

# COMMUNICARE

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## Call for papers

*Communicare* awaits articles for its upcoming edition, Volume 21(1), the first issue of 2002.

- Proposals for articles in abstract form should reach the Administrative Officer before Friday 8 February 2002. Final papers should be submitted before Friday 22 February 2002.
- See editorial requirements.

Submit articles to:

Administrative Officer  
*Communicare*  
Southern African Communication Association  
RAU - Department of Communication  
PO Box 524  
Auckland Park  
Tel: +27 11 489 2139  
Fax: +27 11 489 2426  
E-mail: [sbr@lw.rau.ac.za](mailto:sbr@lw.rau.ac.za)

## Guidelines for submission of articles

1. All articles are to be submitted both on computer disk and on paper:
  - All articles are to be submitted on 1.44 mb stiffer disk.
  - The material should be prepared in the following word-processing programmes (in order of preference) Word for Windows, Wordperfect (either DOS or Windows versions), Word for DOS.
  - The disk(s) should be accompanied by three paper copies of the article.
  - Typed manuscripts should be submitted in triplicate, size A4 and double-spaced.
  - Tables and figures should be included in the text.
2. All articles must be accompanied by an abstract in English of between 100 and 150 words.
3. Particulars of the author(s), i.e. short biography, must be on a separate page.
4. All references must be done according to the abbreviated Harvard method (i.e. follow the examples in the current issue).

# Editorial

## Building a community of communicators

The massification and commodification of knowledge – the expansion of knowledge production to government agencies, firms and consultancies has broken the monopolies of the traditional university and knowledge systems, and has seen a number of competent researchers working outside the old systems. Alongside traditional disciplinary knowledge, a new broader trans-disciplinary and highly contextualised form of knowledge is emerging. Paradoxically, this has resulted in the ceaseless subdivision of knowledge of greater scientific sophistication, or the disintegration of science. The waning coherence of science is seen most clearly in the 40 000 to 50 000 scientific journals currently in print. These changing modes of knowledge production, which shifts the production of knowledge away from ivory tower science-based linear innovation to knowledge that is produced at the point of application, highlights the changing organisational context for knowledge production and consumption.

Knowledge in the fluid, networked environment can be said to have escaped in four different ways:

- Freed from traditional institutional constraints;
- Leaked out through the loss of specialised expertise;
- Liberated from specific locales through advances in information technology networks;
- Eluded attempts to appropriate it through conventional management control.

As a result it can be argued that scientific associations belong to another era, an era where problems were defined by the academic community, based on disciplinary knowledge and quality controlled by “the invisible colleague” in the form of a blind review. Consequently there may be no need for outdated institutional formats such as scientific associations. However, it should be noted that information technology is seen to be much less effective in creating rather than disseminating knowledge. Put simply, the IT network eradicates distance and duration at the expense of the intimacy and sense of the present moment that seems to characterise knowledge creation within informal and formal professional networks. Spender (1992) notes that while electronic networks may provide strong informational ties, knowledge ties are weak. Therefore information technology cannot replace the qualitatively different kind of involvement in knowledge innovation that socially based communities of scientists offer. Social professional networks, such as those offered by scientific associations, are characterised not only by the sharing of information, but also by the sharing of knowledge and the interpretive frameworks that make sense of such information.

The main thrust of knowledge creation is the creation of the kind of open exchange of knowledge and ideas facilitated by the reciprocal, trust-based ties of a social community of communication scientists. However, it is also evident that while the need for a wider community of communication scientist may provide a compelling reason for the existence of an entity such as a scientific association, a need also exists to adopt a more pragmatic approach to the positioning and marketing of such a scientific association. Changes in information technology and the increased connectivity that has resulted because of this, have forever altered the contexts in which information and knowledge is produced and disseminated. The societal trends resulting from these changes also hold implications for the key variables that would drive individual or institutional membership of a scientific association, and the options that are available for the redefinition and repositioning of a scientific association such as SACOMM. Disintermediation, which eliminates middlemen who simply expedite distribution without enhancing the value of what is transferred, is one such trend that must be considered. Disintermediation greatly democratizes access to the means of communication and to information and knowledge. It takes the power conferred by the control of information away from a tiny elite and makes it available to many. Interactive communication allows people to completely sidestep institutions. Unless SACOMM can find a way to add value as an information intermediary in the production and dissemination of knowledge, it will be fossilised along with many other jobs in the private sector that have also failed to make the required transition. The failure of scientific associations in general to adapt in this regard may provide us with an understanding of why most, if not all, scientific associations in South Africa are struggling with declining membership and waning relevance in their scientific and societal contexts.

The trend towards cocooning and one-on-one relationships also extends to the academic context. Interactive communication is facilitating many of these changes, leading to promising new opportunities, but also eliminating patterns we once took for granted. The nature of human involvement has changed as well - ties tend to be less permanent, less engaged and with smaller groups of people. Increasingly, some individuals are escaping their reality (with its confusions and uncertainties) by transforming themselves into "ideal cyberpeople" within virtual communities. Although individuals may become stronger and more powerful, people will still crave the togetherness of communities. However, the problem with a culture of intense individualism is that it ends up being bereft of a sense of community. It is in this regard that I would argue for the existence of a strong scientific association - one that can make the transition and that could provide the sense of community that online relationships cannot.

**Sonja Verwey**  
**Editor**

B. Steyn  
M. Green

## Investigating strategic management roles of the corporate communication function in the Department of Housing

### ABSTRACT

The first phase of this qualitative study employed the extended case method. Its aim was to explore the role behaviour of the most senior corporate communication practitioner in the government Department of Housing, South Africa. It was found that the Director: Communication Services played a combination of roles: firstly, Dozier's (1984) *media relations specialist* (seen as part of the historic *technician* role) and secondly, she also performed certain generic managerial activities. The two (new) strategic management roles of the corporate communication function, the *strategist* and the redefined *manager*, were not observed (Steyn, 2000a; 2000b).

The second phase entailed the development of a corporate communication strategy for the Department by the Deputy Director, using action research. The unit of analysis was her communicative output, in the form of the strategy. Empowered by postgraduate studies, she was found to possess the necessary strategic communication management knowledge and skills to perform this important activity of a practitioner in the redefined role of *manager* successfully.

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*Benita Steyn APR is a senior lecturer in the Department of Marketing and Communication Management, University of Pretoria. Mateboho Green was Deputy Director: Communication Services in the Department of Housing while the research was being conducted. From May 2001, she has been in the employ of Telkom as Manager: Corporate Communication.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In South African government departments, job titles such as Director: Communication (even Chief Director) abound. This would reasonably assume managerial (or even top management) roles for the incumbent, taking part in strategic decision making and being concerned with strategic planning. However, in other parts of the world, some researchers have concluded that corporate communication practitioners in managerial positions still focus on daily routines and technical procedures (Brody, 1985; Cottone, 1987; Pracht, 1991; Reagan, 1990; Van Ruler, 1997). This was substantiated in South Africa by Steyn (2000a; 2000b) in a study of 103 chief executives. Although CEOs indicated their expectations of senior practitioners playing strategic and managerial roles, their perceptions were that many of these practitioners engaged mainly in technical activities.

In the 'New South Africa', government departments are facing daunting challenges. It is up to them to manage the expectations created by electoral promises in the 1990s. In this endeavour, they could be greatly aided by practitioners with a knowledge of strategic communication management. The question therefore arises whether senior practitioners heading communication directorates in government departments are indeed playing strategic and/or managerial roles, assisting in the achievement of institutional goals and contributing towards institutional effectiveness.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Practitioner roles are the key to understanding the function of corporate communication (Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992). Katz & Kahn (1978) proposed the 'role' concept as a major link between individual and organisational levels of theory. Their perspective is that an individual's behaviour may best be understood as a function of role. In an organisational setting, the concept of 'role' refers to the standardised patterns of behaviour required of individuals in specific functional relationships (Katz & Kahn, 1978:189).

### 2.1 The historic roles of *manager* and *technician*

It is generally accepted in corporate communication literature that there are two predominant roles: the *manager* and the *technician*. The role of the manager was originally conceptualised by Broom & Smith (1979) as three different roles: the *expert prescriber*, *communication facilitator* and *problem-solving process facilitator*. However, these roles were found to be highly intercorrelated and performed interchangeably by the same practitioner, therefore regarded as conceptual components of the same empirical role. The manager and technician are the only two roles that emerged time and time again

in numerous empirical studies of the activities performed by corporate communication practitioners since the beginning of the 1980s (Broom, 1982; Dozier, 1984).

Practitioners in the manager role make communication policy decisions and are involved in corporate communication decision making — they frequently use research to plan or evaluate their work and to counsel management. Communication technicians, on the other hand, do not participate in management decision making, but provide the communication and journalistic skills – writing, editing, audiovisual production, graphics and the production of messages – needed to implement communication programmes (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:91). Broom & Smith (1979) saw the technician role as that of technical service providers or “*journalists-in-residence*” – people having previously worked for newspapers and broadcast media, hired because of their communication skills and mass media experience.

In addition to these two major roles, Dozier (1984) found two minor roles: the *media relations specialist* — similar to the technician role, but specialising in external media relations rather than internal communication production activities — and the *communication liaison*, who linked management and publics through communication.

## 2.2 Different conceptualisations of an emerging third role

American academics Toth, Serini, Wright & Emig (1998) reported trends, from 1990 - 1995, on the roles of members of the national Public Relations Society of America. While the 1990 data indicated a two-role typology similar to Broom & Dozier’s (1986) *manager* and *technician* categories, a third role – resembling the expert prescriber — emerged in 1995. This was named the *agency profile*, since the set of activities seemed to be managerial in nature. It covered counselling; research; programming decisions; communicating with clients, peers and subordinates; handling correspondence and phone calls; and making media contacts — no technical activities featured in this role.

Some European academics have recently pointed to the limitations of the widely accepted two-role typology of manager and technician. Van Ruler (1997:250-251) constructed “*three underlying views on the question what public relations – or communication management – is all about*”, based on an exploratory study among corporate communication professionals in the Netherlands. She extended Dozier’s theory (1984) on the two historical roles by splitting the manager role into two. In addition to the technician role, she conceptualised the role of the *sales manager* (someone who is strategically concerned with synchronising the behaviour of a public with that of the organisation, in order that the organisation can continue to behave in the way it wants without interference); and the role of the *intermediary* (someone who is strategically

concerned with bringing the organisation and publics in tune with one another, reaching mutual understanding, and building bridges).

The study of Moss, Warnaby & Newmans (2000) examined the roles played by senior practitioners within organisations in the United Kingdom. They suggested a more comprehensive conceptualisation of the manager's role, necessary to delineate the range of activities that senior practitioners are increasingly performing at higher levels in the modern organisation. Role studies have not generally explored how, for example, different conceptualisations of strategy may affect the nature and extent of practitioner involvement in the strategic management of organisations.

Steyn (2000a; 2000b) concurred with these academics on the existence of a third role. By splitting the historic manager role into two, she conceptualised and empirically verified three roles for the corporate communication practitioner, according to the expectations of South African chief executives. These are the role of the *strategist* and the redefined role of the *manager* — both regarded as strategic roles of the corporate communication function (Steyn, 2000c) — as well as the historic role of the *technician*. These roles are differentiated as follows:

- i. The role of the *strategist* is regarded as a role at top management level of an organisation. A corporate communication practitioner in this role gathers strategic information on stakeholders and issues from the external environment by means of environmental scanning, and feeds this strategic intelligence into the organisation's strategy formulation processes. This represents a corporate communication's contribution to strategic decision making.
- ii. The redefined role of the *manager* is seen to be a role at the departmental or functional level of an organisation. The main responsibility of a practitioner in this role is to develop a corporate communication strategy. According to the model for developing a corporate communication strategy (Steyn, 2000d:1-33), this entails identifying the organisation's key strategic issues (either from the corporate strategy or from the macro/task/internal environment); considering their implications for strategic stakeholders; determining *what* should be communicated to solve the problem or capitalise on the opportunity presented; and formulating communication goals. Furthermore, to develop a strategic communication plan based on the corporate communication strategy, and to oversee the implementation of communication plans by technicians.
- iii. The well-known role of the *technician* also emerged in the CEO study. It is not considered to be a strategic role, since developing/ implementing communication plans or programmes based on the corporate communication strategy is regarded as a role at micro level. This role is implemented through activities such as producing audiovisual materials for presentations, generating publicity e.g. writing media releases, keeping a media clipping service, editing corporate



communication materials such as speeches or the annual report, writing articles for the organisation's publications and organising special events.

### 3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In this qualitative study, the strategic management roles of the corporate communication function are investigated in a government department in South Africa.

#### 3.1 Phase 1: Research Objective 1

Primary Objective: To explore the *role behaviour* of the most senior corporate communication practitioner in the National Department of Housing, i.e. whether she played:

- the role of the *strategist*, the redefined *manager* or the communication *technician* (Steyn, 2000a; Steyn, 2000b; Steyn & Puth, 2000);
- any of the other newly conceptualised managerial roles identified in the literature study, such as the *sales manager* or the *intermediary* (Van Ruler, 1997); or the *agency profile* (Toth, Serini, Wright & Emig, 1998);
- the historic *manager* or *technician* role (Broom, 1982; Dozier, 1984; Broom & Dozier, 1986).

#### 3.2 Phase 2: Research Objective 2

Primary Objective: To develop a corporate communication strategy for the Department of Housing (as the most important activity of a practitioner in the redefined role of the *manager*.)

Secondary objectives:

- To determine whether the Deputy Director: Communication Services possessed the required strategic communication management knowledge and skills to develop a corporate communication strategy for her institution, i.e. to function in the redefined role of the *manager*.
- To confirm the applicability of the model for developing a corporate communication strategy in a government department setting (the model was developed in the non-profit sector—Steyn, 2000c).

**6. RESEARCH STRATEGY, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

A graphic presentation as a summary of the research strategy, design and methodology of Phases 1 and 2 will now be presented.

**Research strategy, design and methodology of the study**

	Phase 1	Phase 2
<b>Research strategy</b>	Ideographic (Windelband, 1980; Babbie, 2001) Contextual (Mouton, 1996) Qualitative (Marshall & Rossman, 1995)	
<b>Research design</b>	Naturalistic (observing/recording ongoing behaviour during the course of "normal life activity"); conducted in the field; participatory, longitudinal, and applied (Smith, 1988).	
	Exploratory (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 41)	Confirmatory (Miles & Huberman, 1984)
<b>Population</b>	Corporate communication practitioners	
<b>Element</b> (Smith, 1988)*	Deputy Director's <i>perception of the role behaviour</i> of the Director: Communication Services	Deputy Director's <i>communicative output</i> (Smith, 1988) in the form of a corporate communication strategy
<b>Selection of cases</b>	Individuals (Babbie, 2001)	

\* the "thing" about which information is collected, also called unit of analysis (Babbie, 2001)

\*\*adapted from Smith's (1988) multi-stage sampling procedure

	Phase 1	Phase 2
<p><b>Four-stage selection procedure**</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>initial/primary:</i></li> <li>● <i>secondary:</i></li> <li>● <i>tertiary:</i></li> <li>● final (always the same as element – Smith, 1988)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government departments</li> <li>● Department of Housing</li> <li>● Second in command, i.e. the Deputy Director: Communication Services</li> <li>● Deputy Director's <i>perception of the role behaviour</i> of the Director: Communication Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government departments</li> <li>● Department of Housing</li> <li>● Second in command, i.e. the Deputy Director: Communication Services</li> <li>● Deputy Director's <i>communicative output</i> (Smith, 1988) in the form of a corporate communication strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Observation unit</b>	Deputy Director: Communication Services	
<b>Research methodology</b>	Extended case method (Burawoy <i>et al</i> , 1991)	Participatory action research (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:56; Babbie, 2001).
<b>Data generation</b>	Participant observation (within a pre-existing theoretical framework)	Participant observation, review of documents, in-depth interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 1995:79-83) - within a pre-existing conceptual framework
<b>Data analysis</b>	Pre-existing theoretical framework (Broom, 1982; Dozier, 1984); (Steyn, 2000a; 2000b); (Van Ruler, 1997); (Toth, Serini, Wright & Emig 1998).	Pre-existing conceptual framework (Miles & Huberman, 1984) - in this instance, a model (Steyn, 2000c; Steyn & Puth, 2000).

#### 4.1 Research strategy for both phases

According to Marshall & Rossman (1995:40), the research strategy is a road map, an overall approach for undertaking a systematic exploration of the phenomenon of interest.

##### 4.1.1 Ideographic research strategy

This study could be called ideographic research (Windelband, 1980; Babbie, 2001), since a *contextual* strategy is followed where phenomena are studied because of their intrinsic and immediate contextual significance – i.e. attention is focused on a single event or case (Mouton, 1996:133).

##### 4.1.2 Qualitative strategy

To answer the specific research questions posed in this study, a qualitative rather than a quantitative strategy has been selected. Qualitative research differs markedly from quantitative research in that it is *“analytic and interpretative — it attempts to examine phenomena in a holistic manner”*. Events or extraneous variables are not controlled—the purpose is to capture the normal flow of events (Du Plooy, 1995:33). Qualitative data is more likely to lead to integrating new theory since it helps researchers to go beyond initial preconceptions and frameworks (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

The qualitative approach was also particularly valuable in both phases of this study since it *“delves in depth into complexities and processes; on little-known phenomena; on unstructured processes in organisations...”* (Marshall & Rossman, 1995:43).

#### 4.2 Research design

A research design *“constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data”*. It is the plan and structure of the empirical investigation to obtain answers to research questions, and provides a framework for specifying the relationships between the study's variables (Cooper & Emory, 1995:114).

##### 4.2.1 Phase 1: Exploratory

In achieving Research Objective 1, the design of the study was exploratory – namely to *“gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person”*, because of a lack of basic information on a new area of interest (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 42). This interest was in managerial role playing within the South African government sector.

Firstly, the study explored whether (traces of) the existence of the two newly

conceptualised strategic management roles of the corporate communication function could be found in a government department. These two roles were empirically verified in a study that included the South African private, non-profit and educational sectors, but excluded the government sector (Steyn, 2000a; 2000b). Secondly, the study explored the existence of any of the other new managerial roles (as conceptualised by European and American academics) in the government sector. To the researchers' knowledge, the latter has not been investigated in South Africa.

#### 4.2.2 Phase 2: Confirmatory

In achieving Research Objective 2, a confirmatory design was employed where researchers go into the field with an almost complete theory or a set of hypotheses (in this instance, the model for developing corporate communication strategy—Steyn, 2000d). According to Miles & Huberman (1984), qualitative research can be outright confirmatory when preliminary work has provided insight into a phenomenon and the researcher wants to enquire as to how this would work in natural settings. In this instance, the preliminary work was a longitudinal study, hypothesising and empirically verifying a model for developing a corporate communication strategy in the non-profit sector (Steyn, 2000c; 2000d). The research interest in this phase of the study was therefore to confirm the validity and applicability of the model in a different setting, namely the government sector – and more specifically, in the National Department of Housing.

### 4.3 Research methodology

Marshall & Rossman (1995:40) consider the methodology to be the specific tools for conducting the research.

#### 4.3.1 Phase 1: extended case method

Case studies are a type of qualitative research in which the researcher explores “a single entity or phenomenon (*‘the case’*) bounded by time and activity, and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time” (Creswell, in Leedy 1997:157). Phase 1 of this study is classified firstly, as a *single case* (sample of one) and secondly, as an *appraisal case* (in contrast to an issue or analytical case), on the grounds of the following criteria (SACRA, 1996):

- It is concerned with future outcomes and long-term planning.
- It is strategy oriented and deals with uncertainties.
- It uses raw data and evaluates critical analysis.
- It processes and conceptualises information

In this case, attention is focused on one instance of a social phenomenon – the *role*

*behaviour* of the Director: Communication Services in the setting of the Government Department of Housing. The Deputy Director observed her direct supervisor's role behaviour over a period of 19 months. A very specific type of case method was employed: the *extended* case (Burawoy *et al*, 1991). This methodology requires researchers to have a thorough knowledge of existing theories, and sets out to uncover contradictions or identify the gaps in them. Its purpose is therefore to discover flaws in, and then modify, existing theories (in this case, roles theory). This differs, for instance, from the grounded theory method where researchers seek to enter the field with no preconceptions about what they will find.

#### 4.3.2 Phase 2: Action research

Action research is a particular form of participatory research, the latter being the encouragement of the active participation of people whom the research is intended to assist. Participatory research is not necessarily action research, but action research is always participatory. Action research demands that the researcher(s) and the participant community to be equal partners in the planning and implementation of a project, and each brings valuable resources to it. Furthermore, that the initiative for the project should come from members of the community who find themselves in some sort of difficulty, looking for solutions (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:56). There is no general formula for action research—*action* and *research* take place alternatively in an ongoing learning process for everyone involved. It is research WITH, rather than research ON (McNiff, 1988:3-4).

In order to achieve Research Objective 2, the action research phase of the study used a model (Steyn, 2000c; Steyn, 2000d; Steyn & Puth, 2000) as a pre-existing conceptual framework to develop a corporate communication strategy for the Department of Housing. The strategy was formulated by the Deputy Director: Communication Services (Green, 2000), playing the redefined role of the *manager* (Steyn, 2000a; 2000b).

Action research as a methodology for developing the strategy was most suitable. The project was suggested by the Deputy Director, as no corporate communication strategy existed in the Department of Housing. Having studied the model for developing a corporate communication strategy (Steyn, 2000d), she participated in the research endeavour as a full partner: firstly, by applying her newly acquired knowledge on corporate communication strategy, and secondly, by offering her practical experience and knowledge of communication procedures and processes in the Department. During the data generation and analysis stages, she constantly consulted with her co-researcher, the academic who developed the model. This situation provided an ideal and therefore a more valid outcome for the study.

The fact that the Deputy Director (the principal participant) was knowledgeable about strategic communication management and research methodology, she was also deemed to increase the validity of the study. The participant community in action research projects usually contributes its expertise and knowledge of the setting under investigation, but rarely possesses research knowledge and skills, nor theoretical knowledge of the subject, as in this instance.

The participants in the action research process were the following:

- Researcher 1: the lecturer of the honours course in Strategic Communication Management (SKO 780) at the University of Pretoria.
- Researcher 2: an honours student in the subject of Strategic Communication Management (SKO 780).
- Participant community: the principal participant was the Deputy Director: Communication Services in the Department of Housing. (She was also the honours student, referred to above as Researcher 2.)
- Other staff of the Department of Housing (who were interviewed by Researcher 2) also formed part of the participant community.

## **5. AN ANALYSIS OF PHASE 1**

### **5.1 Background**

The National Department of Housing is headed by a political appointee in the person of the Minister. The Director-General, who is the equivalent of the Chief Executive, is the administrative head and accounting officer of the Department, assisted by one deputy director-general. Further down the departmental hierarchy are chief directors, directors, as well as deputy and assistant directors.

In many government departments, the top management structure constitutes officials from director level upwards, as is the case in the Department of Housing. This means that the Director: Communication Services is included in top management business meetings and strategic top management meetings, enjoying easy access to senior managers. Due to its relatively small size (a 158-strong staff establishment), deputy directors are also included in strategic meetings, but not in business meetings. Such a situation would be the envy of many a senior practitioner in the private sector, since access to top management is generally accepted (in theory and practice) to be a prerequisite for communication excellence (Grunig, *in* Grunig 1992).

### **5.2 Discussion of findings: Phase 1**

The Director: Communication Services also acts as the Minister's Public Relations Officer, in addition to heading the Directorate. Her role in both positions could be described

as that of a *media relations specialist*. This role is characterised by considering an organisation's external environment of prime importance, especially the media – consequently, communication with internal stakeholders remains largely unattended to (Dozier, 1984). The most senior practitioner in the Department of Housing is mainly occupied with providing communication and journalistic skills, such as writing speeches (for the Minister) and press releases, obtaining free publicity for the institution. This is also called the role of *publicist* or '*journalist-in-residence*' (Broom & Smith, 1979), often played in organisations that practise the press agency/publicity model of corporate communication. Other practitioners in the Directorate also behave and are managed as '*journalists-in-residence*' — it could in fact be said that the Directorate functions as a '*mini press agency*'. In addition to these activities, the Director also spends some time on events management and on the process of producing publications such as the annual report.

In classifying the role of the Director: Communication Services, it could be said that she mainly occupies herself with corporate communication activities, that are generally executed by a practitioner in the role of a *technician* (Broom, 1982; Dozier, 1984). However, she does fulfil certain generic managerial duties such as managing the staff complement and drawing up the budget.

Some aspects of the new role of *agency profile* (Toth, Serini, Wright & Emig, 1998) also apply to the Director. These are mainly the generic managerial activities, such as handling correspondence and phone calls; communicating with clients, peers and subordinates; and making media contacts. She also counsels top management, mainly on publicity-related aspects. Since the characteristics of this role are described as being mainly managerial (including research activities and programming decisions) and containing no technical activities, the authors do not consider it to be a good application in this case.

Van Ruler's two managerial roles (1997) do not apply either. The Director: Communication Services does not appear to be strategically concerned with synchronising the behaviour of a public with that of the organisation (the *sales manager*), nor concerned with bringing the organisation and a public in tune with one another, reaching mutual understanding (the *intermediary*).

Steyn's role of the *strategist* (2000a; 2000b) is also not considered applicable in this case either. A practitioner in this role identifies stakeholders and publics through environmental scanning in the external and internal environments. In the Department of Housing, there seems to be no (communication-defined) systematic mechanism of obtaining and channelling information from management to strategic stakeholders, except via the media (through press statements or when the media covers Ministerial



events), or through management's direct discussions with the relevant stakeholders in their regularly scheduled business meetings – or from stakeholders to management.

Strategic intelligence is not gathered systematically, and when obtained ad hoc, it is not adequately disseminated among top management. An example to justify this statement is the following: In July 1999, a help desk was placed under the jurisdiction of the Directorate: Communication Services as a response by the Minister to queries addressed to her personally whenever she appeared on radio talk shows. This decision was lauded, since the allocated radio time was never adequate to address all the issues, and some of them were too complex to address on air. More and more people are making use of this feedback channel, and the official in charge of the help desk interfaces on a daily basis mainly with people who have grievances about the national housing programme.

The majority of people who visit the help desk at the department live in the vicinity of the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council area, whereas those from other provinces phone in or write letters. These people constitute the Department's most strategic stakeholder group — the poor at whom the national housing programme is being targeted. The Communication Officer who mans the help desk immediately responds to the queries within her power and capability, by phoning relevant municipal counterparts to try and solve the problems aired. Complaints include reports on raw deals people are getting from municipal offices with regard to their applications for homes, or on completed homes which are not delivered in a satisfactory condition. The more complex problems are reported to the Communication Director, sometimes with recommendations. The frequency of the help desk's written reports is generally once a month, but if more burning issues emerge, they are reported as they surface.

The normative theory on the strategic management roles of the corporate communication function (Steyn, 2000a; 2000b; 2000c) suggests this as an ideal opportunity for a practitioner in the role of the *strategist* (or *manager*) to practise two-way symmetrical communication. In this instance, it would entail bringing the concerns of strategic stakeholders (and their implications for the organisation's policies and strategies) to the attention of top management, explaining how the stakeholders think, feel and might behave. Suggestions on how communication could provide solutions to organisational problems should be presented and advocated, thereby increasing the power of the communication division with top management. The status quo is that the Director: Communication Services (also being the Minister's Public Relations Officer) channels this information directly to the Minister, who in turn addresses some of the issues in her public speeches, mostly during interviews with the media or at housing project launches. However, such speeches can naturally cover only a fraction of what gets collected at the help desk, and can hardly deal in specific terms with issues

emerging per case and per township.

What is really necessary is for top management to become privy to this information so that they can directly address the stakeholders' concerns, as far as possible. Intervening with top management on behalf of strategic stakeholders is a major activity of a communication practitioner in the role of *strategist*. However, this necessitates the incumbent to possess strategic communication management knowledge and skills – a situation which, according to the perceptions of chief executives, is the exception rather than the rule in South African organisations (Steyn, 2000a; 2000b).

The role of the researcher is another activity (characteristic of both *strategist* and *manager* roles) that is neglected in the Communication Directorate, as is the case in many other communication divisions countrywide. This is especially important in order to be able to identify stakeholders, issues and the publics that arise around issues (Grunig & Repper, in Grunig 1992), as well as to plan and evaluate communication programmes for their effectiveness. In the circumstances, it is therefore not surprising that passive stakeholders of the Department are starting to form into publics because no action or communication is forthcoming about their joint and individual grievances. Developing a corporate communication strategy to inform these stakeholders/publics about the problems experienced by management in attending to their grievances (among others) is a major activity of a practitioner in the redefined role of the *manager* (Steyn, 2000a; 2000b) – an activity that also has not taken place at the Department of Housing in the past.

### 5.3 Conclusions and recommendations: Phase 1

Phase 1 of this study explored the role played by that most senior corporate communication practitioner in the National Department of Housing. It was found to be a combination of corporate communication activities representing the historical *technician* role (more specifically the role of the *media relations specialist*) and generic managerial activities such as managing staff, doing the correspondence and budget and representing the directorate at management meetings). However, activities not performed were specifically those corporate communication activities representing the role of the *strategist* (identifying stakeholders and their concerns, identifying issues and their implications for organisational strategies and policies, and feeding this strategic intelligence into the Department's strategic decision-making processes). Not performed either were activities such as developing a corporate communication strategy for the Directorate, which is regarded as the most important activity of the redefined role of the *manager*.

The background provided on some of the Department's problems indicates that playing

the roles of the *strategist* and *manager* could possibly have contributed towards achieving institutional goals, therefore remaining as a positive theory. No new activities came to light in analysing the Director's role behaviour to indicate the necessity of adjusting the existing role theory or developing a new theory on role behaviour.

Although this study reports on one case only, namely the perceptions of the Deputy Director: Communication Services in the Department of Housing on the role behaviour of the Director, her perceptions are not dissimilar to the perceptions of chief executives in the private, non-profit and educational sectors on the role behaviour of the most senior corporate communication practitioners heading their communication divisions (Steyn, 2000a; 2000b). South African CEOs who participated in the latter study did not perceive their senior practitioners to be performing well in the role of the *strategist* although their expectations for this role were high. Furthermore, CEO expectations for the role of the *technician* were low, but their perceptions of the performance in this role were high. (The most important reason for CEO dissatisfaction with their communication managers was the fact that they did not play a strategic role in the organisation). The fact that there seems to be no apparent difference between the role behaviour of the senior practitioner in the Department of Housing versus other sectors merits a recommendation by the authors that further qualitative and quantitative research be conducted to investigate corporate communication role playing in the other government departments.

The findings of this exploratory study also seem to concur with the literature on corporate communication (which often describes conditions in the private sector). This case seems to be another instance of Budd's (1991) perception that senior practitioners fail to assume broad decision-making roles within their organisations, and that their thinking is tactical, rather than strategic. Furthermore, intelligence obtained is not integrated into the strategies of the larger organisation (Fleisher & Mahaffy, 1997). Corporate communication is seen to be peripheral to policy formulation, not a legitimate part of the process—“a major industry, with corporate titles abounding, but no closer to decision making than it was in the 1970s” (Budd 1991:9).

A possible reason for the fact that senior practitioners do not make a strategic contribution in their organisations might be that they do not have the required skills to do so (Moore, 1996; Neubauer, 1997). These views are supported by Groenewald's (1998) study in the South African environment, which found that corporate communication *managers* perceive strategic communication skills, management skills and management communication skills as very important — however, they did not consider themselves sufficiently equipped for their present positions by the training they had received in these skills. Such a situation could reflect negatively on the position of senior practitioners, indeed on the entire communication profession.

However, most corporate communication managers are communication technicians through training (Burger, 1993), not having the knowledge and skills to play a (strategic) management role. They often fill a management position by virtue of the fact that they are the most senior practitioner or because they perform well in their technician roles. Such communication managers might be efficient at what they are doing, but cannot necessarily be considered effective – therefore, they are not making a contribution towards communication ‘excellence’. They are functioning at the micro level of the organisation (the level of implementation) and not at the macro level (Neubauer, 1997), where input to the strategy formulation process is made. The career failure of senior practitioners to assume the communication management role within organisations (Dozier, *in* Grunig 1992:352) or the strategic role (Steyn 2000a; 2000b) is a failure to emerge truly as a profession from the communication skills practised by most.

The problem outlined above (both in the case study and in literature) is a practical problem. However, according to the researchers, this problem might be caused by the *training* that corporate communication practitioners receive. If senior practitioners are to participate in strategy formulation and strategic planning in order to make organisations more effective (Grunig & Repper, *in* Grunig 1992:117), they should receive training in strategic management, strategic communication and management communication to empower them to be able to make a real contribution.

## 6. AN ANALYSIS OF PHASE 2

### 6.1 Background

The findings of Phase 1 influenced the setting of Research Objective 2. Firstly, the fact that the role of the corporate communication *strategist* was not being played in the Directorate: Communication Services should be considered against the findings of the Excellence Study (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995). This was namely that knowledge of strategic management/communication is required in the corporate communication division in order to have excellent communication in an organisation. However, it is not necessary that most senior communication practitioner should possess such knowledge —only that someone in the communication division does.

Secondly, a corporate communication strategy as suggested by Steyn (2000c); Steyn & Puth (2000) was not being developed for the Department. Normatively, this is a major activity of a practitioner in the redefined role of the *manager* – a role that should ideally be played by the Deputy Director as she was second in command of the Directorate: Communication Services. Since she was in the process of completing postgraduate studies in strategic communication management, it was deemed important

to determine whether she could indeed function in this role — i.e. whether she possessed adequate strategic communication knowledge and skills as well as the required knowledge of the Department to develop a corporate communication strategy for the institution. Whether the model to be followed in the process was indeed applicable to a government department setting, also need to be determined, since it was developed in the non-profit sector.

## 6.2 Findings: phase 2

To achieve Research Objective 2, the methodology of action research was employed. Based on a model (Steyn, 2000c; Steyn & Puth, 2000), a corporate communication strategy for the Department of Housing was developed by the Deputy Director: Communication Services (Green, 2000), in consultation with the academic who developed the model. The point of departure for the corporate communication strategy was to study the vision, mission, corporate philosophy, values and policies of the Department of Housing.

### 6.2.1 Vision, mission, corporate philosophy and values

The current vision of the Department of Housing is “*a nation housed in sustainable human settlements*”. The mission is “*to establish and facilitate a sustainable process that provides equitable access to adequate housing (fully serviced with running water, ablution facility and electricity) for everyone*” (South Africa, 1999: 1).

The corporate values, philosophy and service principles of the Department are mainly encompassed in the *Batho Pele - “People First” White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery* (South Africa, 1997:1-25). This protocol requires that national and provincial departments make service delivery a national priority – all public servants are to treat every member of the public like a king. This is the principle that the “*customer is always right*” — that citizens be served courteously, with respect and dignity, equitably and without discrimination; be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive; and be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive. The *Batho Pele* principles champion the efficient delivery of services and rapid response to letters and telephonic enquiries, and a reduction in wastage. Where bottlenecks do occur in service delivery, citizens are to be given reasons and a full explanation of the state of affairs, as well as information on what to expect further.

Other aspects are captured in the Department’s operating and draft policies on Affirmative Action, transformation, a Code of Conduct, HIV/AIDS, language, disciplinary and dress codes, overtime, personnel evaluation, smoking, bursaries, etc. However, many of these

policies are in draft form and cannot be communicated actively before they are officially declared a policy. Up to now, the *Batho Pele* protocol has existed mainly on paper. It has yet to be championed actively and lived by each of the Department's staff members, if it is to be translated successfully into a service culture. These gaps constitute internal communication opportunities about which the communication directorate needs to advise top management.

### 6.2.2 Identification of strategic stakeholders and publics

The strategic stakeholders of the Department of Housing have been identified by using Esman's typology (*in* Grunig & Hunt, 1984:140-142).

#### Enabling linkages

These linkages are with groups that provide authority and provide/control resources:

- *Department of Finance (National Treasury)*, which allocates a percentage of the national budget to Housing.
- *Department of State Expenditure*, which regulates state expenditure, and to which the Department of Housing accounts for financial resources allocated to it.
- *The Cabinet* (Ministers' body), which approves policy recommendations before they are tabled in Parliament.
- *Parliamentary Committee on Housing*, which lobbies support for Housing policy and legislation in Parliament.
- *The National Assembly*, the legislative body that passes legal propositions originating in the Department of Housing into law.
- *The National Council of Provinces (NCOP)*, a second legislative body comprising of representatives of the provinces (including traditional leaders), through which proposed legislation passes after going through Parliament and before it can proceed to Cabinet.
- *The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)*, which formulates public service policy and regulations to which the Department of Housing must adhere.
- *Donor bodies*, such as Danish Cooperation for Environment and Development (DANCED), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), and the German and USA governments.

#### Functional linkages

These linkages are with groups that provide input to the Department and use its outputs:

- *Departmental employees* and their *trade unions*.

- *Provincial and local government structures*, who cooperate with the Department.
- *Housing institutions or statutory bodies* established to augment the national housing delivery programme such as SERVCON; Thubelisha Homes; the National Home Builders Registration Council; the National Housing Finance Corporation; Gateway Home Loans; and the Social Housing Foundation.
- *The entire low income population of South Africa* – earning 0 to R3 500 per month — which constitutes the main target of the Department’s housing development programme.

#### Normative linkages

These linkages are with professional/industrial associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), providing solutions to shared problems:

- *Federation of Homeless People of South Africa*, an NGO that mobilises people into saving and using their own savings to meet their housing needs.
- *Institute for Housing in South Africa*, an independent body of professionals in housing, i.e. architects, town planners, surveyors, housing contractors and financiers organised to discuss national housing needs.
- *Sustainable Homes Initiative*, a coalition of NGOs promoting environmentally sound housing initiatives.
- *Urban Sector Network*, another coalition of NGOs offering alternative housing solutions in urban South Africa.
- *Rural Housing Finance*, another independent initiative serving rural South Africa’s housing needs.
- *Other provincially-based housing organisations* which, over and above these initiatives, are doing their fair share to house the nation.

#### Diffused linkages

These linkages are with groups in society who cannot clearly be identified by membership in formal organisations:

- *The media*, who inform diffused groups.
- *Publics* who arise when they experience problems with the consequences of the Department’s decisions, e.g. *the community*.
- *Housing consumer groups* (in both the low income and other categories) who can be considered activists — people organised or otherwise, who are seeking legal and other recourse against any questionable housing practice.

### 6.2.3 *Strategic issues within the macro, task and internal environments*

Strategic issues are “*developments, events and trends that are considered consequential by an organisation’s management because of the potential to impact the organisation’s strategy*” (Ansoff, 1980; King, 1982; Dutton & Ottensmeyer, 1987). Not all issues are

therefore strategic, and management must decide which of the issues (of which they become aware) merit their attention.

The four most strategic issues facing the Department of Housing, identified by Green (2000), are the following:

- Inadequate funding to provide housing to South Africa's homeless.
- Rural under-development contributes to rural-to-urban migration in search of economic opportunities, resulting in ever-increasing urban housing needs.
- Employee attitude and behaviour illustrates the lack of a service culture.
- Some RDP houses built to date are substandard — unscrupulous developers are pocketing huge profits.

In this article, only one of the four strategic issues identified will be discussed in detail to illustrate the process of developing a corporate communication strategy (Steyn, 2000c; Steyn & Puth, 2000). The other three will be presented in table format in less detail.

Each strategic issue will be described and classified according to a typology developed by Steyn (2000c). Furthermore, its implications for the Department's stakeholders will be considered, and decisions taken on *what* should be communicated to the strategic stakeholders to assist in solving the problems experienced or to capitalise on opportunities presented. This is the essence of a corporate communication strategy: forming the basis for the formulation of communication goals. In following this process, a corporate communication strategy forms the link between communication plans and the corporate mission, and communication goals are aligned to the corporate strategy.

#### 6.2.3.1 Strategic issue 1: Inadequate funding to provide housing to South Africa's homeless

##### ■ Classification of the strategic issue

This issue is classified as an Organisational Issue Type 2, where communication is not the cause of the problem and cannot provide a solution, but can provide an explanation by informing stakeholders of alternative housing solutions available.

##### ■ Description of the strategic issue

Although South Africa's current political dispensation recognises housing as a basic human right, and makes provision for housing in Section 26 of the Constitution (South Africa, 1996:12), in the White Paper on Housing (South Africa, 1994:22), and in Section 2 (1)(a) of the Housing Act, No. 107 of 1997 (South Africa, 1997), the available Housing budget cannot hope to match the national demand. According to the 1994 White Paper (South Africa, 1994) it was one of government's goals that year



to increase Housing's share of the state budget to five per cent, thereby increase housing delivery to a peak level of 350 000 units per annum, over a period of five years. In the 1997/98 financial year, housing delivery notched 322 638. However, due to a decrease in the budget, this momentum could not be sustained. During the period up to 2000, housing delivery averaged 235 000 per annum (South Africa, 1999:18).

Furthermore, it should be taken into account that South Africa's population keeps growing, making it even more difficult to address the housing backlog. Other threats to the state housing programme are high unemployment, the lack of social stability, a highly destabilised housing environment, lack of access to basic municipal services in many instances, limited or no access for the poor to housing land, a culture of "dis-saving", and declining investment in housing.

According to an economist in the Department of Housing, annual budget allocations to the South African Housing Fund are decided not only on the basis of national housing needs, but are influenced by other factors such as South Africa's macro-economic and fiscal policy, and the government's national development priorities. This view was also expressed by President Thabo Mbeki in his Year 2000 State-of-the-Nation address on February 4 (South Africa, 2000b): *"While cognisant of a confirmed need to address pensions, social welfare, housing, education and medical care, government needs to strike a proper balance between such expenditure and more directly economic expenditure by the public sector to ensure that we address the challenge for growth and redistribution together"*.

It is clear from the economic and social realities spelt out above that it is unrealistic to expect the government to provide housing for all. However, previously disenfranchised by apartheid and still ravaged by unemployment and the lack of access to housing credit, the country's poor continue to look up to the government to provide them with housing. It is here that a strategic opportunity is presented to the Department of Housing, namely to research and document all alternative housing solutions in existence and to inform the poor, as their strategic stakeholders, about them – if, and when, the Department decides to follow that route. Some possibilities in this regard will now be suggested.

The Federation of Homeless People has housed up to 8 000 households nation-wide in houses ranging in size from 40 to 72 square metres, at a cost of between R7000 and R12000. The poor are encouraged to augment their home savings by recycling building material and contributing sweat equity in the construction of their own homes. This approach has occasionally been applauded by the Minister of Housing as a resounding success, and the Department has publicly acknowledged the Federation's contribution.

However, more could be done in this regard. For instance, the government could publicly acknowledge all alternative solutions equitably, so that the poor, no matter where therefore located, could be informed about all NGO initiatives operating in their areas.

Another corporate strategy that could be followed is to explore the housing methods of thermally-efficient and sustainable houses, employed by organisations such as the SEED Programme, the Sustainable Homes Initiative and the Urban Sector Network. In the quest for energy-efficient homes, these initiatives use natural, far cheaper and widely available building materials. If endorsed the national policy level and replicated more widely, these building methods could see the State's limited funds stretching to millions more houses, offering a lot more than just shelter. Structures requiring little or no artificial heating in winter and cooling naturally in summer would see poor people realising huge savings in fuel costs, not to mention redemption from using cheap energy sources such as paraffin and coal. The Department of Housing could study the research findings on ecologically sustainable houses, conducted in recent years by the SEED Programme, and conduct supplementary studies to establish the sustainability of these alternative housing approaches.

A third corporate strategy that could be followed to offset the government's financial limitations is to establish a link between homelessness and poverty — to identify the causes of unemployment through research and to explore possible interventions in mitigation of the situation. One possible focus area could be to establish to what extent poverty is inter-linked with people relying too much on the formal sector to provide jobs, as opposed to devising their own livelihood. Partnering with relevant government and other organisations in a national communication drive would be the suggested route to follow.

Another aspect of this strategy could be to capitalise on an opportunity created by the Jobs Summit Initiative, through which government, labour and business constituencies have established a fund to stimulate the creation of jobs throughout South Africa in the next three years. The challenge – after people acquire skills from these jobs — is to communicate the importance of self-reliance programmes, of *stokvels* and other alternative savings schemes with a view to continue generating income on their own well beyond the Jobs Summit, and provide for their own needs, including housing.

Government policy does indicate an openness towards alternative housing methods by stating, in the Draft Housing Strategy for the New Millennium that “*where applicable, sustainable cost-effective architecture and home building techniques must be promoted, through the use of durable products and proven local building methods.....agrement (sic)*”

*certification of indigenous building technologies (such as rammed earth technology) must continue, as these methods can make a considerable contribution” (South Africa, 2000a:37).*

Once the Department has approved these alternative approaches to the provision of housing, it should actively promote them in partnership with the relevant NGOs. The state housing subsidy should be extended to this approach, so that the poor can make informed choices about the houses in which they want to be sheltered. The White Paper on Housing (South Africa, 1994:23) recognises an individual’s right to “*freedom of choice in the process of satisfying his or her own housing needs. The State should promote both the right of the individual to choose and encourage collective efforts (where appropriate) by people to improve their housing circumstances*”.

- Implications of the strategic issue for the stakeholders

*The Government:* Failure to receive housing could cause those who have not yet benefited from completed and on-going housing programmes to lose faith in the Department of Housing, and by implication, in the government.

*The homeless* might become despondent or frustrated, feeling neglected, dejected and deceived by what they view as unfulfilled electoral promises. They might turn from being passive stakeholders into publics, or even activists, who actively communicate about their problems. Even worse, it could lead to increased crime and violence should they lose all hope to obtain housing.

*Housing consumer groups* might use the power of the media to state their case. Such a situation would tarnish the reputation of the Department.

*The media*, often looking for sensation, could have a field day in putting down government initiatives.

*Departmental employees* could easily be disheartened in such situations, leading to a decrease in productivity.

*Housing institutions or statutory bodies* established to augment the national housing delivery programme could also suffer these negative consequences.

- Corporate communication strategy

Following the President’s lead in his Year 2000 State-of-the-Nation Address (South Africa, 2000b), government departments should become realistic about what they can and cannot achieve, and openly communicate about it. Once the Department of Housing adopts a clear policy in this regard, the corporate communication directorate should support it with a focused communication strategy.

In the true tradition of openness and transparency, it is suggested that the Department follow a strategy of providing explanations to strategic stakeholders of the financial limitations of the Housing Programme. Public awareness of the government’s limitations must be created, and the Department must set out to create hope among the poor by

communicating the alternative housing solutions spelled out above. The role played by like-minded organisations should be publicly acknowledged. People should be encouraged to use them as credible avenues outside the government. Such a communication strategy will go a long way in allaying the fears of the homeless, who have no economic means to obtain their own houses. This must be combined with instilling and cultivating entrepreneurship and self-reliance in and among the poor.

■ Communication goals

- To inform all stakeholders of the financial constraints faced by the Department of Housing, in view of other national priorities.
- To create awareness of alternative housing approaches outside the state-driven programme.
- To inform stakeholders of partnerships with NGOs in their regions.
- To inform stakeholders of the opportunity created by the Jobs Summit Initiative, through which the government, labour and business constituencies have established a fund to stimulate the creation of jobs throughout South Africa.
- To communicate the importance of taking responsibility for own housing needs and ways in which to do so.
- To promote applicable, sustainable, cost-effective architecture and home-building techniques.
- To communicate the importance of self-reliance programmes, *stokvels* and other alternative savings schemes to provide for own housing needs.
- To allay the fears of, and create hope for, the poorest of the poor, who have no other means of obtaining housing.
- To create more two-way communication channels to obtain feedback on problems experienced by strategic stakeholders.
- To communicate the successes/targets achieved.

6.2.3.2 Strategic Issue 2: Rural under-development contributes to rural-to-urban migration in search of economic opportunities, resulting in ever-increasing urban housing needs.

**Table 2: Strategic issue 2**

<p><b>Description of Issue 2</b></p>	<p>Rural people without a meaningful livelihood migrate to cities in search of jobs. As new arrivals raise the urban housing backlog, the Department of Housing has to bear, in part, the consequences of this migration. They are therefore involved in government initiatives such as the Integrated and Sustainable Rural Development Programme, as well as a cross-sectoral programme intervention to make optimal use of creativity, resource-pooling and the avoidance of duplication of efforts. They also follow a holistic development strategy, where housing development planning, for instance, takes into consideration health, transport, schools and social infrastructure. A partnership with other departments, the private sector, donors and NGOs with an interest in development could further explore attractive alternatives in the form of sustainable rural development programmes, in consultation with affected rural communities.</p>
<p><b>Type of issue</b></p>	<p>Organisational Issue Type 2: Communication is not the cause of the problem, nor can it provide a solution. However, the consequences of the issue could be explained to strategic stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>Most strategic stakeholders for this issue</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural poor, rural jobless.</li> <li>• Relevant government departments.</li> <li>• Donors, NGOs, the private sector.</li> <li>• Employees and labour unions.</li> <li>• The media.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implications of the issue for the stakeholders</b></p>	<p>The rural poor migrate in expectation of a better life. However, what they find is often worse than what they have left behind. Resources of all relevant departments and other organisations involved in social and economic upliftment are severely strained.</p>

<b>Corporate communication strategy</b>	To create a national awareness that rural-to-urban migration is not always a solution to poverty, and that rural dwelling in many cases provides more quality living conditions than urban living.
<b>Communication goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To make the rural poor aware of the fact that unemployment is higher in the urban areas, and that they might face even greater hardships in the cities.</li><li>• To inform them that the quality of life in rural areas is often higher, with clean air, vast open spaces and free-flowing streams.</li><li>• To provide statistics on higher crime in the cities.</li><li>• To provide information on how rural living could be enriched.</li><li>• To create awareness of development initiatives in the region.</li><li>• To change attitudes/behaviour towards urban migration as a solution to problems.</li></ul>

6.2.3.3 Strategic Issue 3: Employee attitude and behaviour illustrates the lack of a service culture.

**Table 3: Strategic issue 3**

<b>Description of Issue 3</b>	There seems to be little observation of the <i>Batho Pele</i> protocol and the Department's Code of Conduct. Employees are not a closely knitted group, working together to achieve institutional goals. All seem to be doing their own thing.
<b>Type of issue</b>	If this is a widespread issue, it could be classified as an organisational issue, Type 1, where communication is not the cause of the problem, but could assist in providing a solution. It might also in part be a management communication issue, where too little or no communication between managers and employees is the problem, not telling employees what they should hear – in this case, the importance of a service culture, and what the role of each employee is.
<b>Most strategic stakeholders for this issue</b>	All employees at national, provincial and local levels, but specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• officials serving in the municipalities under which housing projects are in the pipeline or are already being implemented;</li> <li>• officials at Head Office in Pretoria, specifically front-line employees, personnel directorate, corporate services, secretaries (as gatekeepers) and corporate communication directorate.</li> <li>• the homeless who are the potential/actual beneficiaries of housing projects and who suffer the consequences of poor service;</li> <li>• internal departmental media.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Implications of the issue for the stakeholders</b></p>	<p>The biggest implications are for potential beneficiaries themselves, who are suffering poor service, maybe even corruption.</p> <p>Lack of a service culture may impact negatively on the Department's reputation among all the strategic stakeholders, and by implication on the Government.</p> <p>The employees themselves might suffer the consequences by constantly experiencing negativity from the potential beneficiaries or alliance partners. This might lead to a decrease in productivity and job satisfaction.</p> <p>Lack of inculcation of corporate values in employees may result in disharmony. It may lead to the formation of fragmented sub-cultures with each doing his/her own thing, a staff complement feeling unappreciated, and therefore dissatisfied, leading to high employee turnover.</p>
<p><b>Corporate communication strategy</b></p>	<p>To communicate to employees why a service culture is important and the consequences of a lack of service ethos.</p>
<p><b>Communication goals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inform employees on the <i>Batho Pele</i> "People First" White Paper.</li> <li>• To explain the importance of the principles within the larger context of the Department's vision and mission.</li> <li>• To educate employees on the <i>Batho Pele</i> principles, and its implementation in their specific job context.</li> <li>• To explain to employees that compliance with the <i>Batho Pele</i> principles will earn them rewards.</li> <li>• To inspire employees to serve the public and the department with pride.</li> <li>• To cultivate in employees a commitment to eradicate corruption and unscrupulous practices.</li> <li>• To restore public confidence in the Department of Housing, by showing commitment to excellent public service.</li> <li>• To communicate the Department's Government's commitment to consultation with stakeholders.</li> <li>• To set in place feedback mechanisms on service standards.</li> </ul>



6.2.3.4 Strategic Issue 4: Some RDP houses built to date are substandard — unscrupulous developers are pocketing huge profits.

**Table 4: Strategic issue 4**

<p><b>Description of Issue 4</b></p>	<p>The Department of Housing has to date delivered over 1 million houses, providing shelter to over 4 million people. Intelligence gathered from both media reports and public complaints has revealed that a significant number of homes delivered are substandard. These houses were built by unscrupulous developers who pocketed the profits, but did not deliver the goods in a satisfactory condition. Although the Housing Consumers Protection Measures Act No 95 of 1998 provides for government to bring the shoddy construction culprits to task, this provision might not apply to work done before the law came into being on December 1, 1999.</p>
<p><b>Type of issue</b></p>	<p>Organisational Issue Type 2, where communication is not the cause of the problem, cannot provide a solution, but can explain the situation. In this case, where some of the complaints are received at the Help Desk (part of the Communication Directorate), it is the responsibility of Communication to bring this issue and its implications to the attention of top management.</p>
<p><b>Most strategic stakeholders for this issue</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recipients of substandard houses.</li> <li>• Future recipients of houses.</li> <li>• Alliance partners.</li> <li>• Developers.</li> <li>• The media (including internal departmental media).</li> </ul>

<p><b>Implications of the issue for the strategic stakeholders</b></p>	<p>Government appears to be protecting its political image at the expense of the people it is claiming to serve. This damages the credibility and image of Government, and by implication, the Department of Housing.</p> <p>Not only are occupants of substandard houses in physical danger, but they receive little shelter from the elements. Government might have to shoulder the financial responsibility to repair the substandard houses built prior to December 1999.</p>
<p><b>Corporate communication strategy</b></p>	<p>To inform the nation of the problem, assure everyone that the matter is being attended to, and provide information on the measures being taken.</p> <p>Provide information on the Housing Consumers Protection Measures Act.</p>
<p><b>Communication goals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inform housing recipients of how the Government acted on their behalf once the problem came to their attention.</li> <li>• To acknowledge past mistakes with the intent to demonstrate transparency and therefore credibility/integrity.</li> <li>• To inform all stakeholders of the systems that have been put in place to prevent the past mistakes from recurring, e.g. the capacity-building process for local and provincial officials in partnership with WITS and other universities.</li> <li>• To ask recipients of substandard homes to cooperate in bringing the culprits to task.</li> <li>• To inform recipients of substandard houses of the options available to them, and the avenues they should follow to set the process in motion.</li> </ul>

### 6.3 Discussion of findings and recommendations: Phase 2

As the principal participant in the action research process (also playing the role of Researcher 2), the Deputy Director: Communication Services developed a corporate communication strategy for the Department of Housing. This strategy, as her communicative output, was the unit of analysis in Phase 2 of this study. The document was assessed and evaluated by Researcher 1 – being the Deputy Director's lecturer in the Honours course in Strategic Communication Management at the University of Pretoria, and the academic who developed the model on which the strategy was based.

The Deputy Director showed considerable insight into the Department of Housing's key strategic issues, pointing towards her knowledge of, and experience in, the strategic management processes and structures of the Department. She demonstrated an ability to make a contribution towards strategy formulation at macro level by suggesting, in Strategic Issue 1 for example, possible corporate strategies that could be followed to offset the issue of inadequate funding to meet national housing demands. Being able to derive a corporate communication strategy successfully for each strategic issue, she demonstrated knowledge and skills in strategic communication management, and therefore the ability to perform an important activity of a practitioner in the redefined role of the *manager*.

Contributory factors to this situation might have been the fact that firstly, the Deputy Director had access to senior managers and strategic information by attending strategic top management meetings in the Department. This points to the importance of providing senior practitioners with such access to empower them to make a strategic contribution. Secondly, the Deputy Director was in the process of completing her Honours degree in Communication Management, which might account to some degree for the strategic communication knowledge and skills. This points to the importance of training for senior communication practitioners to empower them to make a contribution towards communication excellence, and therefore to their organisation's effectiveness.

Another insight that emerged from the study was support for the Excellence Study's finding (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995) that it is not necessarily the most senior practitioner who must have knowledge of strategic management/communication, but that another practitioner with the required knowledge and skills might also make a strategic contribution (if allowed by top management to do so).

A last finding points to the applicability of the model for developing corporate communication strategy in a government department setting. In the evaluation of the corporate communication strategy document, no problems could be detected in applying the constructs to the Department of Housing.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Although a private sector organisation and a government department differ in that the former is for profit and the latter is a non-profit entity, no indications were found in this study that the roles to be played by corporate communication practitioners in either sector differ conceptually. Management principles and processes, as far as the development of a corporate communication strategy is concerned, seem to be similar.

The conclusion is reached that government institutions could benefit from having senior practitioners functioning in the strategic management roles of the corporate communication function, i.e. the roles of the *strategist* and the *manager*. It is accepted that in smaller organisations these two roles will of necessity be played by the same practitioner. However, bigger organisations that function in turbulent environments, such as government departments, possibly merit more than one practitioner in these roles.

Professional associations and tertiary institutions in South Africa have only been offering training in communication *management* since the early nineties. Training in *strategic* communication management is an even more recent occurrence. It is therefore the responsibility of both the employer and practitioners in senior management positions to see that they are suitably qualified to function effectively in these roles – be it through undergraduate or postgraduate study, diploma or short courses.

Knowledge of, and skills in, strategic management/communication and research are of paramount importance to corporate communication practitioners to participate in an organisation's strategy formulation (Steyn & Puth, 2000). Senior practitioners should demonstrate knowledge of their organisation's mission, strategies and goals, and their communication solutions must answer real needs and reflect the greater picture. Regardless of the nature of their organisations, private or government, senior practitioners should function as fully fledged strategic advisers to top management. It is in the identification of stakeholder concerns and issues, and the management of communication with those strategic stakeholders, that the corporate communication function could make its biggest contribution to organisational effectiveness.

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P. Schutte

## Political rhetoric used by the main parties in the final debate before the 1999 election

### ABSTRACT

In order to identify the rhetorical characteristics of the participants, this study aimed to describe, interpret and evaluate the verbal strategies and tactics used by the five debaters who participated. The Eclectic Approach within the experiential perspective was used.

Pahad revealed an idiosyncratic rhetorical style. Leon lived up to his party's overall strategy: *"To Fight Back"*. He mostly used the strategy of attack and pinpointed the causes of identified problems in no uncertain terms. Van Schalkwyk appeared to be the man with the facts. Of all the debaters, he made the most use of substantial evidence and proof. Ngobane interacted very little with his fellow debaters. This is in line with his view that opposition parties should rather *"move towards consensus politics, ...but not come and attack the government"*. Viljoen did not once identify himself with his party. He created the image of the political advisor who stands above party politics.

Despite identified negative aspects of the debaters' style and the imperfect format, debate should always be on the political agenda. Rigorous inquiry towards political and moral truth should be at the core of the rhetoric of a democracy to improve the quality of debating and argumentation, in order to enrich democracy and to allow citizens to make well-informed decisions.

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*Paul Schutte is the chair of the subject group, Communication, within the School for Communication Studies, PU for CHE. This article is based on a paper delivered at the 4<sup>th</sup> African Symposium on Rhetoric: Rhetoric and Orality, held in Lusaka, Zambia, on 9-11 August 2000. Schutte received a grant from the NRF.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research questions and methodology

Political rhetoric can take many forms. One of its oral forms is a debate before a live audience or on radio or television. Although there are many prophets of doom, proponents of debates see this form of campaigning as an important contributing factor to the democratic process of electing a party for office (Krause, 1988:2). Hart (2000:117-126) identifies five unique functions of debate in comparison with other forms of political campaigning, and concludes that debates are “comparatively sober, comparatively focused, comparatively plainspoken, comparatively self-risking encounters with some potential to create genuine dialogue”.

Most critical citizens would agree with Hart’s assertion that, most of the time, debates serve the majority of the electorate better than one-sided speeches where the politician can say anything without someone challenging his ideas and arguments (Hart, 2000:116). Thus, debate should flourish especially in the early years of a new democracy. New democracies and new institutions need to demonstrate that they are more legitimate than those they have replaced.

Presidential debates began as an innovation in the 1960 election campaign between John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon. Since then televised debates have become a permanent and major part of the election process in the United States (Nimmo & Sanders, 1981: 273). A similar, but not identical, debate took place in 1994 between Nelson Mandela (the then leader of the African National Congress, ANC) and F W de Klerk (the then leader of the National Party, NP) before South Africa’s first fully democratic election. Before the second election in 1999 another kind of debate with a unique format also took place a few days before voting day. This final debate, where five different parties voiced their stand on three important issues, would give a definite image of the rhetorical means that have been used to secure the assent of the voters.

Such a debate can be studied from different perspectives. Through the focus of the specific “methodological filter,” each perspective emphasises different aspects. The debate may, for instance, be studied from a sociolinguistic perspective (Dodd, 1998: 124). Most of the participants could not use their mother tongue in this debate, and it would therefore be interesting to investigate the way in which the debaters’ use of language, speech behaviour and accent were influenced by factors like race, ethnicity, gender, social status and education. One could also use this perspective to study the way in which their use of language is applied to mobilise different social groups in their audience (different social classes, political parties or even gender). Furthermore, a semiotic perspective could be used to identify how verbal and non-verbal signs have

been used to represent different meanings (see Littlejohn, 1998: 52-55). However, to get a picture of the rhetorical means deployed in the debate, the researcher preferred to engage in rhetorical criticism. The primary dimensions of rhetorical criticism are description, interpretation, and evaluation (Brock et al., 1990:16). The aim of criticism is not to destroy, but rather to build an understanding of the communication artefact. This knowledge of the operation of rhetoric may help make the student of criticism a better communicator. Thus, the focus here is on the discursive logic of the message (Smith, 1988:268), namely the verbal strategies and tactics used in the debate. This study, therefore, endeavours to answer the following questions:

- Which relational strategies and tactics were used by the debaters?
- Which substantial strategies were used by the debaters?
- Were they more "issue" or more "image" related?
- Are there significant similarities and/or differences between the strategies and tactics used by the different debaters?
- What are the rhetorical characteristics of the style used by the different debaters?

In order to answer these questions, the so-called Eclectic Approach within the experiential perspective was used. According to Brock et al. (1990:95), this perspective can be summarised as follows: No single element or rhetorical principle can be assumed as the starting point for criticism; an infinite combination of concepts, strategies and postures is available for the study, with the understanding that any system of categorising is arbitrary and does not accurately reflect an assumed external reality; and no special pattern exists for the study of public discourse. It is important to note that there is no "neutral" description or evaluation (Rosenfield, 1990:97). Any description or evaluation is derived from the researcher's individual interpretative perspectives, which remain open to further interpretation. In a certain sense this is a case study of a communication artefact, with the purpose to gain understanding of the strategies used in the debate and ultimately to promote better communication as far as political rhetoric is concerned (Watt & Van den Berg, 1995:256; Marshall & Rossman, 1995:124).

The following method was used:

- A verbatim transcription of the videoed debate.
- The strategies that Martel (1983:62-72) identified were used to identify and apply tactics and strategies.
- A descriptive analysis (De Wet, 1991) to indicate similarities or differences in the use of strategies and tactics.
- An evaluation of the descriptive analysis.

Description, interpretation and evaluation cannot be isolated in this discussion. These aspects tend to merge with one another, because each shapes the next and reflects back on the other.

## 1.2 Background of the election

The debate took place on national TV during the programme, *Face the Nation*, between the “five biggest parties in parliament”: Mr Essop Pahad (member of the Central Committee and Political Bureau of the South African Communist Party – SACP), at that stage the Deputy Minister in the office of the Executive Deputy President until 16 June 1999 and from 17 June 1999, the Minister in the office of the President, and member of the Executive Committee of the African National Congress – ANC), Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk (leader of the New National Party – NNP), Mr Tony Leon (leader of the Democratic Party – DP), Dr Ben Ngubane (Minister of Art, Culture, Science and Technology and member of the Inkhata Freedom Party – IFP), and Genl Constand Viljoen (former leader of the Freedom Front – FF). This last debate took place on 30 May, 1999, a few days before election day. It was considered to be of great importance and offered an opportunity in which the “big five” could challenge each other.

The analysis must be viewed against the particular context of this debate. This second election of the new democracy did not have all the characteristics of a “normal” democratic election, because the result was a foregone conclusion. All the parties knew beforehand that the ANC would win the election. The only question was whether they would obtain a two-thirds majority. (The results were: ANC: 66.35%; DP: 9.56%; IFP: 8.58%; NNP: 6.87%; FF: 0.80%.) This could also explain why the ANC did not send their leader and president-to-be, Mr Thabo Mbeki, but Mr Essop Pahad. One can assume that Pahad’s goal was to reassure his supporters, or simply to avoid doing anything that might jeopardise their support. Leon and Van Schalkwyk, on the other hand, were at that stage opposing each other to be the major opposition party in parliament. The “battle” between these two parties was an important aspect in this debate and in their respective campaigns. Indeed, the DP took over the role as the main opposition party from the NNP after the election. (In the 1994 election the DP received 1.73% [+7.83%] and the NNP 20.39% [-13.52%] of the votes.)

## 1.3 Procedure

The issues were debated without any format and formal restrictions, unlike the Mandela/De Klerk debate in 1994, which was modelled on the format of the American Presidential debates. Tim Modise acted as chairperson who introduced the three topics, namely corruption; unemployment and economic growth; and the possibility of a two-thirds majority. He also asked questions and facilitated the turn-taking as he saw fit. He often abruptly interrupted debaters to give the floor to another debater, even when they had not yet finished expressing a thought or an idea. The debaters themselves also interrupted each other and asked each other direct questions. It ended with each of the debaters giving short closing remarks.

Pahad used the most words: 2164 - 25.7%, followed by Leon: 1923 - 22.8%, Van Schalkwyk: 1726 - 20.5%, Viljoen: 1458 - 17.3%, and Ngubane: 1148 - 13.6%. Against this cryptic background, the relational strategies of the debaters can be discussed.

## 2. RELATIONAL STRATEGIES

The relational strategies refer to the dominant modes of rhetorical conduct during the debate, and can be directed towards either the opponent, the panellist or the television audience itself (Martel, 1983:62). In this debate, the five men addressed the chairperson, but also spoke directly to one another, especially towards the end of the debate.

According to the descriptive analyses, the following relational strategies were used:

Sell your case, which is realised in the form of a verbal testimonial and in stating the party's policies.

"Me too...me better" is a strategy where the candidate identifies himself with some of the opponent's goals, but persuades viewers that his party is better qualified or equipped to carry them out.

Attack the opponent's arguments, evidence and/or reasoning by demonstrating that they are invalid, erroneous or irrelevant to weaken the opponent's case.

Defend, or rebuild, by introducing new and additional evidence and/or reasoning to further substantiate your arguments or the response after being attacked.

Ignore means paying little or no heed to the opponent's attacks or even the panellist's questions.

Other refers to any other remarks that are mere formalities, or the discussion of an issue in an "objective manner" as a political scientist would do, or aspects that are not related to the party's distinct policy or image issues (see figure 1).

The way in which these strategies were employed by the debaters is discussed below.

### 2.1 Sell

Normally, selling is appropriate if the candidate's policies or credentials are not known or questioned. Selling was the strategy that Van Schalkwyk (27%) (n=total number of words spoken by him) used the most, compared to other strategies. The possible reason could be that the polls at that stage indicated that the NNP's support was declining and that the DP would become the biggest opposition party. The NNP would therefore want to "*work together [with the ANC] to address problems, because we must turn it around*", but would also have wanted to oppose the ANC where it counted. Van Schalkwyk also focused on the aspect that they wished to include all the different groups and provide for the basic needs of the people. (Refer to example 1 in the

addendum.)

Leon used this strategy (12%) to distinguish the DP from both the ANC and the NNP (example 2).

It is interesting that Pahad dedicated 24% of his content to selling, although he mentioned: *“of course the ANC is going to win the elections”*. Maybe the reason for this could be ascribed to the ANC’s need to get a two-thirds majority (example 3).

Ngobane’s strategy took a soft approach, without an explicit endeavour to sell the IFP (20%). He referred once to the IFP’s leader and mentioned his party’s name only once in his closing remarks (example 4).

The reason for Viljoen’s 1% of selling could be that he knew that the FF had a fixed group of supporters and little chance to grow in numbers. He did not use a selling-oriented style and did not even mention the name of his party once; instead, most of the time he used *“I”* and sometimes, *“we”*. In style and choice of words he created the perception that he propagated his own ideas and not those of the FF (example 5).

## 2.2 Me too...Me better

This strategy, which is a special kind or intensive form of selling, was only used by three debaters: Leon (9%), Van Schalkwyk (6%) and Viljoen (6%). This strategy is applied when the debater directly contrasts his party’s policy or plan with that of the opposition. Viljoen, though, gave the impression that he spoke on behalf of himself and not the FF (examples 6, 7, 8).

## 2.3 Attack

Attack was the strategy most used by the representatives of two parties who opposed each other to be the biggest opposition party: Leon (68%) and Van Schalkwyk (62%). They tried to keep Pahad on the defensive, but without much success. Pahad defended his party’s position only to a certain extent and ignored many specific issues.

Leon’s focus on this strategy and the non-verbal intensity that he employed were in line with their campaign’s slogan: *“Fight Back”*. The DP’s style and campaign strategy displayed a more aggressive style: *“The DP is the only party which is fighting back. The only party which has provided effective real opposition from a small base.”*

The nature and content of the attack differed substantially between Leon and Van Schalkwyk on the one hand, and Pahad on the other hand. Leon and Van Schalkwyk

focused their attacks on policy issues and most of the time, they provided some form of proof (examples 9, 10, 11, 12).

Most of the attacks were directed against the ANC, while the smallest number of attacks came from Pahad, who represented the ANC. This would seem normal, because the ruling party is normally in the dock and more on the defensive.

Pahad directed almost all his attacks in a sarcastic manner on the ethos of his opponents. His attacks were mostly short without much detail and most of the time without supporting evidence. This is similar to the attacks that Mandela launched on De Klerk in their debate (Schutte, 1999:73). Neither focused their attacks on the issues, but rather on the ethos of their opponents. In his attack on Leon, Pahad insisted that statements had to be backed by facts, but when his opponents gave the facts to prove their statements, he passed them off as petty politics or playing games or emotional reaction. Thus, he attempted to attack their ethos (example 13).

Pahad also built "straw men" and put words in his opponents' mouths to launch some of his counter-attacks (see also pseudo-clash) (example 14).

Both Ngobane (27%) and Viljoen (29%) used a softer approach in their attacks. Ngobane's few attacks can be labelled as mild criticism from a "friend". The possible reason for this indirect approach is that they felt closer to the ANC because they were part of the Government of National Unity and believed that consensus politics was the better way to go. Ngobane never explicitly blamed the ANC's policy for any problem. He even contradicted himself once. After the question from Tim: *"Is it as simple as it sounds here, that government tolerates corruption and allows it to happen, given that the IFP is part of government?"* Ngobane answered: *"Well, there's no way that government at any stage tolerates corruption. What we need to understand is that this type of problem thrives in an environment that allows it to thrive."* The fact that all the corruption mentioned happened within government departments at national and provincial levels indicated that the government was indeed the "environment" in which it took place!

This choice not to attack the ANC could also have been because of the view of the IFP spokesperson, Musa Zondi, who just one week before this debate said that debates had no aim and would result in mud-slinging (Bezuidenhout, 1999:2). However, Ngobane attacked the other three parties in a more direct manner (example 15).

Viljoen attacked in a restrained and cordial manner as if he was trying to save the face of the opponent (example 16). Instead of directly attacking Pahad, as a member of the Communist Party, he preferred to use an indirect style of warning and the use of *we* instead of *you*.

## 2.4 Defence

With most of the attacks launched against the ANC, one could expect that Pahad would have done most of the defending. Although a candidate who defends a lot appears guilty, defence is of the utmost importance when a decisive issue has been attacked (Martel, 1983:67). Pahad (43%) defended the most, but not in accordance with the quality and quantity of the attack that had been made and not as much as one would have expected. He even ignored many accusations and challenges (see 2.5). He also belittled his opponents, put words in their mouths, exaggerated their statements and passed them off as jokes or petty politics (see also examples under tactics and attack) (example 17).

In example 17, he shifted the burden of corruption to the past regime and used an analogy where he compared a corrupt political system like "apartheid" with corruption in the management of money; yet these are two different kinds of corruption. Pahad also defended the ANC in a lighthearted way with the implication that one cannot blame or attack the present government because there was an irresponsible and corrupt government in the past: *"Did we ever have a responsible and accountable government in this country?" "I'm not sure that it's helpful that in our struggle to root out corruption, that we keep on reducing it to a party, petty party political battles."*

Instead of reacting to the accusation that the ANC plans to phase in 25 new taxes, he shifted the issue to their plan of the reduction of taxes and to the fact that Van Schalkwyk was too ignorant to know that it takes time to reduce taxes (example 18). The following example shows that when it comes to policy issues, more specifics must be spelled out. Ngobane, Viljoen and Pahad were proponents for strengthening small- and medium-size businesses, but in practice it would be realised in totally different ways. For debate to be effective and informative to the electorate, detail must be spelled out about this issue, and questions such as: "In what way? To what extent? To whom?" must be addressed (example 19).

Overall, Pahad's defence was not satisfactory. He neither focused on the real issues nor answered with well-supported statements. He tried to shift the burden to non-issues and the ethos of the attackers.

## 2.5 Ignore

Pahad chose to ignore many attacks and accusations by not reacting to them. He often created a pseudo-clash, shifted the burden to the former regime, or shifted the basic element of the attack (see examples above and under pseudo-clash). This lack of responsiveness is often the strategy of the frontrunner (Martel, 1983:68), and in this

case even more so, as there was no doubt about the outcome of the election. Debaters also ignore issues if they do not have good enough answers or proof to defend the issues.

Pahad ignored, among other smaller issues, the following attacks:

- that the ANC failed in four major areas;
- that the ANC youth thought that crime was acceptable;
- that the ANC's election campaign was funded by Libya's Gaddafi;
- that they hid behind other people and institutions;
- that they were unwilling to act against ANC members who were implicated in corruption;
- that the court system prevented satisfactory convictions;
- that the country, since 1994, had lost one and a half million existing jobs;
- that the job creation level was -3%;
- that the RDP and GEAR failed;
- that the Communist Party prevented the ANC from implementing government policy, especially GEAR;
- that they suggested changing the system of the provinces if they got a two-thirds majority; and
- that they planned to phase in 25 indirect taxes.

Although it is not possible to react to every single attack and accusation from three attacking opponents, important issues should have been addressed.

## 2.6 Other

Certain aspects of the content could not be categorised under the above strategic headings. This content is not so much debate oriented, but more typical of a panel discussion. Sometimes it is of a philosophical nature and/or not directly coupled to specific party politics. The majority of Viljoen's and Ngobane's content can be grouped under this heading.

One can only speculate about the possible reasons. It is, perhaps, their respective rhetorical style and personal choice; or they could prefer to project the image of the "objective" and rational debater whose priorities are not to attack the ANC on the one hand or aggressively sell their parties on the other hand; or they could have decided that whatever they said, would not make any difference to the outcome of the election. Viljoen created the image of a political advisor who gives advice in his personal capacity and not necessarily as a spokesperson of the FF. Even in his closing remarks, he did not sell his party. An audience who did not know him would not have identified him with his party. Viljoen and Ngobane spoke often on behalf of "we", which created ambiguity.



It was unclear whether they referred to the FF/IFP, the government of National Unity, all political parties or the general electorate (examples 20, 21,22).

### 3. TACTICS

#### 3.1 Forensic tactics

While strategies indicate the debater's broad approach, tactics refer to the specific verbal behaviour at micro-level. In other words, the strategies are realised through the tactics. The strategies and tactics are subsequently not mutually exclusive. According to Martel (1983:77) three interrelated categories embrace the tactical choices, namely physical, forensic and tonal categories. In this analysis, only the forensic or argumentative behaviour and a few crucial tonal tactics are investigated. Although a few references are made to non-verbal behaviour in order to give the context of the verbal behaviour, the non-verbal or physical tactics are not investigated.

The following tactics were used by the debaters: outright denial; turning the tables; shotgun blast; highlighting vagueness or evasiveness; tossing bouquets; asserting counter-arguments; direct questions and rhetorical questions; appeal to commonly held values; and pseudo-issues and pseudo-clash. Timing tactics, surprising closing statements, apologies, confession, forewarning and controlling backlash are tactics that were not been used in this debate.

##### 3.1.1 *Outright denial*

The tactics of denial were forcefully used four times by Leon and Van Schalkwyk. Pahad denied the proposition of Van Schalkwyk that *"no foreign investors want to invest here because of crime"* and said that *"We've had a sizable amount coming in"*. To this Leon reacted with a cryptic: *"I disagree."* Another example of an outright denial occurred after Pahad had put words in Leon's mouth (example 23).

After Viljoen proposed the devolution of power to local authorities in the former Transkei in an attempt to develop the communities, Pahad reacted while laughing: *"For that area...no, no"*.

Van Schalkwyk's denial of the accusation from Ngobane that they were not addressing the issues that are relevant to the people is another example of outright denial.

Leon and Viljoen also used outright denial when Van Schalkwyk labelled the DP a right-wing party *"who says to whites, like the FF, 'we would like to take you away from the rest of SA' "*. According to Leon, Van Schalkwyk *"is trying to account for his failures as an*

*opposition. He has let down his voters again and again."*

Denial was backed by some kind of reason only in half the cases where it was used.

### 3.1.2 *Turning the tables*

This tactic consists of using the opponent's evidence, words or arguments, and turning them against the opponent. Pahad tried to turn the tables on the opposition after they had said that the ANC could "*amend certain chunks of the constitution*" with a two-thirds majority, by remarking: "*First of all, if we actually look at what the opposition had been saying, this hanging brigades of people; it is they who want to change the constitution, it's not the ANC who wants to change (Leon: "Ag") the constitution. When you say you want to hang rapists and murderers even without trial, you want to change the constitution.*" This is also an example of attacking a straw man, because none of the debaters said that they wanted to hang someone without trial.

A variation of this technique was used by Leon when he used the "slogan" of the ANC: *Enough is enough*, to attack their failure to act against corruption: "*We have example after example where, in fact, the ANC itself has not fought back or, to use its phrase, has not said 'enough is enough' at the appropriate time, and the appropriate time is when the event happens.*"

If a debater can turn an opposing argument around by transforming it into a reason to support his own position, this tactic can be a very persuasive tool. Yet, none of these examples were really successful, particularly in the light of Pahad's distortion of the facts.

### 3.1.3 *Shotgun blast and laundry list*

Shotgun blast is supposed to be a "forceful, concentrated multifaceted denunciation of the opponent's character, record, position, or campaign" (Martel, 1983:85). This tactic makes it difficult for the opponent to respond to all the aspects and tends to overwhelm the opponent.

Although not in such a forceful and concentrated way, Leon used this tactic twice and Van Schalkwyk once. Leon gave a list of promises made by Mr Mbeki in Kimberley, which were not realised. Van Schalkwyk gave a list of issues when he attacked the economic policy of the ANC: the one and a half million jobs lost since 1994, the protection of the jobs of COSATU at the expense of the unemployed, and the phasing in of 25 new indirect taxes (example 24).

### 3.1.4 *Highlighting vagueness and evasiveness*

This specific tactic was not used in the debate, but a variation of it came to the fore when Pahad frequently questioned his opponents' honesty and appropriate knowledge indirectly and sometimes directly (examples 25-27).

This highlighting of the opponents' lack of seriousness and ignorance is ironic, because Pahad appeared to be the one who had not taken the debate seriously, because of the way in which he laughed at some views of his opponents, the sometimes sarcastic style he used to belittle certain propositions of his opponents, the distortion of opponents' views and the lack of thorough well-supported arguments.

### 3.1.5 *Tossing bouquets*

There were two examples of this tactic. In essence, it involves creating an image of fairness and appreciation of the positive aspects of one's opponents (examples 28, 29).

### 3.1.6 *Counter-arguments*

A counter-argument is supposed to directly oppose or trump the competing argument of the opponent. Pahad used a counter-argument when he tried to refute the attack on corruption, by referring to the former government, which had been labelled a crime against humanity (see also 2.4). This is the fallacy of two wrongs making a right.

After Leon attacked the ANC for never holding ministers accountable for corruption or never making them resign, Pahad countered by mentioning that the Public Protector, after examination, had exonerated minister Zuma. Leon in turn countered this by claiming that *"he exonerated minister Zuma from criminal misconduct; what he didn't do was to deal with the question of accountability and ministerial responsibility for misdeeds of senior officials and indeed of the department"*, because that was the issue at that stage.

After Pahad's argument that *"it's the ANC that has set up the Heath Commission and the Public Protector"* to investigate corruption, Leon countered with: *"But why the ANC thinks, for example, the Public Protector is its own creation, is frankly absurd. It was a multiple party agreement by all parties of the Constitutional negotiations."*

After Leon stated that the ANC had not implemented Mr Mbeki's promises to *"privatise massively"*, Pahad gave a counter-example and said: *"Tony, it doesn't help anybody watching this programme to be selective with facts. The equity stake that was sold to Telkom is part of that process of the restructuring of State assets."* One example, though, did not

prove that “massive” privatisation was taking place.

### 3.1.7 *Direct questions and rhetorical questions*

Because of the flexible format, 14 direct and 5 rhetorical questions were asked, most of them by Leon (6 direct and 3 rhetorical questions) and Pahad (4 direct and 1 rhetorical question). Of these, 6 were answered, 2 were partly answered and 6 got no reply. Only 1 rhetorical question was partly answered. Questions force the opposition to follow one’s lead. If the opponent cannot answer satisfactorily, one has succeeded in discovering weak areas in their case (examples 30-33).

### 3.1.8 *Appeal to commonly held values*

This tactic was not used in its pure form. The closest use of it was when Van Schalkwyk twice referred to the basic needs of the people. Fulfilling the basic needs of people stems from a positive value. Generally accepted values, when they are applicable to most segments of an audience, can motivate people in their everyday behaviour (Ross, 1994:48) (example 34).

### 3.1.9 *Pseudo-clash and pseudo-issues*

According to Martel (1983:103), a pseudo-issue “is a position taken by a candidate for selfish political gain which in reality is far less important than he implies – if not actually insignificant. He exaggerates the importance of weaknesses, normally because he has difficulty assailing its strengths”. Pseudo-clash creates the impression that disagreement exists when it may not be present (example 35).

By building a strawman and by distorting Van Schalkwyk’s words, Pahad created the image that Van Schalkwyk wanted to change the Bill of Rights and take people’s democratic rights away, while he and Leon only asked that officials who had been found guilty by the Public Protector and the Heath Commission should be held accountable on a political level by their leaders, or should not be on the list of possible candidates.

Another example of an assertion against the opposition without the correct data (Toulmin; Freeley 1998:152) is Pahad’s words: “*First of all, if we actually look at what the opposition parties have been saying, this hanging brigades of people. It is they who want to change the constitution, it’s not the ANC who wants to change it.*”

## 3.2 Tonal tactics

Tonal tactics refer to the general attitude or tone of the presentation being consistent with image goals and other strategies and tactics. Martel (1983:94) mentions four tonal aspects, namely controlling backlash; wit or humour; avoiding defensiveness; and reference tactics. Three of these are applicable to this debate. Defensiveness has been dealt with under strategies (see 2.4).

### 3.2.1 Humour

Pahad tried a few times to use some humour and Leon only once. According to the reaction of the other debaters and the chairperson, only Leon succeeded to a certain extent. Apart from the above, there were no examples of real wit.

After Van Schalkwyk said that the RDP programme had and that not one ANC politician mentioned the word, Pahad replied with a smile: *"Is it? I went to the funeral."* Nobody else in the studio found it funny.

Leon created laughter between the debaters when he said: *"Mr Mbeki made a revolutionary speech – not revolutionary as in what Essop would appreciate revolution – but revolutionary as in favour of capitalism where he said that we are going to have a six-pack of fundamental reform."*

### 3.2.2 Reference tactics

At the beginning of the debate, all the debaters referred to each other in a formal way, but as the debate progressed, they changed to first names. The exception here was Viljoen, to whom everybody consistently referred as General:

Pahad: *"General, I think it is wonderful, but you are a wonderful soldier, but you can't decentralise. Sorry, Ben, you can't decentralise economics in that way."*

Viljoen referred once to Leon as *"my friend Tony"* and Leon also said: *"I still want to ask my friend Essop a question."* In the latter case, it was obvious that "friend" was not meant literally. The tone between Leon and Van Schalkwyk was somewhat tense throughout the debate. This can be ascribed to the battle between them to remain or become the main opposition party.

### 3.3 Substance tactics

The forensic tactics (“how”) cannot be discussed without referring to the substance (“what”). Nevertheless, it is important to focus on the substance on its own, to get a more complete picture of the rhetoric. The focus is here on the verbal manner of couching the substance for maximum strategic advantage.

Although this debate focused much more on issues (94%) than on mere image compared to the Mandela/De Klerk debate (41%) (Schutte, 1999:84) in 1994, the quality of the issue-knowledge and the rhetorical choices that the politicians made to debate the issues should also be taken into account (Zhu et al., 1994:302). Did they, for instance, focus on the general nature and significance of the issue and problems, or on the causes of the problems, or on the solutions to the identified problems? Only the first two issues, namely corruption and the lack of economic growth and job creation, and not the issue of a two-thirds majority, have been taken into account for this analysis. The last issue is not an issue of policy on the same level as the first two. The chairperson and two of the debaters also introduced other unrelated issues into the last section of the debate (see figure 2).

In debating a policy issue, it is normally easy to discuss the significance thereof, to identify the possible causes of the problems or to blame an agent or agency. The crucial aspect is, however, to find practical solutions to the identified problem and to propose better solutions if the current policy has been criticised. The specificity of the solutions and the necessary support by solid reasoning and substantial proof would improve the quality of the solution. A distinction has been drawn in the analysis between solutions that were vaguely phrased or phrased with a broad perspective, and more concrete solutions which imply a certain plan of action. There is, for example, a vast difference between the solutions proposed by Leon and Van Schalkwyk in the following examples. Comments are in brackets (examples 36, 37, 38). Van Schalkwyk’s solutions were not flawless, but he gave more reasons for his solution and as much detail as the format and time allowed.

The debaters sometimes avoided specificity because they might not have known enough about the issue, or the commitments might have been politically dangerous, or it might have consumed time that might have been spent better on another issue. Nevertheless, specificity and concrete examples were necessary to avoid ambiguity and create a clash of ideas. Both Van Schalkwyk (“*We can turn it [bad economic growth] around if we... revise the tax system*”) and Pahad (“*We need to find a better tax system*”) proposed that the tax system should be changed. They meant totally different types of change, so without more detail, there was no real clash and not enough information for the listener to know the difference (see also examples on p. 15 under Defence). It

was not clear which labour laws were “wrong”, which ones the NNP approved of and which ones not (example 39).

It is noteworthy that the two non-aggressive debaters who did not sell their respective parties to a great extent focused their strategy more on solutions that tended to be more specific, rather than on the nature of the problem and the possible causes (Viljoen: 13 (vague) + 59 (more detailed solutions) =72% and Ngobane: 4+65=69%). Indeed, the practical solutions were the ultimate issues, where parties differed from each other. This provides the clash of ideas in a debate (examples 40-41).

In contrast to Viljoen and Ngobane, Leon focused most of his time on the causes of the problems and on who and what were to blame (75%), and much less on solutions (17%). This is in line with his focus on the attack strategy and the DP’s “Fight Back” campaign strategy. The few solutions that had been offered were vague and showed a lack of detail (see also examples above) (example 42).

Perhaps this lack of detail and possible solutions could be evaluated negatively from a forensic point of view, but the aggressive focus on the attack against the ANC was rhetorically probably the right decision to win votes from the opposition electorate. This probably resulted from the knowledge that the ANC would rule the country and that detailed solutions would be a waste of time. At that stage, they only endeavoured to be tough opposition in parliament.

According to the figures, Pahad (21+26=47%) spent most of his time on solutions, but even his more concrete solutions lacked detail. He possibly gave little detail to prevent criticism from his opponents. It is also possible that he simply did not bother to give proper and well-supported solutions, because he knew they were going to win anyhow. He also often referred to past solutions and not to what they intended to do in future (examples 43, 44, 45).

Viljoen and Ngobane also pleaded for decentralisation (see examples above) and the empowering of small and medium enterprises. It seemed that these parties wanted more or less the same thing, and Pahad reacted with “*you can’t decentralise economics in that way*”. If Ngobane and Viljoen had not explained in more detail what they meant, one would have assumed they proposed the same policy. But Pahad’s “way” of decentralisation was still vague. The reasons that he gave were not clear and the argument appeared shallow (see also 2.4 under Defence).

These examples illustrate how vague and broad assertions without more detailed information only caused confusion. They did not give satisfactory information to the electorate.

The figures of Van Schalkwyk's strategical choices show that he used most of his words to provide solutions (9+46=55%), followed by the causes (31%). As mentioned above, Van Schalkwyk gave more detailed information, which showed a balance between significance, causes and possible solutions to the problem as well (see examples under 2.1 and 2.3).

A conclusive answer about the effect on the viewers cannot be given, but according to the analysis, the main focus was more on issue knowledge rather than on the images of the candidates and their parties. The nature of the information, however, contributed little to new issue knowledge because they were mostly discussed in vague and very general terms, especially in the case of the ANC and DP. At best, they offered condensed statements, without the practical implications or the operationalisation of the policies. They did not pay much attention to causality, to indicate how a suggested policy would help to solve an identified problem.

#### 4. SUMMARY

**Pahad** revealed an idiosyncratic rhetorical style. According to his verbal and non-verbal conduct it appeared that he sometimes approached it as a mere game to be played, but then suddenly changed to a very serious approach. His relational strategy focused mainly on defence (43%) and was mainly directed towards his opponents. He ignored certain crucial issues and questions, and tried to belittle his opponents to put their ethos in doubt.

There was a lack of substantial supporting material in the form of examples and testimonials. He also used shallow reasoning ("straw men" and "pseudo-clash").

**Leon** indeed lived up to his party's overall strategy: "*To Fight Back*". He mostly used the strategy of attack (68%) and according to his substance tactics, he pinpointed the causes of the problems in no uncertain terms (75%). Several times he also made use of the tactics of direct and rhetorical questions, and shotgun blasts. His non-verbal conduct also enhanced this verbal approach. His rhetorical style suited the debate format, which requires impromptu reactions and good listening skills. He could have balanced his attacks with more well-supported solutions, though.

**Van Schalkwyk** appeared to be the man with the facts and were more logos-oriented (Schellens & Verhoeven 1994:65-72). Of all the debaters, he made the most use of substantial evidence and proof in the form of examples, statistics and expert testimonial. The analysis shows that he used a more balanced substance approach - in order of importance - for describing the significance of problems (14%), identifying causes (31%) and proposing solutions (55%). Although he attacked most of the time (62%), he also tried to sell his party (33%). This was necessary, because the polls indicated



that the DP would become the biggest opposition party.

**Ngobane's** style was more suited to a panel discussion than a debate. He interacted very little with his fellow debaters. This is in line with his view that opposition parties should rather *"move towards consensus politics, ... but not come and attack the government"*. Most of his attacks were directed towards the other opposition parties (27%). Substantially, he spent most of his words on possible solutions (69%), focusing in particular on provincial issues and rural development. He discussed this in a relatively detailed and non-political way.

**Viljoen** did not once identify himself with his party, the Freedom Front. Throughout the debate he referred to "we" and "I" and created the image of the political advisor who stands above party politics. His style could be ascribed to the fact that he was a former head of the South African Defence Force who was supposed to remain impartial. Substantially he focused more on solutions (72%); sometimes very concrete and practical, and at other times in a more philosophical way, especially when he reflected on the "right" political system and the possible consequences of the fact that the governing ANC *"is too much of one racial group"*. He often mentioned issues that were not relevant at that stage of the debate.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Debaters should enter the confrontation of a debate in the belief that the stronger side will prevail and truth will triumph over falsehood, logos over pathos. The tangible fact of the opponent's presence acts as a check on discourse (Jamieson & Birdsell, 1988:12). The informal nature of this debate promoted confrontation and real dialogue, because the debaters interrupted one another frequently and most of the time they reacted immediately to issues with which they did not agree. The styles of Viljoen and Ngobane were not conducive to the confrontational nature of a debate because clear and sharp debate occurs when speakers affirm and deny a proposition in some or all aspects, and when each speaker provides supporting arguments for his affirmation or denial.

Though Pahad and Leon did well in the affirmation and denial of propositions, they did not provide satisfactory support for their respective affirmation or denial. This was especially so in the case of Pahad. They should have focused more on the logos and less on the pathos and ethos.

Despite the identified negative aspects of the debaters and the imperfect format, debate should always be on the political agenda. Rigorous inquiry towards political and moral truth should be at the core of the rhetoric of a democracy. This analysis

might stimulate further discussions from different methodological perspectives to improve the quality of debating and argumentation, in order to enrich democracy and to allow citizens to make well-informed decisions.

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## Addendum

### Examples from the debate

SELL

1 Van Schalkwyk: NNP

“There are two opposition approaches on the table. The New National Party says let’s get SA working. Let’s get white and black and coloured and Indian together, it’s a constructive approach, we want to engage the ANC. We do not hate the ANC like other opposition parties. We have policy differences, (*but*) we want to engage them. I believe the other opposition approach of being “gatvol”, “Fighting Back”, that will achieve nothing. We must take on the ANC where it counts, and that’s at the ballot box.”

2 Leon: DP

"The DP said right from the beginning of this parliament in 1994, let's get people back in work instead of which the ANC, with the support of the NP, passed the Labour Relations Act. The DP want to fight forward for a better society."

3 Pahad:ANC

"But let me say that in the next five years the ANC is absolutely committed to an unrelenting campaign to root out corruption."

4 Ngobane: IFP

"The answer to it all is, as far as I am concerned, continuing vigilance, training and creating capacity as far as management and accountability is concerned, and generating a sense of goodwill what Dr.Mangosuthu Buthelezi has called 'a revolution of goodwill', which will stress personal responsibility, commitment to the workplace and commitment to the community."

5 Viljoen: FF

"When I say I want to bring capital punishment back, I do not wish to bring capital punishment back for every little trivial thing, but for the kind of murders that government gets now, the murders of our policemen that happen at the moment. You need to have a deterrent. And in that way capital punishment is a deterrent. And let us bring it back and use it in a sensible and responsible way."

#### *ME TOO ME BETTER*

6 Van Schalkwyk: NNP

"If one contrasts the New National Party in government with the ANC, there is a stark contrast. The Heath Anti-Corruption Unit is at the moment investigating 97 000 cases of corruption, in the Western Cape (where the NNP has the majority on provincial level) only five, five too many, but only five."

7 Leon: (DP)

"Well, I will tell you that what Mr Van Schalkwyk is busy doing is re-inventing and warming up power sharing. Power sharing did not work under Mr De Klerk. I know Mr De Klerk. I know Marthinus. Marthinus is not Mr De Klerk. It's not going to work under him. The ANC has served notice of that already. The reality of the situation is as follows. What you need is strong opposition and you need a smaller government. So you must build up opposition. That is why the DP said, don't go into coalitions with the ANC. The ANC has enough power on its own already. What you need to do is to build up the strength of opposition, because those are the checks and balances in a democratic society and that is what we need."

8 Viljoen: (FF)

"If I was in government and I had this problem of corruption, I would have spent a lot of time towards uplifting and assisting, for example, the new

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provincial authorities. Mpumalanga is a good example, towards establishing a real good system. You could make use of work study people. You could make use of organisational study experts in order to go to Mpumalanga and to study their system and make sure that the procedures they use within the department can be 100%.”

#### ATTACK

- 9 Van Schalkwyk: NNP (testimonial of ANC’s own leader, facts and figures)  
 “Even president Mandela was forced to admit that the ANC failed in four major areas: crime, education, jobs and corruption. Corruption has become a cancer, it has spun out of control. It is now approaching R34 billion.”
- 10 *“And a part of the problem, that the government doesn’t have the necessary political will, is our court system. At the moment there’s a serious decline in convictions in our courts. For every thousand crimes, there are only 77 convictions, only 36 people go to jail. So, corrupt officials and politicians are starting to say it pays to be corrupt and that is what we must stop now”*
- 11 Leon: DP (examples and testimonial of expert)  
 “They put the interest of the party ahead of the interest of the country. They have convicted criminals like Winnie Madikizela Mandela on their parliamentary list. They have Allan Boesak in the close embrace of the Minister of Justice. We have example after example where in fact, the ANC itself has not fought back or to use its phrase has not said ‘enough is enough’ at the appropriate time, and the appropriate time is when the event happens. We’ve just had evidence today, published in The Sunday Telegraph in London, that the ANC’s election campaign is being financed by Mohamar Gadaffi’s Libya. Now if the ANC’s election campaign is funded by foreign governments, that in itself is a form of corruption which needs to be exposed, because it means our whole foreign policy...”
- 12 *“I mean our Labour Legislation is among the most advanced in the world. It is more advanced than that which you have in America or in the United Kingdom, which is crazy! The Democratic Party’s campaign during this election was assisted by Otto Graph Lamsdorff, the former German minister of economics, who said that the labour model which SA has adopted isn’t working in Germany. How on earth is it ever going to work in SA? And that to us is the big question. How do we build those ladders out of poverty?”*  
 “I said the Communist Party prevents the ANC from implementing government policy.”
- 13 Pahad: ANC  
 “So, don’t make statements which are not true, unless you can back them up with facts. (To Leon) Now if what what’s happening here is that every time we get engaged in a serious debate, what we do is we throw into the melting pot, issues which you can’t debate properly.”

*"This business playing with figures. You can say 20 new taxes, 50 new taxes." (to Van Schalkwyk)*

*"I want to say here that we shouldn't play games here and try to get involved in petty politicking on who's on whose list and so on and so forth."*

*"You know, Marthinus, we must be serious. You can't sit there and come with a set of figures about crime and that every time you're discussing anything, and even if you're going to discuss the moon - you're going to trot out a set of figures given to you by your analysts and your researchers. What one must do is seriously discuss what is wrong in this country"*

*"In what way? In what way is it a deterrent? (Capital punishment for murders on policemen) Now.... but you are just using words and phrases."*

*"And let's not get emotional about your rambling on about murders."*

14 Pahad: ANC

*"You see, the Labour Relations Act, Tony. You can't say that you want an evolving capitalist system and then want to impose labour relations which are fatal, if not semi-slavery. Good labour relations are essential....(Leon: 'But I'm not saying so') are essential to industrial peace."*

15 Ngobane: IFP

*"As far as the DP and the Freedom Front are concerned, and to some extent the NNP, they are addressing issues that are not directly relevant to the majority. Now if you come from a perspective of pure opposition and not contributing solutions to the whole process of job creation and development, particularly rural development, you've become irrelevant to the majority of the people."*

16 Viljoen: FF

*"I would like to say that firstly we have to stick to the right policy. We have to be very careful not to do what the Stalingroup in Europe did after the First World... after the Second World War when they decided to go for socialism, communism, because they didn't believe that the other systems would work."*

#### DEFENCE

17 Pahad: ANC

*"Yes, I think it's very difficult sometimes to take Mr Leon seriously. But corruption did not start in 1994, and those who were in the politics of this country before 1994 must know that they were part of a system that has been described as 'a crime against humanity'. You cannot have a system that was described as 'a crime against humanity' and not understand that corruption was endemic to that system. So when you take over in '94, what you took over was an absolutely corrupt system. Now it's not possible to root out corruption that's so deeply embedded within five years."*

18 *"Now, coming to you Marthinus, this business about playing with figures. You can say 20 new taxes, 50 \* new taxes...(Van Schalkwyk: "It's 26.") I'm saying to you*

*that this government of which your party was a part before, government of National Unity - hold on! The first two finance ministers, you will remember very well who they were, had a position from the beginning that we had to move in the direction of the reduction of taxes (Van Schalkwyk: "Exactly.")..But if you understood anything about economics you would know very well that you can't just remove taxes in one fell swoop."*

- 19 *"General (Viljoen), I think it's wonderful. But you are a wonderful soldier, but you can't decentralise. Sorry Ben, you can't decentralise economics in that way. (Viljoen: "Why not?") Well, for a start, in SA you have, whether you like it or not and some people don't, a very high level of centralisation and concentration of capital (Viljoen: "Which is all wrong.") You can't... it might or might not be wrong.- I know you can go back to "Hochenheimer" of the 30s, but...(Viljoen: "But here, you have just asked for small and medium business?") No. I'm saying you can have small and medium-sized enterprises but they're not incompatible because some economies of skill do require larger production units and if you're going to have a sound financial base, you need then to have a powerful stock exchange, and you can't decentralise your stock exchange... Sorry, sorry." (Nobody asked for the decentralisation of the stock exchange.)*

#### OTHER

- 20 Viljoen: FF  
*"The very first thing I want to say is that if we as politicians have to be honest on this subject, the first thing we have to admit is there is no quick and easy answer to this. There is no quick solution to what is fouling, apparently, in SA."*
- 21 Viljoen (closing remarks)  
*"In voting for the next five years, we need something new. We have to show strong, dedicated, mature leadership in all the political parties; leadership that fits the requirements of Africa. We need a dedicated tailor-fit democracy for Africa, accommodating minorities but also accepting the fact of a majority and making sure that there is a balance between individual rights and collective rights. We need to be dedicated to community empowerment, we need to have mutual tolerance and reconciliation between the different communities. And we need to focus on the very important aspect of economic growth."*
- 22 Ngubane: IFP  
*"Well, we can make rapid impact in job creation by focusing at the areas where that possibility will happen. For instance - if we are talking of rural development where we need to create jobs to stop the influx into the cities, we must support the small farming entities, the small farmers, rural development and so on to create jobs."*

*TACTICS: DENIAL*

23 Pahad: ANC

"You see, the Labour Relations Act, Tony, you can't say that you want an evolving capitalist system and then want to impose labour relations which are fatal, if not semi-slavery. Good labour relations are essential, good labour relations (*Leon*: "But I'm not saying so.") are essential for industrial peace."

*SHOTGUN BLAST / LAUNDRY LIST*

24 Tony: DP

"..But the example does come from the top, and under this government obeying the law seems like an optional extra. You have got government ministers who have misled parliament and who have allowed corruption to flourish in their departments. They are never held accountable. They are never made to resign. And we have got the examples: Sarafina II, Virodin. I could go on."

*HIGHLIGHTING IGNORANCE/EVASIVINESS/LACK OF SERIOUSNESS*

25 Pahad: ANC

"*But if you understood anything about economics you would know very well that you can't just remove taxes in one fell swoop*" (to Van Schalkwyk); "*General, I think it's wonderful, but you are a wonderful soldier, but you can't decentralise. Sorry Ben, you can't decentralise economics in that way*"; "*I think it's very difficult sometimes to take Mr Leon seriously*"; "*So don't make statements which are not true, unless you can back them up with facts.*" (to Leon)

26 "*I want to say here that we shouldn't play games here and, and try to get involved in petty politicking on who's on whose list and so on and so forth.*"27 "*You know, Marthinus, we must be serious. You can't sit there and come with a set of figures about crime and that in every time you're discussing anything, and even if you're going to discuss the moon - you're going to trot out a set of figures given to you by your analysts and your researchers. What one must do is seriously discuss what is wrong in this country, what do we need to put it right? But also be honest.*"*TOSSING BOUQUETS*

28 Van Schalkwyk: NNP

"Tim, I would like to give the ANC credit for some of their achievements."

29 Viljoen: FF

"I would like to say I really appreciate the dedicated unrelenting campaign that will come now on the issue of crime. I think this is a good thing. I also agree that we are all part of this battle and we must fight crime. But let's get down to the basics."



## QUESTIONS

30 Leon: DP

"Why don't you set an example from the top which... because you control the government which the rest of the public can follow?"

31 "Why does the ANC give out these mixed messages against corruption? (They say they are against it, but keep 16 officials who "have been named or fingered in various investigations into corruption on their candidates list.")

32 "I still want to ask my friend Essop, what do they want to do with the two-thirds? Why (Essop: "Isn't it possible..") Why can't you stop murderers in this country without a two-thirds? Why can't you create jobs without a two-third? (Pahad: "Tony, isn't it possible – let's have a rational discussion") Yes I'm trying to, even though you... (Pahad: "And let's not get emotional about you rambling on about murders.")

33 Pahad: ANC

"Did we ever had a responsible and accountable government in this country?"

## APPEAL TO COMMONLY HELD VALUES

34 Van Schalkwyk: NNP

"Economic growth is important for two reasons, Tim. The first one is to ensure that we create enough wealth so that we can build more houses, schools, better service delivery. The second is to provide jobs to people so that people can be able to look after their families, put food on their table, send their children to school, clothe their families."

"People out there who listen to this debate and they say, all we want is work, to put food on the table, to look after our families."

## PSEUDO-CLASH

35 Pahad: ANC

"And if Marthinus and them with their slogans want to do away with this hard-won democratic rights of our people, want to do over the Bill of Rights and the Constitution because what he's asking for is not in the power of the ANC. We have independent judiciary here. And an independent judiciary decides whether or not the criminal is guilty or not. We must have that."

## SUBSTANCE STRATEGIES

36 Leon: DP (Lack of specifics)

"The DP wants to fight forward for a better society" (How? Who doesn't want a better society?)

37 "The ANC sees people in poverty, the DP sees people in poverty. The ANC says the solution is bigger government, the DP says the solution is create bigger individuals by empowering them directly." (How do they plan to do this and how will this eradicate poverty of the masses?)

- 38 Van Schalkwyk: NNP (More specific)  
*"Economic growth is important for two reasons, Tim. The first one is to ensure that we create enough wealth so that we can build more houses, schools, better service delivery. The second is to provide jobs to people so that people can be able to look after their families, put food on their table, send their children to school, clothe their families. In '94 we were promised by the ANC: jobs, jobs, jobs. What did we get? We got the destruction of one and a half million jobs. Job creation levels in our country is now -3% (trustworthy source?). What does it mean? It means we are shedding jobs every day, losing jobs instead of creating jobs. We can create jobs and economic growth by doing three things: Firstly get crime under control. (how?) No foreign (hyperbole) investors want to invest here, because of crime. Local investors don't want to expand because of crime. Secondly, reconsider those elements (which elements?) in the labour relation, which are destroying jobs because the ANC would rather like to protect the jobs of COSATU people against the unemployed. We must turn that around. And thirdly, our tax system. (what is wrong with the system?) At the moment, the ANC is phasing in 26 new indirect taxes. We have to turn it around. (how?) If we can do that, we can start jobs, which we so dearly need."*
- 39 Tim: *"Leon has just said that the NNP was also responsible for the same Labour Relations Act."*  
 V Schalkwyk: *"No, there are many labour laws passed in parliament."*  
 Leon *"You vote in favour of it. You said it, yourself in 1995"*  
 V Schalkwyk: *"Yes, the basic conditions of Employment Act, we were against that and also the Employment Equity Bill .."*  
 Pahad *"You mean the government...?"*
- 40 Viljoen: FF  
*"Can I just add to this? I want to take this a little bit further, because I agree with what has been said. What we need in the country, we need the programme for decentralisation of our economy. If you go to the Transkei today, I've been there recently, and look at the mess that we have. It's a terrible situation and you can only decentralise by devolution of power. And then I agree... not. I'm not sure whether you should empower the provinces. I feel you should empower communities and if you start with the development of, let us say that whole area which is a perfect area for development, it's excellent soil for agricultural purposes. But yet it's not developing. Why not? Because there is no specific local authority developing it. And I am for the devolution of power from the province to that specific area."*
- 41 Ngobane: IFP  
*"I mean it has been shown quite clearly that a lot of industrialised countries are not growing around huge corporations but around S and MEs (give examples of successful countries). But the quality of those small and medium enterprises is one of excellent"*

*production of expert quality goods, and therefore foreign exchange comes in and the economy grows (give examples to prove the statement). What we have done here in the past five years is to create some instruments such as Nsiga Nkula and the Small Business Development Corporation. Some of these have worked, some of it has not worked properly. We do not have an efficient framework to take those instruments at a national level and apply them."*

*"It (the economy) will grow, provided we do certain things, such as empowering supervision at the provincial level, of the local level. You cannot supervise (?) these incentives, those legislative prerequisites for investments for a new plan to take place, plans to grow, in terms of new investment unless you create a framework which actually supervises that and manages it, when the investment takes place. Therefore, I am pleading we must strengthen provincial powers through capacity building. Equally so at local level and then create instruments that support effectively small agriculture, S and MEs and all those job-creating and employment-creating ventures" (give practical implications of feasibility).*

42 Leon: DP

*"We regard unemployment together with crime as the greatest sin and problem facing this country. The question is what's to be done? The DP said right from the beginning of this parliament in 1994, let's get people back in work (how?) instead of which the ANC, with the support of the National Party, passed the Labour Relations Act. That is one of the most job crushing pieces of legislation, whatever its other good intentions might have been. Because it simply massively empowered unions, it diminished the roles of business to decide on employment issues and it made it much more difficult to actually employ new people. So that is being the net-effect: the loss of jobs, of which everyone is aware. The DP wants to fight forward for a better society."*

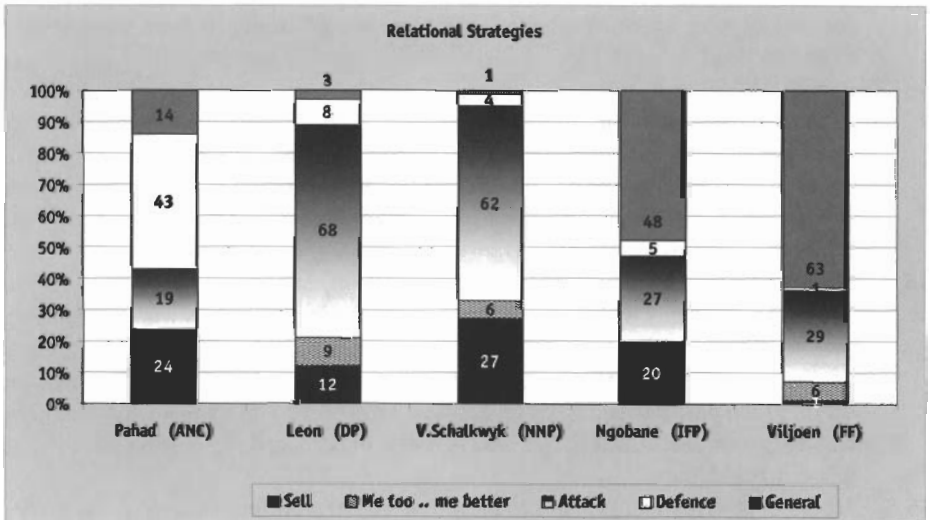
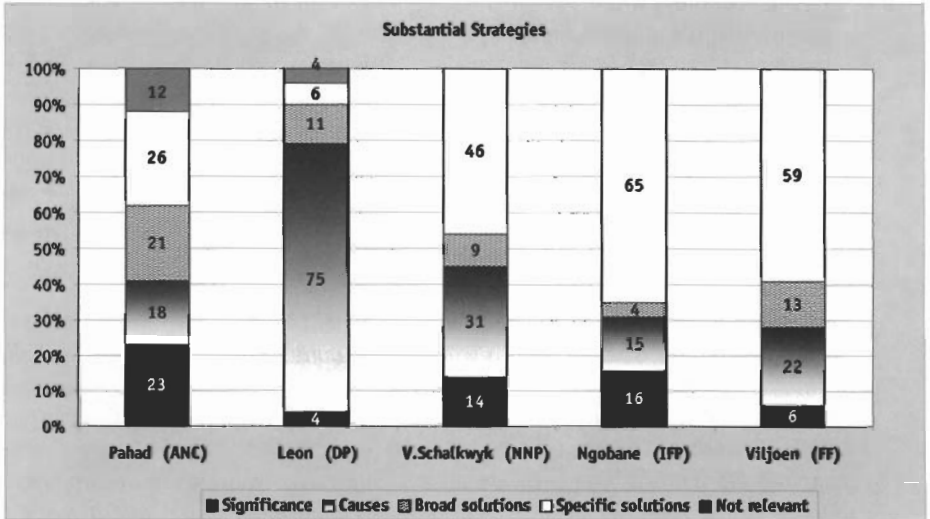
43 Pahad: ANC

*"I think what is important is that the struggle against corruption is something that all of us, all in this country: opposition parties, the ANC, and of course the ANC is going to win the elections on June the 2<sup>nd</sup>, together we should root out this culture of corruption." (Everybody wanted to root out corruption, that was not the issue, but how to prevent it.)*

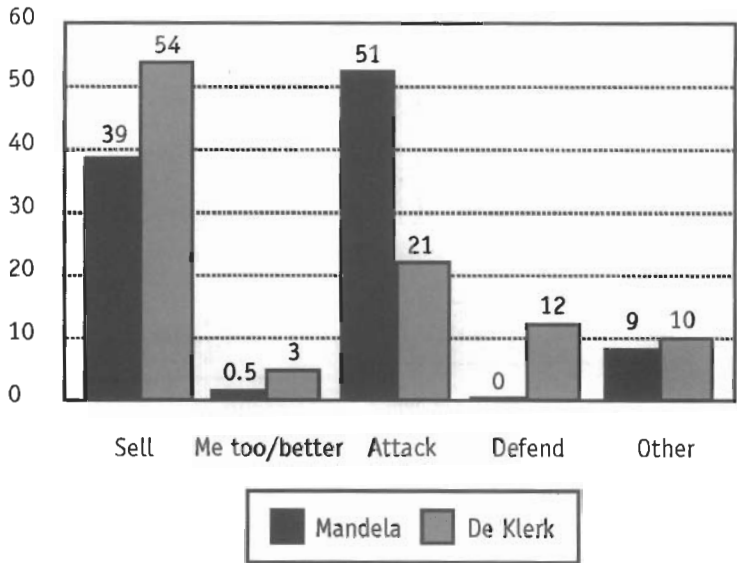
44 *"In the next five years, the government will certainly implement the decisions of the Job Summit. I think we've gone a long way in the last five years within Nedlac, of getting business, labour and the government together, to come to an understanding of what is necessary in the national interest and I think that is going to prove very useful in the next five years." (The average listener wouldn't know what had been decided; how useful will it be? This was the most detailed solution that Pahad gave in the debate.)*

45 *"It (foreign investment) needs to grow, it needs to grow into productive capacity a great deal more. I think what we want to do is to strengthen the small-and medium-*

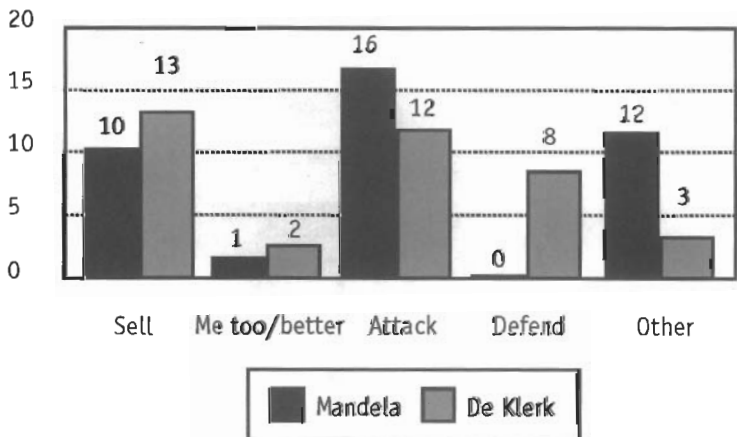
*sized enterprises because it's quite clear that some developments within the capitalist system is going in the direction where jobs are created in small-and medium-sized enterprises. For example, if you take the textile and clothing industry. So it seems to us that we need to pay a little bit more attention (What does this mean?) to developing the small-and medium-sized enterprises."*



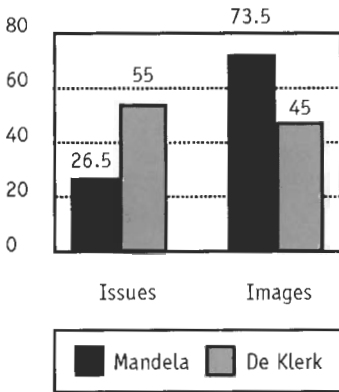
Different strategies expressed as a % of total words used by each



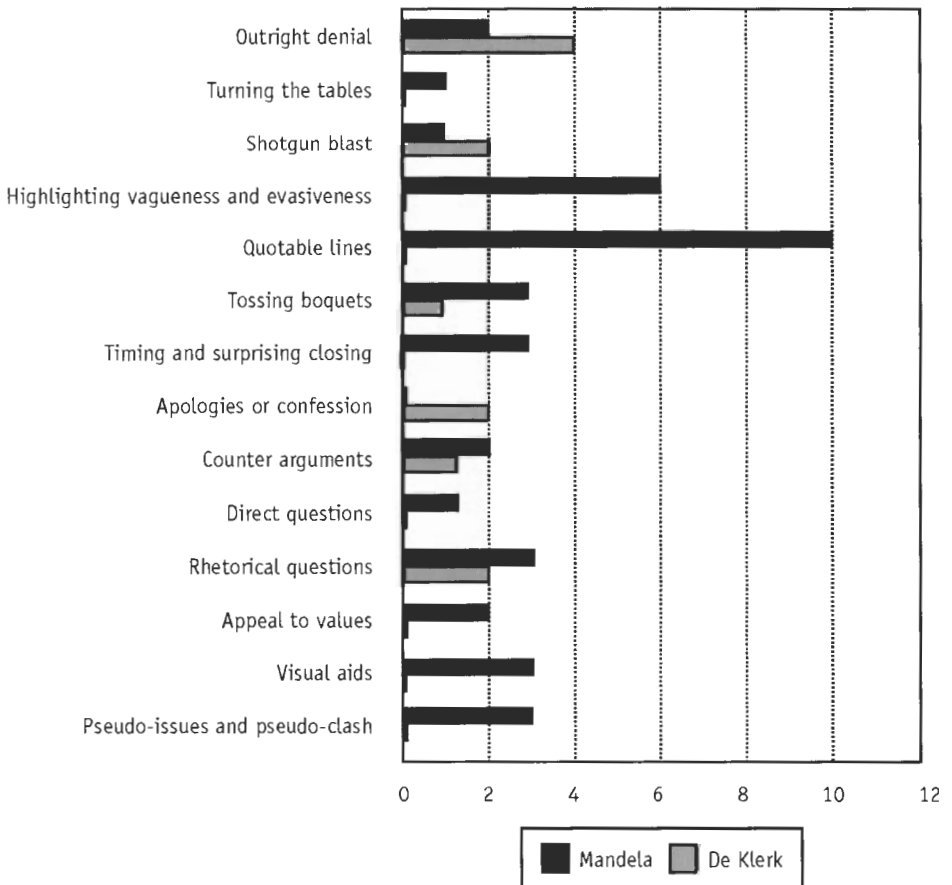
Verbal strategies  
Individual strategic occurrences



Issues versus image



Tactics  
Forensic and substantial tactics



G. de Wet

## **The strategic value of "chaos" in the South African context for the training of communication students**

### *ABSTRACT*

The Higher Education Sector has been going through major processes of change over the last couple of years. These challenges do not occur in isolation from the socio-political changes that permeate larger society. Pressures on the University and thus the School of Communication Studies to transform, not only in terms of programme contents, but also in terms of institutional identity are mounting. Yet, the School of Communication Studies is inextricably part of the larger institution. The traditional core dimensions of what a University has been identified with are at stake. One way of analysing and conceptualising the situation is to look at the Chaos Theory and the inherent implications for the institution and as a result the teaching programmes. This article attempts to place and analyse the core qualities of the Chaos Theory within the context of the University as an institution that finds itself in turn in the context of a very unpredictable and transforming societal sphere. The aim is to become more relevant for the challenges of the situation and in turn enhance the quality and credibility of the programmes being offered.

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*Professor Gideon de Wet is the Director of the School of Communication Studies at Potchefstroom University. This article is an adapted version of his inaugural address of 20 September 2000.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

"The country is in chaos" is surely one of the most common daily statements in various circles. Accusations are thrown back and forth. People refer to incompetence and deterioration. The legacy of apartheid, people being privileged and others being excluded are blamed. People experience crises related to losing and gaining power. It is all about righteousness and freedom: to live as a free person in my country of birth. It is also about the experience of a loss of freedom: I am losing my country. There is anticipation and uncertainty in the air, even fear. This is the "chaos" relevant to this paper.

One could argue that this is an oversimplified image of the South African situation. It is clear, however, that everybody is part of this chaos.

The evident paradox in the title serves as the strength of the argument, and will be highlighted in various ways. The study will also attempt to set out the inherent tension between the old and the new, the bad and the good, the weak and the strong, that which is of less importance, and that which is experienced as a threat. In the midst of this, the intellectual energy presented by this "chaos" is presented as a strategic advantage and opportunity for action. This opportunity needs to be utilised in the training of Communication students.

One obvious question in this regard is: Can the School for Communication Studies at the University of Potchefstroom ignore or deny this "chaos" with which it is faced? The short answer is: most definitely not.

## 2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In the process of change, multi-polar dynamics exist between order and chaos. This is also typical of the existing tension between the University (read in the context of the School for Communication Studies) and the society within which it exists. In South Africa, this question has presented itself increasingly in recent years. Numerous studies, task teams, White Papers and legislation have been undertaken and commissioned in this period. This includes, among others: Macro aspects of the University within Tertiary Education in the RSA (1987) of the Committee of University Principles (CUP); A Framework for Higher Education (1996) of the National Commission on Higher Education; Governance and Decision Making for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (1996) of the National Commission on Higher Education; and Institutional Research: In support of transformation in Higher Education (1997) of The South African Association for Institutional Research. The most recent report is the "Shape and Size of Higher Education Task Team" (2000) of the Council on Higher Education, with among others a primary focus on



differentiation. All of the above aim to address the relationships between institutions and the South African society in terms of purpose, function and relevance. Higher Education's interdependence with the social context is central to the contributions made by these reports.

It is important, however, to realise that this ongoing search for a new mission is not limited to South Africa. It has manifested itself in various societies over centuries. Should one argue that progress throughout the world is increasingly driven by knowledge and information, it also specifically highlights the excellence of research in its clinical context, as well as research as a product of interaction between institution and the complex environments in which it is conducted (*Finansies en Tegniek*, 2000:33-34). As such, the environment as well as the historical, socio-political, economic, health, religious and technological worlds become the focus of research and the generation of knowledge. It also becomes the field for exposure to, and training of, students in the most realistic situations. More will be written about this later.

From a theoretical framework, one could look at the "Chaos theory" and complexity studies for the sake of gaining more conceptual clarity. Murphy (1996) refers to it as a post-modernist scientific view or metaphor for late 20<sup>th</sup> century cultural values as expressed in relativism, social chance and plurality with the consequence that situations and processes such as disorder, diversity, non-linearity, unpredictability and instability are in fact controlling situations in various contexts globally. It is evident that the element of uncertainty represents a central focus in this complexity of change.

The development of a conceptual theoretical framework is important for the presentation of this paper, but an in-depth discussion and analysis of the properties of the Chaos theory fall outside the immediate parameters of what is hoped to be achieved. Having said that, it remains important however to concentrate on the following identifiable conceptual properties: The "*butterfly effect*" and *bifurcation* concepts relate to the ever complex changing and flexibility of such systems that have the quality to move in several different directions of change. Change as the consequence of amplified "butterfly wing" activities can as a result become acutely unstable and yet such situations can open new and exciting opportunities. These bifurcation moments can occur at various levels of complexities, but have ultimately very powerful and decisive impacts on systems according to Dennard (1996:497).

The strange *attractor concept*, which refers to the inherent but not so obvious deep quality that holds the centre together to which situations or entities always return amid powerful and uncontrollable waves of change, provides unique opportunities to reposition such systems. The rediscovery of a sense of meaning of the chaotic situation through a strange attractor such as communication, as one such example, could place

the organisation on a new road. The third aspect refers to the qualities of *non-linearity*, the *scale* of change and *holism*. The ability to grow and change in unpredictable and thus non-linear ways is a prime quality of the chaos theory. Making sense out of such situations requires an ability to appreciate the scale and interrelations of actions that ultimately provide a myriad of sense-making opportunities through the emergence of a myriad of patterns of understanding and the application of instruments of assessment and measurement. Rensburg & Ströh (1998:55) conclude: "The scale of observation thus makes the difference and makes it possible to see the order in what seems totally out of control and chaotic". Through the qualities of *fragmentation* and *interdependence*, well-defined borders are broken down to lead to a borderless and highly permeable context. To be in control of one's destiny could largely be in the hands of external factors that inherently relate back to the quality and complexity of interdependency and the qualities of scale and holism. Yet on the other hand, the qualities of interdependence could lead the organisation to renew because the processes of exchange not only provide for growth, but also for a grater sense of identity. The development of identity is thus the end result of the ability to draw fragmented and interdependent processes and qualities together in a vibrant and complex state of interaction and focus. The last concepts of the chaos theory to be discussed refer to *diversity* and *creativity*. It should be clear that over-control kills the spirit and energy locked up in creativity. Youngblood (1997:59) states that creativity as a process involves three interrelated aspects, namely information diversity and interaction. Through the creative processes, energy is released that leads to an avalanche of non-linear, diverse and unpredictable situations driven through information that in turn results in situations of chaos where the most growth and creativity will occur.

The question should therefore be how one should strategically deal with the overwhelming torrent of change and interchanged uncertainty within the organisational and social worlds (Overman, 1996:75; Rensburg & Ströh, 1999:53). Given this, no institution, but definitely not universities, can function within a closed environment. It integrally forms part of the bigger context. This does not only reflect on the physical or geographical, but specifically on how and through which the vision and mission are highlighted. It also reflects on the way in which the institutional values can eventually be operationalised towards advancing the society that the institution serves (also compare in this regard Antonovsky, 1993:969, Flavel & Williams, 1996:4-6, Stahl-Rolf, 2000:27-29). The definition of who is being served and the reasons why they are being served are central to this process. The same argument would therefore be relevant to the School of Communication Studies.

Chaos can be considered as a final phase before a system or institution moves away from the familiar state presented by security, the logical, and often predictable environment. The pressure presented by an unstable and complex environment becomes

so much, that the institution is forced to change for the sake of survival, and adapting to the changing and exhilarating environment (Baker, 1993:121-135, Littlejohn, 1996:42-44). This process of separation can be attributed to various factors. Within the South African context, the socio-political transformation process is probably the single largest contributing factor. Others include the digital revolution, massification, personal expectations and the clamp down on state resources (*Finansies en Tegniek*, 2000:34-35).

Processes of change do, however, as stated, not occur within predictable linear relations (Warren, Franklin & Streeter, 1998:65). Moreover, institutions do not react similarly to environmental pressure. Institutions experience such environments as being insecure and having the potential for further decay and uncertainty. Change is often the only constant given in this regard (David, 1999:7). This is especially true in cases where chaotic situations are presented as the norm and where chaos is in fact regarded as something occurring on the outside of the institution, which does everything in its power not to be part thereof. This is also very dangerous, as isolation often points towards immanent chaos.

The initial feeling of success brought about by isolating itself from the environment can later be revolved to become only another contributing variable to the greater process of decay. In essence, such a situation also implies a loss of strategic advantage to plan proactively for more efficiency (Warren *et al*, 1998:65).

It is accepted that change management often fails because the reasons for change, together with ways in which the process is managed, are not related to the institution's presupposed strategic objectives (Steyn & Puth, 2000:17). Important, however, is that strategic objectives within the interactive context cannot be isolated from requirements set by the environment. It is often the result of mutual influences and positioning, which are also attained within complex internal and external relations. This process points towards immense complexity, which institutions should manage (David, 1999:2-11, Flavel & Williams, 1996:17-28, Coulter, 1998:32-40; Steyn & Puth, 2000:17-19). Similarly, this applies to an institution like a university. A university should not only exist as a focus of excellence with regard to education, research and community service, but should primarily also be managed as a management institution within a complex environment. This should be done in order to maintain quality and relevancy at all operational levels.

Given its particular nature and mission, the University as an institution consists of unique elements within which the complexity of interaction with the environment deepens even further. The University and School for Communication Studies therefore finds themselves intertwined in complex strengths and fields of tension. These aspects

can be regarded as the core elements of what such an institution stands for. Furthermore, it also constitutes the nature of the relationship with society. Given the socio-political transformation of the South African society, the relevance of all institutions, but specifically also Universities, is deliberated intensively. The contexts from which these institutions came about and through which they have been kept alive over decades contribute to the fact that the *core elements* of such institutions do not escape the process of rethinking and contextualizing the place and function of the University within its new context. These core elements include: *Identity and Relevance; Universality and Particularity; Elitism and Egalitarianism; Autonomy and Transgression; and Community and Corporation* (KUH 1987:1-15; Rossouw, 1991:68-79). The fundamental question that accompanies the core elements is to what extent it would be possible, if at all, to escape or to incorporate the qualities and processes of the chaos theory perspective as a conceptual and analytic framework if the central ideas of *bifurcation, strange attractors, non-linearity, scale, holism, fragmentation and interdependence* have to find a "home" in the context of these core elements. The conceptual contribution that these elements make towards the highly complex relationships of an institution such as a university should ultimately result in strategic managerial policies and practices that "find a home," in turn, in teaching and research programmes. The next section focuses on the core elements of the historical and contextual qualities of an institution called a university. These core elements provide an ideal opportunity to conceptualise the potential interplay with the conceptual aspects as put forward by the chaos theory.

### 3. FIELDS OF TENSION

#### 3.1 Identity and Relevance

Within a fast-changing society like the South African one, it is almost unthinkable that the issue of an institution's identity is not the single focus of the total change process. In essence, the focus is on the tension of what its identity was and what it is supposed to be within the new and complex situation. Given this, it would be problematic to argue that the institution can arrive at a particular identity and stick with it. Over centuries, one of the core characteristics of transformation has been that nothing is necessarily completed for the good. If transformation could be considered as done, it would create a false sense of security and order. Tension would therefore exist between the poles of total isolation from society and the intense process of interaction with the environment. This is a situation where identity creation is considered a private (and therefore exclusive) issue, compared to an inclusive interactive process involving the environment.

Obviously, one would also have to look at the founding definitions of openness and segregation, which are closely related to the idea of autonomy and the creation of

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identity. Together with this, the definition of what constitutes a community and the type of interaction necessary for the university to be relevant within its social environment should also be considered. Among others, identity therefore deals with the institutionalisation of academic thought and man's effort towards scientific knowledge (Rossouw, 1991:68). People striving to uncover knowledge determine identity as they practise science. Knowledge is gathered through research methods, and therefore reflects the intellectual ability of man to practise science systematically (KUH, 1987:2; Rossouw, 1991:69). This activity is one element of the complex process of creating identity. It is, however, also important to determine the nature of these processes within community contexts. Interaction between the institution and the community should be kept in mind throughout.

South Africa's new socio-political situation forces institutions and communities to redefine the concept of 'community', given its exclusive definition of the past.

The instrumental value of scientific knowledge forces institutions to become relevant for the social environment in which they operate. Knowledge of how science is practised only for the sake thereof puts enormous pressure on the institution's relevance. As a strategic value, relevance should always carry the test of quality, and in this process help to address the relevant issues within the social environment. The quality of outputs should therefore also be measurable.

Relevance means to be appropriate to the important issue. This implies that the issue should not be approached short-sightedly only for the sake of being relevant in the short term. It should rather be looked at through a so-called multi-focal lens (Rossouw, 1991:69). It should be approached with the type of vision that can determine and address needs at a single glance within the wider approach of theoretical thought and practical expertise. Solutions will be identified more easily through this process (Rossouw, 1991:70).

Having dealt with the issues of identity and relevance, it is no surprise to see the conceptual interplay with aspects such as the butterfly effect, non-linearity, holism and interdependence, to mention but a few. No identity or relevance can exist in isolation from the context of existence. Once again, within the strategic context, a choice needs to be made where identity and relevance are the end products of managed interaction.

A key element is contained here in two questions, namely, what is considered as relevant and what is a relevant institution? It is about cultural expediency, about identifying certain social problems, phrasing academic programmes and constructive interaction with the institution in its broadest possible form. Such an approach can be valid if the

institution is in essence a product of the pursuit for quality and measurable solutions, as well as generating knowledge. Considered as such, and given the post-1994 social dispensation, the question is how much progress has been made on the way towards this type of relevancy?

### 3.2 Universality and particularity

The second relevant aspect is the relationship between the universal spirit and focus of the institution, and the inevitable particular effect social forces have on it. The institution represents certain universal values. These values have such an impact on the spirit of individuals that they transcend borders, broaden horizons and subsequently develop an orientation towards life, which promotes an inclusive experience and expression of humanity. They also form the foundation for all disciplines of practising science, and therefore also belong to the core of academic thought (KUH, 1987:6; Rossouw, 1991:70).

This endeavour to establish academic values presupposes a predisposition of tolerance and a willingness to cross boundaries. One looks therefore at a broader picture of contact and presentation, and towards the international world. Simultaneously, these values also mean that there should be a spirit of openness and a positive acceptance among people within their immediate communities. In essence, these values mean that parochial predispositions and exclusivity are in conflict when limited to a specific group.

On the other hand, the institution is also a social organisation functioning within a specific social and cultural environment (KUH, 1987:6; Rossouw, 1991:70). In order to exist meaningfully, it should search for common ground among characteristic social and cultural values of existing and potential supporting groups. Given the historical and demographic realities within South Africa, thorough planning should be done within the context of both a changing and a highly diverse environment of potential supporters. There is little indication of a stable and predictable environment.

Within this relationship, certain elements of a power struggle can be identified. Often the community has the tendency to occupy an institution or have it act as an agent for maintaining or promoting community interest. These interests can include cultural identities, political power basis, etc. On the other hand, institutions can also promote their own political power bases, often as agents of parochial interests. This is especially the case where institutions are regarded as cultural and administrative organisations creating security instead of institutions where knowledge and skills are acquired and applied in systematic ways for the sake of general national interest for instance.

The important element is, however, that no institution can come about and function within a social and cultural vacuum. It is also important to emphasise that cultural renewal and development cannot take place without the institution acquiring legitimacy in the community or communities with which it interacts.

As far as South Africa is concerned, repositioning in terms of interaction with new communities is extremely important for experiencing inclusion and ownership. The diverse way in which the community and its interests are constituted puts enormous pressure on the unique nature and being of the university within such environments. This also pressures the way in which 'being a university' as part a universal and particular institution can be realised.

A burning issue in this regard is the possibility that a specific social or cultural group can occupy an institution. This can happen to such an extent that there is no room for expanding scientific and socio-cultural horizons. Occupation can occur in terms of certain social and cultural claims, demands and agendas. In such cases, institutions allow themselves to be disadvantaged by means of sectional exclusivism and short-sighted parochial interests.

The elements of universality and particularity mirror and interplay very meaningfully with the aspects of bifurcation, strange attractor, scale, holism, fragmentation and interdependence in view of a very unique own world that appears very fragmented, yet structured. Part of the challenge is that the linkages with the immediate and the global context require quality management. Again, a very complex strategic choice needs to be managed where universality and particularity touch ground in policies and practices.

The question therefore is: can a university, in combination with the specific values of its socio-cultural environment, use these as a channel and an opportunity to fulfil its universal cultural function effectively? Moreover, can this happen given the historical and political context of the South African community? If the approach is one of: "We proceed in the way we determine", and if this "we" reflects the exclusive parochial social environment, there can in the long term be no mention of relevance for the broader social environment. The reason is that such an approach sacrifices credibility. In South Africa, the search for balance between the universal and the specific is probably one of the biggest challenges facing institutions as part of the processes of transformation towards wider inclusivity and relevance.

### 3.3 Elitism and egalitarianism

Another aspect of the very complex relations highlighted above, is the perspective that institutions are places for the privileged, the elite, compared to those who want to see the institution as one focusing on access for the masses. For many centuries, elements like social standing, economic class or political systems determined the exclusive nature of institutions – a place of and for a small group of privileged few (Rossouw, 1991:71).

Currently in South Africa, there is enormous pressure from the broad population to be allowed into institutions for Higher Education. Increasing numbers of occupations require high level training, and universities are seen as centres making social opportunities, positions and economic prosperity possible (KUH, 1987:12). The elitist perspective largely focuses on excellence, which in turn strongly focuses on the criteria of intellectual talent and academic performance. Higher Education can therefore not allow unrestricted access to everybody. The argument is: ensure imaginative and creative thought and innovative leadership in order to cultivate cultural prosperity among those who have the talent and the ability to achieve this. If not, precious resources are wasted on hopeless cases – those cases do not belong here (at universities).

Posed against this is the egalitarianism arguing that there should be equal opportunities of access to these institutions for all (KUH, 1987:12). It is also argued that institutions should be open with little or no criteria for entry. It is often said that those discriminated against cannot compete on an equal footing with others, because of social handicaps and as a result of political discrimination. “They do not start from the same position on their way to the finish”. Furthermore, the system should make provision for support through which the unfair legacy of structural imbalances within the welfare system can be rectified. One such aspect is to establish education within a multi-medium education model, and subsequently ensure wider entrance for a broader segment of the community within an integrated system of training and research.

This distinction thus refers to the viewpoint that one should stick to the traditional perspective of the university as a place where science is primarily practised and developed. Compared to this, the issue of contemporary relevance is put forward with the focus on accessibility to promote social relevance and specific career paths (Rossouw, 1991:73). The challenge to institutions is therefore to find ways, also structural, through which access and opportunities for education are maximised in order to develop potential without endangering the quality of education. This process should not endanger the institution’s financial position or future existence. Institutions of this nature are in fact national assets and not sectional businesses.



This situation presents enormous challenges with regard to the diverse composition of the South African community and its needs. The strange attractor concept built around a particular force, practice or symbol could provide in this regard an interesting strategic choice. Coupled with non-linearity, the achievement of managerial goals could find new meaning in the contextual interplay between elitism and egalitarianism as strategic management challenge given the context of the South African situation. Definite attempts will have to be made through which recruiting and the creation of bursaries and loans could address some of these restrictions. In this regard, the diversity profile of the School for Communication Studies falls very short.

### **3.4 Autonomy and transgression**

In short, institutional autonomy boils down to the institution having the freedom and right to have sole expression on entry requirements, student admission, staff employment, the choice of research topics and the spending of money. The conditions of effectively practising science, as well as the standards of applying quality assurance are therefore controlled. In order to practise innovative and critical thought in true academic fashion, management systems and processes should create conditions to promote this predisposition among staff and students. Evaluation therefore lies with the community of academic experts (KUH, 1987:8-9; Rossouw, 1991:72-73).

In South Africa, major question marks exist about who the community of academic experts is and how this group was constituted. Developments around the South African Quality Assurance Authority have a lot to do with this, namely to establish quality assurance as an interactive process.

This can also be linked to the acceptance that absolute autonomy is impossible. Institutions are inevitably largely dependent on state finances through subsidies and contributions from private donors. Therefore, to believe in absolute autonomy amid the financial givens, does not make sense either (Rossouw, 1991:74).

This presents the question of to whom the institution belongs. People could argue that it should be considered a national asset and that the institution should therefore be more accessible to all. On the other hand, the institution would not be able to exist if it were not regarded and experienced as acting in the interest of the society in which it functions. This, of course, again presents questions like: "Who and what represents this community within the South African context?" And: "How and by whom and in which manner is this community defined?"

Apart from the restrictions that an institution's particular relationship with the community places on its autonomy, its decision-making power, is in practice also

guided by specific legislation like equal employment, anti-discrimination and others (Rossouw, 1991:74). This coheres with academic freedom and the university's autonomy. How far can the institution go and with whom does the decision lie as to whether such practices are in the interest of society? Moreover, increasing emphasis is placed on responsibility and therefore also public accountability.

Still, one can defend that institutions can claim autonomy in those issues influencing their academic task (KUH, 1987:9). Academic values pursued have no chance of excelling in a milieu fully determined by external factors and interest groups. The institution should strike a balance where its legitimacy and acceptance by the community and interest groups is such that relative autonomy can be exercised with responsibility and the necessary self-discipline. It can be expected that government and society will acknowledge the institution's inherent authority as the source of knowledge, intellectual creativity and critical thought. These are issues without which a free, open and democratic society is not possible.

It is obvious that the qualities of the butterfly effect, non-linearity, scale, holism, fragmentation and interdependence of intense relevance are regarding autonomy and transgression. The interaction and exposure not only of people, but also of ideas, knowledge and practices push continually against the proverbial walls of autonomy from all sides. Strategically, the questions to be asked are in which way and to what extent these boundaries should be defined, operated and redefined?

Hence, the emphasis is heavily on defining the type of relations the institution engages in with communities. Who is the community and how is the autonomy defined in terms of community interests? To what extent is autonomy the filter for sectional academic practices for the sake of own interest and promoting sectional interests within the community? The paradox of insulation can create a false experience of autonomy that is in fact nothing else but artificial academic practices within closed relations. One can argue that such a situation eventually becomes little less than practising an occupation.

### **3.5 Community and corporation**

Within the community context, the university is not a group of people linked to one another through membership. It is rather a group of people linked through common ideals, values and tendencies. The institution can be regarded as a product of combined and participating powers operating in an organic manner (KUH, 1987:13; Rossouw, 1991:74).

When the university is considered an organic community, it is not regulations and

prescriptions as such that determine its existence and functioning, but rather, social values and tendencies like loyalty and trust, openness for criticism, mutual respect and tolerance, unhindered communication and the voluntary acceptance of power from acknowledged holders of authority.

The university is not only a community functioning in an organic fashion. It also has a particular corporate character. Legislation constitutes it as a legal person, with structures and competencies being determined legally (KUH, 1987:13-14). A university can therefore be seen as a creation of the state. As such, the state could also expect the allocation and management of public funds as subsidies to lead to the promotion of national priorities. This argument can, however, create tension between universities established as organic systems and the expectations created for the institution's corporate entity. This is especially relevant in a country like South Africa with limited resources and the historical political context of apartheid.

In future, universities can therefore most probably expect to come under massive pressure from the government. This would be in an attempt to adhere to national priorities, of which human resources development and clamping down on poverty are some of the most important issues. Hence, the expectation is to move towards a more inclusive system – a process that has already come a long way.

In spite of its qualified dependence from the state, the institution should, however, also have the freedom to be critical of the state. As a community of people in search of the truth, the university has a responsibility to aspire to the type of knowledge mediating technical and organisational power. It should also endeavour to find the type of knowledge that can promote critical insight into the current social and moral values. In this regard, the university ought to maintain its distance from society and government institutions, in order to fulfil its role as a conscience for the state and society (Rossouw, 1991:74). For this task, the university, however, needs legitimacy to be regarded a constructive contributor.

It is argued that institutions that exercise sectional and cultural exclusivity do not contribute to the pool of constructive criticism against, for instance, state practices. The reason is that they focus on a system of exclusivity, without putting the emphasis on promoting national priorities. Seen against the historical background of discriminating practices, this would have little credibility. It would especially lack credibility if structural discrimination were applied, like for instance excluding students on other grounds than academic merit or through the organisational and structural arrangements of serving the community.

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Having dealt with these core elements, the particular interfacing with the chaos theory

qualities is evident. A primary concern about the positioning of the institution should thus not be based solely on the historical contextual element, but how management read the impact of the chaotic worlds, internally and externally, on the realisation of the mission of the institution. It is important here to understand and manage the qualities of for example, the butterfly effect on the total spectre of academic activities in terms of the content of programmes, community involvement, etc. On the other hand, the interdependence aspect requires strategic managerial practices that could enhance the financial viability of the institution. Such decision would be vital for the growth, prosperity and long-term sustainability of the university. Such a decision remains a management responsibility.

#### **4. UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

Linking the conceptual qualities of the chaos theory to the core elements reveals an inherent tension between the historical mission and operation of such entities and the expectations of a larger context that manifests itself in the qualities of the chaos theory. The inevitable position of the university as part and parcel of a society with a very complex history as well as an even more complex presence underlines the useful qualities of a conceptual framework such as the chaos theory for analytical purposes. However, this usefulness finds its application not only at the conceptual level, but also at the level of practical implementation regarding the contents of programmes and the training of students. If, for example, the core elements of identity, relevance, universality and particularity are juxtaposed viz-a-viz for example the elements of bifurcation, non-linearity, holism and interdependence, the question of its relevance lies within the strategic choice of direction that an institution chooses to follow. Whatever the relationship option with society, the choice remains a strategic management decision

Given the above, one can state that the core relationship between the School and the University, and with the society in which the institutions find themselves, presents both the nutritional vein and the space for delivering students who have completed their studies.

Put differently: the space determined through the wider university realm, namely structures, policies, procedures and eventually management, to a large extent also determines the rules for the School of Communication Studies. The School can therefore not act and exist in isolation from the University and its social environment.

Put lightly, the bigger world in which students enter displays very complex characteristics. The popular offers of the results and impact thereof are flashed over television and Internet screens every second. The digital and print media report daily

on this from different perspectives. The spectrum of this complexity impacts on every area of the institution, from the hyper technology as contained in nano technology, bio technology and digital information systems of communication and information to the national and international complexities of socio-political modifications and globalisation. The enormous scope of wars, HIV/Aids, poverty, violence and rape all forms part of this.

Uncertainty about the future of especially young white' young people, the expectations of black\* people, the loss of power, racism that is inherited from birth, uncertainty about how to accept leadership, reactions of run and hide and escape to the familiar, anger about the past and panic about (but also hope for) the future all form part of the setting from which and for which the School must train students. One could argue that this is an impossible task. If one accepts, however, that focus should only be on the safe and the familiar, it would not adhere to the essential being of a university. Then such an institution merely becomes a social association, a cultural experience, a phenomenon studied by historians and sociologists in years to come.

In order to better understand this "chaotic world" better, it is necessary to look at some events within the South African society in order to communicate clearly the context within which training and education actually takes place.

For this purpose, it is also necessary to keep the paradox between the institution and these social phenomena in mind. Conceptually speaking, the core elements of what a university stands for on the one hand and the qualities of the chaos theory on the other hand provide a very intense domain of interplay where society and institution meet. Therefore, it is important to look more closely at particular phenomena, albeit very selective in nature, in order to grasp some of the complexity that needs to be factored into the training of students and the management of institutions.

*\* The terms "white" and "black" are used throughout this study for functional reasons. No racial bias should be read into these.*

## **5. THE "CHAOTIC" WORLD**

### **5.1 Hyper technology**

The speed against which information technology has changed in recent years will probably multiply in years to come. The progress towards digital technology, the convergence of the media and satellite service provision open up incredibly new possibilities for training and education. Media convergence results in all electronic media being transformed into one electronic system like the Internet. As a result, radio and television become components

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of the Internet on personal household computers (Karsten, 2000:1).

Video recorders and DVDs are replaced by a service with the ability to provide chosen programmes in a very direct and personal manner to viewers by means of a service provider. As such, the concept of broadcasting channels will be replaced as soon as the Internet band width is abundantly available to make direct satellite links possible in less than three years. Access will be directly to the source of the broadcast through the Internet (Karsten, 2000:1).

Along with this is the process of globalisation. It puts people in situations of virtual relationships, bringing to the fore totally new processes of relationship dynamics. Through the interface of the computer and computer software, new opportunities are created for contact, access and creativity. A short while ago, these were still only dreams. A new generation of earthlings will become citizens of this "Global Village". This way of life will obviously impact on man's daily existence, and already presents a vast field of research for many scientists, a paradise of trans- and multi-disciplinary research for Communication Scientists, among others.

What this world can further expect is that email and telephone numbers will disappear. Your name.com will become your access to the world within which everybody will be linked digitally and within which people will do e-business, with the consumer forming the central point. The mobility of the cellphone further contributes to the amazing possibilities presented by new technology. Electrical household appliances are also integrated with digital technology, which gives a new dimension to security and household management. Appliances become dramatically smaller and more mobile. It is envisaged that personal computers can become so small that it would even be possible to implant them under the skin (Karsten, 2000:1).

Through nano technology, the newest discovery of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, unbelievable new possibilities are presented in securing digital information for instance. Nano technology makes it possible for trillions of digital information bits to be stored on an area as large as a postage stamp, the entire Encyclopaedia Britannica times five hundred!

Due to the wonders of DNS, the bio technological revolution is already here. Some informed sources suggest that it is significantly bigger than the information revolution. Genes were discovered to bring about and control aging: "telemore". The theory is that the production of these genes within an organism can be promoted through an enzyme called "telemorase" and that this could extend the life expectancy of people, animals and plants. This also presents the possibility to grow human organs and tissue to be used for transplants or reconstruction. This implies that organ banks could in future potentially be created for each individual (Karsten, 2000:1).

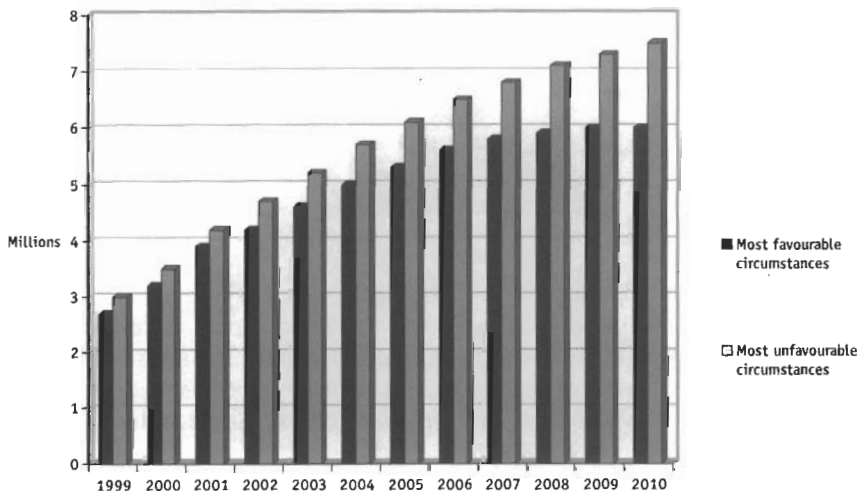
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## 5.2 HIV/Aids

The second complexity is the state of HIV/Aids. It is said that if the HIV/Aids pandemic were a war, South Africa would have surrendered to the enemy a long time ago (Shell, 2000:7).

The following table presents a projected image of the scope of this enormous problem unfolding within the South African society.

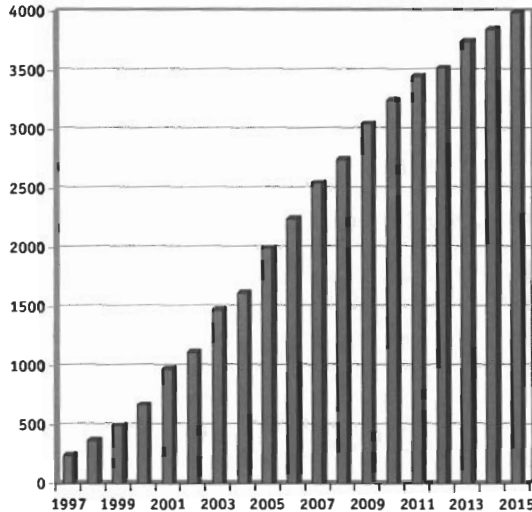
**Table 1: The expected increase of HIV/Aids cases in South Africa up to 2010**



The reality is, however, that it is worse than a war. It is estimated that by the end of 1999, some 3,5 million people in South Africa would have been contaminated with the virus and that by 2001, some 4,2 million people has be contaminated. This figure could increase to between 5,3 and 6,1 million in 2005 and to 7,5 million in 2010. Apart from this, more than 2 500 people are infected daily, and between 100 000 and 150 000 children would be orphans by the end of the year 2000 because of HIV/Aids (Van Tonder, 2000:1).

The devastating effect of this pandemic will result in the average life expectancy of the South African population decreasing to 40 years by the year 2010 compared to an estimated average age of 63 years in 1980 (Shell, 2000:7-27, Quattek, 2000:34-56).

**Table 2: The expected deaths of economically active people in South Africa due to HIV/Aids up to 2015**



The dreadful effect of HIV/Aids has a high impact on especially economically active people. Apart from the personal tragedy, the economic impact is considered larger than inflation. Quattek (2000:34-56) found that companies could lose between 40% and 50% of their workers by the year 2005. This estimate indicates that by 2010, some 15% of schooled workers would be infected (also compare South African Institute of Race Relations [SAIRR], 1999:218-225).

Companies face enormous labour costs and a large decrease in productivity due to absence from work, illness and death. The large increase of people in professional positions being infected (like nurses, soldiers and teachers) is also worrisome. Where there is already a huge shortage for well-trained people in these professions, it has large-scale implications for all levels of society. South Africa can simply not afford the labour market in these professions to collapse. Such a collapse would detrimentally affect society as a whole – not only the poor, but the entire social structure. Such an event could destroy family structures even further (Quattek, 2000:34-56).

### 5.3 Africanization

With the first 1994 democratic election and the subsequent replacement of a white and predominantly Afrikaans-speaking government, South Africa was irreversibly put on a new political and social path. The working and living environments of South



Africans became more complex and unpredictable, especially for white people who were historically privileged.

The trauma of losing power and fear of the unknown took hold of many people – especially whites. What was a safe and predictable environment in the past, changed into experiences of uncertainty and anger.

All indications are that the debate on the process of Africanization is still in its infancy, in the midst of the increasing black consciousness. Establishing South Africa as an African state and cultivating a nation with a strong African identity, linked with the African Renaissance idea, are some of the biggest challenges of the next decades (compare in this regard Mbeki, Buthelezi, Cleary, Kornegay, Landsberg and Mokgoro, 1998). For many white people, South Africa as an African state was and still is a peculiar thought. White people easily refer to Africa as something north of South Africa. As if South Africa is not firmly embedded in Africa.

The new government's sentiment is that revived African values should create a new African identity. This is part of the people's mandate. Many commissions, like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Amnesty hearings and the media and racism hearings, are seen as processes through which the problems of a complex society are addressed. The international conference on racism held in South Africa in early 2001 is another example of the search for a new identity and value system for the country.

The debate on racism is on the one hand seen as an attempt to further complicate relationships among groups. On the other, it is seen as an attempt to understand something of the experiences of people who were and still are on the receiving end. It is seen as an attempt to understand something of the past. Many white people are accused of a state of denial. This is regarded as proof that they are completely ignorant or insensitive about the results of centuries old statutory and institutional discrimination. It is said that black people's self-hate is not understood.

The one argument, for instance, is with regard to affirmative action as a form of racial discrimination. The other wants the people who were advantaged by racism for many years, and did little or nothing to speak out against it, and who now suddenly raise their voices against discrimination, rather to stay out of the debate. Prejudices and suspicion towards others have the potential of immense uncertainty and conflict.

It is indeed a very complex and uncertain world that people (students) need to enter, and institutions should keep this in mind.

#### 5.4 Crime and violence

Transformation contributes to societies becoming unsure about the future. Established customs and norms are not only overthrown, but certain expectations are created among people looking for rectification. Expectations are often not within reach due to the short time available to address complex issues like unemployment, education, health and material prosperity (Lewis, 1999:43, 75).

One of the big side effects of societies in transition is the inevitable increase in crime and violence. Unemployment is considered one of the biggest contributing factors. In South Africa, the phenomenon of political and racially motivated violence is not unusual. Some murders, for instance on army officials, commercial farmers, and political opponents between the ANC and IFP, are regarded as examples of racial and politically motivated incidents.

Crime figures, including murder, armed robbery and rape, are regarded as some of the highest in the world. The impact of these activities on society further contributes to many people's confusion and lack of vision.

Comparing violent crime, social violence and some types of property crime, the following image is portrayed:

**Table 3: Crime and violence. Ratio per 100 000 of the population**

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Murder	29.4	25.9	24.7	23	22.9	22.7
Theft	85.5	84.8	69	63.4	77.3	89.8
Rape	41.5	46.4	50.8	50.9	47.4	47.5
Assault	199.9	216.9	214.9	201.9	195.2	209.7
Break ins	238.7	253.2	263.4	248.9	256.2	280.3
Vehicle theft	106.2	110.9	97.2	96.9	102.7	100.8

Statistics, as provided by the South African Police Force (2000), indicate that on average 9 080 people are killed annually in violent incidents. Robbery with aggravating circumstances is found in an average of 35 920 cases per year. Rape has been reported on average (over the past six years) in 19 000 cases, and the average annual assault figures for the past six years stand at 82 567.

Housebreaking incidents, which have increased by almost 10% per year for the past six years, stand at an average of 102 713 per year, and motor vehicle theft, which shows

a very slight decrease, stands at almost 41 000 cases per year.

The irony is that for many South Africans, these circumstances are part of their immediate and everyday lives. Small wonder that a lack of vision, further deterioration into self-destruction and a reaction of leaving everything behind feature so strongly in many people's future plans.

## **5.5 Demographic composition and trends**

South Africa's demographic population composition represents the broad framework within which the social dynamics and complexities of society feature. A thorough grasp of the trends and patterns featuring with regard to the composition, spread, growth and declines in growth are of the utmost importance for all planners (for instance, human resources developers). The University and the School for Communication Studies find themselves in the midst of this dynamic situation. Future clients, and students who have finished their studies for some decades form a part of this society. It would therefore be irresponsible to consider these merely as cold statistical figures.

These statistics can obviously not be isolated from the other trends discussed in previous sections of this study. Hidden and potentially volatile contexts should be kept in mind – for instance material goods like houses and luxury goods. Geographical distribution and the accessibility of (or the lack) thereof public services like hospitals, clinics, schools and others are also hidden within these contexts. The land issue is one such key element.

There is little doubt that this is and will become one of the biggest issues in South African society. The fact that approximately 6% of white people own 70% or more of South African land is a very strong indication of the intensity of the problem. It is not only problematic due to the economic impact, but specifically also due to the emotional and cultural-political dimensions attributed to it (and therefore also to identity).

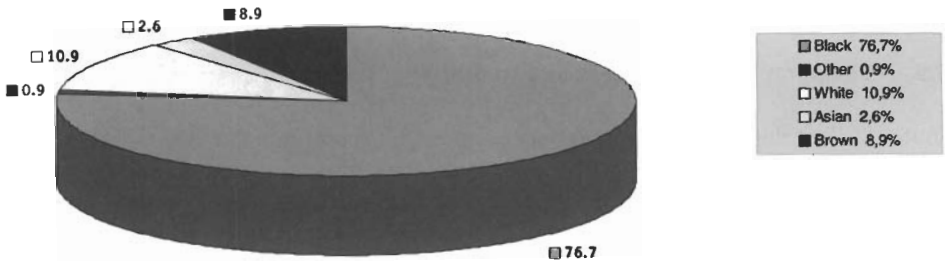
The recent Zimbabwean example is typical of how such an issue can destabilize societies and communities. Proper management is therefore of the utmost importance. The burning need for justice, dignity, recognition and regaining lost ownership and opportunities is fundamental to this complex situation.

It is estimated that the South African population figure currently stands at approximately 40,6 million (SAIRR, 1999:5). The official census of 1996 (and the public announcement thereof in 1998) highlighted the following trends. In the first instance, attention will be given to the broad composition, with classification between the different population groups, and then to the figures for the North West province, distribution in terms of

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the different age groups, and the registration of learners in schools, as well as the classification of single culture and multi-cultural schools (SAIRR, 1999:5-15).

**Table 4: Population structure according to race**



The most salient element here is the classification between the two main groups regarded as black and white. The black group represents 88,2% of the total population and the white group 10,9%.

**Table 5: Proportionate classification of the different groups according to race per province**

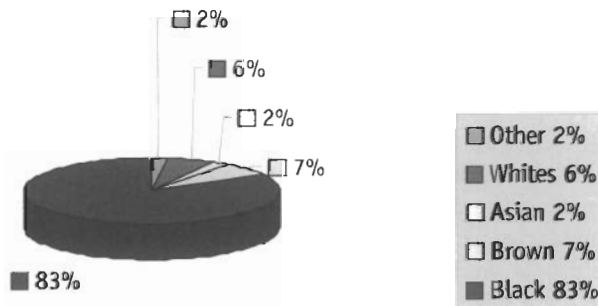
Province	Black	Brown	Asians	Whites	Other
Eastern Cape	86.4	7.4	0.3	5.2	0.6
Free State	84.4	3	0.1	12	0.4
Gauteng	70	3.8	2.2	23.2	0.8
KwaZulu-Natal	81.7	1.4	9.4	6.6	0.8
Mpumalanga	89.2	0.7	0.5	9	0.6
North West	91.2	1.4	0.3	6.6	0.5
Northern Cape	33.2	51.8	0.3	13.3	1.5
Northern Province	96.7	0.2	0.1	2.4	0.7
Western Cape	20.9	54.2	1	20.8	3.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76.70%</b>	<b>8.90%</b>	<b>2.60%</b>	<b>10.90%</b>	<b>0.90%</b>

As far as the North West province is concerned, the split is 92,9% black and 6,6% white.

**Table 6: Proportionate age profile**

Age	Blacks	Brown	Asian	White	Other	Average
0 - 14	36	33	27.4	21.1	37	33.9
15 - 39	43.1	44.2	44.2	39	38	42.7
40 - 64	15.5	18.4	23.8	28.2	14.9	17.4
65+	4.2	3.6	3.8	10.3	3.9	4.8
Other	1.2	0.8	0.9	1.5	6.1	1.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The age group 15 to 39 years (being the potential supplier of human resources for the economy and tertiary institutions) proportionately forms the largest group. This figure stands at approximately 15 million people (in the case of the black group). Compared to this, the same group of white people represents only about 800 000. Not too much imagination is needed to understand the dynamics of this scenario for future needs in terms of the economy, agriculture and education. Accessibility is the crucial issue here.

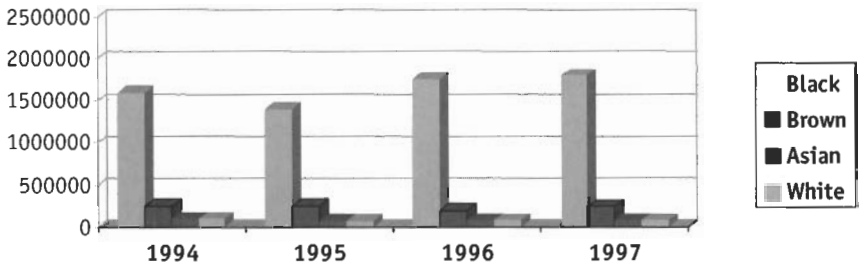
**Table 7: School admissions per race****Enrolments according to race**

Children entering school in 1997 consisted of almost 94% black people, with approximately 6% from the white group. This clearly shows the trend for the future (SAIRR, 1999:127-141).

### 5.6 Economically active people (poverty)

The economy probably represents one of the most dynamic variables in a highly complex South African society. The historical and structural composition of the levels, type of work, type of remuneration and the prospects for promotion within the economic structures are closely linked to the country's socio-political past. The processes of affirmative action, transformation of education and training opportunities, bigger emphasis on skills development, promotion of small businesses, focus on foreign investments, privatisation of state assets and increased exports are all attempts to place the problematic South African economy on new tracks. Together with this, accusations and problems with poor management and administration, crime, a lack of trust and interrelatedness with world markets due to globalisation leave a very complex and intricate environment.

**Table 8: Economically active people per population group (unemployment): 1994-1997**



The finer, but simultaneously concealed detail of what happens to people in economic contexts makes the South African situation even more complex. As such, the economically active part of the community is divided into 85% black and approximately 14% white people. According to the most recent census figures, approximately 34% of these people are unemployed. Some sources estimate this figure to be 42%. Making things worse is the large numbers of people who earn a minimum wage of less than R1 000,00 per month. These figures correlate directly with race and gender. As such, just over 50% of black men and approximately 69% of black women earn less than R1 000,00 per month. Compared to this, approximately 65% of working white men's income is in the area of R3 500,00 per month. There are also more than 50% unemployed black women, compared to the approximate 5% white women. Moreover, there are approximately 34% unemployed black men compared to the approximate 4% unemployed white men in the South African economy (SAIRR, 1999:251-309).

The gap between the groups and the economic and social dynamics that go along with unemployment on the one hand and economic activities on the other hand creates even more intense differences. These experiences provide differing views on living in South Africa. This fundamental basis of people's well-being will obviously influence the way in which they experience daily events.

Given the historical and political situations of the past, and despite the different cultural experiences, people (in this case the largest group of people) are placed in situations where sharp contrasts are found between human qualities. Therefore, it is easy to have a picture of two nations within one country: the one black and poor, and the other white and wealthy.

## **5.7 Managing diversity, leadership and change**

For the purposes of this study, the last aspect forming part of the complex South African community is the diversity of the transforming South African organisational environment. Obviously, this forms the practical environment in which Communication students will be working, and the worlds where South African communities meet.

Diversity in terms of gender, race and orientation contributes strongly to the potential for conflict and uncertainty, especially in terms of South Africa's unique history characterised by discrimination, stereotypes and violence for so many years. However, such situations also present unique opportunities for innovation and increased awareness of core objectives. It also presents more openness that could contribute to a culture of transparency and safety within a democratic dispensation (Giacalone, 1994:621; Stahl-Rolf, 2000:27-34 ).

Some issues should be kept in mind here, namely:

- The process of change and change management is often defined, planned and executed in isolation from the fields of tension within which the existence and identity of the organisation should be redefined. In reality, the status quo is maintained with mere superficial structural changes. These changes are regarded as the action as well as the expected and planned outcome of change. The attitude is often: "We should merely ride the tide. Let us sweat this one out. Things will blow over".
- Too many attempts are made to focus on planning, without clear objectives and processes or the value of participative decision making.
- The very strong ideologically driven or sectional focus of change and the management thereof, without seeing and calculating the importance of the bigger picture.
- Structural exclusivity contributes to processes being managed according to

confined frameworks of institutional policy and practices within structural paths. This leads to structural isolation.

- The focus on technological innovation as the answer, and most often the recommended solution, to change without understanding the interactive management environments. The individual is seen as optional to the process. Identity is built around technology and structure and not around values and people (Rensburg & Ströh, 1998:60).
- Fragmented management of changing key focuses where institutions are managed structurally, as if it could be custom made for interest groups and management objectives without coherence and cohesion. The pragmatic therefore becomes the goal. Different identities are presented, depending on the situation and with whom this is discussed. This could be considered a typical post-modern technique. Technology often plays the role of interface simultaneously helping to create the schizophrenic image of unity (but also division and distance).
- The dilemma of interpretation and packaged reality presented as the only and therefore sanctioned reality. Most often it is the result of utmost uncertainty on behalf of decision makers. In many cases, it is also due to a lack of recognising the complexity of the situation, or it is the result of fear strongly supported by narrow personal and/or cultural/ideological viewpoints (also compare Lewis, 1999:43, Kolzow, 1990:19-23).

As part of management, and given the above dilemmas, Communication students' specific task would be valuable in making critical contributions with regard to:

- Helping establish a comprehensible and clear management philosophy with the focus on trust and ownership as key elements of an integrated process of transformation and change.
- Helping discover knowledge and information on the way ahead by communicating the vision, mission and key values as well as measurable outputs of the institution (Pace & Faules, 1994:99-112). These elements should also be part of continued communication creating opportunities for discussion.
- Helping establish shared values as the result of inclusivity amid the knowledge that change continuously puts new pressure on familiar conditions. These shared values cannot be determined in isolation of the communities served. Interaction should obviously form a major part of this process. Defining these communities is strategic for the institution's credibility. Without credibility, institutions expose themselves to uncontrollable pressure eventually leading to marginalization.
- A key element of management and diversity management in particular is the need for information and knowledge related to processes, procedures and structures that are central to coordinating management within the organisation. It is very important to stop suspicion regarding perceptions that structural



determinism determines people's fate as far as their influence and positions within the organisation is concerned. In situations of transformation it does not help to replace or change individuals when the organisation operates within the same structures and processes (Giacalone, 1994:641).

- The ability to cross bridges of suspicion and hostility is certainly one of the most complex tasks the communication specialist can perform. People's diverse histories, socio-political contexts and personal ambitions are some of the key elements to be addressed and managed so that an identity can be developed. Not only products contribute to the development of a specific corporate image. People, and the way in which attempts are made to achieve the institution's values and objectives, also play a role (Rensburg & Ströh, 1998:62).
- Managing change in authority, where the organisation's leadership needs to be replaced, probably represents the most dramatic process for any institution. Within situations of transformation, it is probably the highest price to pay and probably the main target for which pressure groups aim. The biggest asset in removing authoritative figures lies in the symbolic value thereof. It is often also experienced as such. Authoritarian and undemocratic managers and their practices need to be replaced to create space for real change. For other employers, such steps could create the impression that security and identity were lost. Within such uncertain working conditions, the communication specialist plays a very important role in creating a well-informed and manageable climate.
- Within uncertain and complex environments, the challenges for the communication specialist are to establish communication systems. These can include the whole spectrum from interpersonal communication to electronic media. Through these systems, a communication environment is created that does not only see the institutional management functions succeed at a formal level, but often also succeeds in having a diverse group of people identify with one another and with the objectives of the institution through increased contact. This creates a climate for communication contributing to security and safety. This does not only have the symbolic value of unity, but forms some of the important goals to strive for. To establish this, and given the socio-political history of the country, is most certainly not possible within a short time. In the larger context, this uncertainty within institutions contributes to more instability within diverse South African organisations. The impact of this can be seen in the lack of investments, the withdrawal of capital and the emigration of expertise (Rensburg & Ströh, 1998:62).
- Managers therefore need to play a healing and serving role within these complex environments. Communication should support managers by creating an environment within which these managerial functions can excel – largely in a facilitating way (Zorn, Page & Cheney, 2000:528-534). These are new and challenging management roles for people who were probably not used to rating

'soft' management tasks so highly within the entangled technocratic management environment. The principle is that personnel should see and experience that managers playing corrective and serving roles create human management.

## 6. APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

In a broad sense, two very intense and complex systems are intertwined, namely the institution and the environment (although attention was only given to selected elements for the purpose of this study). A certain unique element of tension exists. Constructive interaction with these complexities presents the strategic context within which training and education is done. As pointed out earlier on, the conceptual qualities provided by the core elements of what a university has been traditionally regarded to possess and the conceptual qualities of the chaos theory provide very intense management challenges. Given the historical context as well as the challenges provided by "chaotic" social, economic, political and other societal phenomena, institutions in line with their historical and contextual obligations should rather opt for the "chaotic" root as a strategic growth and survival path.

Given the above, one can argue that the paradox and often chaotic tension line presents the strategic advantage to institutions who are constructively and proactively interacting with the complex South African society. This involvement is central to the unwrapping of key elements of a university as experienced through centuries, but within the new and challenging South African contexts.

Should one argue from the point of view that training and education of Communication students cannot be isolated from the challenges of the society in which they will practise their skills, a large responsibility is placed on the shoulders of those institutions that are directly involved in interactive processes.

This obviously also presents institutions with enormous decisions in determining definitions for relevance and quality. Without taking away some key characteristics of these fields of tension, positioning requires a process through which contents should be defined that are not one-sided or in isolation of the South African community in its broadest and most specific sense.

Programme content, research opportunities and projects will have to include complex elements of the world within which institutions find themselves. Lecturers would deliberately have to understand the dilemmas of this complex situation in order to contribute to the source of creating knowledge and dealing with solutions to problems. Where better than within the discipline of Communication, which is intensely entwined with the social environment?

By actively promoting such an approach, the symbolic value of such a process and product is not only acknowledged more, but new credibility, relevance and contents are given to all the key characteristics of the University as an institution. This will enable the institution to deliver measurable quality outputs at all levels. Bigger meaning will also be given to the concept of "custodianship". In other words, the institution is looked after with care and quality for the sake of the South African community and thus to the advantage of those students who will still be enrolling in future. The process is embedded in a partnership with communities and interest groups. This partnership is continuously developed and expanded.

This is probably one of the largest challenges, namely to deliver relevant and quality outputs within the international, but also the African context. Intense planning is needed to achieve this.

Who will be invited to such a discussion? The short answer is that it should be as inclusive as possible. Representatives, like the diverse potential community, corporate institutions, state and provincial departments, non-governmental organisations and others should be invited as relevant partners. The question is also *what* would be discussed at such a South African discussion? Some issues for the agenda would include:

- *Hope*. A vision stating that there is a future within a very complex South African context. But then the hope that has contents of quality in order to help facilitate the enormous challenges of poverty, the lack of skills, self-worth and security. "We have a plan. Let us work on the plan to make ourselves more relevant".
- *Expertise*. The School hosts highly trained personnel with years of experience. Expertise has been developed over decades. This is what can be provided. What is the need? How can expertise be maximised in order to help reach the ideal of relevance and quality?
- *Leadership*. Set the example and have the courage to address the complex and unknown, the unpleasant and the uncertain constructively. But also be prepared to see others guide.
- *Quality*. To link relevance to quality where outputs are measured and objectives determined.
- *Openness*. One cannot deny that all people carry some baggage of the past with them. Some have probably not yet dealt with and addressed this baggage of arrogance, discrimination, suspicion, stereotyping, ignorance and self-worth at the cost of others. There are also perceptions that should be addressed, like brutality, backwardness, mediocrity and others. Openness is a good point of departure to give recognition to events of the past.
- *Exposure*. Fear and uncertainty may be part of this process. Positive contributions can be made through experiences. Exposure also brings about emotional growth,

which is very important for trust and quality service delivery.

- *Relevance*. How can the most competitive and best quality training be presented to the advantage of students, society and the School for Communication Studies? What will be needed in terms of experience, expertise and equipment? What about the ethical? What are, morally spoken, the values to be endeavoured?
- *Honesty*. What do you want to achieve? Is it about another power struggle in order to promote hidden interests? How honest are people's motives? How does the playing field compare?
- *Realism*. All problems cannot disappear or be solved overnight. Apart from the immense complexity involved, there are practical considerations of finances, rules and regulations. Culture and self-interest are involved. But there is also a process driven by objectives. New targets are set.
- *Symbols*. Attention should be given to relevant identities and customs. Partnerships and repositioning also give meaning to new symbols, new role models and therefore more credibility. What do student composition, staff composition and programme outcomes look like? What is the symbolic message portrayed through these?
- *Sensitivity*. The complexity lies in dealing with people and the relationships between people. Appreciation and insight into the enormous trauma experienced and still being experienced in a very chaotic and uncertain world are of the utmost importance for the discussion as a whole. Different experiences and histories with diverse expectations place enormous pressure on the process to handle issues with compassion and sensitivity.
- *People can differ*. This aspect is extremely important for growth and prosperity. This does, however, not imply that someone specific can supply all the answers. To differ also means that attempts should be made to come to an agreement in the interest of the values and objectives aimed at. If not, the opportunity to add quality and value to the process is missed.

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# The Last Word

S. Campbell

## Protests and perceptions: Mass media, free trade and muted voices

### ABSTRACT

Protests and Perceptions: The Framing of the Modern Protester considers the role of the modern mass media in creating and perpetuating simplified images of newsworthy events and people. Specifically, an in-depth analysis of *New York Times* and *Washington Post* coverage of the Summit of the Americas held from April 20, 2001 to April 22, 2001 in Quebec, Canada, provides examples of media framing of both Summit participants and protesters. The analysis shows that newspaper reports on the debate are presented through a pro-capitalist framework, which influences readers' perception of those who oppose globalization and free trade.

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*Dr Shannon Campbell is an Assistant Professor in the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas. Dr Campbell is a Freedom Forum Fellow who has served as a consultant for the Internal Revenue Service (Jacksonville, FL), the federally funded One-Stop Service Centers, and the Florida Fund for Minority Teachers. She has been an invited presenter at the Rand Afrikaans University (Johannesburg, South Africa, 2001); Truman State University (Images of Blacks Symposium, 1999); and The Institute of Public Relations (International Symposium III, 1999).*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Anarchists. Hooligans. Communists. These labels represent mediated descriptions of the modern protester. A recent resurgence of protests and activism in the U.S. has garnered substantial coverage in the media. Today's protesters demonstrate against a global economic structure that is perceived as unfair to both workers and the environment. Demonstrators have frequently made news by disrupting several high profile international trade meetings, including the 1999 World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle. For the purposes of this study, however, the motives behind protesters' actions and the specific events through which these protesters have sought a public voice are not the primary focus. The media coverage stemming from the protests represents the author's primary emphasis. It is the author's contention that media representations, as unbiased and objective as they claim to be, have profoundly influenced the ways in which audiences have come to perceive both protesters themselves and the act of protesting as a viable form of public response to government policies and decisions. This study will examine the notion of media framing and prototype theory through an examination of the coverage by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* of the Summit of the Americas, a free trade conference held from April 20-22, 2001 in Quebec, Canada.

Historically and contemporarily, mass media scholars and journalism practitioners actively strive to report in an 'objective' manner. The notion of objectivity continues to remain elusive within the discipline, as it is not only a lofty, but also an unattainable goal. As a human being reporting on issues affecting the human condition, one cannot separate one's history from oneself. In other words, the socialization agents that shape and mould the person one becomes are active, and they continuously influence the way one views the world and ultimately the way one will 'report' newsworthy events. Each person's unique history provides standpoint epistemologies that vary from person to person. Dependent variables that might influence one's standpoint epistemology include things such as age, race, class and gender. Ultimately, these dependent variables create the lens through which one views the world. Hence, a number of journalists viewing the same event will likely 'see' things differently as the lens through which they view the event will vary from journalist to journalist. With this in mind, it becomes clear that objectivity is not only unfeasible but also inaccessible. Ethical journalists should, therefore, seek balance in their reporting. That is, while recognizing the inherent biases all journalists maintain as a result of their standpoint epistemologies, journalists must actively seek oppositional views when reporting news. Currently, the majority of newsroom employees are white and male ("American Society of Newspaper Editors", 2001). Consequently, media consumers are provided with a news 'voice' devoid of diversity and in the end they receive a homogenous view of the world.



Media framing of events and individuals is also profoundly influenced by the biases inherent in ownership patterns of various message-producing entities. Oftentimes, the media “act purposefully to support the values dominant in a community or nation and act on behalf of a ruling class in suppressing or diverting opposition and constraining political and social deviance” (McQuail, 2000, p. 467). Essentially, this means that those in power use the media to stay in power. Fiske (1987) argues that television in particular often carries the message of the dominant ideology. Public television (PBS) is particularly guilty in this regard. Many pundits point to PBS as a liberal stronghold; however, giant corporations with conservative interests such as Paine Webber and Mobil fund most of the network’s programmes. Parenti (1995) goes so far as to label PBS derisively as the “Petroleum Broadcasting System”. Furthermore, well-known conservative journalists like John McLaughlin (*The McLaughlin Group*) and William F. Buckley, Jr. dominate its commentary. While proponents of liberal media bias point to the political orientation of most journalists and the semantics used in news reporting to support their claim, evidence suggests that the media are, in fact, more conservative (or at the very least pro-big business) in their messages, practices and policies. The recent trend towards media concentration underscores this evidence.

Edward Herman (1999) writes that in 1990 there were about 25 major media companies. That number has been drastically reduced by a spate of mergers and acquisitions in the media industry. In fact, today there are just five giant corporations that produce roughly 90 per cent of media content (Nichols & McChesney, 2000). Giant corporations such as Disney, General Electric (GE) and AOL Time Warner own most U.S. media, maintaining the framework upon which capitalistic ideals are built and maintained. Michael Parenti (1995) calls the heads of these corporations “the lords of the media” (p. 9). These media owners are multimillionaires and sometimes billionaires such as William Randolph Hearst, Henry Luce, Rupert Murdoch and Walter Annenberg staunch conservatives who “regularly leave their ideological imprint on both news and editorial content” (Parenti, 1995, p. 9). Furthermore, the boards of directors of print media and representatives of giant non-media corporations like Ford, GM, Alcoa, Philip Morris and IBM are also board members of broadcast news organizations. It is not surprising then that the major stockholders of the three largest broadcast networks are financial giants (Chase Manhattan, J.P. Morgan and Citibank). Merrill Lynch is the prime shareholder of the Associated Press, the country’s largest wire service (Parenti, 1995).

Lee and Solomon (1990) maintain that this pattern of conservative influence and ownership affects how news and commentary are produced. They point out several cases in which NBC edited or removed stories critical of the nuclear power industry when pressured by executives from GE, the corporation that owns the network. Jack Welch, the CEO of GE, once approached the news editor at NBC and reminded him to remember that he worked for GE (Parenti, 1995). When Murdoch, an admitted

conservative who owns FOX and hundreds of newspapers worldwide, was asked if he influenced the editorial views of his newspapers, he responded: "My editors have input, but I make the final decisions" (Parenti, 1995, p. 10).

Pertinent to the study at hand is a number of research efforts that demonstrate the effects of conservative media biases on the outcomes of various protest movements both within the U.S. and abroad. According to Smith, McCarthy, McPhail and Augustyn (2001), for example, the tendency of media reports to engage in episodic rather than thematic analyses of protest events generally favours the establishment over the protesters, since thematic exploration is often necessary for viewers and readers to understand and sympathize with the complex causes behind many protest actions. Similarly, Adkins-Covert, Ferguson, Phillips and Wasburn (2000) indicate that media reports overwhelmingly support structures of power while often failing to provide the kinds of specific information that would lead viewers and readers to hold institutions responsible for the abuses that generate protests in the first place. As a result of these failings, audiences are not receiving a complete picture of the issues, and are thus left to question the motives of protesters and other opponents of status quo realities.

Slanted reporting due to ownership biases and thematic simplifications of complex issues may have implications beyond providing readers and viewers with an incomplete understanding of important world events. According to Entman and Rojecki (2000), humans process their perceptions of the world by classifying this information into distinct cognitive categories. As a way of reducing the complexity and effort involved in this process, observers often construct a mental image of an "ideal" or representative member of each category. Once put into place, these ideals – known as prototypes – influence the ways in which we perceive other objects or concepts contained within our mental categories. According to Entman and Rojecki (2000), we come to expect certain kinds of behaviours out of those others whom we compare to our "ideal" or prototype group members; these expectations, in turn, "drive social perceptions and act as inertial restraints on peoples' ability to interpret behavior that is incompatible with their stereotypes" (pp. 61-62). While dealing specifically with the formation and encouragement of racial prototypes in television news programmes, the authors' discussion of prototype theory may easily be extended to other mediated images of specific characters or cognitive types.

These and other investigations have provided a solid rationale for the author's own review of mainstream newspaper reports of the globalization issue to follow.

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## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

On April 20, 2001, leaders representing every nation in the Western Hemisphere with the exception of Cuba convened in Quebec City to discuss the future of trade in the Occident. Dubbed "The Summit of the Americas", the talks revolved around the proposed drafting and ratification of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) - an expansion of the existing North American Free Trade Agreement to include nations and peoples "from Alaska to Argentina" ("No NAFTA" 2001, p. 4).

As with any controversial act of government involvement or control, opinions vary widely as to the impetus behind the FTAA as well as to the potential benefits or harms that might result from its passage. What is generally conceded by both supporters and detractors of the measure is that the proposed FTAA is the culmination of a process that began in 1988 with the ratification of a free-trade agreement between the U.S. and Canada, and that passage of the FTAA, as presently conceived, would create the largest free-trade zone in the world, one encompassing some 800 million people and a combined GDP of \$11 trillion ("NAFTA for the Americas," 2001). In order to achieve these ends, the proposed treaty would call for the gradual reduction and eventual abolition of import tariffs on trade between member nations, the harmonization of investment rules within the hemisphere, the liberalization of trade in services and the gradual dismantling of quotas and other non-tariff barriers ("Betting on free trade" 2001).

While the actual measures that would constitute the agreement are fairly clear-cut, the motives behind the creation of the FTAA, not to mention the ramifications of a free-trade zone in the Western Hemisphere, remain very much a matter of contention among the many parties and interests disputing the treaty's ratification. Perhaps predictably, this review found that reports in mainstream, large-circulation periodicals tend to support the FTAA initiative, while stories in smaller-circulation, independent magazines and newspapers more frequently side with those opposing the forces of globalization. Opponents claim, for example, in one *Earth Island Journal* article that the Summit of the Americas was simply the final, public exposition of a long-secret process to "impose NAFTA's failed model of increased privatization and deregulation throughout the hemisphere" ("NAFTA for the Americas", 2001, p. 24). According to these detractors, the first Summit of the Americas, held in Miami in 1994, was soon followed by a series of clandestine meetings between representatives of Western nations and those of numerous private corporations in an effort to broker a deal that would benefit free enterprise to the detriment of the environment and the hemisphere's poor. Furthermore, they claim that the FTAA as envisioned would include language to encourage transnational corporations to assume control of services ranging from health care, museums, libraries and insurance to broadcasting, legal services and prisons. In these

opponents' way of thinking, even the most precious of natural resources would not escape the clutches of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, as the measure would bring to fruition what has been for Western government leaders a long-standing dream of creating a hemisphere-wide for-profit market ("NAFTA for the Americas", 2001).

Other detractors have formulated their own reasons for opposing an Americas-wide free trade zone. Weekes (2001), who served as Canada's ambassador to the World Trade Organization from 1995 to 1999, is against an FTAA treaty he calls "too small-bore to be achievable" (p. 39). The former representative has pointed out that the U.S. is unlikely to relax such trade restrictions as agriculture subsidies unless or until the European Union does the same - and with this in mind, a Western Hemisphere-only free trade measure is unlikely to succeed without being expanded to the other side of the globe.

Predictably, proponents of the treaty have taken a far different perspective on the issue. In a *Washington Quarterly* article, Fauriol and Weintraub (2001) describe the FTAA proposal as a chance to "highlight the salience of the Western Hemisphere in a manner that has not come naturally to most U.S. leaders in the post-World War II era". The authors further suggest that the treaty is the natural culmination of three forces at work in modern world politics: the development of a special relationship between the United States and Mexico, a relationship that necessarily competes with historical interactions between the U.S. and Europe; a political process emphasizing liberalized trade in the West, with its attendant focus on common economic and political reforms; and a push toward a more successful U.S. foreign policy and economy based not on imperialism, but on mutual benefits among hemispheric nations. Still others admit that the Executive Branch's eagerness to ratify the FTAA is due, at least in part, to U.S. President George W. Bush's desire to complete a hemispheric free trade process put into motion by his father in the 1980s ("Betting on free trade", 2001), or, conversely, the president's desire to eclipse Clinton's achievement in forging the passage of NAFTA in 1994 ("The real trade wars", 2001).

While a good deal of disagreement exists as to the motives behind the passage of an FTAA measure, opinions are even more polarized concerning the effects such a treaty would have on the nations of the Western Hemisphere. Adversaries of the measure warn that an expansion of NAFTA to all the nations of the Americas would only extend the miserable results of that 1994 treaty: after eight years of NAFTA, they claim, poverty rates in Mexico have soared to 70 per cent, 90 million Mexicans are now without homes, and the use of pesticides in the country has tripled from 1996 rates. And the ill effects of the treaty have reached to American shores as well: almost 400000 U.S. jobs have relocated to the south as domestic companies rush to take advantage of lower employee wages and relaxed working standards below the border ("NAFTA for the

Americas", 2001).

Opponents of free trade have also turned to non-economic effects of the proposed FTAA measure for inspiration in their battle against the initiative. Newman (2001) notes in *Maclean's* that the rioting engendered by the Quebec City summit "had nothing to do with [the rioters'] fear of free trade, and everything to do with their dread of cultural genocide", further explaining that the most devastating impact of the FTAA treaty "will be the cultural homogenization of the Americas" (p. 20). Phillips' (2000) concerns voiced in *Social Policy*, while directed specifically at the World Trade Organization, echo the fears and reservations of many FTAA opponents. The author claims that free trade will result in an entire list of individual, societal and political harms, including "environmental degradation, international systemic sweatshops, loss of American jobs, diminishment of nation-state sovereignty, and undemocratic processes" (p. 34).

Of course, proponents of free trade in general and of the FTAA in particular have a much different opinion about the potential effects of the proposed treaty. In a *Newsweek* article, Zakaria (1999), for example, calls the expansion of free trade "one of Washington's most remarkable acts of global leadership this century" (p. 40), while others have compiled a list of benefits that easily rivals the detractors' compendium of reservations. One report in *Business Week* claims that a free trade zone in the Americas would boost hemisphere-wide growth, give support to lagging Western democracies, and even build a model for global interaction that would emphasize concern for education, democracy and the environment ("The real trade wars", 2001). Still, one cannot ignore the fact that many of the greatest advantages to be gained from the passage of such a treaty are described, even by the FTAA's biggest supporters, as being very much to the liking of the hemisphere's most prosperous and powerful nation. Perhaps the biggest boon to U.S. interests in the treaty's passage, according to news reports, would be the opening up of trade channels between the United States and South American nations. At present, only eight percent of all U.S. trade is aimed at the southern continent ("The real trade wars", 2001), and estimates suggest that America's current \$29 billion a year trade with Brazil alone could triple under the FTAA ("Betting on free trade", 2001).

Opinions about free trade are decidedly divergent - and a wide range of media reports may well be at least partly responsible for the framing of a complex socioeconomic/political problem as a matter of a few simple ideological concepts, and for the polarization of opinions that have resulted from this overly simplistic framing. Documents generated by both sides of the free trade divide have remarked on the disparate collection of people and interests that converged to protest the 1999 World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, an event that led quite naturally to a similar confluence at Quebec

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City in 2001. Phillips' (2000) *Social Policy* report called the gathered protestors an "in-your-face mobilization of labor unions, environmentalists, liberals, progressives, family farmers, small business owners, and human rights advocates" (p. 34); in contrast, *Time* magazine referred to them as a rag-tag group of protesters supported and even covered by several thousand union members in fear of losing their jobs to free trade ("The new radicals," 2000). Wildly varied as they were in approach and ideology, these opponents were united against a single process - globalization - and its unstated threat to the environment and human rights (Naim, 2000).

Numerous statistical reports and qualitative evaluations of the forces that converged at Seattle and Quebec City suggest that media manipulation prior to the events, as well as the extensive news coverage of the events themselves, may have played a significant role in the escalating violence at both trade summits. An article in *The Ecologist* ("Protestors play the media pipe", 2000), for example, celebrated the protestors' effective use of college radio stations, the Internet, and more traditional poster and billboard campaigns to rally the troops weeks before the Seattle showdown. Additionally, a 60-second advertisement on CNN that aired the day the WTO summit began provided a direct call for free trade opponents to join in the struggle:

Under images of global ecological devastation and frenzied market trading, a voice said:

"Overproduction. Overconsumption. An unregulated global casino. A world awash in chemicals. Let's go to Seattle and put those issues on the WTO agenda" (p. 11).

Of course, such open and widespread appeals to action could not have escaped the notice of WTO organizers. Ernsberger Jr., Woznicki, Meyer and Haskins (1999) note that officials were expecting some 20000 protesters representing more than 1200 non-governmental organizations to converge at the event, and that city police would be assisted by representatives of the FBI, ATF and Secret Service in an attempt to bolster security for the event. Despite such preparations, the handling of para-summit activities was an "unmitigated disaster" (Zakaria, 1999, p. 40). *Time* magazine referred to the fracas as a collection of "40,000 protesters from across the ideological map [who] surrounded, shouted down and roundly embarrassed the assembled representatives of the World Trade Organization" ("The new radicals", 2000, p. 42), whereas in the *Multinational Monitor*, Weissman (1999) reported that alleged mistreatment of those arrested in the protests had led to investigations by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International - and Seattle's own mayor.

Organizers of the Quebec City summit, alerted to the potential hazards by media reports of the goings-on in Seattle, took a more proactive approach to crowd control for the

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FTAA convention. More than 6000 police officers in bulletproof riot gear were deployed around the city, and a 2 ½-mile barrier of concrete blocks and wire mesh was constructed around the buildings scheduled to host various meetings of the summit (Wright, 2001a). Free-trade opponents, having claimed victory for disrupting the Seattle summit two years earlier (Weissman, 1999), responded in predictable fashion to these heightened security efforts: the barrier around the central FTAA complex was quickly dubbed “the Wall of Shame” (Wright, 2001a, p. A8) by protestors, who responded to pre-emptive fusillades of police tear gas and pepper spray with ice balls, sticks, chunks of cement and verbal tirades against the “potential human costs of political and commercial globalization” (Gerstenzang & Kraul, 2001, p. A1).

Responses to the events at both Seattle and Quebec City also point to the media’s influence in framing the issue as one involving decidedly polarized points of view. Naim (2000), for example, suggested that the protesters’ united stand against the concept of globalization had failed to take into account the many benefits of worldwide economic and political cooperation - a sense of global unity, which was celebrated, not so long ago, with the demise of Communism in the East.

“The bricks people collected as souvenirs from the Berlin Wall in 1989 were thrown through the windows of McDonalds in 1999”, Naim wrote, adding that opponents of globalization had unfairly blamed this ambiguous concept for “poverty, inequality, environmental decay, corruption and cultural degradation” (p. 96).

Others have been even more explicit in their condemnation of protesters opposed to what is seen as a largely media-created amalgamation of forces and political views. *Time* magazine suggested that those battling against globalization must be in favour of its opposite; however, “What’s the opposite of globalization? Socialism? Isolationism? Vegetarianism? The answer is all three things, and many more” (“The new radicals”, 2000, p. 43). Similarly, Zakaria (1999) insisted that concerns over human rights and environmental contamination are wrongly directed at those seeking unfettered trade borders. “The purpose of trade agreements is to reduce trade barriers and thus expand economic growth. Period. They do not exist to make the environment safe, give workers health care or make countries democratic. There are other methods, treaties and organizations aimed at pursuing these worthwhile goals” (p. 40). And there was no way for the various news organizations represented in and around Quebec City to deny at least partial responsibility for the crowds gathered outside the central summit cordon: according to Wright (2001b), the number of protestors swelled to 30000 for the second day of the meetings, presumably due to media reports of scattered violence that followed the first day of FTAA discussions, and to news that Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien had denounced the protesters as a “small group of extremists” who were behaving “contrary to the principles of democracy we all hold dear” (Gerstenzang

& Kraul, 2001, p. A1).

While the debate as to the relative merits or drawbacks of free trade continues, then, so too does the United States' open pursuit of the FTAA treaty. Despite more than 400 arrests and injuries to at least 46 police officers and 57 demonstrators, the three-day summit came to an end with President Bush feeling confident about the measure's future (Gerstenzang, 2001). In a nod to the thousands of detractors outside the fortress of meeting halls in Quebec City, the president announced a host of U.S. initiatives designed to ease the transition to a hemispheric free trade zone, including the establishment of such efforts as centres for teaching excellence, an inter-American e-business fellowship programme, and a programme for nations to trade civil servants for a year to promote excellence in government, as well as a strong commitment to labour standards and the environment (Wright, 2001b).

Still, significant opposition from officials both within and without the United States could derail the measure long before the January 1, 2005 deadline for its ratification. Externally, numerous nations have expressed concerns over the FTAA treaty creating even more disparity between rich and poor nations (Wright, 2001b). Brazil in particular is balking, largely over the U.S. refusal to cut subsidies to its farmers, a move which would open up new markets to Brazil's massive surpluses of sugar and produce. Internally, Bush faces opposition from Congress, particularly from the Democrat-controlled Senate, which is not likely to grant him "fast track" authority for the FTAA measure - status that would require the House and Senate to either approve or deny any treaty legislation without amendments. Officials predict that most Western nations will be reluctant to sign a free trade treaty with the U.S. unless Bush is granted such authority, since without it, any measure signed by the nations will be subject to an unending process of adaptation and renegotiation in the halls of the American legislature ("The real trade wars", 2001).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Fundamentally, qualitative researchers seek to preserve the form and content of human behaviour and to analyze its qualities rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformation (Lindlof, 1995). Qualitative methodology considers a variety of analytical means for understanding texts used in the construction of "reality" and the implication of such texts. The "voice" in which the author writes influences how readers imagine a scene and, in this particular case, construct reality. The basic premise of textual analysis is to understand how people think, and consequently act, by studying patterns displayed in their discourse, broadly defined.

Information sharing through mass communication channels can be described as being



in a permanent revolutionary state (McQuail, 2000). That is, the process is simultaneously pre-paradigmatic, quasi-paradigmatic and multiparadigmatic. Consequently, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* greatly impact readers' everyday ways of knowing by influencing their cognitive functionalist and interpretive paradigms. There are various ways of portraying one specific event; the representations depicted involve the notion of selection and salience. Journalists, therefore, select specific aspects of reality to highlight and use a variety of techniques to make certain messages more salient, that is, more noticeable or meaningful. In short, print journalists have the ability to frame for their audience a specific vision of the world. Hence, media professionals are sanctioned by the virtue of their profession, with the ability to set the cognitive parameters for their readers. One of the goals of this article is to call attention to the preset frameworks and parameters established by media's hegemonic strata that limit the reader's cognitive complexity. The ways in which newspapers frame relationships and explain events lie at the heart of this critique.

In analyzing the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, the authors asked specific questions including why did the journalist write this text? That is, what goals might the journalist have sought to accomplish through the writing? In answering this question, the authors generated a list of possible goals. Upon reviewing the text, the authors sought to uncover evidence that specifically supported or undermined each of the goals previously listed. A depiction of the overall agenda of the journalist is provided for the reader by a compilation derived from the authors' reflection upon the completed process. Hence, the authors defend their depiction of the journalists' agenda through identification of specific evidence found in the papers' articles.

This article critiques the framework upon which one's epistemological views are built. Using textual analysis as a technique for describing and interpreting the characteristics of communication texts (newspapers), the authors seek to debunk commonly held viewpoints. Examining communication outputs allows the authors to rely on indirect observation. This unobtrusive methodology is relatively free from contamination by the research procedure. The primary goal of this textual analysis is to describe the characteristics of messages embedded in mediated texts. In essence, the authors seek to examine the phenomenon of reality construction by media outlets.

Any exploration of phenomenology as a research method needs to be set in a wider context of research and what Kuhn (1970) calls a paradigm shift. The research paradigm shift is only part of a larger paradigmatic shift taking place in the Western world. The moves from modernity to post-modernity, from nationalism to globalization, from cultural supremacy of one group over others to the concept of multiculturalism and the acknowledgment of cultural diversity, from an understanding of one faith and its dominance in society to acceptance of multi-faiths, are some of the major changes

taking place in the world in which we live and which we accommodate. A recent paradigm shift has to do with the way knowledge is constructed and created. The authors of this article contend that the "informed public" receives its knowledge through a mediated prism that operates to colour information on pre-ordained, paint-by-numbers schemata. In short, the informed public receives knowledge from a media that reflects the ideology of the political and economic elite with a goal en masse consent.

The authors will analyze newspaper coverage of the Summit of the Americas held on April 20-22, 2001 in Quebec by the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. Any article and/or editorial piece (focusing on the Summit) appearing in the papers (excluding letters to the editor) from April 1 – April 30, 2001 was coded, classified and analyzed. This sample demonstrates the validity of their opposition to the widely held notion of the U.S. press as an independent, free and objective entity. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were selected for this research because of their inter-media agenda setting power. When the news agenda of one medium follows that of another, inter-media agenda setting occurs (Atwater, Fico and Pizante, 1987). The *Times* and the *Post* are both powerful and influential. In fact, Massing (1984) suggests the agenda of network television news is heavily influenced by the coverage of elite newspapers, particularly the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.

The *New York Daily Times* published its first edition on September 18, 1851, and was seen as "more balanced, reasonable and objective than its rivals and excelled in foreign coverage" (Lovell & Geraci, 1987, p. 58). The *New York Times* has maintained that reputation and has since grown into a powerhouse, which attracts an impressive amount of national advertising revenue. The newspaper boasts three daily editions - the National, the Northeast, and the main Metro edition (Gealogo, 1997); it maintains 16 news bureaus in the New York region, 11 national news bureaus and 26 foreign news bureaus (The New York Times Company, 2001). As one of America's leading newspapers, the *Times* has satellite-to-plant distribution throughout a great deal of the United States (Lovell & Geraci, 1987). The *New York Times* has received 81 Pulitzer Prizes (38 more than any other news organization), and currently has an average weekday circulation of 1.1 million and 1.7 million on Sundays (The New York Times Company, 2001). In 1999, the Audit Bureau of Circulation ranked The *New York Times* third in circulation among all U.S. papers (Editor & Publisher Online, 2001).

The *Washington Post* began publication in 1935 under the tutelage of Eugene Meyer (The Washington Post Company, 2001). The *Washington Post* banked \$12.9 million in revenue between January and May 2001 (The Washington Post Company, 2001). The paper maintains 22 foreign, six national and 12 metropolitan news bureaus, and has an average weekday circulation of nearly 800000 and just over one million on Sunday

(The Washington Post Company, 2001).

In 1999, The *Washington Post* was ranked fifth by the Audit Bureau of Circulation among all U.S. papers (Editor & Publisher Online, 2001).

Data Analysis

From April 1, 2001 to April 30, 2001, the *Washington Post* contained 25 articles covering the Summit of the Americas in Quebec. During the time period, the *New York Times* published 20 articles focusing on the summit.<sup>1</sup> The papers' coverage of the summit revealed that all of the news stories fit within three broad categories: opinion/editorial pieces, protest stories (focusing on demonstrations outside the conference), and political stories related to the proposed FTAA (dealing primarily with the meetings and events occurring within the conference). The textual analysis of the news coverage shows treatment that is overwhelmingly pro-business, pro-globalization, and anti-protester.<sup>2</sup>

### **3.1 Opinion/Editorial Content**

Editorials represent the views of the newspapers while opinion pieces represent the views of the journalists. It is the authors' contention that if these two papers are truly liberal, then an analysis will yield a clear slant towards a pro-labour policy/ideal. This investigation yielded the opposite; in fact, the editorial content of the *Washington Post* reads like an advertorial for corporate interests. Of the six editorials relating to the topic, four make the case for the FTAA pact as unilaterally beneficial. Moreover, the articles ignore, condescend to or even dismiss outright the environmental, labour and human rights issues voiced by the protesters. In his column on April 20, Don Evans writes that "governments have come to understand that knocking down barriers to trade creates the strongest possible engine for economic progress, technical innovation and, ultimately, a higher quality of life . . . Clearly, trade and the conditions that promote foreign commerce are things we want to encourage" (p. A16). He even credits free trade as a tool of democracy, citing NAFTA as the impetus for the election of opposition candidate Vicente Fox in Mexico. Evans, it should be noted, is the Secretary of Commerce for the Bush administration.

The *Post* also serves to marginalize oppositional views on globalization. Michael Kelley's April 25 column refers to protesters as union hacks and states: "the anti-globalization movement is largely the well-intentioned but ill-informed being led around by the ill-intentioned and well informed" (p.A31). While the *Washington Post* devotes ample coverage to the cause of free trade, it merely skims over protester concerns. In an April 24 editorial, the *Post* states: "The finessing of labor and the environment may offend the advocates for those causes, but it shouldn't. The responsible lobbyists in

both camps say they are not against globalization and seek only to influence its character" (p. A22). So, according to the *Post*, opponents of globalization and in particular the FTAA are not responsible human beings. If the editorial page truly reflects a newspaper's ideology, then in the case of the *Post's* editorial coverage of free trade, the newspaper's liberal reputation is unwarranted.

An analysis of the *New York Times* editorial desk's coverage of the Summit yields similar results.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the *New York Times* included an opinion piece by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, whose pro-Bush, pro-globalization stance was neither balanced (with other viewpoints) nor camouflaged by the paper. In his April 19, 2001 column Powell states, "President Bush and I are optimistic about the future for Americans here at home and in our larger neighborhood". He concludes with the following, "we will work with our neighbors to build a Western Hemisphere of freedom and prosperity—a hemisphere bound together by shared ideals of free trade" (p. A25). The following day (April 20, 2001) the editorial desk of the *Times* continued to disparage any notion contrary to globalization. In a story entitled "The Summit of the Americas" the paper made the following claim, "...trade liberalization and economic globalization offer poor nations the best opportunity for improving their standards of living. There are no models for the notion that less interdependence with the global economy is a recipe for success" (p. A18).

Paul Krugman (April 22) adds a similar view when he asserts that Third World countries desperately need globalization. He ends his commentary with the following: "So who are the bad guys? The activists are getting the images they wanted from Quebec City: leaders sitting inside their fortified enclosure, with thousands of police protecting them from the outraged masses outside. But images can deceive. Many of the people inside that chain-link fence are sincerely trying to help the world's poor. And the people outside the fence, whatever their intentions, are doing their best to make the poor even poorer" (p. A17).

Perhaps the sarcastic lead written by Thomas Friedman on April 24, 2001 best illustrates the *Times's* culpability in the perpetuation of a pro-business "reality", Friedman writes, "I thought about going to the Quebec Summit of the Americas, but I lost my gas mask so I decided to go to Africa instead" (p. A19).

#### Coverage of Protesters

Six of the 25 stories appearing in the *Post* addressed the "Quebec protester", Coverage of demonstrators at the Summit of the Americas ranged from flattering and in-depth to condescending and one-sided. On April 20, Ahrens profiled several American college students who planned to protest in Quebec. He found today's campus activists to be "articulate, techno-savvy, and impressively well-informed" (p. A1). This was, however,

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the only detailed account of protester views and ideology set in a peaceful context. This finding is inconsistent with other findings of protester coverage. One of the most obvious ways in which the deviance of protesters is communicated in the media is through the emphasis on violence. Even news programmes attempt to describe deviations from the norm rather than a slice of daily life (Jeffres, 1997). Media coverage of protests often focuses on the violent actions of a few while ignoring the peaceful actions of the majority of protesters (McLeod, 1995).

The *Post* frequently published accounts of clashes with riot police at the Quebec summit while making reference to the demonstrators as anarchists. While the first two days of the conference were marred by violence, it was not widespread, and it is certainly questionable as to whether the area was the “war zone” described in DeNeen Brown’s April 22<sup>nd</sup> article entitled “Demonstrators Turn Anger on Trade Meetings ‘Wall’”. Brown’s account of the events dramatically recalls the images at “ground zero” of Quebec City’s protests—tear gas, bomb sniffing dogs and motorcades speeding through empty streets. She emphasizes the 85 injured and 150 arrested, while providing only passing mention of the 20000 (other reports estimate upwards of 30000) peaceful demonstrators in the city at the same time. Nearly 99 per cent of the protesters marched peacefully, yet the relative handful of rebellious and violent protesters received the majority of media attention. While violent protests are certainly worthy of detailed coverage, the *Washington Post* failed to provide proper context regarding this small group of troublemakers within a large group of peaceful demonstrators.

Similarly, the *Times*’ coverage of the “protester” was lacking in both quantity and quality of balance. Anthony DePalma wrote three of the *Times*’ four stories devoted to the coverage of the Quebec protester. DePalma polarizes the movement and its activists by depicting the protesters as either genuine but naïve or calculating paid union activists.

Michael Weinstein (2001) examines similarities of the WTO protester and the Quebec protester in his article “The World: Greens and Globalization; Declaring Defeat in the Face of Victory”. Weinstein opens his article with the following:

REMEMBER all those protesters dressed up as sea turtles and carrying pictures of dolphins as they railed against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999? Well, the W.T.O.-bashers are back, this time in Quebec, where President George W. Bush and 33 other heads of state are gathered this weekend to reaffirm a 2005 deadline for creating a free-trade zone stretching from Canada to Argentina. And once again their target is a global bogeyman that the Humane Society of the United States, speaking for animals, has labeled “the single most destructive international organization ever formed” (A18).

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This condescending view of the protester is one that permeates the paper's coverage of the Summit.

### 3.2 Coverage of Politics

While the protesters warranted only six articles in the *Washington Post*, the paper devoted 13 stories (approximately half) to the politics of the Summit of the Americas and the activities and goals of the 34 national leaders who attended. Of the 20 articles appearing in the *Times*, half dealt specifically with the political aspects of the Summit. There was very little difference in the way in which either paper reported on the political aspects of the Summit. That is, both papers provided a thorough explanation of the issues at hand while simultaneously espousing the goals of the Bush administration for the conference. The journalists at both papers repeatedly lauded the efforts of the world leaders to create a borderless hemisphere where free trade could provide an opportunity for economic empowerment of its citizens. While doing so, the journalists often failed to illustrate any converse views. These papers created for their readers a constructed reality that reinforces the notion that this agreement is important because it will expand free trade, which will in turn spread prosperity and freedom throughout the region.

Journalists from both papers failed to assess Cuba's exclusion from the Summit critically. In short, the U.S. grants "economic empowerment" only to those neighbours who embrace a U.S. ideology. Though the Summit represented Bush's first opportunity to address an international delegation, both papers often quote him as an authoritative figure in free trade and globalization. Other nations' leaders were virtually excluded from press coverage save for Mexico's Vicente Fox and Canada's Jean Chretien, longtime trade partners with the U.S. under NAFTA.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Unfortunately, the notions of balance and fairness seemed to elude both the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* with regard to their coverage of the Summit of the Americas. This is particularly unnerving as both publications maintain exemplary reputations within the industry and with their readers. This analysis indicates that the papers ran only half as many stories about demonstrators as they did about the politicians. In addition, the political stories went into great detail about the benefits of free trade as extolled by the Bush administration, whose representatives were frequently quoted at length; demonstrators, on the other hand, were antagonized, marginalized and dismissed as tree-hugging fanatics or violent troublemakers.

One might expect a liberal newspaper to report on stories concerning big business and

profit-motivated politics with great skepticism. Indeed, a liberal media would be cognizant of, and even advocates for, labour issues and the environment. This study found the *Times* and *Post* to be exactly the opposite, with the only real anti-globalization rhetoric coming from readers in the form of Letters to the Editor. The *New York Times* published eight letters, and six were critical of the paper's coverage of the FTAA.<sup>4</sup> On April 24<sup>th</sup> the *Times* published a letter from Mark Krumholz of El Cerrito, California. He voices his concern in the following passage, "Environmentalists object not just to specific WTO rulings but to a system where corporations get two chances to block environmental labor laws: once in a country's ordinary legislative process and a second time before a WTO trade appeals panel" (p. A18). He further questions why appeals panel hearings are closed to mass media and the public.

Luther Vanummersen of Philadelphia notes that "The protesters in the streets of Quebec City were clamoring for justice. We were not denouncing globalization outright. We are simply speaking out for environmental protections and basic workers' rights because history shows us that without these protections, corporate globalists will not exercise those wise restraints that set people free" (p. A22).

The authors' assessment suggests that both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* rely on a non-critical, non-evaluative workforce to perpetuate capitalism, status quo, and ultimately, media hegemony. The only voice of dissent to the *Times*' static coverage comes from a few readers who dare to question the paper's authority. The challenge to the reality constructed by a small number of media owners comes from disgruntled readers, not from "liberal" reporters or the editorial staff. In essence, these readers represent the sole opportunity to alter a preset reality that forces readers to accept a prescription for big business and unilateral trade without questioning its potentially harmful influence on human rights and environmental issues.

It is the authors' belief that the term "globalization" denotes a two-way symmetrical flow of production and ideas between and among trade partners. The authors further assert that the current use of the term "globalization" represents a misnomer. The FTAA promotes Westernization as opposed to globalization; that is, it promotes a process whereby developing nations are expected to adopt and adapt to Western ideals of capitalism and commercialism.

<sup>1</sup> At least 51 per cent of an article must be allocated to specific coverage of the Summit of the Americas to be included in this analysis.

<sup>2</sup> This ideology is hardly indicative of a paper with alleged liberal leanings.

<sup>3</sup> The *New York Times* also published six editorial pieces focusing on the Summit.

<sup>4</sup> The *Washington Post* did not publish any Letters to the Editor about the Summit of the Americas

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# Research forum

## UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

### **The representation of Mythical Africa at the Lost City: a critical analysis**

**Candidate: Jeanne van Eeden**

**Degree: Doctor of Literature and Philosophy in the subject Communication**

**Promoter: Prof Pieter J Fourie**

The purpose of the thesis is to deconstruct and reveal the underlying patterns of thought in the construction of "The Lost City" as a cultural construct. The thesis thus offers a reading of "The Lost City" as a revitalisation of the "myth of Africa" and as indicative of the patterns of capitalism, consumption and neo-colonialism that inflect history, culture, heritage, and the experience of the past. The thesis suggests that "The Lost City" creates an elaborate simulacrum of Africa that resonates with an oblique neo-colonial mentality of cultural appropriation that hankers nostalgically for the days of colonialism and western supremacy in the guise of entertainment.

Theoretically the thesis is set against the background of current critical studies of entertainment landscapes (theme parks, shopping malls and casinos in particular) as a worldwide phenomenon with Disneyland/World as the most well-known prototype. It applies an eclectic "postmodern"/"post-disciplinary" methodology based on the writings of social and cultural theorists and deconstructivists such as Baudrillard, Eco, Jameson, Foucault, Barthes, Said, Bhabha and Sadar. All of them deal in some manner with the constructed nature of cultural production. This provides the candidate with the means to do a descriptive and interpretive analysis of third meanings.

### **An investigation of Internet usage among a group of professional in South Africa: a uses and gratification approach**

**Candidate: Juliet Francis Gilbert**

**Degree: MA (Communication)**

**Supervisors: Prof Pieter J Fourie & Dr Elirea Bornman**

In her dissertation Ms Gilbert investigates the uses and gratifications of the Internet among a group of South African professionals. This is done against the background of the known impact of different communication technologies on the communicative nature and quality of successive mass communication media and on the ways in which people use media and the gratifications they derive from them. Ms Gilbert provides the

reader with an overview of the uses and gratifications theory, research findings related to categories of gratifications, audience activity, factors effecting media use, changes to media usage and gratifications, the technology and possible uses of the Internet, as well as its predicted impact, and an empirical survey of Internet usage.

**'n Onderzoek van Afrikaanssprekendes se behoeftes aan Afrikaanse televisieprogramme - 'n gevallestudie**

**Candidate: Mr JM Grobler**

**Degree: MA (Communication)**

**Supervisors: Prof GM du Plooy and Prof M Pitout**

This study investigates the need for Afrikaans television programmes among Afrikaans viewers in the changing media environment in South Africa. Needs are studied by means of a case study among grade 10 learners in Pretoria. The uses and gratifications approach serves as the theoretical framework of the study and a number of variables are investigated. These variables are television driven (supply, content and structure), technology driven (new media technologies such as satellite television and the Internet) and viewer driven (socio-cultural, personal and demographic factors). The study finds that there is a connection between these variables and the need for Afrikaans programmes among respondents. The supply, content and structure of Afrikaans programmes do not gratify respondents' needs. New media technologies broaden respondents' socio-cultural horizons, enabling them to comfortably watch English programmes. Amidst the increasing supply of overseas programmes in English, the need for Afrikaans programmes is diminishing.

**RAND AFRIKAANS UNIVERSITY**

**The role of television news in the social transformation process in South Africa**

**Candidate: P.J. Mashangoane**

**Degree: M.A. (Communication)**

**Supervisors: Dr. H.L. Venter and Dr. D.P. van Vuuren (SABC)**

The study involves a review of relevant mass communication theories, as well as a comprehensive and detailed literature review of social transformations to democracy around the world (e.g. in Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Sub-Sahara Africa) and the role that the media played in these processes. The study focuses on television news and the specific role it plays in social transformation. Research questions used for in-depth interviews with opinion leaders in the news area in South Africa included

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the coverage of key themes such as: national unity and democracy; socio-economic and political development; cultural diversity; the African Renaissance; the social healing process; objectivity; development in rural and township areas and lessons that can be learned from international broadcasters. Data was collected by way of a non-probability sample which consisted of 15 respondents that included media executives, media practitioners, media monitors, academics, government officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations. Interviews were conducted during the period August to October 2000. The results of the study provide insight into the relationship between television news and social transformation. Specific recommendations for South Africa are considered.

## UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

### Strategic management roles of the corporate communication function

**Candidate: Mrs B Steyn**

**Degree: M Com (Communication Management)**

**Supervisor: Prof Ronél Rensburg**

Chief executives (CEOs) and other senior managers do not seem to be satisfied with the performance of their corporate communication managers/senior practitioners. Perceptions are that practitioners fail to assume broad decision making roles in organisations. They seem to be unable to see the big picture or understand the key issues in their industry—their thinking is tactical, rather than strategic. Practitioners are focused on their own activities and media, on the achievement of *communication* goals and objectives—without necessarily linking them to *business* goals. There appears to be a lack of understanding between top management and the corporate communication function on the latter's role in the strategic management process.

In order to shed light on the situation described above, the research objectives addressed by this study were the following: Firstly, to conceptualise a strategic role for the corporate communication manager at the top management level of the organisation (the role of the "*PR strategist*"). This was done by investigating the strategic management literature to determine whether a need exists at the top management level for the corporate communication manager to play a strategic role. The behavioural activities of such a role were identified both from the public relations as well as the strategic management literature.

Secondly, to conceptualise *corporate communication strategy* as an activity of a corporate communication practitioner in the role of the "*PR manager*", a strategic role at the functional or meso level of the organisation. Furthermore, to differentiate corporate

communication strategy from a communication plan.

Thirdly, to hypothesise a model for developing corporate communication strategy—and thereafter to implement, evaluate and improve the model by assessing and comparing the corporate communication strategy projects of third year corporate communication students at the University of Pretoria, as partners in the action research process.

The research approach selected was *qualitative* research—an *exploratory* design was employed in achieving the first three objectives by means of a literature investigation. A *confirmatory* design was used for the implementation, evaluation and improvement of the model through the methodology of action research:

In implementing, evaluating and revising the hypothesised model, this study moved away from the traditional teacher-centred approach in the classroom to a situation where students were involved in a research inquiry to build theory. At the same time, the participant community (non-profit organisations in this case) was exposed to strategic communication knowledge—being involved in a process whereby they became active participants (together with the students and the lecturer/researcher) in developing a corporate communication strategy for their organisations. This resulted in them (as well as the students) acquiring strategic communication skills; and in the researcher investigating a new area of interest, building theory, and teaching students work that is applicable to practice.

In conceptualising a new role for the corporate communication practitioner at the top management level (the role of the *PR strategist*), and proposing corporate communication strategy as the link between the communication plan and the corporate strategy, an attempt was made to provide possible solutions to important problems in practice.