

# EDITORIAL/REDAKSIONEEL

*A dominant theme in this issue of Communicare is the application of the Cultural Studies approach to the South African scene. A key insight of Cultural Studies is that culture, communication, power and politics are locked together in a complex web of interdependence. Given the political transition that South Africa has experienced in 1994, asking questions about the impact power shifts have on cultural and communication production becomes timeous indeed.*

*The dominant culture in a society speaks of and to the ruling group and confirms its need for hegemonic control. Popular culture, on the other hand, is spoken by and to ordinary people. As an expression of the needs and feelings of ordinary people, popular culture often becomes a site of resistance to the ruling elite and the dominant culture that dominant groups will try and impose on all citizens in a country.*

*The question is: what happens when the nature of the ruling group changes? When the formerly dominated become the dominators: and those who were previously dominant become the dominated. In many ways South Africa is currently experiencing such a shift. Hence, much of the popular culture which used to serve as a vehicle of resistance to apartheid now looks set to assume the role of a cultural form which will legitimate the new ruling elite and its 'national unity' project. If this happens, it will, of course, lose the vitality and excitement previously associated with its popular phase.*

*On the other hand, that which was previously the dominant culture – associated with Afrikaner nationalism – has already begun to experience funding problems and hence a sense of angst. Faced with such a challenge, this previously (staid) dominant culture will be forced to adapt or perish. A likely scenario is that it will not only survive, but will mutate into a new (re-energized) popular culture. It may even assume the role of a resistance culture to the Afrikaner spirit that is becoming apparent in the emerging dominant culture (?).*

*One thing seems certain – the shifts which will play themselves out over the next decade will provide communicologists with much material for analysis. And given the nature of the communicative and cultural mutations we will be experiencing, it seems likely that we shall see a greater volume of work using Cultural Studies perspectives in order to try and unravel these shifts.*

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