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Background, Problem and Methodology

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Definitions

This chapter explains the basic issues, choices and assumptions that launch the rest of the study. It includes defining some of the key terms to be used in the study, i.e. "values" and "development", but starts with an explanation of the choice to focus on Southern Africa and specifically the six countries that are covered by the network. We continue with the statement of the objectives of the study in a more formal manner than above, and explain the areas of concentration based on that. Lastly, the methodological choice to compare is explained and some of the pitfalls and problems of that choice are discussed with reference to our own work that follows the framing that the first chapter provides.

Southern Africa

The study focuses on Southern Africa and six countries in particular. The six countries were picked in terms of practical considerations and can be seen as a convenient sample. However, the six countries are also a good distribution of countries in the region. The countries we were able to include in the network are Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

One might consider the case for the inclusion other Southern African countries separately from the existence of a network of collegial cooperation established and co-funded by CODESRIA that lead to the convenience sample that delimits the rest of the research reported here. The countries with relatively small populations left out in a strictly Southern African Development Community member states population are Namibia, Swaziland and Lesotho. The countries with larger populations left out are Malawi, Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Francophone island states left out are the Seychelles, Madagascar and

Mauritius. Arguments can be advanced for the inclusion of any selection of these countries with the exception (at the time of the conception of the project) of Angola and DRC. Both these countries were still in the last throes of civil war and serious destabilisation in 2001 and survey data of the type handled in the empirical analyses were not available then.

In general terms, through migrationsof linguistically-related groups from further north centuries ago, the communities and societies of the Southern African region have been in interaction through economic exchange, religious influence, migration, political power struggles and alliances, etc. The colonial history is also one of interaction with four blocks constituted by the four main colonial authorities, namely Britain, Portugal, Germany and the Belgian king and later the Belgian state. Here, the forms of interaction again included religion, migration, economic exchange and politics, but the content was decidedly different with the effects of slavery, missionary activity, colonial rule, migrant labour systems, disenfranchisement, imposition of political borders, trading political relationships from afar, etc.

Apartheid became the next major feature of the political economy of the region after the decolonisation of Angola and Mozambique. The alliance of the Frontline States, the instigation, support and direct involvement of the South African regime in civil war in Mozambique and Angola and independence struggles in Zimbabwe and Namibia, and the existence of apartheid with significant economic but dwindling (later) political support cannot be unravelled here; but this does show how intertwined the Southern African region was prior to democratisation in South Africa, and hints at how interdependent the region will continue to be.[1]

With the reconstitution of the region after the democratisation of South Africa in the 1990s, a new order has been emerging. From the seventies onwards in the apartheid era, the Frontline States were working together politically and sometimes economically in an attempt to break the stranglehold of South Africa on the region. In 1980, they formed the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference and it is this body that was transformed into the Southern African Development Community in 1992 with 14 member countries (SADC, 1992). SADC has a large number of regional projects and agreements and plans. These are not just important instances of regional interaction. We can take the activities that are associated with SADC [2] as symbols of other types of constant interaction through all sorts of institutional arrangements, business ventures, government and non-governmental initiatives, etc. Southern Africa is a region not only in name, but also in terms of activity and institutional agreements. Many essential aspects are similar across countries in the region, and certainly across the countries that form part of the Comparative Network. Therefore, a research design formed in the Most Similar Systems Design mode is applicable.

Some of these essential aspects include the fact that there are significant linguistic overlaps and exchange as well as cross-border community relationships between the populations of these countries; they have seen similar cultural and religious transformations; have been exploited economically through slavery in some cases and through exploitative colonial regimes and foreign business interests in all cases; have gone through liberation struggles led by nationalist and mostly socialist-oriented liberation movements; now struggle to make progress from a low base in a globalised economic environment of extreme competition and trade barriers that are mostly unfavourable to African countries. The important differences that could be considered as independent variables are the varying levels of industrialisation and economic sophistication and therefore the type of integration into the world economy. The social and political cultures that go with a population that is mostly urbanised, the development of a sizeable middle-class and liberal constitutional and legal dispensation could also be considered. This sets South Africa apart from the rest. Furthermore, we might expect some impact from the type of post-colonial economic regime in that some countries went for a much more rigorous or specific form of socialism. The cases of Mozambique and Tanzania are important in this regard. Civil War is the last prominent dimension that may have a noticeable effect. Mozambique, the Congo and Angola have had their share of this type of tragedy, but only Mozambique forms part of our study in some chapters.

Values

Our Approach to Values
To analyse the values of ordinary people is to discover the ideas of the good, notions about meaning, significance and coherence, points of motivation and symbols of identity. These come from concrete forms of interaction such as community, family, friendships, religious and other civil organisations as well as the interaction between these localised and personal relations and the larger more abstract and distant systems and structures. The institutions and the political, economic, social, legal and scientific systems of society only make sense and are only made sense of in terms of the 'stocks of knowledge' (Ingram 1987:116) that societies and individuals hold.

In spite of possibly thousands of attempts at defining values, a definition of social values would mostly refer to the idea that values are 'conceptions of the desirable that guide behaviour over the long term' (Coetzee 1989; Halman 1991; Joubert 1992; McLaughlin 1965; van Deth and Scarbrough; 1995b). We argue that there are three important assumptions associated with this definition. These assumptions eventually determine the significance of the term as well as the research methodology.

- Values are of heuristic nature in that they enable us to interpret and categorise our own and other people's general approach to life. Values appear in attitudes, opinions, preferences, etc. patterns can be discerned. When we observe social interaction and behaviour. If we focus our attention on attitudes, opinions, beliefs and moral judgements, we argue that a distinct pattern in a wide array of these observable aspects can be interpreted as evidence of constraints. These constraints are evidence of a value orientation. It is still an interpreted constraint, and thus an interpreted value orientation. But that is what value analysis is for. It makes it possible to understand the general orientations that guide or underlie behaviour over the long term.

- Values are non-empirical (McLaughlin 1965) conceptions of the desirable in the sense that they cannot be observed directly. It is, thereby, assumed that values are latent variables underlying opinions, attitudes, beliefs and moral judgements. These can be regarded as manifestations of values focusing on a particular object or class of objects while values are more general and enduring. However, as people act on their opinions, attitudes, judgements and beliefs, they learn from the experience and that affects their values. In that sense, there is a reciprocal relation between values and manifestations of values.

- Values engage moral considerations because of the implied moral dimen- sion of conceptions of 'desirability' in distinction to simple 'desire'. Con- ceptions of desirability are social and historical. We engage in moral discourses in relation to particular issues that we face and have to take decisions on in everyday life as well as in momentous circumstances. These issues relate to contexts of interaction and social structures and thus we are engaging with others when we form and change values. In addition, the others that we meet in this engagement are not all part of one seamless series of exchanges, but part of a complex array of relations, and structu- res. That means that values have to be studied with due regard for the particular historical and social context within which they are found.

If we, therefore, take the cultural approach outlined below with the approach to values stated here, we define social values as cultural and cultured conceptions of the desirable that guide behaviour over the longer term. These conceptions are formed and embedded by the structures of society and manifestations and instruments of power.

Because values discourses have such powerful but hidden normative associations obscured the seemingly self-evident nature of the ethical precepts carried in the values discourse, we find it necessary to point to a fourth logic of the definition of values that we adhere to.

> Values are always expressed in a context of the exertion and contestation of power. As values are normative expressions they operate within the sphere of ideology. Because the expression of values is an expression of what ought to be, values discourses intend change to a desired, normative situation or the establishment of the normativity of a current situation. This implies that values analysis should always also be analysis of power and especially hidden structures of power. Values, when instituted in a discourse, are too easily just the expression of the ideology of the dominant class (Touraine 1974:144; Touraine 1977:37)

There is no self-evident set or number of values that play a role in development; just as there is no self-evident role of values in poverty. This has to be observed and interpreted in historical and social context. There is evidence that values are, indeed, path-dependent, implying that values may differ between people and groups of people because they have followed different trajectories in the (recent) past. But it is important to define what has to be taken into consideration and for that purpose a provisional and working definition of poverty and development has to be formulated.

Economists now realise that human beings are not just self-interested rational decision-makers, but cultured beings that have different ideas about rationality and that are not only motivated by self-interest. Human values are the 'outcomes of environments in which individuals develop and live, within boundaries set by genetic predispositions' (Ben-Ner and Putterman 1998:58). These 'genetic predispositions' relate to basic human needs and how humanity has learnt to satisfy these needs through cooperation and mutual solidarity. The environment within which this deep structure is played out is affected by socialisation of the individual in terms of the conditions within which he or she grows up and forms a world-view. These conditions are affected by the institutions of the time, major events that have a deep impact and technologies that bring about major shifts in the way we live and make a living (Ben-Ner and Putterman 1998:17-51).

Sociologists and political scientists have been arguing for some time that different cultures are the product of different strategies of dealing with economic, technological and political change, but add that these cultures also shape the environment (Inglehart 1990:3). In fact, the rise of sociology and political science as subjects in modern science has at its root the attempt to understand the change brought about by industrialisation and the establishment of modern societies in the nation-state system (Giddens 1971).

Empirical research is always trying to pin down particular formative factors in the development of particular values. This is notoriously difficult but not unimportant. Inglehart finds that '[f]ormal education, one's current social milieu and perhaps life-cycle effects all seem to shape one's value priorities. But the

impact of a given generation unit's formative experiences seems to be the most significant variable…' (Inglehart 1977:96). Inglehart argues that generations are influenced by two dynamics. These are explained by the 'scarcity hypothesis' and by the 'socialization hypothesis'. The first depends on the Maslovian need hierarchy – even if only in a very broad sense of distinguishing between material needs and needs that relate to 'esteem, self-expression and aesthetic satisfaction' (Inglehart 1997:33). The second hypothesis implies that values formed at a young age tend to have more purchase and the environment seems to have relatively little effect on values after individuals have reached adulthood (1997:33-34). A third hypothesis holds promise that goes beyond the commonly accepted ideas of socialisation and scarcity. Inglehart speaks of the 'authoritarian reflex'. By this term, he refers to the effect of rapid change and subsequent insecurity that seems to lead to fundamentalist reactions or a need for strong secular leaders (1997:38).

Values are part of a wider cultural framework and this is discussed in order to establish some basic principles.

Our Approach to Culture

Culture and values are modern concepts even if what we immediately think of in these terms is as old as humanity itself. No concept central to the self-description of society can be understood in isolation from what the concept is meant to effect in society. An essentialist but naïve concept of culture and values may maintain that culture and values are just other words for being human. However, the notions of culture and values emanate from a consciousness that we may also have control and influence over society and over human differences and that these are not just facts of social life but human constructs. The intention and hope of actively changing the way of life of a society is the root of the idea of culture. This is fundamentally modern. Obviously, the question is then how this change of culture is effected and to what aims cultural change is effected.

Baumann provides an enlightening historical perspective on the matter. In the initial stages of modernity, views on culture could be equated with 'gardening'. There was only the cultured and the uncultured (Bauman 1987:95) and the uncultured had to be kept out or 'weeded out'. In early modern society and with the advent of the nation-state system and the institution of mass education, industrial production, universal legal systems, etc., a new view of culture emerged whereby culture was to be 'legislated'. In many countries, religion, language and other aspects of culture were standardised. For that more than propaganda was needed, and institutions were built up to govern the citizens of a country. In late modernity or globalised modernity, it is no longer possible to do this kind of social engineering – even if many societies still try, and many political parties still have cultural and social engineering as the core of their ideology. The role of intellectuals and ethical research is that of 'interpreting' (Bauman 1987).

From our perspective there are important choices implied here. Looking at African culture from this gardener perspective means that the correct cultural answer to African development exists and can be instituted. Looking at African culture from a legislator perspective means that the standard cultural answer for every society can be developed by representative political processes and then enforced. Such views cannot be accepted if the diversity and continuous change that typify modern societies is taken seriously. Baumann suggests a more modest approach. Cultural research should interpret. Interpretation assumes pluralism and precludes the existence of a privileged or final normative answer to cultural issues. Culture is to be communicated and debated and not gardened to root out the weeds or legislated to homogenise all (Bauman 1987:143).

This perspective is a warning to both the investigator and researcher and the policy-maker and decision-maker. If this is not done, the Disreali observation of social and cultural manipulation in his time will be true of the relationship between our research and policy-makers and the African societies that are engaged: 'ours are nations of the seduced and the repressed; of those free to follow their needs and those forced to comply to the norms' (Bauman 1987:169).

Another aspect that has to be noted when thinking about cultural investigation and the relationship between any such investigation, and its context is the necessary relationship between culture and power. 'Culture is linked inextricably with power because some people are able to structure the world more than others; and they do so for others… Culture is structure' (Varcoe and Kilminster 1996: 217).

The connection between power and structure has been a standard issue in social theory since the notion of the two faces of power became current due to Bachrach and Baratz's critique of Dahl's argument according to which power was the ability to effect decisions (Lukes 1974; Bachrach and Baratz 1962). They pointed out that the effect of 'non-decision-making' was also the exercise of power in that it sets the agenda in a given context. They (Bachrach and Baratz 1962, following Schattschneider 1960) call this agenda-setting feature of existing social patterns the 'mobilization of bias'. Structure refers to the patterns that are set in society and in organisations and do not change overnight. Institutions and organisations are in themselves prime examples of social patterning in that they do not change overnight.

Cultural investigation should, therefore, also include institutional investigation and as institutions are critical to the political and economic patterns in any society, culture forms 'informal constraints that are part of the makeup of institutions' (North 2005:12). Institutions are manifestations of the structuration of culture and the dominant culture. Castells also argues that 'cultures manifest themselves fundamentally through their embeddedness in institutions and organisations… The culture that matters for the constitution and development of a given economic

system is the one that materializes in organisational logics' (Castells 1996a:151-152). Therefore, it is imperative that a cultural analysis and attempts at moulding development initiatives with a cultural consciousness include an institutional analysis and approach.

The so-called 'third face' of power, i.e. ideology, as defined by Lukes (1974) has to be reflected on as well. Behaviourist cultural analyses do not have the inclination to think about ideology, because the object of the analysis is purely the 'empirically verifiable' behaviour rather than the interaction between meaning and behaviour and the structures within which the meaning and behaviour is placed and makes sense. However, culture is a playground of ideology and the institutions and other structures of society often both support and require ideology. Apartheid structures and ideology cannot be bettered as an example of this.

If we take the approach developed here, the key guidelines in our analysis of African culture and values have to be that:

- the intention of the analysis is to be reflected on at least, and at best focused on interpretation and mediation rather than judgement, reform or political alignment;

- institutional and other structural dimensions of the particular cultural aspect that is studied should be included in the research; and

- the ideological potential of the research and the ideological embeddedness of the cultural aspect that is being studied should be investigated and questioned.

Most observers and commentators and policy-makers now seem to say African solutions are the only ones that will work. All of these people and institutions would agree that solutions that recognise the values and culture of African people and that deal with them are needed. We suspect that this is not only recognition of the dignity of African people and their say in the development process. It is also admission that there has to be a fusion of the development process and African values and culture for the institutions and projects and policies and aid to work. We suspect that this is sometimes meant as 'gardening' and the 'weeding out' of aspects of culture that inhibit development. We also suspect that this is sometimes meant as the 'legislation' of a homogenous and politically enforced standard cultural framework – which would suit a neo-liberal agenda, as we will see later on. We would suggest that it should rather be meant as interpretation and communication that enables ordinary people to escape the threat of being forced to comply with the norms that govern outside influences and those who are seduced by freedom to follow their needs.

An interpretative view of culture understands that values and culture cannot be changed overnight and do not change from the outside. Even though some

might think that values lie waiting for the next individual and government to take them and change them to suit the ends or goals of the individual or government, this is not the case. It is a much more complex and in principle unpredictable process of change that is at stake. In a globalised and connected world the process of cultural change has become even more complex as it is more reflexive (Giddens 1994; Beck 1986) than ever. This means a more sophisticated understanding of communication and mutual understanding has to be developed for the area of values and cultural exchange.

Poverty and Development

We define development as a significant and sustained change for the better in material conditions as well as social and psychological experience of a community or society – knowing full well that the term is not unambiguous (Mkandawire 2010). Any definition of development in Africa has to deal with the existing widespread and severe poverty that characterises large parts of the continent. It also has to deal with systemic matters such as the impact of globalisation and the consequent marginalisation of Africa in the world economy. Development definitions must be useful in institutional contexts in that it has to deal with political governance, economic and corporate governance, infrastructure development, capital flows, market access, human resources, etc. Development definitions also need a historical dimension in both human and environmental time. Development that could deal with these issues would require a restructuring of both the position of Africa in the world and of domestic development strategies. Lastly, and maybe even most importantly, one has to deal with the discourse on development itself, i.e. the ideological nature of the term and the space left for ideological agendas in policy-making in the very ambiguity of the term.

This is not what development theory has been about all the time, though. The practice and the theory have to meet. Not only has actual economic growth meant global and national increases in inequality (Seligson 2003) and has such economic growth not been evident in many African countries on a consistent level, but Africa has been following (if sometimes belatedly) the strictures of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral development agencies that are supposedly based on the best of what development theory had to offer (Rutten and Leliveld 2008:12-13). It is now clear that most African countries will not even reach the Millennium Development Goals (UN 2010) and the failure of development as a notion has to be considered (Kothari and Minogue 2002:2-7). Some argue that the notion of development is a foreign imposition and if we take the dominant formalised theories that cluster around modernisation as a metatheory (Kothari and Minogue 2002:7-10) this has to be acceded. However, the initial impression is different if one reads development theory texts.

Diversity of approaches to development and the fight against poverty have almost become a principle (Booth 1993a). In this regard, gender (Nussbaum and Glover 1995; Townsend 1993; Tripp 1998), class formation (Sklar 1998), rural and indigenous knowledge (Chambers 1983; Long and Villareal 1993; Prosterman et al. 1990), ecology (Adams 1993; Sutcliffe 2000), the state (Castells 1996a; Mouzelis 1994), ICTs (Ben Soltane and Adam 1999), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Brown and Korten 1989; Cernea 1988; Korten 1990; Schuurman 1993), New Social Movements (Sklair 2000) and culture (Putnam 1993; Serageldin and Taboroff 1994) have been studied and have been the focus of particular development programmes and policies. In different ways, all of these are relevant and legitimate dimensions that need to be tackled.

It may be that development is not the right term for this change. The notion of development has a range of general and more systematic associations that are to be declared and declined. Development often meant foreign and imposed. It has also meant capitalism, and this is still a dominant association for many commentators in the current period. These two associations have to be declined. Development cannot be imposed and development is not capitalist ideology cloaked as something else.

Development has long been associated with foreign designs for African people that assume that Africans are to follow the path taken by others, and subsequently theorised as the normative framework for development under all circumstances. However, development has been associated with this kind of evolutionism and determinism for too long. The fact that Europe has seen a particular modernisation process does not mean that Africa should follow the same steps. This is the case not only because African development takes place under different conditions, but also because a modernisation model would necessarily be an imposed model.

Modernisation theory, as we know it, makes little sense in Africa. There is no necessary connection between the, sometimes hidden, assumptions of evolutionism and determinism in modernisation theory on the one hand and development theory for Africa on the other. African development cannot mean change from traditional African society to modern society, simply because these essentialist concepts do not apply – even if they were used to define development theory and designs in Africa for quite some time. Not only are 'traditional' and 'modern' flags for a significant variety of conditions, but traditional and modern have been in conversation for a long time in Africa. This 'long conversation' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1997) has emptied out any pristine or pure form that may be conceived. No traditional society (whatever that may have meant) exists in Africa after at least 200 years of intense and deep confrontation and entanglement with first colonial Europe and, subsequently, with modern capitalism and socialism.

At the same time, modern cannot be exclusively associated with Western – unless one claims that socialism and communism are exclusively Western concepts. The notion of revolution and proletarian or peasant-based change as propounded by socialists and communists of all hues is as modern a notion as one can get.

The other question one has to discuss is the issue of whether the notion of development does not suppose capitalism and capitalist forms of development. Capitalism looms so large in the current world order that this issue cannot be finished off with historical perspectives that point to some similarity in assumptions about historical change between capitalism and socialism. Those that argue that development is more often than not a mask of capitalist change, point out that development in Africa has often meant that Africans and African goods and resources are accessed and exploited by the West. This is a critical matter not only because of critique of the *dependencia* school of thought (Frank) and world systems theory (Wallerstein). Many African commentators and intellectuals have tried to use this argument to develop the foundations of an independent view of African change – rather than 'development' as propounded by the World Bank and other international or Western agencies (Onimode 1992).

Such arguments seem to forget that historically, development has also, for a considerable period of time and in many countries, meant socialism and therefore another type of modernisation of 'backwardness' and 'traditional' society (Mafeje 1978:8, 48, 75) correctly points the disjunction between socialist ideologues and community life while still using a framework of necessary and historical progress from 'primitive' to socialist in his own work. In fact, as argued above, both socialism and capitalism are deeply dependent on ideological constructs of modernisation and of the 'backwardness' of traditional societies. If one looks at the use of the term development over a slightly longer period of time than the past decade, it becomes clear that socialism also intended to 'develop' societies and communities and that the real issue is not whether the notion of development supposes capitalism but what development means in a context where capitalism is the dominant mode of production.

We might then follow the arguments of post-development theorists (Rahnema and Bawtree 1997) and dismiss the term fully, but Matthews (2004) makes the important point that this would not be the preferred position of Africans themselves. She then follows the line set out in our initial definition of development, but adds that development in Africa cannot work on the basis of the values of development in the West as the values and the project have to be aligned.

Theorists of the RWWII development project lament the way in which African communities have failed to achieve 'development', but are blind to the possibility that some of these communities may have rejected the kind of development such theorists propose and may be actively trying to meet their needs and fulfil their aspirations in a different way (Mathews 2004:381).

If we discount the idea that development has to mean modernisation and if we discount the idea that development has to mean capitalism, one still has to deal with the question of what development is. We agree with Kebede that an historical approach is needed, as this creates space for divergence and choice and does away with the universalism and evolutionism of ideological constructs of modernisation and concomitant theories of development (Kebede 2004).

It, then, become possible to understand what Diagne means when he concurs with Sall that the notion of development means 'the exploration of the future' (Diagne 2004:57) and most importantly, that this way of thinking about development is not at all foreign to African culture. He severely criticises Mbiti's characterisation of African time as 'motion towards the past' and agrees with Gyekye that Mbiti overanalyses African languages in order to find what he already decided to argue, namely an essentialist view of African cognitive processes and culture (Diagne 2004:59-64). This kind of accusation has been levelled at Mbiti before (Lo Liyong 1988; p'Bitek 1970, 1973).

Gyekye himself argues for a 'self-created modernity' as a counter to the assumption that Western modernity has to replace some essentially African tradition, and as a counter to the assumption that Africa cannot be modern and cannot change (Gyekye 1997:286).

From the above, it is clear that we want to define development in terms that do not continue the mental colonisation that characterises most of the history of the discourse on development in Africa up to now. At the same time, we want to focus on the concrete and the historical and not be enamoured with a theoretical discourse that disregards the complexity of difficult questions that come from all sorts of different quarters.

For example, the question of who is to benefit from development remains. If development is not simply an imposed process of modernisation in terms of criteria and a path of change defined outside of Africa, and if development in not simply a process of de-liberalisation, structural adjustment and formal democratisation in order to suit the capitalist mode of production and enable exploitation in a more 'palatable' form than the present, it may still not mean that the poor will benefit. Even though we are not presuming the 'trickle-down effect' of capitalist development thought, and we are not presuming the necessity of 'breaking eggs to make an omelette' (Leninist modernisation) or 'liberalisation' (capitalist modernisation), it may be that the poorest people in societies that go through significant change still end up being victims of the process of change. Development cannot mean that this happens.

It is useful to reflect on Barrington Moore's analysis of the role of peasants in industrial modernisation. Although African development cannot be limited to the aim of industrial development, and although we have already declined an ideological

reading of modernisation as an adequate or desirable model for development in Africa, Moore's historical and comparative perspective is very useful to focus attention on the question of beneficiaries from development. He argues convincingly that the peasant has always, lost even if peasants did sometimes play a very important role in creating change. On an economic level, the extension of market relationships implies the replacement of subsistence farming and on a political level, modernisation means centralised political control – both detrimental to peasant interests in important regards (1966:467-468). Even though the notion of peasant is not all that useful in the post-colonial African context where large groups of very poor are urbanised and otherwise displaced, careful consideration has to be given to the results of development for the poor.

Barrington Moore's conclusions may be the result of the questions that he asks. The consequence of change for peasants that Moore identifies may be because industrial modernisation has always been about the interests of some elite and not about development as a whole. Our interest is not industrial modernisation in the first place but development in a sustained and holistic sense. Therefore, the discussion will be limited to stating the likelihood that change may benefit particular groups to the exclusion of the poor and setting a criterion for successful development as change that is to the benefit of those at the bottom of society.

Development is for people, and this means that development has to be defined in terms of the aspirations and expectations of the people concerned (Coetzee 1989). In tandem with that approach, poverty has to be defined by ordinary people and their approach to poverty should guide attempts to alleviate or eradicate poverty (Narayan 2000).

In continuity with that, we see the data available from household surveys used in the Living Standards Measurement Surveys and the Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA) of the World Bank and associated institutions. The PPA data focuses on the 'multiple meanings, dimensions, and experiences of poverty' (Narayan 2000:15). The data available on the meaning of poverty for the poor themselves, the role of formal and informal institutions in the lives of the poor, gender relations in that context and the relation between poverty and social fragmentation, forms important background information for the study of the values of ordinary people (of whom a sizeable proportion in Southern Africa are poor or very poor). The six main findings of the PPA studies expose the multidimensionality of poverty in the experience of the poor themselves. Poverty is associated with a lack of material well-being, but it also includes a lack of basic infrastructure, illness, lacking literacy and material assets. Furthermore, poverty signifies psychological aspects such as dependence, humiliation and social marginalisation as well. Development would mean positive change in these conditions and experiences. However, the poor cannot be made to speak in a form that is predetermined by the global institutions (Pithouse 2007); and in the

case of the PPAs, the function of the data is clearly encapsulated, but the function of the World Bank and how the bank sees itself and its role in ideological terms.

For that reason, we need to discuss poverty a bit more than to list the findings of a constrained data gathering process such as the PPAs. We find that the Economy, Ecology and Exclusion group of the Africa Studies Centre of Leiden has the right approach to the matter. There has to be, detailed study of the complexity of the nature of poverty and how it links to development opportunities that will seek to understand the varied and complex ways in which resources are accessed and institutions allocate resources (Rutten and Leliveld 2008:15). We find their use of the notion of exclusion relevant, as they want to point to the way in which access is denied. This is most relevant to a view of poverty as it allows us to place the poverty concept in terms that are aligned with an attempt to account for the effects of globalisation on poor people and in the creation of poverty (2008:17).

It can be contrasted with the other two common ways of thinking about poverty. May provides a good summary of these. The first is the most obvious notion that poverty is 'the inability to attain an absolute minimum standard of living, reflected by a quantifiable and absolute indicator applied to a constant threshold...' (May 2008:27). The second is less obvious, but quite pervasive. It argues that poverty is the 'lack of resources with which to attain a socially acceptable quality of life' (2008:28). The difference lies in the norm that is used. In the one case, it is a derived international number. In the second, it is a relative social level. The third way of looking at poverty is to think of it 'as being constrained choices, unfulfilled capabilities, and exclusion' (2008:28).

This approach fits the Human Development measures of the United Nations. These were developed with significant influence of Amartya Sen's approach to development as freedom and the so-called capabilities approach. The history of this development will be considered in more detail in the next chapter, but suffice to say at the moment that our notion of development and poverty takes into account the full range of human capabilities and is not limited to an economistic or quantification model of development. We are interested in the experience of ordinary people, and as a test of the success of development, we are specifically looking at the experience of marginal groups. Along with Diagne, we are interested in how these people think about their own ability to create their own destiny. Are they able to 'explore the future' and conceptualise a future? Do they feel well and are they happy? Are they free from poverty, also in the sense that they do not suffer from a poverty of ideas about their own future and what they can do about it? Do they feel empowered enough to use resources that they have at their disposal or is hopelessness a cloud that covers their horizon? One could go on in this vein and attempt to make the list of questions universal (Nussbaum's Aristotelian list [1993] or Clarke's version of it [2002b, 2002a]). However, [t]he problem is

not with listing important capabilities, but with insisting on one predetermined canonical list of capabilities, chosen by theorists without any general social discussion or public reasoning. To have such a fixed list, emanating entirely from pure theory, is to deny the possibility of fruitful public participation on what should be included and why public discussion and reasoning can lead to a better understanding of the role, reach and significance of particular capabilities (Sen 2004b:77, 81).

For that reason, we see the establishment of a multi-level dialogue about values, poverty and development as critical to the successful redefinition of development in Africa. It may well be that there is a list of universal capabilities that will mean development for all people, including poor people in Southern Africa. However, we will only know that if we have taken the trouble to engage with poor people and if we have heard and analysed the variety of verbalisations that tell us about capabilities that are relevant.

Research Objectives and Questions

Our objectives are to link cultural values in the fullest sense of the word (including institutions and all social interaction) and development conceptually and empirically, to explore specific values that are supposedly playing a significant role in perpetuating poverty and to identify values that could contribute positively to development as we have defined it above.

Determining what role values play in development and determining what role what particular values play has to be done in context. Values are not just particular to the culture of a particular community or 'nation', but also to groups and stratifications within communities and large social entities. Age, gender, ethnicity, rural-urban location, occupation and employment status, income, education, religion, ethnic background, marital status, etc are all variables that require investigation in order to establish how values play a role in development. In terms of the region which we focus on and the countries that we have data for and which we study in some or other way, it is also important to focus on the aspects in which these countries differ. These aspects have been pointed out above, but they include the level of industrialisation, urbanisation, global economic integration, middle-class formation and war trauma experience. These aspects will be highlighted where appropriate and mostly on a country level analysis.

A number of questions can be formulated and applied in terms of the differentials listed. These include:

- Do values provide a partial explanation for the pervasive poverty of African people?
- Are there certain discernable values that provide a partial explanation for the notion that Africans have allowed themselves to be exploited by outside forces and inside elites over the past decades?

- Are there certain discernable values that enable a partial understanding of the fact that many African communities have survived in the most extreme conditions in the recent past?

- Are there certain values that could play a pivotal role in the future development of Africa and its people?

- What is the interplay between demography, values and development?

- Is it possible to explain the dynamics between discernable values and value-clusters and other factors like political-economy, demographic change, geography, etc.?

- What value differences and cultural dynamics are there between countries and communities in Southern Africa that could explain development differentials?

By investigating the questions above, we could focus on a tangible list of dimensions of development possibly affected by the values of ordinary people. The aim of this book is to argue the ambitious claim as to the aspects that are to be considered when investigating the relationship between culture and development in our time. This claim is based on our interpretation of the current debates about social capital, religion, civil society, moral virtues, relationships and trust and the reasons why and how culture matters in development. But it is also based in our particular African experiences of issues that continue to come up in discourses about values in Africa. The aim is not only to argue that particular aspects are to be investigated, but also to start the investigation and to attempt to draw conclusions about the correctness and relevance of the theoretical claims made from existing material and data.

Areas of Concentration

The values notion encapsulates a wide variety of themes. With the definition provided above and the focus added by the research questions regarding the role of social and cultural values in development in Southern Africa, the matter has been reduced somewhat. However, when one considers the variety of value-related matters that might conceivably have an impact on development, the field opens up again. The need for choices is, therefore, implied again. The process of deciding on which values we find most important and the availability of data are two separate matters of course.

During a preliminary workshop and subsequent meetings and discussions, the results of our deliberations were that four clusters of values were defined. We saw these clusters as encapsulating what we thought would be important ones to investigate. These clusters refer to a fairly long list of specific values and value-oriented notions. The four value clusters are power, cosmology, human relationships and human qualities. Some aspects are, of course, crosscutting.

Power: including questions about the nature of different definitions and social role of status, success, wealth and leadership; the social role of obedience, tradition and custom; the significance of these themes for the body, for gender relations and gender definitions.

Cosmology: including the various definitions of social and general harmony and conflict; positions regarding strangers, foreigners, the unknown; the concepts of fate and causality, and their relationship to witchcraft and to multiple explanations for the same events; the notion of time; the value of human life in the greater scheme of things; the significance of these aspects for creativity and innovations, tradition and custom, risk and view of the future.

Human relationships: including patterns and conventions of communication; gender definitions and relationships; the body; notions of honour and shame; values regarding freedom, trust and tolerance, strangers, foreigners, the unknown.

Human qualities: including notions of obedience, integrity, responsibility, discipline; types of aspirations; perceived different work ethics; the role and value of imagination, creativity and innovation; and the value of human life.

In some instances, we include an aspect because existing analyses and theories focus attention on it, whether or not we deem this aspect to be particularly useful in answering the research questions that we pose. For example, Weber's Protestant Ethic is a famous argument that has seen many analyses flow from it. The African case is a rather complex setting for the operationalisation of this argument as the religion picture is not as clear as elsewhere and work is not as industrialised as elsewhere. However, the concept was operationalised and tested as far as possible. In other cases, we made educated guesses as to the relevance of particular notions and relationships and were able to establish some relevance in empirical analysis. In most cases, however, we still remained on the conceptual and theoretical level, as we were not able to test the relevance of most of the notions listed above fully or adequately.

The conceptual and theoretical arguments for the particular notions are made in the next two chapters. The empirical analysis is done in the subsequent four chapters. The analysis depends mostly on secondary analysis of existing data and therefore on the category fit and sampling arguments of the primary data collection frameworks. It is not always satisfactory, but exactly in the problems we identify, a significant number of learning points emerge.

Comparative research is not about quantitative analysis and should use both quantitative and qualitative analyses. We attempt to provide material that has that balance, but the full spectrum of such an attempt will remain outside the scope of a single publication.

Methodology

The Case for the Comparative Method

Introduction

The increased interest in cross-cultural research in recent times can be seen to be directly related to factors such as globalisation, in which individuals across the globe have become connected in new and unexpected ways. However, the history of Orientalism (Said 1979, 2004) as a subject should be a warning about ethnocentric and ideological conclusions to such research. In trying to understand the similarities and differences between cultures, cross-cultural studies bring with them a unique set of methodological challenges. These need to be comprehensively addressed if valid and reliable results are to be obtained. In essence, all cross-cultural researchers have to deal with a set of similar problems, such as the (in)equality of meanings of phenomena they wish to study across cultural groups, the appropriateness of measurement instruments across cultures, and the accuracy of data collected to answer research questions and hypotheses. More especially, these differences are greatly amplified when varying cultural contexts are taken into account,.

The most basic assumption of cross-cultural research is that comparison is possible because patterns (kinds of phenomena that occur repeatedly) can be identified. To understand why a particular community or culture is the way it is, we must compare that case with others. Nevertheless, there are those who argue that cultures are so diverse and unique that they can only be described in their own terms. From this point of view, comparison is a waste of time, if not wholly illegitimate (Ember and Ember 2001:5). It is, however, important to note that cross-culturalists do not deny the uniqueness of each culture as such. Instead, they argue that uniqueness and diversity are always present, simultaneously. Taking these dynamics into consideration, this chapter will aim to address the challenges inherent in cross-cultural research with specific reference to methodological issues.

Establishing Equivalence

Undergirding the superstructure of theory and causality within the social sciences is measurement. As noted by Torgerson (1958:89), achieving the theoretical and causal goals of a particular field 'would seem to be virtually impossible unless its variables can be measured adequately'. Two closely related concepts play an essential role in cross-cultural comparisons, namely: equivalence and bias. From a theoretical point of view the two concepts are the opposite of each other; scores are equivalent when they are unbiased (Van de Vijver and Leung 2000:7).

Neumann (2000:410-11) refers to four types of equivalence that the cross-cultural researcher should strive towards: Lexicon, Contextual, Conceptual and Measurement equivalence. Firstly, lexicon equivalence refers to the correct translation

of words and phrases and also highlights the need for the researcher to make sure that words have the same meaning across cultures.

Contextual equivalence, however, refers to the correct application of terms or concepts in different social or historical contexts. For example, in different cultures with different dominant religions, a religious leader may have different roles, training and authority. A researcher who asks about "priests" within a specific culture, without taking into account the context, could make serious errors in interpretation.

Conceptual equivalence relates to the use of the same concept across divergent cultures. Here, the question arises, whether it is in fact possible to create concepts that are true, accurate, and valid representations of social life in two or more cultural settings? For instance, as noted by Neumann (2000:410), there is no Western conceptual equivalent for the Japanese 'ie', which denotes a continuing line of familial descent going back generations and continuing into the future. The researcher, therefore, needs to be aware of these conceptual limitations and make the relevant adjustments to the research design.

The final type of equivalence described by Neuman (2000:411) is measurement equivalence, referring to the measurement of the same concept in different settings. Even if a researcher develops a concept appropriate to different cultural contexts, the question remains has to whether one may not need different types of measurement to test the same concept in these different contexts. For instance, the researcher might measure a concept using an attitude survey in one culture but field research in another. Similarly, it may be necessary to use different indicators to measure the same concept in different cultures.

Differential response styles such as acquiescence and extremity ratings can also cause significant levels of measurement bias in the researcher's findings. Hui and Triandis (1989:296-309), for example, found that Hispanics tended to choose extremes on a five-point rating scale more often than did white Americans. Another common source of method bias is differential familiarity with the stimuli used. When, for example, cognitive tests are administered to cultural groups with widely different educational backgrounds, differences in stimulus familiarity may be almost impossible to overcome (Van de Vijver and Leung 1997:45-49). The application of Western methods of information gathering to non-Western contexts therefore presents particular difficulties, as many people in the developing world may not fully understand the concepts of evaluation, measurement or anonymity.

Translation-related Problems

As Hofstede (2001:21) notes, language is both the vehicle of most of cross-cultural research and part of its object. Our thinking is framed by the categories and words available in our language. One of the major challenges of any kind of research in which the language of the people under study is different from that

of the write-up is, therefore, gaining conceptual equivalence or comparability of meaning. Phillips (1960:291) sees this as being 'in absolute terms, an unsolvable problem' as 'almost any utterance in any language carries with it a set of assumptions, feelings, and values that the speaker may or may not be aware of, but that the field worker, as an outsider, usually is not'.

For many researchers (Sechrest et al 1972; Brislin et al 1973; Warwick and Osherson 1973) the process of gaining comparability of meanings is greatly facilitated by the researcher (or the translator) having not only a proficient understanding of a language, but also an intimate knowledge of the culture. As noted by Birbili (2000:86), only then can the researcher pick up the full implications that a term carries for the people under study and make sure that the cultural connotations of a word are made explicit to the readers of the research report. The use of translators and interpreters 'is not merely a technical matter that has little bearing on the outcome. It is of epistemological consequence, as it influences what is "found"' (Temple, as quoted in Birbili, 2000:86).

Solutions to the Problem of Inequivalence

As noted by Landman (2000:43), the explanatory power of concepts can be greatly enhanced if they are applied to contexts in which the comparativist is most familiar. Those who engage in area studies should, therefore, have extensive knowledge of the history, economics, politics, and culture of a regional sub-set of countries in an effort to make more meaningful explanations of political and cultural phenomena. This local knowledge can identify gaps between theoretical concepts and their application, resulting in a more meaningful comparison.

A second solution involves the raising of the level of abstraction of concepts in order to allow a study to be more inclusive. For example, Inglehart (1997) applied two value continua to forty-three countries, which ranged on the one hand from citizens' concerns with 'survival' vs. 'well-being' and, on the other, from 'traditional' vs. 'legal-rational' forms of authority. In doing so, he specified his concepts so as to incorporate a wide range of countries (Landman 2000:43). However, this heightened level of abstraction also has its own limitations in terms of adequately tapping into the complexity of a given society.

The third solution follows from the first. If a truly informed comparison of countries is sought, then those seeking to compare 'should venture out of the security of the familiar [and] collaborate with other scholars who possess specialist knowledge of the countries under scrutiny' (Sanders quoted in Landman 2000:44).

It becomes clear that one of the most challenging aspects facing comparativists is the equivalence of both their theoretical concepts and the indicators for these concepts across multiple contexts. As Mayer (1989:57) argues, 'the contextual relativity of the meaning or the measures of indicators constitutes the most serious

impediment to the cross-contextual validity of empirically testable explanatory theory'. The key towards overcoming this obstacle necessarily lies in careful specification of concepts, thoughtful construction of indicators that operationalise them, careful application of them to multiple contexts, and recognition of their limitations.

Selection of Countries: Most Similar and most Different Systems Design
Variously called the "comparative method", "comparable cases strategy" or "focused comparison", comparing few countries achieves control through the careful selection of countries that are analysed (Landman 2000:27). Comparison of the similarities and differences is meant to uncover what is common to each country that accounts for the observed outcome.

The method of comparing few countries is divided primarily into two types of system design: "most similar systems design" (MSSD) and "most different systems design" (MDSD). MSSD seeks to identify the key features that are different among essentially similar countries, with these differing features therefore accounting for the differing political outcomes. For example, countries may share the same basic characteristics (a, b, c), and some share the same key explanatory factor (x), but those without the key explanatory factor also lack the outcome which is to be explained (y). Thus, the presence or absence of the key explanatory factor is seen to account for this outcome. By contrast, in the MDSD design, countries selected have inherently different features, but share the same key explanatory factor (x) as well as the presence of the outcome to be explained (y) (Landman 2000:27).

MSSD is particularly well suited for those engaged in area studies. The theoretical and intellectual justification for area studies is that there is something inherently similar about countries that make up a particular geographical region of the world. Whether it is common history, language, religion, politics or culture, researchers working in area studies are essentially employing most similar systems design, and the focus on countries from these regions effectively controls for those features that are common to them while looking for those features that are not (Landman 2000:28).

However, it should be kept in mind that it is often a vast oversimplification to view individual countries which are to be analysed as homogenous units which possess a single "culture". It is, in fact, common to see studies from vast and hugely diverse countries such as India or China being used to suggest that the findings are representative of the culture of the entire nation (Patel 2001:36). Such simplistic assumptions seem to have greatly limited the value of cross-cultural studies. Thus, while employing MSSD or MDSD, one needs to remain wary of the pitfalls associated with aggregating country data, and take full cognisance of the internal variations present in these countries.

Ethnocentrism and Representation of the "Other"

Prejudices and cultural biases in judgments of other cultures work like "cognitive schemata" that have a bearing on the type of processing that takes place. Information congruent with the schemata tends to be more actively sought after and better remembered. These schemata essentially 'act as templates and reduce the rich and pluriform reality to more manageable formats' (Van de Vijver and Leung 2000:35). Value bias is, therefore, intimately related to the perspective from which one sees the world. Classification, analysis and substantive interpretation are all subject to the particular perspective of the researcher, with that which is observed in part 'being a consequence of the theoretical position that the analyst adopts in the first place' (Sanders, quoted in Landman 2000:51). One could even go as far as to argue that the very decision that cross-cultural research is worthwhile reflects a certain ethnocentric Western universalist value position (Hofstede 2001:18). Knowledge is, therefore, by no means value-free.

Ethnocentrism can be defined as the 'exaggerated tendency to think the characteristics of one's own group or race superior to those of other groups or races' (Drever 1952:86). Such tendencies often start at the level of data collection, in which surveys only deal with issues that have proven relevant in a particular (usually western) test population and for which a particular language has words. The very concepts and categories of thought which sociologists and political scientists employ in their analysis 'are very often themselves part of the very political ideology which they try to understand' (Cohen, quoted in Hofstede 2001:19). As noted above, it is, therefore, essential that instruments being put to cross-cultural use should be developed with cross-cultural input.

Subjective judgements become particularly evident when studying values. Inspection of a number of instruments designed to measure human values makes it clear that the universe of all human values is not defined, and that each author has made his or her own subjective selection from this unknown universe, with little consensus among researchers. This means that the content validity of measurements of values (their representativeness for the universe of values) is necessarily low (Hofstede 2001:7).

The representation of the "other" is also an important methodological issue which needs to be considered by comparative researchers. Researchers produce meanings and values, and create social identities through the ways in which they represent people's lived experiences. This homogenising representational discourse, however, often merely reproduces unequal social relations, especially when representation involves unequal power relationships between researchers and their participants (Donnelly 2002:59). As Cotterill (quoted in Kamler and Threadgold 2003:137) notes: 'When the researcher leaves the field and begins to work on the final account, the responsibility for how the data are analysed, interpreted [and represented] is entirely his own. From now on, the [participants] are vulnerable.

Their active role in the research process is over and whatever way it is produced is beyond their control.'

Ultimately then, defining and presenting the participants' lived reality resides in the power that uncritical and non-reflexive researchers hold. According to Cheek and Porter (1997:110), what we choose to represent or not represent, and how we represent certain views and social phenomena, reflects our own beliefs, values and assumptions about reality. In essence, what we represent, we affect as well.

Ecological and Individualistic Fallacy

While individual data comprise information about individual people, ecological data comprise information that has been aggregated for territorial units, such as voting districts, municipalities, countries, amongst others. Fallacies occur when inferences are drawn about one level of analysis using evidence from another, thereby often overestimating existing relationships between variables. The ecological fallacy relates to results obtained through the analysis of aggregate-level data being used to make inferences about individual-level behaviour, while the individualistic fallacy occurs when individual-level data are used to make inferences about aggregate-level phenomena (Landman 2000:49-50).

Data availability is one of the major sources of ecological and individualistic fallacies, since scholars may be forced to substitute data from one level to examine a research question specified at another level. For example, Landman (2000:50) argues that Inglehart (1997) commits an individualistic fallacy in his study of values in forty-three societies in *Modernization and Postmodernization*. Using a standard battery of questions ranging from the "importance of God" to "protection of the environment", Inglehart constructs "clusters" of values that cohere into distinct geographical patterns. These patterns, Inglehart argues, are meaningfully distributed around the globe according to general cultural groups. In this study, Inglehart is aggregating individual-level responses to questions to establish simplified classifications of countries based on culture. Yet as Landman (2000:51) notes, grouping percentages of individuals who responded similarly to a battery of survey questions and ascribing cultural "types" to them can be argued to be an illustration of the individualistic fallacy, which confuses systemic properties with individual characteristics.

Research that specifies questions at the individual level ought to use individual data, and vice versa for research questions that specify systemic relationships. As Neuman (2000:138) notes, sociology is a discipline that rests on the fundamental belief that a distinct level of social reality exists beyond the individual. Explanations of this level require data and theory that go beyond the individual alone. Indeed, 'cultures are not king-size individuals: They are wholes and their internal logic cannot be understood in terms used for the personality dynamics of individuals' (Hofstede 2001:17).

By contrast, the ecological fallacy is committed when ecological correlations are interpreted as if they apply to individuals. Doing so is attractive because ecological correlations are often stronger than individual correlations. For example, Robinson (1950) dealt with the relationship between skin colour and illiteracy in the United States and found that between percentages of blacks in the population and percentages of illiterates across 48 states the ecological correlation was $r=.77$. An ecological fallacy would lead one to infer that blacks are more likely to be illiterate than other racial groups. This conclusion is proved false, however, as across 97 million individuals the individual correlation between race and literacy was $r=.2$ (Hofstede 2001:16).

The Importance of Triangulation

Many researchers perceive their research methods as an 'a-theoretical tool' and therefore, fail to recognise that methods impose certain perspectives on reality (Denzin 1978:98). Seeing as each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, triangulation is necessary in order to increase the depth of understanding an investigation can yield. According to Denzin (1978:101), triangulation includes the use of multiple data-collection procedures, multiple theoretical perspectives, and/or multiple analysis techniques.

Qualitative and quantitative techniques should, therefore, be combined if a comprehensive view of the world is to be achieved. Simply put, quantitative methods seek to show differences in number between certain objects of analysis while qualitative methods seek to show differences in kind.

Qualitative strategies such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and participant observation strive to uncover a deeper level of information in order to capture meaning, process and context. Superficial, fragmented, simplistic tests and responses are therefore avoided, operating under the presumption that phenomena cannot simply be reduced to numbers analysed according to mechanical statistical tests (Berg 1995:86). By contrast, quantitative strategies serve the positive-science ideal by providing rigorous, reliable, verifiable aggregates of data and the statistical testing of empirical hypotheses (Berg 1995:10).

Triangulation can also be seen to include the incorporation of different disciplines in the research process. Indeed, cross-cultural studies presuppose a systems approach. Any element of the total system called culture should, therefore, be eligible for analysis, regardless of the discipline that usually deals with such elements. The unwanted effects of overspecialisation such as compartmentalisation, restriction of inputs and restriction of methods can thereby be avoided (Hofstede 2001:19-20).

As Hofstede (2001:2) notes, social scientists approach social reality as the blind men from an old Indian fable approached the elephant; the one who gets hold of the leg, thinks it is a tree, the one who gets hold of the tail thinks it is a rope,

but none of them understands the true nature of the whole animal. Thus, we will never be more than blind men in front of a social elephant, but by joining forces with other blind men and approaching the animal from as many different angles as possible, we may find out more about it than we could ever do alone. There is no such thing as objectivity in the study of social reality; we will always be subjective, but we may at least try to be 'intersubjective', pooling and integrating a number of subjective points of view of different observers (Hofstede 2001:2).

One qualitative method which can be seen to be particularly valuable in gaining a better conceptual understanding of people's value systems is the use of focus groups. Here, researchers strive to learn through discussion with small groups about conscious and unconscious psychological and socio-cultural characteristics and processes within societies (Berg 1995:68).

Interactions between and among group members stimulate discussions in which one group member reacts to comments made by another. This group dynamism has been described as a "synergistic group effect" (Stewart and Shamdasi, 1990:16). A far larger number of ideas, issues, topics, and even solutions to a problem can be generated through group discussion than through individual conversation. The informal atmosphere of the focus group interview structure is intended to encourage subjects to speak freely and completely about their behaviours, attitudes and opinions. It is the group energy which distinguishes focus group interviews from more conventional styles of one-on-one, face-to-face interviewing approaches (Berg 1995:85).

Aggregate Data Analysis in Developing Countries

Aggregate data collection and survey research in developing countries poses its own specific challenges beyond those encountered in most developed countries. The problems frequently include, for instance: multiple languages and dialects; lack of skilled staff; poor road systems and lack of suitable transport, lack of adequate computing facilities, poor maps; nomadic populations, lack of knowledge about ages and other items by many members of the population, and difficulties with the concept of "household" as used in censuses and surveys in most developed countries (Brink 2004:65).

As Brink (2004:181) notes, government or government subsidized institutions often manipulate data in order to present a rosier picture than what should be reflected in reality. In the study of developing countries, where survey analysis is often politically and subjectively suspect, aggregate data analysis published by an independent organization can, therefore, play a useful role in generating objective information. Nevertheless, many of the figures used and presented as country statistics in such indices are only estimates – proving that figures for certain countries remain hard to come by (Brink 2004:182). In addition, as mentioned above, gross averages and aggregates also frequently mask substantial internal variations

and deviations. This is particularly the case in developing countries where the views and material conditions of the political elite often do not correspond at all to those being governed.

Conclusion

As the above analysis has indicated, the very nature of cross-cultural research presents challenges not otherwise encountered in data collection processes. Researchers must be aware of, and account for a myriad of possible pitfalls, such as styles of verbal and non-verbal interaction, equivalence of meanings and the unbiased representation of the research subject. So too, it is crucial that various research methods are used in order to provide a comprehensive, contextualised understanding of cultural differences within specific environments.

Using multiple data collection strategies as well as multiple data sources may resolve some of the problems associated with cross-cultural data collection, and improve the quality of the information collected. So too, involving researchers from the country under investigation in the research process is crucial if cultural and language differences are to be adequately dealt with in the research design. Multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary research teams also have a vital role to play in selecting appropriate research methods within specific cultural contexts.

The above overview has provided some initial insights into the challenges faced by the cross-cultural researcher. Although the rewards for those engaging in this type of research are immense, valid and reliable measurement of unambiguous and interpretable cultural differences is only possible through scrupulous theorizing, design, data collection and analysis, with the validity of the results being as good as the weakest link in this chain.

The selection of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique for the network that led to the analyses in this work was due to practicalities as well as substantive reasons. These considerations were indicated at the start of the chapter. However, when one takes into consideration the discourse that has now been presented about comparative research methodology, one might consider some other alternative frames for the research as well.

The choice of doing a comparison between countries, whatever the selection of countries may be, directly implies a view on the relevant unit of analysis. The Southern African region not only comprises nation-states. One might also attempt other comparisons. Cities, developmental hubs defined by the SADC, provinces, communities, and a number of other more complex constellations could be compared.

In what follows, we depend mostly on a national comparison between data gathered in terms of national sampling. We attempt to provide thicker descriptions of the complexity that national comparisons hide away throughout the publication

and in particular chapters. However, most of the data that is available depends on the position that nation-states are a valid unit of analysis. This is a contentious position in a world that is networked and globalised; it also is a contentious position in terms of the specific question that we are interested in, as development is certainly not only determined by national dynamics but also by very local and very regional dynamics. One can only do comparative analysis if the unit of analysis has been surveyed in terms of that unit of analysis. Such data is not available in Southern Africa.

Notes

* The methodology section was written by Hennie Kotzé and Stefanie Schulein
1. Ellis even argues with quite some evidence that the organised crime that plagues the region is based to some extent on networks developed in the anti-apartheid struggle years between elements of the liberation movements, the South African security system and 'ordinary' criminal networks (Ellis 1999).
2. These are many and varied and we point to collections that reflect on issues like democracy activities: Matlosa, 2004; material resource management cooperation: Katerere et al, 2001; possibly the worst case of military intervention: Likoti, 2007, and, lastly, possibly the most important issue of economic policy: Pallotti, 2004.