size, age, workforce and trade union recognition. Finally, the third section considers questions relating to the Human Resource department within these organisations in terms of its size and how it functions with regards to policy reviews.

**Table 5.1 : Presentation of results for South African and United Kingdom subjects –
Section 1: The Subject**

VARIABLE (and responses)	NO. OF SOUTH AFRICAN SUBJECTS (10 respondents)	NO. OF UNITED KINGDOM SUBJECTS (7 respondents)
<i>Job Title:</i>		
Human Resource Director	2	1
Group Human Resource Manager	2	0
Human Resource Manager	1	4
Human Resource Advisor / Officer	1	2
Human Resource Consultant/ Specialist	3	0
Divisional Industrial Relations Manager	1	0
<i>Age Group:</i>		
20 – 29 years	1	2
30 – 39 years	6	2
40 – 49 years	1	1
50+ years	2	2
<i>Date you started work at the company:</i>		
Between 1960 and 1969	1	0
Between 1970 and 1979	1	0
Between 1980 and 1989	2	1
Between 1990 and 1999	5	6
In the year 2000	1	0
<i>Date you took up the above job title:</i>		
Between 1980 and 1989	0	1
Between 1990 and 1999	7	6
In the year 2000	3	0
<i>Qualifications:</i>		
Human Resource Degree/ Diploma	5	5
Other Degree/ Diploma	4	1
Studying towards Human Resource Degree/ Diploma	1	0
Gained position through Promotion	0	1

**Table 5.2 : Presentation of results for South African and United Kingdom subjects –
Section 2: The Organisation**

VARIABLE (and responses)	NO. OF SOUTH AFRICAN SUBJECTS (10 respondents)	NO. OF UNITED KINGDOM SUBJECTS (7 respondents)
<i>How many people are there in the organisation?</i>		
100 – 1000	4	4
1001 – 2000	2	1
2001 – 3000	0	0
3001 – 4000	3	0
More than 4000	1	1

Table 5.2 Continued

<i>How old is the organisation?</i>		
1 – 10 years	1	1
11 – 25 years	1	2
26 – 50 years	1	1
50 – 75 years	2	1
75 – 100 years	3	1
More than 100 years	2	1
<i>Is the company a multinational?</i>		
Yes	7	6
No	3	1
<i>Are there branches in South Africa?</i>		
Yes	8	2
No	2	5
<i>Are there branches in the United Kingdom?</i>		
Yes	6	4
No	4	3
<i>Are there branches in the Rest of the World?</i>		
Yes	7	6
No	3	1
<i>Nature of the Workforce in terms of GENDER:</i>		
More males than females	4	4
More females than males	2	3
Balanced in terms of gender	4	0
<i>Nature of the Workforce in terms of RACE:</i>		
More Whites than Blacks	1	4
More Blacks than Whites	4	0
A good racial mix	5	3
<i>Nature of the Workforce in terms of FOREIGNERS:</i>		
A large number of foreigners employed	0	0
A few foreigners Employed	9	7
No foreigners are Employed	1	0
<i>Company's position on Trade Union recognition:</i>		
Does recognise a Trade Union	8	4
Does not recognise a trade union	2	3

**Table 5.3 : Presentation of results for South African and United Kingdom subjects –
Section 3: The Human Resources Department**

VARIABLE (and responses)	NO. OF SOUTH AFRICAN SUBJECTS (10 respondents)	NO. OF UNITED KINGDOM SUBJECTS (7 respondents)
<i>How many people are there in the HR Department?</i>		
Below 10	3	4
Between 11 and 50	3	3
Between 51 and 100	3	0
More than 100	1	0
<i>Are the functions decentralised?</i>		
Yes	0	3
No	6	3
Partially decentralised	4	1
<i>Does the department determine policies for all branches of the company?</i>		
Yes	8	3
No	0	2
In an advisory capacity	1	2
Not applicable	1	0
<i>When are your policy reviews conducted?</i>		
Once a year	2	1
Twice a year	0	1
Every Quarter	1	0
Only when necessary	7	5

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of this research indicate that Human Resource policies and practices and the policy development process are greatly influenced by the historical and current societal, legislative and cultural context in South Africa. Changes to legislation, providing for a more equitable composition of the workforce in terms of race and gender; societal issues, through the increased recognition of women and their place in the workplace and cultural issues, with the acknowledgment of the increasing diversity of the South African workforce, have had an important impact on the type of policies that are developed. Developments in managerial practices towards being more participative and developing trust and commitment from workers has changed the relationship between management and employees which impacts on the policy development process. The extent of this participative approach varies amongst organisations, however, and this chapter will consider whether the policy development process is balanced in terms of input from all parties affected by the policies, or not.

The nature of the policy development process, the influence of the Human Resource practitioner on that process and the elements that influence their personal values and beliefs form the vital issues for discussion in this study. Overall, the results indicate that the role of the practitioner in this process is paramount. The impact of this should be assessed with regards to policies that are developed to govern the entire workforce. Where it can be shown that practitioners are primarily guided by their own personal values and beliefs rather than those of the organisation (or vice versa) when developing policy, the issue of values, and competing values within the organisation, certainly needs to be addressed.

This discussion will consider the presented results in conjunction with the two primary aims of the study, considering both the nature of the policy and who is involved in the decision making process and the influence that the Human Resource practitioner, with their values, beliefs and opinions, has on that process. It will be important to consider these two issues in line with the theoretical base of systems theory and competing values approach and to identify any pitfalls in the present approach by South African organisations. It may even be possible to suggest a 'best practice' in this regard although the unstable economic environment and possible unsettled relationships between management and employees may make it difficult for organisations to apply this in their companies.

6.1 THE HUMAN RESOURCE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS – CO-DETERMINED OR UNILATERAL?

The results of the study offer valuable information to understand the process of policy development and the parties involved in that process. An exploratory look into these two elements is one of the primary aims of the study and can be linked to the many themes and sub-themes identified in the research results. Although it is in the organisation's discretion to decide on the procedures to be followed in the development of a Human Resource policy or practice and the parties who will participate in this process, the results indicate that the practice is relatively similar across organisations. In general, it is considered the prerogative of the Human Resource practitioner and management to dominate this process. Where organisations do involve employees, this is usually via partial indirect participation through representatives or through trade union negotiations. The fact that this study covers organisations and practitioners across the board in different industries, both service and manufacturing, profit and non-profit, means that this practice is widely maintained by the majority of South African organisations – within the Durban region and possibly even beyond.

6.1.1 Parties to the Process

The results indicate that within the policy development process in South African organisations, Human Resource practitioners are given the primary responsibility for implementing changes to policies and practices. This means that, within the Human Resource department, the responsibility is solely that of the practitioner to develop a draft of the new policy or changes to an existing policy. I agree, along with the results of the study, with the suggestion by Torrington and Hall (1991: 43) that the actual drafting of a policy needs to be centred on one person who ensures “a single style and coherence in the drafting, no matter how many different suggestions and points of view are eventually accommodated.” This suggestion does not eliminate certain parties from the development process but rather advocates for a single mind in the wording and presentation of that policy.

What is vital, however, is that the Human Resource practitioner is never the final ‘port of call’ in the process. Decisions around policy content are never solely the responsibility of the practitioner. Rather, policies are always ratified and approved by top management before being implemented. This is important because despite the fact that line managers and supervisors are accountable for the decisions they make around Human Resource policies, the

Board of Directors/ top management are ultimately accountable for everything that happens in their organisation. The development of policies, applying to all areas of the organisation, allows top management the assurance that what happens to their employees conforms to the goals and objectives of the organisation. (Seybold, No. 169) Therefore, top management need to be involved in this critical process. Predominantly, they take the role of making suggestions to Human Resource practitioners regarding the content of policies as well as effecting the final decision on the operation of policies and practices.

With the impact of legislation, such as the Employment Equity Act, the results show that many organisations are in fact setting up committees to assist practitioners and top management in the process. These Equity committees are consulted on the content of policies and are able to make suggestions especially with regards to anything that may be discriminatory or contrary to the provisions of the Act. They are often made up of representatives from employees, management and shop stewards (representing trade unions) thus giving each party in the organisation an opportunity to have some input into the policies of the organisation. A possible shortfall of this otherwise progressive inclusion of parties through the committee is the fact that they do not have any bearing on the final acceptance of the policy. Where top management are unhappy with suggestions offered by the committee, these may simply be rejected with no counter-position permitted.

The extent to which management dominate the policy development process is highlighted by the results of the study which indicate that the majority of organisations, across different industries, allow no or only partial employee involvement in the process. Partial participation is rendered through the Employment Equity committees set up by organisations, although, as has been mentioned above, they lack any major influence on the decision process. Where full participation by employees was allowed by organisations in the study, this cannot be attributed to one cause alone as the organisations were from vastly different sectors; had varying relationships between management and employees although all had recognition agreements with a trade union.

Many organisations believe that their policies are highly favourable to employees and, therefore, do not justify the involvement of employees in the process. This situation means that the values, beliefs and opinions of a small group of policy decision makers dominate policies governing the entire organisation. Employees represent a different interest in the organisation to management and are, therefore, driven by different values, beliefs and opinions. The competing values approach suggests that because of the number of individuals

in an organisation with different interests and goals, there can never be only one set of values that hold true for the entire organisation. Quinn (1988) acknowledges the importance of examining values and beliefs at every level in the organisation. This produces a true picture of the organisation and effects a balanced approach to values incorporating all orientations. This means that Human Resource practitioners should involve all value orientations, including employees, in the policy development process so as both to ensure that everyone's position is recognised and to encourage commitment to the policy where all parties are able to give input. This, however, does not happen in South African organisations and is an area that needs to be addressed.

Torrington and Hall (1991: 44) present that “the involvement of those affected by the policy will improve its chances of translation into practice.” Therefore, there may be benefits in involving employees, who are directly affected by a number of policies, in the policy development process. Not only does participation encourage commitment and motivation from employees but it also gives a sense of recognition and acceptance to employees which can only have a positive impact on the organisation. (Khumalo,1999) Employees should be involved, not only at the level of trade union negotiation over wage issues etc, but also on policies regarding issues that directly affect them – such as family life policies, career development and health and safety. These are predominantly determined without any input from those individuals directly affected by them. It is not that the values, beliefs and opinions of employees should dominate policy content. Rather, they should be used as guidelines around which policy makers can develop policies.

6.1.1.1 Relationship between the Actual Level of Employee Participation and the Human Resource Practitioner's View of Participation

It is interesting to note that the results indicate a positive correlation between the actual level of employee participation existing in an organisation and the Human Resource practitioner's view on the issue. Whether practitioners agreed or disagreed with employee participation in the policy development process or simply took the side of partial participation, the same situation generally existed in their organisations. In some cases, however, the results show that the level of participation was at times lower than what was valued by the practitioner (although a number of practitioners acknowledged the need to control employee participation to an extent). The similarity between the actual level and the practitioner's values may be as a result of their active involvement in creating the procedures and policies around this process, thus including or excluding employees at their discretion. I suggest, however, that the reason

for this positive relationship lies in the fact that Human Resource practitioners will remain in an organisation where their personal values and beliefs are in line with or at least similar to those of the organisation. Therefore, where practitioners believe in the exclusion of employees from the process, they will remain in an organisation which holds this same view.

6.1.1.2 Relationship between the Management-Employee Relationship and the Nature of the Policy Development Process

The relationship between management and employees is a vital part of the organisation. Odendaal and Roodt (1998) found that traditionally, South African management has been dominated by an autocratic attitude and style. This has caused the collapse of communication channels and has had a negative effect on the overall relationship with employees. The need for a participative managerial approach has been identified to repair this broken relationship and to, amongst other things, encourage the acceptance of and commitment to organisational policies and practices. Overall the results indicate that there has been a positive change to this relationship in South African organisations across the board and this being as a result of a change to management. A new style of management has developed which has encouraged a more open, informal, participative relationship with employees and an increased sharing of information. This has been both as a result of a change to the management profile in many organisations, moving away from primarily white males, as well as the rise of new, younger managers entering the managerial ranks with new managerial styles.

It should be acknowledged, however, that this new positive managerial approach has not spilt over into the policy development process being discussed. Through an exploration of the correlation between the actual management-employee relationship that exists in organisations and the nature of the policy development process - being co-determined or unilateral - the results show that despite a positive shift in the relationship, there has been no corresponding increase in the consultation of employees within the process. Therefore, even though management are attempting to improve their relationship with employees through being more open and participative, this does not seem to extend to the policy development process. Where consultation is allowed, this is only through partial, indirect participation. The results also revealed that even where there had been no change to the relationship or in fact a negative relationship existed, there was also no consultation of employees. Despite these managerial shifts and attempts to improve the relationship between management and employees, organisations are still reluctant to allow employees to participate in the policy development process. I suggest that the importance of policy and practice governing the

organisation means that management still regard it as their prerogative to dominate these decisions and that they believe the values, interests and objectives of the organisation should be foremost in mind when developing policy.

6.1.2 External Consultation

The issue of external consultation was also identified through the results. Torrington and Hall (1991) suggest that deciding on who to consult regarding policy is dependant on the subject of that particular policy. The results confirm this suggestion by identifying that most Human Resource practitioners consult either the relevant legislation on an issue and / or experts on the policy subject. I agree that this is a positive move for the policy development process as it allows the policy to extend beyond the walls of the organisation and the values and beliefs held there, to include outside viewpoints on the issue. Through systems theory, organisations exist as open systems constantly interacting with their external environment and being connected to the world through this interaction. The results indicate that one of the dominant ways that organisations interact with their external environment is through participation in and the use of market surveys. Market surveys are usually conducted within the framework of a particular industry and so organisations can use the survey results to identify how other organisations in the industry are approaching a particular issue. Through this they gain input into how to incorporate the issue into their policy. The results also indicate that some organisations even go so far as to make use of employee surveys. They attempt to discover what employees think and feel about a particular issue thereby interacting with the individual parts of the organisation's (internal) system. The result of these external consultations means that Human Resource policies and practices are not entirely biased towards the values and beliefs of the organisation because most organisations seek to extend themselves into the external (and internal) environment of the system. This allows the policy makers to see beyond their own mindsets, keeping the organisation system open by being exposed to different viewpoints that can be incorporated into policy.

6.1.3 Policy Awareness

Once the process of policy development is complete, the question arises as to how employees are made aware of the content of policies if they are not actively involved in the decision process. The results reveal that organisations do attempt to inform employees although this is indirectly through the use of the organisation's Intranet; policy manuals, mainly kept in the Human Resources department, or through setting out the basic list of policies in the

employee's contract of employment. This means that the onus is on employees to find out about the policies by consulting the various sources or the Human Resources department itself. So despite the fact that employees are unable to participate in the process, they are then not even given the opportunity to be fully informed about the policies and practices that will govern them within the organisation. Torrington and Hall (1991) address this issue by acknowledging the importance of making a policy work by ensuring that the contents are known, understood and accepted, especially by those who have not participated in the policy development but will be affected by it. They stress that "it is not sufficient to simply send a copy to all concerned; (rather) briefing will be needed and possibly training sessions" (1991: 44). I agree with this proposition and suggest that organisations should follow the example of one of the research subjects whose organisation places the onus on managers to ensure that each and every employee is well informed about the policy. Managers and supervisors need to take time to present the policy to employees; answer any questions and explain any misunderstandings so that at the end of the day, the whole organisation is aware of what is permissible and what is not permissible regarding a certain issue. This provides for greater commitment to the policy and ensures that employees will keep management 'on their toes' in the execution of a policy of which they are now fully informed.

The discussion has shown that the present situation in South African organisations regarding the policy development process is one of *unilateral* decision making. There is very little attempt, both by Human Resource practitioners and management, to involve employees at this level despite the benefits that may be gained from their participation or the more positive relationship that has emerged between management and employees. With the effect of both systems theory and competing values approach, this means that a situation develops where a change initiated at Human Resource level has an effect on individual employees as well as various departments and functions within the organisation. This is because of the interconnectedness of the parts of the organisation as an open system.

Therefore, a decision made in one part of the organisation in which employees are not able to participate, governs the functioning of the organisation and their roles in it. This also means that the values and beliefs of one individual or group of individuals dominates the development of a policy or practice that will be applicable to all members of that organisation, governing their behaviour and thinking. Due to the diverse nature of the South African population, it is impossible to allow one set of values and beliefs to run an entire workforce where people are from different racial, gender, cultural and social backgrounds.

One value system will not be right for the organisation and for everyone. So there is a need here to allow the diverse values and interests to work towards a common goal, such as a decision about policy, through finding out what is common between the different value systems that can be brought to the process. The need to involve all parties through a *co-determined* effort towards policy development is evident and because this is not happening in South African organisations, it is an area that needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

I would like to suggest a possible 'best practice' for the policy development process as set out by one of the research subjects. This large, well established, service sector organisation has recently devised a framework for developing Human Resource policies and practices by involving all parties in the process. The new, young, black Human Resources manager has single handedly changed the whole process of policy development by allowing representatives of employees, trade unions, management and Human Resources to sit as *equals* on a steering committee to develop policy. The committee themselves structure the policy from a blank piece of paper to an approved document. There is a degree of ratification required from the Board of Directors before the policy is implemented but this usually poses little problem for the parties involved. The benefits of this approach are invaluable. Involving employees in the initial stages of policy development means that the policy is acceptable to them and they own the policy. This has removed the previous antagonistic relationship that existed between management and employees in the organisation by ensuring that all parties are allowed equal access to the development of policies.

This approach to the policy development process has a huge amount of merit as it allows the values and beliefs of all parties in the organisation to be expressed. It ensures commitment to the policies and practices by all parts of the organisation whilst still ensuring that the profitability of the organisation does not suffer through the ratification by top management. I believe it is an approach that all organisations, no matter what industry, should aspire to when dealing with Human Resource policy development. The importance of external consultation as discussed above should also be noted so as to gain expert opinion on the subject matter of the policy.

6.1.4 Legislation as the Driver of Policy Development

Most organisations do not have a predetermined time of year when they assess their policies, making any amendments or changes or even developing new policies where one has not existed previously. Although many may try to consider their policies and practices on a yearly basis, the dominant practice is to develop policies as and when is needed. At present, with South Africa's rapid social and legislative changes, organisations are finding themselves addressing policy issues on a more regular basis to keep themselves in line with the law and with what society dictates.

To begin the process of policy development, there must be a drive for change. The results indicate that changes to existing legislation as well as new employment laws that are passed stand as the primary driver of policy development. This is mainly because of the numerous sanctions that may be imposed if organisations do not adhere to the law. This is especially true of the Employment Equity Act where companies that wish to maintain state contracts (as well as some private contracts) and avoid government monetary sanctions, need to actively promote employment equity in their organisations as set out by the Act. The importance of incorporating this Act into Human Resource policy and practice is indicated through the results of the study where all organisations have either a policy in place or are in the process of developing a policy in line with the Act. Employment Equity seems to be at the top of the list in South African organisations. In many cases, organisations have gone beyond the requirements of the legislation and have sought to provide for even more favourable conditions than that which has been set out by the Act. Human Resource practitioners, as an active part of the policy development process, are very aware of the situation in South Africa in terms of both Employment Equity and diversity. This piece of legislation has forced practitioners to begin ensuring that their policies comply – the primary focus being that policies are not discriminatory in any way. In many organisations, this is happening through the use of Employment Equity committees (or other committees with different names but the same function) who are considering policies along with Human Resource practitioners to ensure that the wording and the policy provisions are not discriminatory.

Charoux and Moerdyk (1997) identify that despite the real progress made through the conception and implementation of this equity process, Employment Equity is still being perceived by many managers and organisations “in business terms rather than as being important for other reasons ... ie. because it is the right thing to do” (1997:37). This claim has been substantiated by the results of the study where many practitioners expressed concern

regarding the motives of a number of managers in the introduction and implementation of policy in this regard. These individuals simply enforce employment equity as part of a legislative requirement rather than internalising the moral and social implications of it. A focus has been placed on older, white male managers, many of whom feel that Employment Equity places a 'black ceiling' on skilled white male employees who may leave the country because of the lack of job prospects in South Africa. (Charoux and Moerdyk, 1997) This means that many top managers do not support employment equity whole-heartedly. Therefore, with policy development, organisations may have several managers who are developing policies around Employment Equity because of the legislation rather than because they believe in it. This will create problems with the implementation and execution of this policy in the workplace as it is important to have commitment for a policy from the top down if it is to be successful. Cummings and Worley in French and Bell Jr (1995) stress the need for gaining the support and commitment from the top of an organisation for any change process, here specifically in terms of policy development. The leadership, resources and energy of these individuals is necessary to execute these policies effectively and to ensure that employees understand the policy and are committed to achieving its aims.

An interesting situation arises where the results of the study indicate that some Human Resource practitioners themselves do not believe in the Employment Equity process or at least, have doubts and negative feelings about the process. These are people in positions of great influence when it comes to developing policy; ensuring that managers adhere to that policy and are responsible in terms of decisions around it as well as ensuring that employees are committed to the policy through seeing the value that the organisation places on it. If Human Resource practitioners themselves do not actively support and believe in the policy and the values of Employment Equity, then the organisation faces the problem that the policy may not go beyond that which is required by legislation. The process may never have the full and active support from the top of the organisation. (It should be noted, however, that the practitioners who were identified as not wholly supporting the Employment Equity approach were older white males who had been in their positions through the apartheid years and into the transition to democracy. This may have had a bearing on their limited outlook on the issue.)

6.2 THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONERS ON THE PROCESS – THEIR PERSONAL VALUES, BELIEFS AND OPINIONS

6.2.1 The Role of the Human Resource Practitioner

The discussion into the development of Human Resource policies and practices has already revealed the influence that Human Resource practitioners, as individuals, have on the process. Not only are they influential in terms of policy content but they are also, in most cases, the sole writer of the policies, meaning that their personal impact on Human Resource policies and practices, affecting the entire organisation, is extensive. It is questionable, however, as to whether this level of influence is really the role that Human Resource practitioners should be adopting within the organisation. Many writers have argued the role of Human Resources in the past, some seeing it as a managerial function which needs to be concerned first and foremost with the goals and objectives of the organisation. Others have advocated the role of Human Resources as being the representative of employees to management, representing their needs and concerns and looking after their well-being. It is interesting to consider the role of the Human Resource practitioner in the process of policy development; whether their influence on policies should be as a representative of employees or of management or whether they should take a more neutral role – coordinating the process rather than exerting a great amount of influence on it.

In response to this question, the relationship between the actual level of influence held by Human Resource practitioners in the policy development process and their own personal view on the role of Human Resources should be considered. The results have already shown that the influence of the practitioner in the development of policy takes precedence in the majority of organisations. This means that practitioners are given the freedom to develop policies as they see fit as long as these are ratified, with some suggestions, by top management. In most cases, the practitioner is largely unaware of the views of employees. This poses a problem as the results of the study indicate that Human Resource practitioners value their role as being one of neutrality within the organisation. In some cases, there is even a greater tendency to adopt a paternalistic approach through understanding and meeting the needs of employees. Therefore, the results of the study show that there is a negative correlation between these two elements. Practitioners believe that their role in the process should be neutral but in practice, they are guided primarily by top management because employees are not able to be part of the process. The results also indicate that Human Resource practitioners in organisations across the board are adopting the role of ‘policy

watchdog'. Along with employees, in some cases, practitioners hold management accountable for decisions they make regarding policy issues. This ensures consistency of behaviour and decisions and helps to prevent the setting of precedents that may be detrimental to the organisation in the future.

A recent author on the subject, David Ulrich (1998), has commented on the emerging role of the Human Resource function. His view is that Human Resources needs to be the voice of employees to management. Through Human Resources representing employees' views in the policy development process, Ulrich advocates that employees will feel more committed to the organisation (and its policies) and will be able to contribute fully. Therefore, the role of Human Resource practitioners is becoming one of *employee champions*; being concerned with the needs of employees and how they can be met within the organisational environment. Ulrich (1998) also acknowledges that practitioners still need to play the role of watchdog, ensuring that policies are carried out correctly and are transformed into specific behaviours by both management and employees. In contrast to Ulrich's employee-centred approach, Torrington and Hall (1991) suggest that the role of Human Resource practitioners has moved away from being employee orientated to being more professional in approach, situating itself as part of the managerial function. Despite the awareness of the need to foster employee commitment, according to Torrington and Hall (1991) there has been a change in focus of practitioners towards greater organisational efficiency and productivity rather than 'looking after employees'.

From the results of the study, it can be determined that the current practice of Human Resource practitioners in the policy development process is to follow the approach of Torrington and Hall (1991). Practitioners tend more towards the goals and objectives of management and the organisation rather than taking the role of being the voice of employees and being concerned with their needs. This position certainly does not seem to correspond with the views of practitioners in the study who value their role as being neutral or even tending towards Ulrich's notion of employee champions.

I suggest that the role of Human Resource practitioners in the policy development process should be a combination of the two approaches mentioned above. Human Resources needs to be seen as part of the managerial function so that it is accorded the respect and importance that, as an integral part of the organisation, it deserves. Despite this managerial position, however, practitioners should not be authoritarian in their role. Their function is not simply to ensure the profitability of the organisation but they adopt the role of liaising between

management and employees in the organisation. This means that, as confirmed by the results of the study, Human Resource practitioners need to take a neutral approach especially in the policy development process. In writing the policies, it is vital that a neutral person be given the task so that they will not be biased, being swayed by the point of view of either side. Therefore, I agree with the role of the practitioner in this regard. It is also important that the practitioner, in their neutral role, conducts the necessary research and external consultations so as to advise both management and employees on the best course of action in terms of policy content. Their role in the policy development process should, therefore, exist more as a coordinator, encouraging both management and employees to be involved and to make informed decisions around policy content. It is, therefore, vital that Human Resource practitioners ensure that employees are actively involved in the process and that their voice is heard. As French (1978: 563) notes, “since personnel policies, processes and systems tend to cut across all organisational subdivisions, an organisation-wide viewpoint is needed in planning, coordinating and controlling.”

6.2.2 The Personal Values, Beliefs and Opinions of the Human Resource Practitioner

This study is interested in exploring the effect that the Human Resource practitioner’s personal values, beliefs and opinions have on the Human Resource policies and practices that are developed through the policy development process discussed earlier. Having determined the extent of practitioners’ influence on the policies, the necessity of identifying how much of their personal values are incorporated into policies governing an entire organisation becomes evident. The competing values approach identifies the problems associated with developing policies that encompass a certain set of values which may not be held by the rest of the organisation. As an individual in a largely managerial position and coming from a particular background and experiences, the Human Resource practitioner is unlikely to represent the exact same interests, values, beliefs or opinions as all other members of the organisation. This means that in developing policies, practitioners may be driven to achieve certain goals and objectives through the policies which may not be shared by all members of the organisation because of the different values and beliefs that they hold. The personal values and beliefs of the practitioner may also be different to the values of the organisation and the goals that it aims to achieve. It is, therefore, important to determine the extent to which the personal values, beliefs and opinions of these practitioners impact on policies and practices which should be reflective of the goals and objectives of the organisation.

Godsell (1983) discusses Schein's approach to values in the organisation by saying that although practitioners will construct a new self to fit in with their role in Human Resources, their basic personality – values, beliefs and opinions – will remain the same. Therefore, because they have only adapted to their role in the organisation and have not fully adopted the values and beliefs of the organisation as their own, they are able to exert influence on the organisation, in this case through policy development, as well as be influenced by the organisation. Through Schein's approach then, practitioners are influenced by the organisation when developing policies and practices – primarily through suggestions and input from management as well as knowing which policies will be accepted by the organisation and which will not. However, Schein argues that they are also able to exert a personal influence on the policies and practices because they maintain their values and beliefs as an individual in the organisation.

The effect of the practitioner's personal values and beliefs on the policy development process may pose a problem at times as the personal values of one individual will not be shared by the entire organisation. In South African organisations especially, where people come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, different sets of values and beliefs emerge.

Hollinshead, Nicholls and Tailby (1999: 539) identify that “values held by individuals .. influence perceptions and often cloud how objective and rational they can be over issues.” Therefore, the values, beliefs and opinions of Human Resource practitioners, affected by their background, upbringing and experiences, may impact on how they view policy issues. It may effect the extent to which they will engage in external consultation; the extent to which they will encourage the involvement of employees in the process and ultimately, the extent to which they will remain neutral in the development of policies and practices. Kluckhorn in Godsell (1983) warns of the danger of stressing dominant values, such as those held by the policy makers – Human Resource practitioners – and the subsequent exclusion of alternate value systems, such as those held by employees and the values of the organisation itself. This situation would provide a distorted picture of the values of the workforce. Practitioners need to be aware of this and develop a respect for value differences.

If we conclude, therefore, that the impact of a Human Resource practitioner's personal values, beliefs and opinions is negative for the policy development process, then this study indicates that there is little cause for concern. The results of the study found that most Human Resource practitioners are guided by a combination of the organisation's values and beliefs and their own personal values and beliefs. It is acknowledged, however, that where the profitability of the organisation is at stake or where practitioner's know that certain policy

content will not be accepted by the organisation, their personal values fall by the wayside. The results also indicate that some practitioners consider their own values to be completely subservient and void of any influence whatsoever. This could be attributed to the length of service and age of the practitioner as the younger, more inexperienced practitioners were more inclined to consider their personal values and beliefs negligible in the policy development process. The older, more established practitioners, however, allowed their personal values and beliefs some influence in the process. This may be due to their knowledge of the organisation over many years of employment there and their awareness of where they are able to exert some of their own influence or not.

This balanced approach to values by most Human Resource practitioners in the policy development process creates a positive situation. Practitioners are not completely guided by the organisation's values and beliefs, allowing them space to consider both their own personal interests and the values, beliefs and opinions of employees. They are also not completely guided by their personal values and beliefs allowing them to take into account the goals and objectives of the organisation and adhere to the policy requirements set out by the organisation. This also places them in a neutral position which has already been discussed above as the necessary role for Human Resource practitioners.

6.2.3 Primary Influences on the Values, Beliefs and Opinions of the Human Resource Practitioner

Values are at the core of an individual. They are enduring entities and change slowly, often in response to environmental demands and challenges to their core values. Understanding values can help to explain why people possess certain attitudes and how these are translated into particular behaviour. (Hollinshead, Nicholls and Tailby, 1999) Therefore, an understanding of the values, beliefs and opinions of Human Resource practitioners, will allow an insight into why they make the decisions that they do in the policy development process. It is important to discover how these values, beliefs and opinions may have changed and been affected over the years. This is because the practitioner exerts a great amount of influence on the development process and so it is important to understand where they are coming from; what has influenced them and how have they changed as individuals. Changes in values, beliefs and opinions may often result in a shift in motives and behaviours by the significant actors of the policy development process. Understanding these elements will help to understand why they make certain decisions in the process.

To understand values, beliefs and opinions, it is important to understand how they have been shaped and influenced in the past; where they have come from. The results of the study show that the values, beliefs and opinions of Human Resource practitioners are predominantly moulded by their background and the era that they grew up in. Hollinshead, Nicholls and Tailby (1999: 540) acknowledge that an individual's values are "established and reinforced through the early years of a person's life; they are significantly influenced by parents, social upbringing and wider social and cultural experience." Many of the practitioners in the study support this statement by saying that their families and life experiences have had the most vital impact on their values and beliefs. These values formed early on through interactions with family and their social situation are demonstrated and expressed in the work environment in later life. Therefore, as Hollinshead et al (1999) note, considering the era in which an individual was raised, gives important insight into the dominant values, beliefs and opinions held by that individual. This in turn allows an understanding of how the practitioner will behave in the workplace, especially in the policy development process, and how their values, beliefs and opinions will impact on the decisions that they make.

The results of the study also show that the majority of practitioners do in fact undergo some degree of change to their values, beliefs and opinions, especially since being employed in the Human Resources profession. Immediately this indicates that practitioners may not remain constant in their decisions around policy development or even their outlook on certain issues. This will have an important effect on the Human Resource policies and practices that they influence. In the South African situation, three main reasons for value change were cited – the changes to South African society with an eradication of discrimination and a greater acceptance of diversity; changes to management becoming more open and participative and changes to the management-employee relationship which has become more informal with an increase in trust and sharing of information. These are probably the most important reasons for change for practitioners as well as most members of top management.

The way that practitioners' values have changed cannot be generalised as each individual is unique, coming from their own background and experiences. They begin with their own set of values, beliefs and opinions which are affected and changed by different elements impacting on them.

From the results of the study, the form of the change can be divided into four categories:

- Become more *practical* in approach
- Become more *mature, neutral* and *balanced*
- Become more aware of the importance of *perseverance* and an increased belief in the *ability of designated groups*
- Become more *conservative* in approach

It should be noted that the last category came from an older, white male practitioner who has been through all the changes in South African society and within the organisation. However, he does not seem to have changed personally along with those changes and has instead become even more conservative in his approach to Human Resources, including policy development. This may pose a problem where this practitioner may never go beyond that which is required by the organisation in terms of policy and may not take into account the needs of employees in the organisation.

Identifying these changes to the values, beliefs and opinions of practitioners encourages an understanding of the way that these practitioners develop policies and the goals that they wish to achieve through the policies. For example, an awareness of the fact that a practitioner has become more conservative in his values, beliefs and opinions allows an understanding of why he does not allow any employee participation whatsoever in the policy development process. On the other hand, an awareness of the fact that a practitioner has become more neutral and balanced in their values, beliefs and opinions allows an understanding of why he takes a more advisory approach in the process, allowing management and employees to make decisions on policy issues and content together.

Hollinshead et al (1999) suggest that the values of the most influential group in an organisation, namely top management – and in the Human Resource policy development process, Human Resource practitioners – shape organisations and impact on how the organisation relates to the people it employs. Therefore, it is important to understand the values, beliefs and opinions held by Human Resource practitioners; how these may have changed over the years and what effect this may have had on their motives, attitudes and decisions they make around policies and practices. It should be noted that changes to values will only be applicable when looking at the effect of the practitioner's personal values and beliefs on the process. If the practitioner is primarily guided by the values and beliefs of the organisation, then the basis of and changes to their own personal values will be negligible.

6.3 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This discussion of the research results has considered a number of issues under the primary aims of determining the nature of the policy development process, being co-determined or unilateral, and considering the influence of the Human Resource practitioner, with their personal values, beliefs and opinions, on the process. This is an exploratory study and so the aim is not to prove a particular hypothesis, but rather to discover, through descriptive results, what the current situation in South Africa is. This discussion makes use of information-rich cases to gain a new understanding of the process and how Human Resource practitioners fit into and affect this process.

The results of the study reveal that the present situation involves a domination of the process by Human Resource practitioners and top management. There is little or no employee participation permitted which establishes a situation where employees feel that their needs and opinions do not count for much. This may ultimately have a negative impact on their commitment to and behaviour in the organisation. I suggest that organisations should aspire to the 'best practice' mentioned earlier; involving employees as much as possible in the process and thereby reaping the benefits of this positive interaction between management and employees. The extensive role of the practitioner also needs to be acknowledged as, although their personal values and beliefs do not seem to have too great an impact on the process, this role needs to become more neutral in approach. Rather than being the controlling influence, practitioners should adopt the role of coordinating and liaising between management and employees, allowing an effective policy decision to be made by both parties.

This research has shown that there may be some important problem areas in policy development which South African organisations need to begin addressing. Some suggestions have already been indicated but it will be interesting to consider the present situation in the first world country of the United Kingdom; to see how organisations are approaching the process there and whether there is anything that South African organisations and Human Resource practitioners can learn and apply.

CHAPTER 7: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HUMAN RESOURCE POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

Until now, the primary focus of this study has been the development of Human Resource policies and practices within different types of *South African* organisations. This includes a consideration of the decision making process towards developing policies and the level of influence that Human Resource practitioners within these organisations have on the policies that are developed. This chapter now aims to go beyond these findings, extending them outside the South African borders. It moves from the third world situation to consider the current first world position on Human Resource policy development, using the first world country of the United Kingdom as its basis for comparison.

The United Kingdom, whilst being a dominant economic world power and a leading first world country, still has connections to third world South Africa, both historically and presently through the Commonwealth. This makes the United Kingdom a good comparative base to consider how the process of Human Resource policy development functions in the first world as opposed to third world South Africa. Therefore, a further aim of this study is to consider, through an exploration of a first world situation, what South African organisations can learn, if anything, from their first world counterparts in the United Kingdom. A general overview of interviews conducted in both countries indicate that the process of policy development and the role of the practitioner is relatively similar in both the United Kingdom and South Africa. However, there are some important differences which should be identified.

It should be remembered, throughout this comparative analysis, that these two countries share vastly different backgrounds and histories and their present situations also differ considerably. This means that approaches applicable to organisations in the United Kingdom, may not be easily applied in South African organisations because of the adversarial workplace relationships, decrease in trust and other reasons stemming from the country's historical background. The differences between the policy development processes of the two situations will need to be assessed in terms of whether there are elements that South African organisations can learn from United Kingdom organisations and whether they can be applied back to the South African situation or not.

7.1 THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS – UNITED KINGDOM vs SOUTH AFRICA

7.1.1 The Parties to the Process

The previous chapter identified the primary parties in the South African policy development process and the influence they had on that process. Research conducted in the United Kingdom also considered the role of the Human Resource practitioner, management and employees in the process. Although generally the results were similar for both situations, regarding some elements, the United Kingdom results were slightly different to the South African situation. The results of the United Kingdom interviews indicate that the Human Resource practitioner dominates the process towards developing policy. It should be acknowledged that some of the practitioners interviewed identified that a *group* of Human Resource practitioners – and in one case, a group of Human Resource practitioners and line managers – determine the policies. Overall, however, in the majority of cases, it is the Human Resource practitioner who single-handedly develops policies.

The United Kingdom results regarding the role of the Human Resource practitioner are significantly similar to the South African results. Both countries are dominated by organisations who allow their practitioners a primary influence on the policies and practices that are developed to co-ordinate a diverse workforce. This means that, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, one individual has the responsibility to make decisions on policies that will “channel the thinking of organisation members so that it is consistent with organisational objectives” (Torrington and Hall, 1991: 34). Whether the placement of such extensive responsibility in the hands of one individual is advisable or not needs to be assessed in light of the influence that top management and employees may have on the process?

An exploration into the role of management in the process in the United Kingdom has revealed that they do not participate at all in the development of Human Resource policies and practices. The results indicate that management’s primary task is to approve and ratify any policies that are developed by the Human Resource practitioner; making the final decision on whether to make them operative in the organisation or not. They do not, however, make any suggestions or recommendations regarding policy content. This is left solely to the discretion of the Human Resource practitioner. In some cases within the study, the approval of policies by top management is not even required and the entire process, from development to implementation is left up to the Human Resource practitioner. Hollinshead, Nicholls and

Tailby (1999) suggest a possible reason for this lack of management participation in the development of policies and practices. They acknowledge that a primary influence on the structure of managerial hierarchies in British organisations is class. A large number of senior British managers are from elitist backgrounds and the writers argue that this often results in relatives or acquaintances being moved up the ranks to top management level rather than the most able or appropriate people. Hollinshead, Nicholls and Tailby (1999: 64) also state that because of this, the current situation in terms of top management in the United Kingdom is that “it is at a comparatively retarded stage of development in terms of possession of technical skills and competence in strategy formulation.” With this negative state that British organisations face in terms of their managerial function, it should be questioned whether they are proficient enough to respond to the legislative, social, economic and political changes that require developments in policies and practices. The current lack of participation in the process by top management and dominance by Human Resource practitioners shows that British organisations do not believe management is adept enough to address policy development.

The level of managerial participation in South Africa differs considerably to the position in the United Kingdom. Here, managers are able to contribute to decisions around policy content which are never completely left to the Human Resource practitioner. Whilst employees may not have much of a say, top management do influence the policy content quite significantly. This means that a number of minds work together to develop and make changes to policies. Although the top management structure of South African organisations may still be dominated by middle to upper class, white males, this does not seem to pose a problem to policy development as in the United Kingdom. Most South African managers are believed to have the ability to contribute to policy development and whilst at present they may not be highly representative of the workforce, positive in-roads are being made to eradicate this discrepancy.

In comparing these two scenarios, it can be seen that the workplace situations impact considerably on the functioning of the policy development process. Whilst British organisations place overall responsibility for policy development on Human Resource practitioners due to the relative ineptness of management to participate, South African organisations involve practitioners and top management in the development process because of the democratic ethos governing both the workplace and the extended society. With this in mind then, I do not believe that adapting the approach of the first world scenario to South Africa’s third world position in this regard would be beneficial. Whilst practitioners do have

extensive expertise regarding Human Resource policy issues and content, it would be unwise to give one individual practitioner, or even a group of practitioners, sole responsibility for the development of policy, thus excluding management. Problems arise regarding the issue of managerial prerogative on decisions in this regard as well as whether this situation would be plausible in South African organisations where there is an attempt to move away from authoritarian approaches towards being more open and participative. In many cases in South Africa, Human Resources has not yet obtained the position of authority in top management that advocates allowing it full responsibility for the process.

The third aspect of an exploration into the parties to the process considers employee participation in policy development. The results of the study indicate that in British organisations, there is generally no involvement of employees in the process. Some organisations did acknowledge that there is partial participation by employees although this is provided only through allowing employees to provide feedback and opinions about policies, raising any problems they may have with Human Resources. This participation does not extend to policy content, however, and in this regard there is no employee participation.

The position with regards to employee participation in South African organisations is relatively the same. Employees are generally not able to participate, although slightly more employee involvement than in the United Kingdom may be permitted. In the United Kingdom, the onus is on employees to become involved, whilst partial participation in South African organisations is provided for by the organisation through employee representatives on the Employment Equity committee. Organisations in the United Kingdom do not openly encourage employees to participate in this process. Rather the option is there and it is the employee's responsibility to become involved if they so wish. The reason for a greater level of employee involvement in South African organisations may be as a result of the greater influence of trade unions in this country as opposed to the United Kingdom. The results of the study indicate that South African organisations are still dominated by a high degree of trade unionism whereas British organisations are not. In the British situation, "the impact of the global economy and the shift towards social partnership require the unions to change from their confrontational and conflictual stance to one of collaboration and partnership with employers and individual employees" (Hollinshead et al, 1999: 547). This decrease in trade unionism means that British employees no longer have trade unions strongly arguing for their right to participate. Instead, "the rise of management strategies and approaches ... with the emphasis on individual commitment and employee empowerment shifts the emphasis for responsibility directly onto the employee's shoulders" (Hollinshead et al, 1999: 548).

I propose that the South African situation encouraging slightly more employee participation, as opposed to the approach in the United Kingdom, is likely to be the best possible option for South African organisations. The past and present situation in South Africa dictates the need for a democratic process, allowing all members of the organisation governed by the policies to participate to some extent in the determining of those policies. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, I believe that it is indeed necessary to extend the level of participation presently held by South African employees, engaging them more openly in the process. Whilst the significant decisions should still be taken by Human Resource practitioners and top management, employees should at least be given a voice and an opportunity to contribute. As opposed to South Africa, the United Kingdom has not had an extremely antagonistic work environment for many years meaning that employee participation is not a priority or a necessity as it is in South Africa.

7.1.2 External Consultation and Policy Awareness

A positive outcome of the comparative analysis between the United Kingdom and South Africa is the importance that both countries place on the use of external consultation in the development of Human Resource policies and practices. It has already been noted that South African practitioners make extensive use of external sources to gather sufficient information for an informed decision regarding policy content. The results indicate that practitioners in the United Kingdom also make use of external consultation through the use of subject experts and referring to bodies such as the Industrial Society. This is positive for both scenarios as it indicates that generally, organisations in both first world and third world countries do look externally for alternative views and opinions when making decisions around policy content. For British organisations especially, this allows some input from sources other than simply the Human Resource practitioner because no contributions from management or employees are available.

A further similarity between the two scenarios regards policy awareness where both situations are faced with employees who are unaware of the policies because they have not been involved in the policy development process. The results indicate that, as in the South African situation, organisations in the United Kingdom also place the onus on employees to find out what the policies are – as set out primarily in the staff handbook or contract of employment – and familiarise themselves with them. It has already been suggested, however, that practitioners should follow the example of one South African subject whose organisation places the responsibility on management to ensure that employees are aware of what the

policies contain. This approach could be transferred into the United Kingdom situation to improve policy awareness in the first world scenario.

7.1.3 Primary Driver of Policy Change

Most British organisations researched in the study identified that there is no set time during the year where Human Resource policies are reviewed and changed. Instead, policies are developed only when necessary and when legislation, society or the organisation itself demands it. The results of the interviews conducted with British practitioners indicate that the primary driver of policy change is legislation, both of the country as well as employment directives issued by the EEC (European Economic Community), which organisations in the United Kingdom must adhere to. It is this employment legislation that sets-off the policy review process and encourages developments to Human Resource policies and practices. Overall, the results of the study show that Human Resource practitioners consider the legislation above the values and objectives of the organisation when developing policy. Despite this, however, it was acknowledged that many try to determine what is compulsory in the law and what can be omitted, thus not wanting to adhere exactly to the law but rather to the sensible implementation of it.

The South African third world scenario differs to an extent in this regard. Whilst the practitioners acknowledge the importance of the law as the primary driver of policy development, they also place the values of the organisation at a significant level in terms of this. Primarily, the results indicate that whilst compliance with the law is expected and valued, the values and objectives of the organisation are also considered essential towards guiding and effecting policy change. This situation seems to work considerably well in South African organisations where policy developers adhere to both the law of the land whilst still taking into account the objectives and values of the organisation, furthering its aims in the process. Therefore, there does not seem to be anything more that can be added or learnt from the first world approach to this element of the policy development process.

7.1.4 Policy Content – Racial Issues

Although policy content has not been an issue under exploration in this research, it is important to consider the research results in terms of how the first world and third world scenarios approach the issue of racial discrimination in their organisations and with regards to Human Resource policies and practices. The issue of discrimination and its eradication in

society and in the workplace is something that is dominating South Africa today. Legislation has been passed forcing employers to do away with discrimination in organisations and many in-roads have been made to incorporate these legislative requirements and principles into policies and practices. Whilst there is this positive move in South Africa, both legislatively and socially, to redress discrimination and understand differences in the workplace, expressed through changes to policies and practices, the United Kingdom is still battling discrimination, especially on racial and ethnic fronts. (Naidoo, 1997) Few steps have been taken to address discrimination within the policies and practices of British organisations and this has been substantiated by results from the study. The results indicate that the majority of organisations in the United Kingdom are balanced in terms of gender but are not balanced in terms of race. Despite the fact that all, but one, of the organisations represented are multinationals, with a highly diverse workforce, the majority of these still discriminate racially, even if it is not practiced outright. A number of practitioners did note, however, that they are aware of the situation and that they are actively trying to recruit more non-whites, eradicating racial discrimination in their organisations.

This comparative discussion of the Human Resource policy development process in both first world United Kingdom and third world South Africa has revealed a high degree of similarity between the two approaches. Despite the different economic, political and social backgrounds that impact on organisations from these two situations, the primary parties to the process are determined to be the same. The Human Resource practitioner is given a great deal of responsibility towards developing policies and practices and employee participation is negligible in both countries, although slightly more participation is encouraged in South Africa. The countries differ, however, with regards to managerial input which is an integral part of the process in South Africa but which is excluded in the United Kingdom. As has already been discussed, it would not be beneficial to incorporate this British approach of excluding management into South African organisations as the need for an open and participative environment incorporating a number of views and not simply the opinions of one Human Resource practitioner, is vital.

In considering the approaches, there is very little, if anything, that can be taken from the situation in the United Kingdom and applied to South African organisations. This is because either the elements of the process are so similar that nothing different could be added or else the British approach is not suitable. South African organisations are faced with an historically adversarial and diverse workforce that requires an open, participative, informative approach

to policy development. A reversal of learning has been suggested, however, whereby the United Kingdom could follow the South African example of greater employee participation, even if they are not actively involved in policy content decisions. This can only be a positive move to fostering an improved relationship between management and employees.

7.2 THE PERSONAL IMPACT OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONER – UNITED KINGDOM vs SOUTH AFRICA

The extent to which Human Resource practitioners impact on the policy development process has already been explored. It has been concluded that the practitioner's role allows them a comprehensive influence on decisions that are made. If we take into account the larger degree of influence held by British practitioners, as discussed above, then this impact is even more extensive. In light of this, the issue of the practitioner's personal values, beliefs and opinions; their impact on decisions around policy content especially, and whether practitioners in fact allow their values and beliefs to impact on policies, needs to be considered.

Hollinshead, Nicholls and Tailby (1999) acknowledge that an exploration of values gives insight into the thoughts, motives and behaviour of the significant actors, in this case – in the policy development process. Therefore, it is important to determine whether it is the personal values and beliefs of the practitioners that influence their thoughts, motives and behaviour in developing policy or whether it is the values and principles of the organisation that guides them. The results indicate that the majority of practitioners from the United Kingdom involved in the study are guided by a combination of their own personal values and beliefs and the values and beliefs of the organisations they represent. Some even commented that the basis for decisions around policy is what is fair and reasonable, taking into account both sets of values. This is a positive element in British organisations as it indicates that the thoughts and behaviours of practitioners are not simply guided by the commercial values of the organisation but also take into account the needs and views of employees.

An interesting discovery is that one of the practitioners interviewed noted that he was *only* driven by his personal values when developing policy. The reason given for this approach is that the organisation has not yet fully defined its values and beliefs and has, therefore, given full responsibility for the development of policy to the Human Resource practitioner. He is allowed the freedom to incorporate his own personal values into the policies, posing an important problem as policies are there to guide an entire diverse organisation. This highly questionable situation means that the values and beliefs of one individual dominates the work

lives of an entire workforce This could never function in a South African work environment where people from a variety of different cultural, social, racial and gender backgrounds could not be managed by the values of one individual. This situation, however, can be considered very unusual and as such should not effect the overall results of the study.

The position taken by practitioners in the United Kingdom on the impact of their personal values, beliefs and opinions is shared by practitioners in South Africa. South African practitioners also try to maintain a balance between the two sets of values, taking a neutral position in decisions around policy content. I believe this to be a positive approach by both groups of practitioners because their role in the organisation should be one of neutrality and as such, they should not allow their own personal values to dominate the policy development process. As determined through a discussion of the South African results, Human Resource practitioners also hold the responsibility to encourage the participation of employees in the process and to give them a voice. This means that in developing policy, they cannot be completely guided by the values of the organisation and what it wants to achieve but also need to take into account the values and beliefs of other parties in the organisation that will be affected by these policies.

7.2.1 Shifts in the Values, Beliefs and Opinions of Human Resource Practitioners

Human Resource practitioners have been identified as the primary influence on policy development and it is, therefore, important to determine what influences them and where they are coming from. Although it has been acknowledged that these practitioners do not allow their personal values and beliefs to dictate their policy decisions, there may still be instances where their personal values come to bear on the process. It is, therefore, important to explore what has influenced these values; if any shifts have occurred to their values and how these shifts have been expressed. Practitioners in the United Kingdom identified that their personal values and beliefs have indeed changed, predominantly since they had been in the Human Resources profession. The results indicate that some practitioners noted that their values and beliefs had shifted as a result of changes to legislation over the years. The introduction of new EEC directives and changes to domestic employment law had affected their beliefs and opinions on issues. Primarily though, the values and beliefs of practitioners were shown to be influenced by the era they grew up in and the life experiences they encountered. Their background and upbringing were acknowledged as being important influences on the way practitioners thought, behaved and what they valued in life.

The effect of a practitioner's background and experiences on their values and opinions, which they bring to the policy development process, is further substantiated by Godsell's acknowledgement (1983: 110) that "values result, at least in part, from home and peer group socialisation." She also extends this argument for the influence of era and background on values by identifying Van Maanen and Schein's statement that "the values of the new generation entering organisations may be quite different from traditional values" (Godsell, 1983: 13). This means that the era that younger employees grew up in and were affected by holds different experiences from those of older employees. This may cause problems, especially in the South African process, where younger practitioners, managers and employees may clash with their older counterparts in the development of policy as they are guided by different values, beliefs and opinions influenced by their experiences and background. This situation is not likely to occur in the United Kingdom where practitioners have the overall influence on policy development and will not be greatly influenced by the values and beliefs of managers or employees from different eras and backgrounds.

It is not only important to understand the influence on values, beliefs and opinions of Human Resource practitioners but it is also vital to identify in what *way* their values have changed. By looking at shifts in values and beliefs, it allows an understanding of changes to the thoughts and behaviours of practitioners which influence the way they develop policies. (Hollinshead, Nicholls and Tailby, 1999) It also helps to identify what practitioners may be trying to achieve through their decisions around and the development of certain policies. The results indicate that British practitioners have all had their values, beliefs and opinions affected in different ways and that these changes have impacted on the way they develop Human Resource policies.

Four main categories of change to values can be identified from the results of the study:

- Become more encouraged to ***increase communication*** between management and employees and increase ***sharing of information***
- Become more ***flexible***
- Grown older and ***matured***
- Become more ***organised and thorough***

It is interesting to note that the practitioner who acknowledged that she had become more encouraged to share information and increase communication noted that she was primarily influenced by her background and experiences from her previous career. Before entering Human Resources, this practitioner was in the caring profession which has moulded her

values and beliefs towards becoming more open, eager to share information and communicate with employees. Understanding the value shift of one practitioner who became more mature in her approach can also help to understand why she strongly advocates for policies that stress family life and quality of life. This is because the results identify that she has matured through developing a respect for people who value other things besides work.

The previous discussion of the research results identified that most South African practitioners also experience some degree of change (or shift) to their values, beliefs and opinions, especially since being in the Human Resource profession. Their reasons for the shift in values are different, however. They have been primarily affected by changes to the society as well as changes to the management-employee relationship within the organisation. Due to the fact that these two elements – the society and the management-employee relationship – have been tremendously adversarial in the past because of the country's history, the changes that have occurred to them have been radical. Therefore, it is easy to see how they can have an important influence on the values and beliefs of practitioners.

In correspondence with the results from the United Kingdom, South African practitioners also acknowledge that they have been primarily influenced by their background and the era they grew up in. This similarity indicates that most people, across different countries, are shaped by their past experiences, their family and upbringing and the society that they live in. These elements have an important influence on who they are as an individual – the way they behave, what they value and believe in and what motivates them in making decisions.

The results of the two scenarios indicate, therefore, that the values, beliefs and opinions of practitioners are primarily influenced by the era and background they grew up in as well as their life experiences. Because practitioners come from different experiences, changes to their values and beliefs can never be entirely the same. The way their values shift and the effect that this has on the policies and practices they develop, differs for each practitioner. Therefore, it can never be fully predicted how practitioners will think or behave in terms policy decisions as this will be based on their values, beliefs and opinions, grounded in their era and background and affected by a number of different influences. As the most influential group in the policy development process, especially in the United Kingdom, Human Resource practitioners, with their values, beliefs and opinions and the shifts that occur to these, shape the organisation and the lives of its employees. It is, therefore, important to try and understand, in both the first world and third world situation, how practitioners' values change; what affects that change and how this impacts on the decisions that they make

around policies. However, as has been noted in the previous chapter and has been extended in the exploration of the impact of values and beliefs of British practitioners, because practitioners rarely allow their personal values and beliefs to impact on policy decisions, these issues around value shifts and the reasons for these changes seldom need to be considered.

7.3 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The main aim of this chapter was to explore the policy development process in the United Kingdom and to use this information in a comparative analysis of the first world and third world scenarios. The reason for this was to distinguish what was similar between the two approaches and what new elements in the United Kingdom approach could be incorporated by South African organisations in order to learn from their first world counterparts. This assumes, of course, that the difference in approach by the first world scenario is in fact a better approach than that which is already practiced in South Africa.

What the results show is that the Human Resource policy development process followed in the United Kingdom is in fact very similar to the process in South Africa. Most notably, the Human Resource practitioner in both circumstances holds a primary position, having a dominant influence on the policies that are developed. In both cases, there is little or no participation by employees in the process. A difference here, however, is that whilst British employees predominantly need to take the initiative themselves to engage in the process, South African employees are provided the structures to participate by the organisation and are indeed encouraged far more to participate than in the United Kingdom. As has been stressed in the previous chapter, however, greater participation by South African employees still needs to be achieved.

Where the two countries differ the most in terms of process is on the issue of managerial participation. What has been identified is that management in the United Kingdom have no impact on policy development whatsoever. Whilst they sometimes take the final decision on a policy, they are not involved in its development at all. This differs starkly to the South African situation where management is actively involved in decisions around policy content and work together with the Human Resource practitioner to develop policies. Whether this first world alternative approach to management participation is more favorable to the South African approach of involving managers, needs to be questioned. In the South African situation, positive measures are being taken to create a managerial function that is more

representative of the races and genders in South Africa, along with the fact that allowing participation from other individuals produces policies governing a diverse organisation that are not just out of the mind of one practitioner. The spirit of democracy has come to be adopted by both South Africa and its organisations and it is important, therefore, that this ethos be maintained through the participation of management and increased employee participation in the process. This suggests that the one sided approach in the first world United Kingdom, preventing the involvement of the two major parties in the organisation – management and employees – would be detrimental if applied to the South African process.

A positive similarity explored between the two approaches is the fact that most practitioners, when developing policy, are primarily guided by a combination of their personal values and beliefs and the values of the organisation. They, therefore, maintain both the objectives and aims of the organisation whilst also representing the needs of employees, keeping a neutral role which is really where Human Resource practitioners should be placed in the organisation after all. The exploration of the shifts to the values, beliefs and opinions of the practitioners in the first and third world scenarios also produced a similarity between the two approaches. Both sets of practitioners' values are primarily influenced by the era they grew up in, their background and experiences. A number of changes to their values and beliefs were also identified. These elements, however, really have little significance where practitioners do balance their personal values and beliefs with those of the organisation.

Through this comparative exploration of the first world and third world scenarios, it can be determined that there is little that can be distinguished between these two approaches. The differences in the first world approach that can be identified have been shown to be inappropriate for the South African situation and the incorporation of these into the policy development process of South African organisations would be futile. It should be recognised, however, that due to the small sample of the study, the results of this research may be inconclusive. Further expansive exploration of practitioners in both South Africa and the United Kingdom should be conducted to substantiate or disprove any conclusions that have been reached.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

The basis of this study is a two-fold exploration considering organisational policies and practices as they exist in the Human Resources department, with the focus primarily being on the development of these policies and practices. On the one hand, there is an investigation into the actual process followed towards developing policies, identifying who the major actors are and what role they play in this change process. In the second instance, the focus converges on the Human Resource practitioner, as an individual, and their impact on the policies and practices developed through the process. Here, the concern is with the personal values, beliefs and opinions held by the practitioner and the effect that these may have on the policies developed.

No hypothesis has been propounded and no theory is being refuted through the study. Rather, a detailed exploration through personal interviews with practitioners has been followed to gain a wider understanding of the approach that organisations take to this process and the people that are involved. Whilst studies have been conducted around work values and decision-making, few studies have been done concerning the precise aspect of the policy development process and the impact that the values, beliefs and opinions of individual Human Resource practitioners may have on the policies developed. This study endeavours to increase the understanding of this aspect of an organisation's functioning and to identify any downfalls and areas of improvement that need to be addressed. The focus of the investigation is on organisations in South Africa and primarily in the Durban region.

To identify the importance of the policy development process and why it should be explored, an understanding of systems theory is vital and can be used to extend the analysis of this process. Organisations exist as open systems which continuously interact with both its external environment and its internal parts. Every part of the system is interconnected and, therefore, a change in one part affects all the other parts of that system. This theory has been shown to apply to the policy development process where the Human Resources department, as part of the organisation system, through a change to their Human Resource policies and practices, affect all other parts of the organisation. Human Resource policies govern the everyday work life of the workforce and set out the rules and procedures to be followed at the workplace. Therefore, any developments and changes to these policies, through the policy development process, will have an effect on everyone in the organisation. This means that the power of the parties who develop the policies is extensive.

The Human Resource practitioner has been identified, through an analysis of the interview responses, as a principal party to the policy development process. Their level of influence is immense as not only are they able to draw up the policy but they are also able to give extensive input into policy content. Essentially, therefore, the process is driven from conception to implementation by these practitioners. A further participating party is management who are involved both in decisions around policy content as well as final ratification of policies. Policy development is not, therefore, left solely in the hands of one individual – namely the Human Resources practitioner – but rather exists as a combination of input from practitioners, management as well as external consultations with experts and the current legislation which expand the emphasis of policy content.

Employees form the third important party within the organisation and their role in this process has also been explored. Employee participation is a widely debated and contested issue, especially by trade unions in the past. This has resulted in the establishment of workplace forums and more recently, Employment Equity committees where the needs and goals of employees are represented. The restriction on participation in final decisions relating to many organisational issues, however, means that the participative power of employees is still limited. This is extended to the policy development process where in many instances, employees are not able to participate at all although in some cases, partial participation through the Employment Equity committee is permitted. Essentially, this situation renders employees unable to have a voice in the development of policies that govern their day to day existence at the workplace.

In view of this, a key research question which asks whether the values and opinions of employees are taken into account when developing policies or whether the sole responsibility rests with the Human Resource practitioner, can be answered. In other words, is the process unilateral or co-determined? Whereas the process is not entirely unilateral because management does have a say, it is also not entirely co-determined as employees are not able to have a voice. Therefore, the nature of the process is somewhere between these two extremes. The values and opinions of employees are rarely taken into account during the process; however, the responsibility for policy development also does not rest solely with the Human Resource practitioner.

The lack of employee participation in the process means that the power and influence of management and practitioners over both them and their work life is immense. The extensive influence of the Human Resource practitioner especially, as they are the primary party

involved in the process, means that their personal values, beliefs and opinions may impact on employees because of their influence on policies governing an entire organisation. The study's theoretical basis through the competing values approach has indicated the negative impact of one individual's set of values and beliefs having an extensive influence on the rest of the organisation. The approach maintains that competing values exist in an organisation, according to the interests that individuals represent, which create conflicting goals between members of the workforce. Because of these competing values and goals, no single individual's values can dominate an entire workforce – something that may occur with the extensive influence of practitioners on the policy development process.

If we are considering the impact of Human Resource practitioners on policies, it is important to identify what practitioners as individuals bring to the process; in other words, what they value and believe in as well as the extent of impact that these values have on the policies that are developed. We need to understand where these values come from and what influences them. Through the research interviews, the study has shown that era, background, family life and upbringing has had the most important impact on the values and beliefs of individual practitioners, shaping who they are as a person. Other influences have been cited such as changes to society and to the management-employee relationship.

The study has revealed, however, that despite the extensive influence held by practitioners, their personal values, beliefs and opinions, as effected by their background and era, have little impact on the process. Practitioners have been shown to exert a balanced approach to the process between the organisation's values and beliefs and their own personal values and beliefs. Therefore, when developing policies, these individuals are not primarily guided by their own values and beliefs but rather a combination between these and the values held by the organisation. This finding provides a response to a further research question regarding the extent to which policy decisions are based on the values, beliefs and opinions of the Human Resource practitioner involved. In this regard, the personal values and beliefs do not influence the process to a large extent at all. This is a positive response in view of the competing values approach which falls away as one individual's values do not govern a diverse organisation.

Since it has been concluded that the impact of the Human Resource practitioner's personal values, beliefs and opinions on policies and practices are negligible, then little thought needs to be given to the primary influences on those values and beliefs. It is only where the

practitioner allows their values to impact on the process to a greater extent than any exploration into the basis of those values needs to be undertaken.

An understanding of the research results from the exploration of South African practitioners and their policy development process, leads to some important conclusions around this issue. Ulrich (1998) has suggested that the emerging role of Human Resource practitioners is to be the voice of employees; being the vessel that allows their needs and goals to be heard and achieved within the organisation. The study has shown, however, that Human Resource practitioners as they are involved in this process, do not take on this role as proposed by Ulrich. This is because they work together with management to determine policies with the exclusion of any employee input. Therefore, their role in the process, besides exerting primary influence on policy development, can be seen as in some way siding with management whilst failing to encourage the voice of employees to be heard. It is also interesting that many of the South African practitioners in the study believed that their role needs to be one of neutrality, representing the organisation but also encouraging and allowing employees to put their needs forward. There is, therefore, a dichotomy that exists between what they believe their role should be and how it is realised in the policy development process. Therefore, in terms of the key research question of whether any changes need to be made to the present role of Human Resource practitioners in the policy development process, the response is relatively positive. Instead of taking a dominant role in policy development, the position of practitioners should be one of neutrality – allowing the viewpoints of all parties affected by the policies to be heard; as well as conducting the necessary research and consultation to ensure that the decision makers have all the relevant information to make an informed decision about policy issues.

Comparing the first world (United Kingdom) and third world (South Africa) approaches to the issue of policy development has also resulted in important findings regarding the compatibility of applying first world processes to the third world scenario. Generally it was found that South Africa and the United Kingdom conduct the process in a similar way, allowing Human Resource practitioners primary influence and permitting no employee participation in the process. The two scenarios differ, however, with regards to management participation in the process. Whilst it is deemed relatively unnecessary for management to contribute to the process in the United Kingdom, management is actively involved in the process in the South African approach. This is a vital difference and the discussion has shown that the first world approach could not be transferred to the third world situation as it would not be beneficial for the South African workplace. A positive similarity for both approaches

is the fact that practitioners, no matter how extensive their influence on the process, do not allow their personal values, beliefs and opinions to dominate the policies that are developed. Instead, they are guided by a combination of the organisation's values and beliefs and their own personal values and beliefs. Therefore, despite the fact that the findings show a large degree of similarity between the two scenarios, there is some difference between the two. The first world approach, however, has not been found to be more favourable than the process currently followed in South Africa and, therefore, very little can be taken and applied to this third world scenario.

8.1 PROBLEMS WITH THE RESEARCH

The qualitative nature of this exploratory study is prone to a number of problems in the execution of the research process. The sampling procedures resulted in a sample of subjects from a variety of different industries. In the South African sample, however, practitioners were selected from both the manufacturing and service industries whereas in the United Kingdom, all subjects came from the service industry. This poses a problem with regards to the comparative analysis between the two scenarios as the research lacks the necessary data from both industries in both scenarios which can be compared. The convenience sampling selection method that was used also poses a problem for the results of the study where subjects may have been selected simply because they were convenient and easily accessible. This does not mean that the subjects forming the basis of the study are fully representative of industries in the region. Despite the fact that some maximum variation sampling was used to include subjects that represent information-rich organisations, the random selection of the sample may have resulted in a lack of representivity which will have implications for the generalisability of the research results.

The sample size, with only ten subjects from South Africa and seven from the United Kingdom, may also be considered as relatively small. This may have hindered the breadth of information that could have been gathered about the research topic if a greater number of practitioners had participated. The restriction as to the number of practitioners included in the sample was primarily because of time constraints on the researcher, both in the United Kingdom and in South Africa. The large amount of information that would have been gathered with a larger sample would have also increased the work in transcribing and analysing the interviews placing unnecessary pressure on the researcher for a research project of this size.

The data collection method of face-to-face interviews used in this research may have also posed problems in terms of the recorded results. Through the continuing analysis of the literature and interviews that had already been conducted, the bias of the researcher may have modified individual responses to fit into categories and themes that had already been identified. The researcher may have also probed those areas that fitted into the determined themes and categories whilst not exploring other issues in any great depth. Although these problems are foreseeable in this research study, focus areas were the only elements really considered by the researcher during the interviewing of subjects. Themes and sub-themes were determined through a content analysis of the material after the interviews had been transcribed thus decreasing the effect of researcher bias on the interview process. It still means, however, that certain issues were concentrated on by the researcher in greater depth than other issues that were not considered focus areas of the study.

8.2 GENERALISATION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

Besides a greater understanding of the current South African situation through an exploration of the subject matter, the ultimate goal of this study is to be able to generalise any results that are gathered to the wider environment, on both an industry, regional and national level. Both service and manufacturing, profit and non-profit organisations were canvassed in the study and the results recorded regarding policy process and Human Resource practitioner involvement were the same or at least very similar for all industries. One possible difference identified was that in the non-profit organisations, employee participation was encouraged to a larger extent than in profitable, commercial organisations. Despite this, the similarities identified within the various organisations mean that the results from the study can be generalised between the different industry sectors in the country. No matter what type of business the organisations followed, they were all identified as having relatively the same policy development process thus allowing the findings regarding that process to be generalised to all organisations regardless of their industry. Though the content of the policies may differ across the different industries as well as who they consult with towards making policy content decisions, the influence of the Human Resource practitioner also remains the same across all organisations.

Generalising the results within the Durban region, which has been the focus of the study, as well as nationally throughout South Africa, does face some restrictions. Predominantly this is because of the small size of the sample which limits the breadth of input that can be gathered about the policy development process. A larger sample may have provided more extensive

information that would possibly have revealed discrepancies between the different organisations towards the policy development process and the impact of the Human Resource practitioner. Further studies incorporating a wider sample may be necessary to explore whether any stark differences can be found on this issue within organisations in the region as well as any new discoveries that may extend the issue discussed in this study.

The study's theoretical basis of systems theory suggests positive in-roads for the national generalisability of results. Ribton-Turner (1995: 125) notes that "from a systems viewpoint, where all organisations are part of the total political, economic and social South African environment, trends that appear in one industry are likely to be reflected in others, albeit to a greater or lesser extent or within a different time frame." I agree with this proposition that as part of the South African environment, all organisations have been affected by the past apartheid practices, the past negative management-employee relationships and the exclusion of employee participation from the organisation. South African organisations are being influenced by new employment legislation governing equal opportunity and quality of life practices and the majority of these organisations, especially on the level of 100 employees and more which is the basis of the organisations in this study, are making positive advancements towards non-discriminatory practices and the development of a positive, open and democratic work environment. With this in mind then, and taking into account the value of systems theory, I believe the results of the study can be generalised nationally. Although some organisations may move faster and be ahead of others in the change and development process, making their policy development process and the influence of their practitioners slightly different to other organisations, it has been suggested that the majority of organisations are following the same course on this issue. Therefore, whilst trends in the policy development process may be reflected by some organisations to a greater or lesser extent and in different time frames, South African organisations are ultimately moving towards the same place in terms of policy development.

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APPENDIX A-1

SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

(italics = notes to the interviewer)

- Please discuss the **process** you go through when reviewing/ developing new Human Resource policies.
 - Who does the drafting and with whom do they consult?
 - How much influence does top management have or is it the sole responsibility of the Human Resource manager?
 - Is there much employee/ union involvement in the process? *ie what is the situation in terms of employee participation?*
- How are employees made aware of what the company's policies in fact are?
- In drawing up Human Resource policies, are **you** driven more by organisational values or your own values and beliefs?
- Do the organisation's Human Resource policies reflect the values of personal development, family life and other important factors to the individual?
- How enforceable are your Human Resource policies? Are the boundaries around decisions set out by policies clear and consistent and are management held accountable if these policies are broken?
- To what extent are changes to Human Resource policies a response to changes in the law and to what extent do the organisation's values and beliefs influence these changes? In terms of the Equity Act – has this resulted in changes to Human Resource policies with regards to the issues of race and gender? Do these changes 'fit in' with the opinions and ideas of the organisation?
- Do you think that **your** beliefs, values and opinions have changed since being at this company or in Human Resources as a profession? What do you think have been the most important influences on these changes:

***External:** abolition of apartheid; new equity employment law – impact on racial and gender issues; rise of trade unions; legislative changes eg. increased employee participation; technology and phasing out of some jobs; the need to be more competitive.*

***Internal:** your personal attitude to work and employees; new work ethic of the importance of individuality; balanced life and getting value from work life.*

How do you think these changes to your beliefs and opinions have been reflected in the Human Resource policies that you have been involved with?

- Which era did you grow up in and do you believe that the influences from this time have impacted on your values, attitudes and beliefs? Has this been reflected in the way you draw up Human Resource policies?

- ❑ What are the assumptions that you make about diversity in the workplace and how does this affect the way that you draw up Human Resource policies? (*ie. do you just include diversity into policies because you're forced to or are you really trying to harness diversity towards enhancing organisational effectiveness?*) Do you have any new assumptions about how diversity may be changing in the workplace?
- ❑ Do you think there has been a shift within the organisation in the past 10-20 years in terms of employer/ employee relationships? (*eg. changes in the trust relationship; commitment of employees; development of shared goal; a partnership between the employers and employees towards achieving and developing the mission-vision; empowerment of employees*)
- ❑ What are your assumptions about employee rights and power? What is the company's position on this? Does the organisation actively encourage employees to exercise their rights and power or does the organisation simply abide by what is set out in the legislation?

APPENDIX A-2

UNITED KINGDOM INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

(italics = notes to the interviewer)

- Please discuss the **process** you go through when reviewing/ developing new Human Resource policies.
 - Who does the drafting and with whom do they consult?
 - How much influence does top management have or is it the sole responsibility of the Human Resource manager?
 - Is there much employee/ union involvement in the process? *ie what is the situation in terms of employee participation?*
- How are employees made aware of what the company's policies in fact are?
- In drawing up Human Resource policies, are **you** driven more by organisational values or your own values and beliefs?
- Do the organisation's Human Resource policies reflect the values of personal development, family life and other important factors to the individual?
- How enforceable are your Human Resource policies? Are the boundaries around decisions set out by policies clear and consistent and are management held accountable if these policies are broken?
- To what extent are changes to Human Resource policies a response to changes in the law and to what extent do the organisation's values and beliefs influence these changes?
- If your core values and beliefs were challenged by changes to legislation that demanded changes to Human Resource policies, how easy would you find it to enforce it?
- Do you think that **your** beliefs, values and opinions have changed since being at this company or in Human Resources as a profession? What do you think have been the most important influences on these changes:

***External:** influence of trade unions; labour government in power (political issues); legislative changes including those of the EEC; racial and gender issues; technology; global competition and the rise of the free market.*

***Internal:** values and beliefs; attitudes to work and employees; new work ethic of the importance of individuality, balanced life and getting value from work life.*

How do you think these changes to your beliefs and opinions have been reflected in the Human Resource policies that you have been involved with?

- ❑ Which era did you grow up in and do you believe that the influences from this time have impacted on your values, attitudes and beliefs? Has this been reflected in the way you draw up Human Resource policies?
- ❑ Do you think there has been a shift within the organisation in the past 10-20 years in terms of employer/ employee relationships? (*eg. changes in the trust relationship; commitment of employees; development of shared goal; a partnership between the employers and employees towards achieving and developing the mission-vision; empowerment of employees*)
- ❑ What are your assumptions about employee rights and power? What is the company's position on this? Does the organisation actively encourage employees to exercise their rights and power or does the organisation simply abide by what is set out in the legislation?

APPENDIX B

GENERAL INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:

Company Name:

Job Title:

Nature of the Business:

Age Group: 20-29
30-39
40-49
50+

Date you started work at the company:

Date you took up the above job title:

Qualifications:

(If you have no Human Resource qualifications, have you gained this position through promotion?)

In terms of the Company:

- Approximately how many people are there in the company (at Head Office)?
- How old is the organisation?
- Is the company a multinational?
- Have you got branches in other parts of SA? How Many?
The UK? How Many?
The rest of the world? How Many?
- What is the nature of the organisation's workforce in terms of gender, race and foreign employees?
- What is the company's position on trade union recognition?

In terms of the Human Resources Department:

- How many people are there in the Human Resources Department?

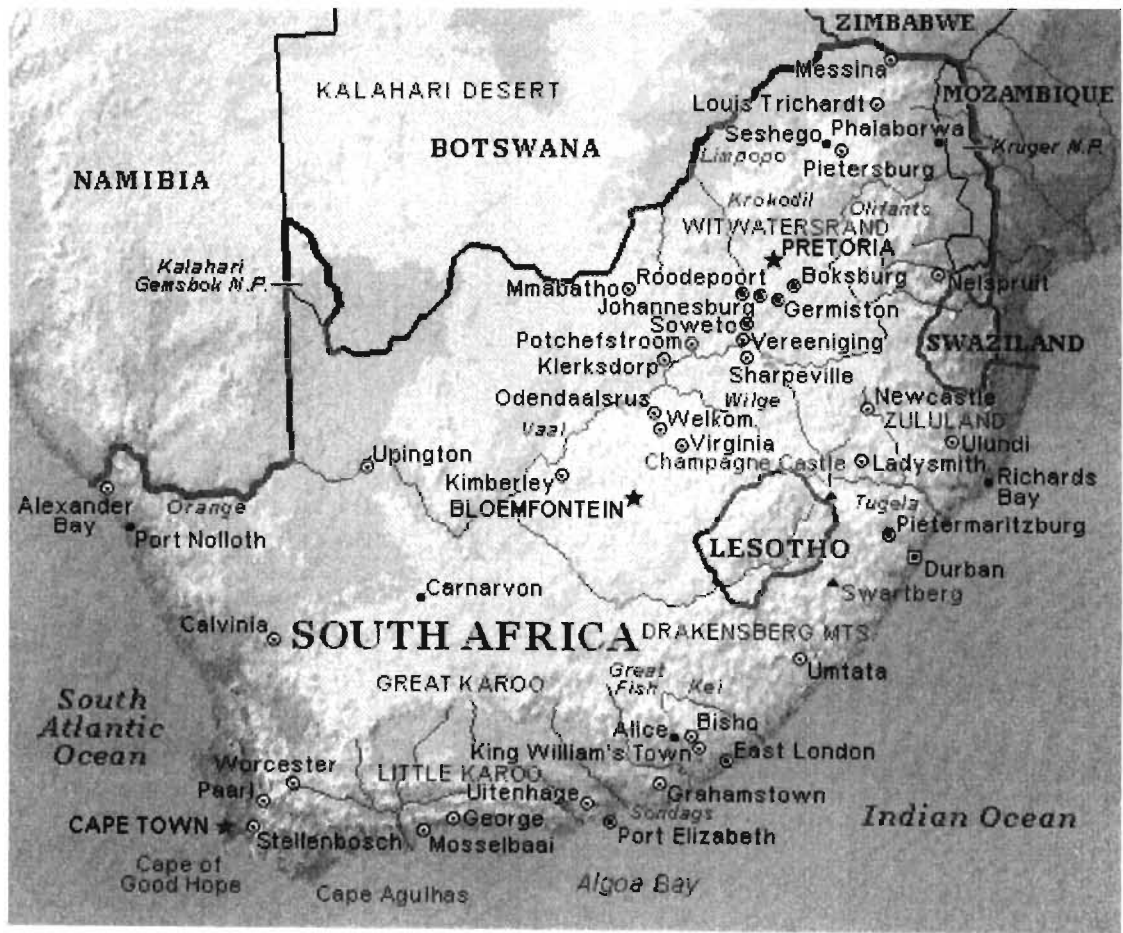
- Is the Human Resources Department decentralised in terms of functions or is there a core group that deals with all the functions?

- Does the Human Resources Department at Head Office determine the policies and procedures for all the branches/ bases of the company?

- When does your Human Resources Department conduct policy reviews?
 - Once a year
 - Twice a year
 - Every quarter
 - Only when necessary

APPENDIX C

MAP OF SOUTH AFRICA SHOWING DURBAN



APPENDIX D

MAP OF THE UNITED KINGDOM SHOWING LONDON

