

LOOKING EAST: DIFFUSING HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK PRACTICES IN THE SOUTHERN AFRO-ASIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

Most cross-cultural International Human Resource Management (IHRM) literature contains instructive comparative analyses of east Asian and Western countries and lessons from Japanese best operating practice. There is a paucity of literature extending this debate to the African context and of comparative IHRM work between east Asia and African countries. This article fills a contextual gap in offering a comparative analysis of diffusion and adoption of High Performance Work Practices from east Asia in southern African firms. The continued relevance of 'context' is critically evaluated, given powerful forces for convergence in the global economy. However, much of the debate on the convergence/divergence framework appears to neglect process dynamics and cross-vergence in the development and implementation of hybrid practices as well as reverse diffusion. This article highlights the importance of considering certain variables of local distinctiveness and diversity as features of the notion of crossvergence which shape particular human resource practices.

Keywords Contextual relevance; cross-cultural practices; crossvergence; high performance work practices; international human resource management.

Introduction – Convergence, divergence and crossvergence frameworks

Africa has often been dubbed 'the hopeless continent' (The Economist 2001). This article however, examines evidence of increasing influence of managerial and HRM practices of multinational (MNC) east Asian firms investing and trading in southern Africa in the post Apartheid era, as well as the degree of reciprocal influence of managerial practices by increasingly globalized South African firms in east Asia. This trend represents a clear effort on the part of entrepreneurs in Africa to improve their socio-economic condition. It also suggests that a growing number of these investors are beginning to look beyond the West, to the East with whom they share some similar challenges in their drive to attain industrial development. We believe the time is opportune for researchers to begin a more systematic exploration of the Afro-Asian context. In this regard we examine the significance of 'context' for the diffusion of High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs), set out the case for an 'Afro-Asian' context, and identify the scope for the diffusion of such practices between these two regions.

Globalization and increased supply elasticity, new technology, growth of multinationals, mobility of labor, capital and technology and increased global competition, have arguably led to increased convergence of managerial and HRM practices (Dowling et al 1999). The notion of convergence is tempered by opposing theoretical constructs of divergence/particularism relating to country and local context, including cultural variables, regulatory environment, labor market attributes, skills supply and level, and industry structure (Porter 1987). These may limit or aid implementation of HPWPs.

Diffusion of these practices is clouded by different interpretations and meanings attributed to these practices (Marchington and Grugulis 2000). As such, diversity of nomenclature, e.g. 'HPWP's, flexible work practices,' and 'high commitment work cultures', occurs. These terms mean different things in different contexts and their benefits may be uneven between cultures and within organizations. Inadequate attention is given to the importance of organizational context and enabling/disabling organizational factors (Jackson and Schuler 1995, and Marchington and Grugulis 2000). Rather uncritical, normative exhortations to adopt 'best HRM practice' prevail in both literature and practice. Implementation may vary in respect of 'what and how', thus limiting the value of comparative survey research, which could be enhanced by in-depth qualitative work, including case study research.

This article explores the proposition that whilst globalization creates compelling pressures for cross-cultural integration of HPWP's, this process is strongly influenced by contextual factors which relate to actual the adoption of the notion of crossvergence (Ward, Pearson, Entekin and Winzar 1999). The cross-cultural diffusion of high performance work practices (HPWPs) has become more widespread in international human resource management (IHRM) literature (Dowling, Welch, and Schuler 1999, Marchington and Grugulis 2000). The need for integrative frameworks for effective cross-cultural diffusion and adoption requires critical evaluation of variables key to implementation (Budhwar and Debrah, 2001). There is a need to focus on contingency approaches and mediating variables affecting organizational level application. Rigorous theoretical approaches also add to the importance of "context" frameworks such as integration/divergence or universalism versus local particularism, and ethnocentric, geocentric, regiocentric and polycentric managerial strategies (Heenen and Perlmutter,1979). The term 'high performance work practices' is similar to what others refer to as 'flexible work practices' (Osterman, 1994), flexible production systems (MacDuffie, 1995), high-performance work systems' or 'high involvement work practices' (Applebaum and Batt, 1994, Lawler, 1988, and Pil and MacDuffie, 1996). This literature identifies related motivations for adopting these practices. They include the need for organizations to develop high-performance work practices to enhance flexibility, efficiency, productivity and high quality goods and services. Much of this work examines the relationship between human resource practices and firm performance (Becker and Gerhart 1996, Delaney and Huselid, 1996, and Pfeffer, 1998). Some studies consider HPWPs in comparative findings between domestic and multinational firms (Dowling et al 1999, Horwitz and Smith, 1998 Paik et al 2000 and Perkins 1999). These studies caution against hasty conclusions given evidence of the importance of contextual factors in implementation.

Whilst most research on the concept of HPWPs is in a North American context, the focus in this article is on the extent and manner of diffusion in the southern African context of generic high performance practices from east Asia. Therefore HRM practices such as problem solving teams, employee development and labour productivity and quality improvement associated with Japanese best operating practice, the concept of lean manufacturing and world class manufacturing (WCM), are considered. Japanese practices are however, not hegemonic in East Asia, given the diversity of the region (Warner 2000). Neither is diffusion and adoption of Japanese practices by firms in the West comprehensive. There are numerous cases of inappropriate adoption of Japanese practices in the West. By a similar token, Nissan UK and NUMMI, a General Motors/Toyota joint venture in California, are examples of relatively successful adoption. Japanese MNCs outside Japan will expectedly seek to infuse their work values, culture and practices in host countries. However, there

is no 'Asian model' of HRM per se, although there are some underlying common tenets. These include a non-adversarial, 'we' rather than 'us and them' employment relationship, consensus seeking, organizational loyalty and a family or team orientation and seniority based promotions.

A model most likely found in the East, in countries like Singapore, has Confucian values underlying managerial practices. Yet in South Korea and Indonesia adversarial employment relations occur. Even in Japan, certain of these practices, such as lifelong employment have been eroded under pressure of globalization, financial crises and convergent diffusion of western practices such as downsizing and performance-related pay (Shibata 2000). Selmer (1999) argues however, that even in Japan the notion of 'jobs for life' was never comprehensively institutionalized. Given the 'fire at will' doctrine in North America and to an extent in the United Kingdom, the cultural values of individualism, and meritocracy inhibit the large-scale adoption of Japanese practices in these societies, especially in local firms. Warner (2000:180) argues that 'what is now less likely than many previously conjectured is that the Japanese model will be the template for Asia/Pacific IR/HRM, or indeed elsewhere. 'Japanization' may be hard to transplant outside Japan, other than superficially or at best in subsidiaries of Japanese MNCs'.

This article evaluates the extent and nature of diffusion of HPWPs in the southern African context, which like east Asia, is diverse both cross-culturally and within countries. The southern African region is an appropriate starting point for an Afro-Asian context in part because of the magnitude of investments between these two regions, as discussed below. From this analysis, we can hopefully shed light on the diffusion on management practices to and from the wider African context. In this regard, this paper presents analytically robust theoretical constructs and frameworks and proposes that a further construct be added to the convergence/divergence framework as the latter's polar extremes do not reflect the integrative alternative of cross-vergence (Ward et al op cit: 466-473). The latter refers to an overlap of values across countries, and diversity of values and sub-cultures within countries. This results in a need for closer attention to process dynamics in the design and implementation of HPWPs, given the more likely hybrid of human resource systems and practices in the southern African context, and the allied concept of reverse diffusion, where host country practices may influence those of the parent company. These processes are not satisfactorily addressed in the convergence/divergence framework. It is important in the southern African context and elsewhere, to identify process implementation factors such as the extent to which HPWPs are introduced (1) "as is" – transplanted intact cross-culturally, or (2) with some adaptation based on local culture and factors such as labour relations institutions, or (3) whether these practices are significantly transformed because of local exigencies and (4) the nature and degree of crossvergence which may occur.

Key factors in contextual analysis of HPWP adoption

Contingency approaches

With globalisation, diffusion of HPWPs cross-culturally has received increased attention (Brosnan et al.2000, Dowling et al., 1999, Heenen and Perlmutter 1979, Mishra et al., 1994, and Sparrow et al 1994). In addition to inconsistencies between studies (Marchington and Grugulis 2000: 1114-1115), variations occur in conceptual approaches to firm level adoption of HRM practices cross-sectorally and cross-culturally. Categorization lists of HPWPs (Kallenbach and Moody 1994, and Delaney et al (1989), cluster or HPWP bundles (Ichniowski et al 1996, Huselid 1995) as holding good across sectors and cultures without sufficient attention to context, have been criticized, with an emergent debate on the lack of theoretical underpinning regarding HPWPs (Godard and Delaney 2000, Kochan 2000). Normative and positive attributes are contrasted with the claim that contemporary changes in work practices are falling back into a human relations or Taylorist model of work with unitarist underpinnings (Kochan 2000:705, Marchington and Grugulis 2000:1104).

Galang (1999) and Marchington and Gugulis (2000) note the absence of consideration in the HPWP literature of the importance of stakeholder interests such as trade unions, power dynamics within and between organizations, and the organizational reality of often competing interest groups. This is particularly important in South Africa and Zimbabwe where unions are relatively strong. Kochan et al (1995) note however, that the mere presence of unions has limited impact on adoption of these practices, exerting a positive impact only where unions operate to increase the saliency of human resource considerations. Galang's (2000:300) research suggests there are important factors which prevent the widespread use of an alternative model of managing human resources that promises to deliver positive outcomes for organizations. She proposes that a contingency perspective for a high performance work system would help avoid rejection of workplace innovations. This may support the notion of crossvergence or hybridisation.

Difficult methodological questions around researching HPWP's are potentially exacerbated in cross-cultural studies because organizational contextual variables occur in a 'meta' cultural, labor market and regulatory environment (Dowling et al 1999, Jackson 2000, Kamoche 1992). There is a universalism implicit in much of the HPWP literature which may not stand the test of particularist attributes of different societal, industry and cross-cultural contexts, thus limiting generalization. Inconsistencies in findings could be multi-attributational. These include different methodologies, conceptual frameworks and potential biases in normative confirmatory expectations based on the assumptions made by the researcher(s). A second difficulty is the failure of research on HPWPs to consider what Marchinton and Grugulis (2000:1109) refer to as 'nice words and harsh realities'. The latter include issues of employment security, adverse employee effects of downsizing, work intensification and stress, and increased adverse effects of peer surveillance in teamwork. This is particularly pertinent in southern Africa, where downsizing and retrenchments have led to large job losses in the past five years and where resultant labour disputes on retrenchments have become more common.

A third issue particularly relevant in cross-cultural diffusion and convergence of HPWPs is determining causal relationships. With cross-cultural mergers and acquisitions for example, the relative power of one party over the other, may influence the direction of diffusion of particular practices, such as reward systems. This is important in cross-cultural diffusion of HPWPs in transnational firms seeking to achieve a degree of consistency and standardization of managerial practice and culture in their global operations. However, it may not consider the nature and extent of hybridization which actually occurs, especially in a culturally diverse society, such as South Africa. There may also be what Edwards (1998) refers to as an often overlooked 'reverse diffusion', where practices of overseas subsidiaries flow to domestic operations or headquarters. The scope for such diffusion may be limited if the opportunity for such 'learning' is neither recognized nor encouraged. In South Africa, where the regulatory and institutional framework for industrial relations remains relatively strong, this together with local cultural factors may mitigate against unchanged adoption of HPWPs. The pre-occupation with cross-cultural analysis seems to neglect the importance of within-culture diversity and the potential relationship this may have in the adoption and hybridization of HRM practices sourced from another country.

Most MNCs are likely to have head offices in countries where use of HPWPs has been adopted. The extent to which this impacts on MNCs operating in host countries will depend on the human resources strategy adopted by the MNC. Human resource strategies in MNCs will vary greatly due to the conflicting demands faced in their global environment. These conflicting demands often arise as MNCs attempt to maximize their ability to respond to the needs of the host country (local responsiveness) while trying to maintain their control over corporate structure world-wide (global integration) (Brewster and Tregaskis 2001, and Caligiuri and Stroh 1995:494). International human resource managers in these firms have the challenging task of trying to maintain congruence with the overall strategic plan of their MNC while balancing economic, social, political and legal constraints of the host countries (Milliman et al 1991). The more autonomy foreign subsidiaries have to act independently and respond to local demands, the less integrated the world-wide

organization becomes and vice versa (Prahalad and Doz 1981; Tung and Punnett 1990), and the more likely that hybrid models of HPWP's will be adopted.

Heenen and Perlmutter's (1979) seminal work on managerial strategies of MNCs that differ in terms of interplay between global integration and local responsiveness, correspond to four phases in the MNC life cycle literature: domestic (phase 1), international and multinational (phases two and three) and global (phase 4). Heenen and Perlmutter identified four strategy types: an ethnocentric strategy where a firm maximizes control of the parent company in order to integrate subsidiaries at the cost of local responsiveness; polycentric and regiocentric strategies allow for more local responsiveness and less corporate integration. Thus, polycentric and regiocentric strategies endeavor to satisfy the need for local responsiveness, but at the cost of global integration. Geocentric approaches may be preferable as they attempt to balance both global integration and local responsiveness. The latter approach seeks to incorporate both of the theoretical ideals of global integration and local responsiveness, thus suggesting support for a crossvergence and associated hybridization. In reality, the difficulties in adopting these approaches cannot be overestimated.

As foreign subsidiaries mature, they may become resource dependent on strategic resources such as technology, capital and specialized skills (Prahalad and Doz (1981:5). With less dependency on the parent organization MNCs seeking to maintain control may do so by fostering a global corporate culture with associated human resource and HPWPs. Ethnocentric MNCs place expatriates in key executive positions, centralizing parent company control in decision making. In polycentric and regiocentric MNCs subsidiary host nationals manage foreign operations. Geocentric MNCs aim to staff positions world-wide with the best recruits regardless of nationality (Heenen and Perlmutter 1979 and Kobrin 1988). We argue that cross-vergence may be more likely in the latter case.

Historical and stakeholder context

Historical context, and influence of key stakeholders may influence perceptions, meanings, interpretations and cultural acceptance. These and other potentially intervening variables may limit or impede adoption, integration and implementation of HPWPs. An important question arises whether the influence/power of MNC's is so extensive and penetrative in a host country as to override local implementation factors such as the regulatory environment, including legislated employment standards and collective bargaining institutions, thus establishing a kind of MNC hegemony over local institutions, work practices and norms regarding recruitment and selection, performance management and employee relations. Dowling et al (1999:10) argue insightfully that the complexity involved in operating in different countries and employing different national categories of employees, rather than any major differences between the types of HRM activities and practices, is a key variable differentiating domestic and international HRM.

In addition to complexity, they posit four other variables that moderate (i.e. either diminish or accentuate) differences between domestic and international HRM. These are the cultural environment, the industry(ies) in which the MNC is primarily involved, the extent of reliance on home-country domestic and attitudes of senior management. Effective diffusion, integration of HPWPs will therefore depend on the relative importance of these factors. The stakeholder perspective is relatively well accepted in South Africa's new democracy. The historical exclusion of key stakeholders under apartheid has been replaced by a new emphasis on consultation and involvement of key groups and individuals, for example the statutory corporatist tripartite institution, the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). It includes organised business, labour and government departments in formulating industry, and labour market policies. Arguably, the stronger the stakeholder and pluralist perspectives are institutionalised in a society, the more likely that cross-vergent, hybrid models of HRM will develop.

Cultural and labor market factors

Considerable research has occurred on the issue of cultural factors in the diffusion of HRM practices (Dastmalchian and Blyton 1998, Debrah and Smith 1999, Dowling et al 1999, Jackson 2000, Kamoche, 1992, and Wasti 1998). A facet of this research is a focus on integration/divergence of work values cross-culturally (Chew and Putti 1995, Katz 2000 and Triandis 1994). Southern Africa is rich in cultural and ethnic diversity. South Africa for example, has eleven official languages. It should be noted that there are numerous other African countries with an even more complex ethno-cultural mix. Hence the question of cultural influence on work values and HRM practices is obviously important. This especially in assessing the extent and type of hybridization which occurs in adopting HPWPs from east Asian countries and elsewhere, and how culture and labour market institutions influence such adoption.

Cross-cultural variation in the labor market and skills supply for addressing market needs, is an important consideration by MNCs in the decision regarding foreign direct investment (FDI). An economy with a high skills base such as Singapore may be more attractive for investment in the technology and bio-technology fields. Alternatively a MNC seeking a low wage, low-skill host country for a low cost labor-intensive work process, may seek to invest in an economy with these features. South Africa and its regional economy has an oversupply of manual, relatively unskilled workers, and as in many emergent economies, a critical shortage of technology, financial and managerial skills. This is exacerbated by the apartheid legacy, which until recently deliberately reserved access to skilled work on a racial basis. Recent legislation, the Skills Development and Employment Equity Acts, has sought to reverse this process, by putting policy emphasis on human resource development, with levy and grant incentives.

The notion of strategic differentiation may see firms adopting hybrid, cross-vergent HRM practices both different in content and manner of execution than so-called 'best HPWPs'. At country level there are both macro-economic and cultural factors as well as industry/sector and organizational level variables, which seem neglected in much of the literature on IHRM diffusion. Considerable work on cross-cultural issues in IHRM has been done (Black 2000). However, macro-cultural comparative analyses (Hofstede 1991, Trompenaars 1993) may have adequate face validity, but often neglect deeper consideration of diversity within certain contexts and the power of organizational culture in MNCs. The latter may act as rival causal factors in the propensity to successfully adopt HPWP's cross-culturally. This is particularly relevant in South Africa, with its highly diverse cultural and ethnic fabric, and where research on cross-cultural diversity in organizational contexts is embryonic. Verburg et al (1999:391) argue that there is no evidence for universally applicable HRM practices. Their comparative work on HRM practices in Chinese and Dutch industrial firms found cultural and contextual constraints responsible for the problematic nature of cross- cultural transfer of HRM practices. They conclude that the differences found are in line with differences in national culture. Saha (1993) similarly argues that HRM practices in a country are not only products of national culture and environment, but organizational culture, strategy and structure which in turn influence design, content and implementation of performance oriented HRM practices such as staffing, compensation, HR planning and training/development.

Paik et al's (2000) work provides strong evidence of significant differences even in assumed cluster economies of south east Asia, in prevailing managerial practices and behaviors in the design and conduct of performance management systems. Contrary to the assertion of increased homogenization in previous cross- cultural cluster research, and regiocentric perspectives, they conclude that it is not apt to generalize the appropriateness of performance management design and practice even in countries in the same traditional cluster. They provide strong evidence for the presence of divergent cultural attributes using Hofstede's (1991) typology in Indonesian, Malaysian, Philippine and Thai firms. The debate regarding convergence/divergence perspectives in the cross-cultural diffusion of HRM practices is a somewhat simplistic one. Convergent similarity of HRM practices exists largely at the nominal level. Hence, the need to explain the hybridization of HRM practices, for which the notion of crossvergence seems apt especially in a culturally diverse

society, such as South Africa. There is increasing support that at the organizational level, contextual factors including national and corporate culture, may have a determining effect on design and implementation of HPWPs (Dastmalchian and Blyton 1998, Jackson 2000, and Mbigi 2000).

Noting the complexity of doing research on comparative and international HRM, Budhwar and Debrah, 2001; Budhwar and Sparrow, 1999) found both common and country specific attributes of HRM. They advocate moving beyond contingency and comparative process models to an integrated framework which includes both contingent variables, HRM strategy within an organization, and 'meta logic factors'. Significant determinants of this meta-logic are national culture, institutional factors, industrial sector and the dynamic nature of the business environment. They argue that contingent factors are mediating variables and that an analytical distinction should be made between different levels of context, including the national cultural (meta) context, industry (external) context and organizational (inner) strategy level context. This is important because of the context specific and 'culture bound' factors influencing the nature of basic HRM practices (Brewster and Tregaskis 2001). In southern Africa, the nature of the domestic labor market is important, including the degree of voluntarism or regulation of employment practices such as fair/unfair labor practices, recruitment and selection, pay determination, union influence, human resource development policy and dismissal law. The above discussion underlines Dowling et al's (1999:10-11) emphasis that understanding the complexity in the environmental context, is vital for both research and practical implementation of HPWPs. It may potentially be associated with a high degree of HRM hybridization in some African countries. African cultural frameworks and their relevance to managerial practice are discussed in more depth in the following sections.

The importance of an Afro-Asian comparative analysis

Following from the above discussion on contextual issues in IHRM and global diffusion of HPWPs and our proposed Afro-Asian perspective, we note that there is a virtual absence of any comparative analysis between HRM in east Asian and African countries. Published work in this field comprises empirical and theoretical comparisons of HRM practices, cultural and work values between east Asian (mainly Japan) and Anglo-Saxon Western countries and some European/Asian and east Asian cross-cultural HRM research (Brosnan et al 2000, Katz, 2000, Jackson, 2000, Mbigi, 2000 and Wright et al 2000). Some of this work tends to be both descriptive and normative.

South Africa in particular, has experienced a dramatic transformation in the post Apartheid era. The economy has opened up and liberalized. These developments have increased interest in the region for east Asian investors facing saturated domestic markets (Tan et al 1998). Socio-economic links between southern African and east Asian countries begun in the 17th century when the Dutch East India Company established a settlement in Cape Town as a transit port and gateway for trade between Europe and east Asia. The earliest Asian immigrants were Malay slaves from Indonesia. In the 20th century the Chamber of Mines imported more than 67,000 Chinese workers as cheap labor. The Malayan community has grown significantly and has developed a distinct culture. The Chinese community though small, has become a successful business class. There is also a large Indian population of over one million concentrated mostly in the Durban area of South Africa, in Kenya and Zimbabwe. This article focuses however, on African and east Asian HRM since it is the business and HRM practices from east Asia, which have gained increased influence in South African organizations over the past decade.

A second reason why such an analysis is important is the growing trade and investment links between southern African countries and east Asian countries (Tan et al 1998). East Asian firms made foreign direct investments in South Africa by establishing manufacturing plants and trade bases in the country during the pre-sanction investment era (from 1983-1987). They were attracted to South Africa and surrounding countries such as Zimbabwe, by the region's rich resource deposits and strategic location as a business gateway to Africa. The largest Asian investments were from Japan, followed by Taiwan, Malaysia, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong (United Nations

Center 1990). Subsequently Japan's cumulative foreign direct investment in the mid 1990's was around R1,298.9 million. Malaysia is the largest east Asian investor in South Africa with over R7,568 million. Significant investment has come from Indonesia (R 550 million), South Korea (R223.4 million), and Taiwan (R 87 million) (Financial Mail, 1997a). Large East Asian MNCs have made direct investments in plant and machinery in countries such as Botswana and South Africa. Hyundai for example is relocating a large automobile assembly plant from Botswana to South Africa. Toyota and Nissan have for long had assembly plants in South Africa, usually as joint ventures with South African firms. Recently Petronas, the Malaysian state owned oil and petroleum company acquired control of Engen's (formerly Mobil) African operations based in South Africa.

Japan has been South Africa's largest Asian trading partner, with South African exports to Japan over US\$ 3 000 million and to Hong Kong US\$ 2 500 million at the end of the 1990's. Coal, iron and steel are significant exports to Japan and South Korea. The post apartheid era has seen increased foreign investment in South Africa. South Africa's natural resources and location have been considered as a gateway to southern Africa, and were important factors responsible for investment return (The Economist 1996). In the late 1980's Japan replaced the USA as South Africa's largest importer and first trading partner when imports reached a high of US\$ 2.4 billion. Major imported items were coal, non-monetary gold and other precious metals. Automobiles were Japan's largest export to SA. Strong performing Japanese firms in Southern Africa include NEC, Pioneer Electronics, Kansia, Tonoko, Chubu and Chugoko (United Nations Center 1990).

Japanese banks which established ties in the 1980's included the Export-Import Bank of Japan, Sakura Bank, and Sumitomo Bank. In the post apartheid era, in an effort to attract investment, South Africa's Motor Industry Development Plan allowed South Africa's seven largest automobile manufacturers to import duty free up to the value of their exports. This led to Japanese firms embarking on export programs to maximize benefits under the Plan (African Ventures 1996a). Nissan's joint venture with Sankorp (an investment arm under one of South Africa's financial conglomerates, Sanlam), was listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange as an auto manufacturer. Nissan Diesel and Mitsui were the major shareholders. Nissan and Toyota have recently invested hundreds of millions of Rands in new model launches at the lower end of the market where competition is greatest. Other sectors such as electronics, telecommunications, utilities, and computers, have attracted major Japanese MNCs such as Fujitsu, Hitachi, Matsushita, Mitsubishi, Nippon Telecoms and Telegraph (NTT), Sony, and Tokyo Electric (Financial Mail 1997b).

Malaysian direct investment in southern Africa is more than R3.5 billion (The Economist 1996). This has recently increased to over R 4 billion with Petrona's investments in the petroleum industry. Some analysts believe that Malaysia-South Africa ties are also politically and culturally motivated (Rahul 1997). South Africa has viewed Malaysia as a useful model for helping a disadvantaged majority while seeking economic growth. While Malaysia has pursued a policy of bumiputras (affirming and empowering indigenous people), South Africa too has embraced legislated employment equity and economic empowerment policies. This important similarity partly explains the close foreign direct investment relationship between the two countries. Namibia too has similar policies. Malaysia has signed agreements to buy military equipment from South Africa worth over US\$30 million. This includes joint manufacture of helicopters by the South African firm Denel and Malaysia's Airod Sendirian Berhad. In addition to investment in South Africa's petroleum industry, Malaysia has made strategic investments in telecommunications, with a 30% joint stake by Telkom Malaysia in SA Telkom. Over a dozen stock-broking firms in South Africa have sold equity to Malaysian firms. In the financial services sector a Malaysian based securities firm TA Enterprises has bought out a South African firm. Most of the Malaysian firms operating in southern Africa have expatriate employees working in the region.

South Korea is South Africa's third largest trading partner. In addition to Hyundai's assembly plant in the region, Daewoo markets cars and trucks and produces electrical appliances in South Africa. It has a license to sell Pace satellite TV equipment. It is amongst South Africa's top 100 companies (Financial Mail 1997c). Samsung has a joint venture with Etron a South African firm to make television sets and other electronic equipment. Taiwan has been a significant investor in manufacturing in South Africa for more than 20 years. Its exports to South Africa and the region are over R 900 million. In 1994 President Mandela signed a trade agreement with Taiwan worth R 146.4 million. Since then, South Africa's Peoples Development Bank has an office in Taiwan to promote trade and investment between the two countries, Acer Computer International has opened seven branches in South Africa, and packaging and cable wire enterprises have been started by Taiwanese firms. The bank of Taiwan has a strong presence in South Africa. Taiwan has made direct foreign investment in businesses ranging from electronics, ferro-chrome processing, granite, packaging, and textiles plants. Recently however, South Africa's recognition of Beijing ahead of Taipei, reflects a policy shift whereby China is considered to have bigger long-term economic growth, trade and investment potential. China is fast becoming a major trading partner of South Africa and other southern African countries.

South African Breweries for example, has bought Shenyang Brewery in North-East China as part of its strategy to acquire a dominant market share in emergent economies. The East Asia Metal Investment Company of China has a US\$ 70 million joint venture to run the Dilokong chrome mine and build a large smelter in South Africa (Tan et al 1998:335-337). More than US\$ 550 million contracts have recently been signed between South Africa and China. Clothing and head ware and thoroughbred racehorse exports are also amongst the increasingly diverse trade and investment dealings. In other Afro- East Asian economic ties, bilateral trade with Singapore has increased to over S\$ 390 million, including imports from South Africa of steel, petroleum products, copper and paper (Greyling 1997). By 2000, Singaporean imports from South Africa had increased to \$420 million and exports to South Africa were nearly S\$ 1 billion, and included telecommunications apparatus (South African High Commission, 2001). Courts Singapore has taken a 25 per cent stake in the South African retailer Protea Furnishers to establish a joint venture (The Straits Times, 2001). Southern African firms have also made important inroads into Asia. One example is Gencor's joint mining venture in Sulawesi Indonesia. De Beers, the diamond corporation, has significant exploration and mining interests in China. South African advertising firms have also opened in Singapore as have fast- food franchise operations such as Nando in Singapore and other South- East Asian countries.

Tan et al (1998: 362) conclude that while there are major challenges ahead, there are good policies and programmes in South Africa to take the country much further as a significant global player, and particularly in its economic ties with East Asia, in areas such as electronics, financial services, telecommunications and tourism. From the foregoing, it is evident that significant socio-economic ties exist between Southern African and East Asian countries. These ties form an important basis for considering the impact on managerial and particularly HRM practices in organizations in these regions.

An Afro-Asian analytical framework

The following analysis offers a theoretical exploration with case study examples. A qualitative approach is taken in seeking to fill a gap in the literature in respect of integrating both the importance of contextual variables and southern Afro-Asian comparative IHRM. Drawing also from Jackson's (2000) typology, the instructive approach of cross-vergence (Ward et al 1999) is taken in evaluating the nature and extent of hybridization. Conclusions are drawn and a research agenda is identified. A key proposition is that it is largely east-Asian influence on southern African HRM practices than vice-versa which has occurred until recently. A second proposition is that adoption of HPWPs is mediated by identified contextual variables. Implementation barriers and facilitators are

discussed with case examples from southern African countries and east-Asia. Thirdly, consideration is given as to whether these practices are adopted 'as is', or with some modification, or comprehensively redesigned, with due consideration therefore of crossvergence issues. First, we set out a conceptual perspective within which an Afro-Asian context can be suitably framed.

Jackson (2000:9-16) proposes a typology of western instrumentalism and African humanism as a useful analytical framework. The latter concept reflects values such as sharing, adherence to social obligations, collective trust, deference to rank and seniority, sanctity of commitment and good social and personal relations. As discussed above, these arguably reflect a conceptual proximity to Confucian humanism with social cohesion and cooperative rather than adversarial and competitive relations. Jackson submits that a nascent African management approach with roots in a humanistic tradition could reflect a potentially positive contribution to global HRM. However, there is a danger in presenting both African and east Asian systems in this way. An unrealistic, idealized or indeed romanticized conception may not have significant empirical or managerial support. Second, there is a latent assumption of both homogeneity and unique distinctiveness, which obfuscates the reality of inter-regional, inter-country and inter-ethnic diversity. Hence a cross-divergence perspective is important. Based on Jackson (2000:15-16), Appendix 1 proposes a comparative framework of post-instrumental, African 'renaissance' and east Asian management attributes) as a typology for analysis. This typology has been extended to identify important HR dimensions.

A second node of analysis considers not which of convergence or divergence prevails, as this is over simplistic, but examines the conditions under which hybrid or crossvergent models are developed in practice in a particular context. It appears that the adoption of east Asian HPWPs in southern African firms derives from both increased investment and consequent influence these firms have in Africa, and an emergent managerial belief in southern African firms, that there is much to be learned from Japanese managerial practices, particularly as these might have a higher likelihood of adoption in the African cultural context. This may however, be a somewhat normative belief. Whilst there are indeed some similarities between African and east Asian cultures, there are also fundamental differences between them. In this section we attempt to formulate a rationale for a more critical analysis of the diffusion of practices between these two regions.

An enduring theme in the literature on developing countries is the appropriateness of Western management principles and practices. Many authors have challenged the tendency by MNCs as well as local managers to adopt practices with little consideration as to the suitability and relevance of such practices. Some have identified the limitations of concepts formulated in the West (Blunt and Jones, 1992; Kamoche, 1993, 1997a; Nzelibe, 1986), while others have offered empirical evidence on the nature of extant practices, pointing to their appropriateness or lack thereof (Blunt and Jones, 1986; Kamoche, 2000a; Seddon, 1985). This growing critique has highlighted the need to understand the African context as well as the indigenous thought system and in particular the perspective of the African worker.

In this latter regard, Ahiauzu (1986:54) points out that 'though he may work in industry, the African lives in a wider society; and it is from this society outside the workplace that the elements that constitute the framework within which the African indigenous thought-system operates derive'. This thought system includes features like: a high degree of harmony between man and the world around him, the use of symbolism to make sense of the world, and a strong emphasis on family and the immediate community. This importance of family is seen in the network of interrelationships, extended family and mutual obligations not dissimilar to the paternalism found in Thai organizations (Kamoche, 2000b). This results in a sense of communalism and traditionalism (Nzelibe, 1986; Onyemelukwe (1973) which is not unlike the Confucian influence on Asian cultures.

This has led some authors like Maruyama (1984) to propose an epistemological shift away from the predominant Western management theories to alternative ones based on Asian and African perspectives. Maruyama proceeds to identify epistemological aspects in which both Asia and Africa share some common ground. These include cultural heterogeneity as a source of mutually beneficial win-win cooperation, a polyocular vision with regard to what constitutes 'objective' truth, the mental connectedness the worker shares with group members, the idea that the individual assumes a relational existence and identity whose *raison d'être* is located within the community to which he/she belongs.

Given the salience of differences of Malay and Thai cultures, human resource strategies should not be assumed to be identical across different managerial functions, and a blind application of a regiocentric approach should be avoided (Paik et al 2000). Just as the African notion of 'ubuntu' is not widespread in parts of modern Africa, so too are the tenets of Confucianism not hegemonic in east Asia. In Malaysia and Indonesia, Muslim cultural beliefs are more extensive. However, it is the precepts of Confucianism which advocates of African 'ubuntu' tend to equate with African values, as a basis for fostering an Afrocentric managerial culture with regiocentric HRM practices (Mbigi 2000). The notion of 'ubuntu' literally translated, means 'I am who I am through others'; this in contrast to the Western tenet of 'cogito ergo sum' – 'I think therefore I am'. It is this contrasting of a form of communal humanism with individualism and instrumentalism, which has a normative appeal for advocates of an African economic and cultural renaissance. Caution is however, necessary in potentially confusing a desired future vision with current empirical reality. Several east Asian countries are further along a transition continuum in respect of economic development and growth than most African countries. The socio-economic context of management therefore differs from that of African countries, most of whom have high levels of unemployment, poverty and illiteracy. At the same time, like east Asian countries, there is a high need to develop people (Kamoche 1997b). These contextual overlaps suggest avenues for further research.

Adapting high performance work practices in southern Africa

Japanese work practices

Research shows that although Western managerial practices have prevailed for decades in African countries there is an increase in southern African firms adopting Japanese and east Asian practices (Horwitz 2000, Keenan, 2000 and Faull 2000). This is particularly evident in the use of lean manufacturing, just-in-time methods and other operations management measures to reduce product defects, stock holdings, inventory and waste. Quality and productivity improvement measures have sought to benchmark international standards in the South African hospitality multinational Sun International. These measures have also increased in the manufacturing sector in which firms have introduced kaizen, kanban methods, Nissan type green areas, Total Quality Management (TQM) and quality improvement teams. Increasingly the ideas of lean thinking (Womack et al 1990) have gained currency in African firms such as Bell Equipment, Nampak Management Services, South African Breweries' beer division, Shatterprufe Windscreens, Sasol Polymers and Joel Goldmine. The motivation for adopting these measures is primarily productivity and work process improvement. However, the adoption of east Asian work practices is seen by many as unworkable. Many firms believe that Japanese work philosophies are rooted in a different cultural context and cannot therefore be copied in African countries (Keenan 2000:26). Diffusion thus requires eclecticism and a sensitivity to the African context.

The regulatory and institutional context

Socio-legal and political context is particularly important in labor relations, given different regulatory systems, collective bargaining institutions, relative power of stakeholder interests e.g. trade unions in South Korea and South Africa, as well as differing conflict resolution conventions and styles. Whilst these factors are not static or immutable in time, they may impede or enable change in a particular cultural and industry context. They may affect the propensity to develop and implement a HPWP of a certain type (e.g. union resistance to individually-based performance pay in South Africa, but measured support for this in Singapore). Historical role relations between labor relations actors also vary, with collaborative, corporatist relationships in Singapore and Japan. Tentative shifts from adversarialism in South Africa are not as evident in Indonesia where labor unrest cost the Indonesian economy up to US\$ 2 billion in 2000 (Go 2001:6) and South Korea for example. Traditional roles may be revised however, depending on developments in the political economy, public policy, and workplace impact of globalization and new technology.

Trade unions in South Africa and Zimbabwe retain a relatively important influence over the choice and implementation process of HRM practices. Labour legislation in South Africa is protective of worker interests in respect of organizational rights, collective bargaining and the principle of unfair labour practices, such as arbitrary dismissal and unfair employment discrimination. Statutory institutions such as bargaining councils, the labour court and the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), play a prominent role in the conduct of industrial relations. The regulatory context is an important mediating variable and co-contributing factor in limiting the arbitrary introduction of HPWPs, and enabling hybrid outcomes.

Managerial styles, culture and high performance work practices

Cultural context factors may also limit or assist the adoption of HPWPs such as performance related pay and merit promotion, where deference to seniority, service and age remain important in Japan and countries where family control of large enterprises remains strong e.g. chaebols in South Korea and Malawian firms in Africa. In contrast, meritocratic values and individual goal orientation evident in Singapore (Chew and Putti 1995), Hong Kong and to a slightly lesser degree in South Africa, would permit greater flexibility in adopting performance appraisal, merit pay and promotion, and financial incentive schemes. Yet within a country and national cultural context, variation between MNC and local firm propensity to adopt HPWPs, occurs (Horwitz and Smith 1998:590). This study found that MNCs in South Africa used numerical forms of flexibility, such as outsourcing and sub-contracting to a larger extent than South African owned firms. However, MNC influence may extend beyond HPWPs. In Engen SA its owner Petronas of Malaysia has key Malaysian staff members in the South African operation's strategic planning department responsible for charting the future direction of the company. This supports the proposition that MNC influence on global integration and work practice standardization, may reveal cross cultural convergence of HRM practices within MNCs through adoption of 'best global practice', compared with a higher degree of divergence in local firms.

Managerial styles reflect organizational and national cultural patterns. In South Africa, whilst achievement is valued, group and organization conformity is also important. Whilst there is a paucity of empirical research on managerial culture in southern African firms a masculine dominance is evident across ethnic groups (Horwitz 2000:217), underlined by individualist values and a relatively large power distance between groups. This supports Jackson's (2000) framework and is based on historical racial and ethnic disparities. However, an emergent black middle class has begun to occupy decision making roles. Class mobility is likely to have an impact on managerial culture and inform strategic choices about appropriate organizational culture, business and HRM practices in the African context. There is some evidence therefore for elements of an African renaissance approach. Managerial ideologies also tend to reflect unitarist ideas – the organization as a 'happy family' or cohesive team emphasizing loyalty and conflict avoidance, notions similar to

the Japanese notion of 'industrial familism'. However, organization and national culture in many African countries tend to reflect considerable diversity and pluralism, with procedural regulation of conflicts in South Africa particularly. The latter lends support for the post-instrumental model in Jackson's framework. The advent of democracy especially in South Africa, and 'glasnost' effect of global competition begs the on-going question as to the inevitability of HPWP convergence and global hegemony of 'best practice' over local exigencies. In practice, hybrid models appear more likely.

Managerial styles in many African countries reflect both Western values based on individualism, meritocracy and an authoritarian legacy of apartheid and colonialism. These are often rooted in high masculinity cultures (Hofstede 1980). Indigenous models of leadership and organization emphasizing the notion of 'ubuntu' or humaneness, group decision making, and interdependence, struggle to assert themselves in the face of a converging global business orthodoxy (Mbigi 2000). These notions may be similar in concept to the Confucian emphasis on family and social cohesion. Notwithstanding increasing globalization of African economies struggling with International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank debt repayment policies, investment in southern Africa by east Asian firms and local interest in Japanese work methods, has occurred. There has been a resultant reassessment of organizational strategies and increased experimentation with Japanese work methods such as self-directed teams, employee empowerment through task-level participation and multi-skilling in southern African firms such as Cape Cabinets, Cashbuild and PG Bison (Horwitz and Townshend 1993).

Total Quality Management (TQM), cellular manufacturing methods and 'green areas' have been introduced in firms such as Nampak, Nissan, Toyota, South African Breweries, Shatterprufe Windscreen Division, Joy Mining Engineering, and Consani and GK Engineering. Workplace semi-autonomous teams are an example of a collective orientation to motivation and work design. This is more of a feature of Japanese and European organizations than the individualism of Anglo-Saxon countries. However, these practices tend to be more successful in restructured organizations where authority and responsibility are devolved to well-trained and informed work groups. There is anecdotal and case study evidence of these forms of functional flexibility emerging in the African context in firms such as Pick n Pay Retailers, SA Nylon Spinners, Sun International Hotels and above-mentioned firms (Horwitz and Townshend 1993). However, these practices are considerably less common (under 10 percent) in relation to use of numerical flexibility such as downsizing and outsourcing, and temporal flexibility types such as part-time, temporary and casual, short term work (Brosnan et al 2000). Although not extensive, practices such as work flexibility, multi-skilling and performance-based pay have become more important issues in HRM in both African and east Asian countries.

Patterns of diffusion

The diffusion of HPWPs may show an uneven pattern in respect of the extent or degree of adoption and actual modification/adaptation of these practices for successful implementation. Practices may be adopted 'as is', or with some modification, or comprehensively redesigned to suite local conditions. It is important that IHRM research focus more closely on the nature of adaptation and implementation. This requires more organizational level research, especially of a qualitative nature. This will enable research to move beyond descriptive evaluation of the extent and type of HPWP diffusion, and convergence/divergence debate, by requiring a more rigorous and critical assessment of the variables and processes affecting success or failure in HPWP diffusion and hybridization. Hybrid forms of HPWPs may occur in nomenclature, design, content and implementation processes. In South Africa, indigenous African terms are now being given to adapted east Asian practices, often in preference to using Japanese terminology, for example, the Zulu term 'Indaba' groups for TQM teams or 'sebenza' problem solving teams. 'Indaba' refers to 'debate in groups'. The latter term means work or workplace. Horwitz and Smith (1998:590-598) found that although

consultation and employee involvement occurred in introducing these practices, MNCs were more likely than local firms to involve employees in both design and implementation processes.

In the southern African context it appears that 'as is' adoption is rarely effective and that either some or extensive modification occurs, thus reflecting the need for sensitivity to local circumstances and support for the notion of crossvergence. For example in most of the above cases where performance-based pay and variable pay were introduced, these tended to be work group or team-based schemes rather than individually based; this especially so in unionized firms. In over 85 per cent of the cases reviewed, the HPWPs were of Japanese origin, though Malaysian and Taiwanese firms have also implemented home-based policies and practices. In the latter case however, managerial practices are somewhat traditional, based on low labour cost/cost reduction methods, and cannot be considered 'high performance'. There is some evidence of reverse diffusion. South African Breweries' jointly owned breweries in Poland have successfully implemented best operating practices and management know-how on systems, process and technology based on Japanese practices and its experience in emergent economies, and South African indigenous restaurants in Singapore draw on home-country practices. Similarly, the South African based consultant firm Competitive Capabilities (CCI), using Japanese world class manufacturing and operations methodologies and building on its African experience, has extended these precepts into its work in Australia and Singapore. Identical HRM practices cannot be transferred intact. A degree of crossvergence appears inevitable and indeed necessary.

Conclusion

This article seeks to generate debate into the much neglected field of Afro-Asian business relations with particular regard to the diffusion of HPWPs. The influence of east Asian practices tends to be supported by the case evidence considered. Conversely, although southern African MNCs have increased foreign direct investment in east Asian countries and several have quite large operations abroad, there is insufficient empirical evidence on the influence they have on local HRM and HPWPs. This is in part explained by both the relatively recent expansion of firms from Africa to east Asia, and the smaller scale of this expansion in comparison to east Asian economic influence in Africa. Some anecdotal case evidence of the authors suggests that some of the former firms introduce productivity measures successfully learned in the African context, most of which are adapted from lean manufacturing, TQM and other Japanese practices, thus supporting the crossvergence construct. As managers of particularly South African organizations become aware of opportunities in East Asia, this is clearly an area requiring further research.

Following the research needs identified above, there is a need to investigate if/how the notion of gaining competitive and performance leverage from local contextual factors, such as cultural diversity and local skills supply (e.g. a highly technologically literate work force in Singapore), occurs. The multi-variable contextual framework identified by Budhwar and Debrah, (2001) and the integrative framework of De Cieri and Dowling (1998) are instructive and require empirical testing in a comparative Afro-Asian context. The latter authors also raise the importance of considering at the micro-level, the life cycle stage of the organization and intangible endogenous factors such as a firm's experience in international business and the head quarter's international orientation. Further research is also needed on comparative practice diffusion, including the relative impact of European, United States and East Asian MNC's on HRM practices in African countries.

Although the variables culture and institutional and regulatory context are included in the above frameworks, our analysis of the southern African-Asian HRM context, underlines the need to strengthen analysis beyond descriptive cross-cultural adoption to within cultural variables, such as the degree of homogeneity or diversity within the culture adopting HRM practices. This is important to enable both comparative description and rigorous qualitative analysis and insight. Both will impact on the process and design of HPWPs. Whilst the convergent/divergent analytical framework is important, it can be built on by adding the construct of crossvergence. The latter

appears to offer a more robust way of analyzing the actual nature of the change process in cross-cultural adoption of HPWPs, particularly in the type and degree of hybridization, which appears to occur in the southern African context and clearly has far-reaching implications for the broader African context. From the above conceptual debate and research agenda, the following propositions are suggested:

- P 1: Where there is an African cultural tradition of 'ubuntu', the propensity for successful adoption of east Asian practices based on Confucian tenets, may be higher than where Western values of individualism and instrumentalism dominate
- P 2: Firms in a host country with a strong regulatory and institutional framework are more likely to adopt hybrid than other forms of HPWPs
- P 3: The greater the internal cultural diversity of the host country, the more likely that hybrid than other forms of HPWP's will be adopted. (Friedman's 2000) metaphor of the Lexus and the olive tree is particularly powerful in this regard).

This article has sought to extend the contextual debate regarding IHRM frameworks and HPWP diffusion by presenting case evidence from the little considered Afro-Asian context. Attendant agenda items for further research have been identified. The importance of a holistic and integrated analytical approach and cautioning against both mere descriptive analyses and simplistic cross-cultural transfer of managerial panaceas, has been further underlined. The metaphor of an onion is apt in this regard. Peeling off each layer gets closer to a deeper understanding of variables which effect core success. The process must however, be undertaken with due care. Jackson's (2000) adapted model is useful in that it depicts the mix of HRM and managerial systems in the African context and highlights the extent of similarity or divergence and potential crossvergence of hybrid models where elements of Japanese practices, African renaissance and Post instrumental practices may occur. This supports the more realistic idea of a hybrid model which is not an exclusive ideal type of any one of these frameworks, and adds credence to the need for adding the construct of crossvergence to the convergent/divergent analytical framework.

The benign neglect of HRM in Africa is in part a reflection of the poor economic performance of African countries in the global economy, and the paucity of internationally published work emanating from the continent; this in comparison with a much richer east Asian HRM research tradition by both east Asian-based and Western HRM and organizational culture researchers. Yet why in Anglo-Saxon Western and in some emergent economies, have best practices been so uncritically applied by practitioners and academics alike without properly considering contextual issues? We caution strongly against mindless group think which cannot offer competitive differentiation. There is sufficient scope to theorize the diffusion of work practices between east Asian and African regions given both the apparent similarities in contextual circumstances and current expansion of business links between them. It is hoped that lessons can be learned from previous efforts to transfer management practices in order that managers might adopt a more eclectic approach and that researchers will approach this emergent field with an open mind.

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Appendix 1 A comparative framework of organizational and management systems in Africa.

Source: Adapted from Jackson, T. (2000:15-16)

	Post-colonial	Post-instrumental	African Renaissance	East Asian / Japanese
Main Principles	Theory X Western/post independence Instrumental	Theory Y Western/modern	Humanistic Ubuntu	Humanistic Corporate/collectivist
Importance	Continuing legacy	Viewed as an alternative by MNCs, Western consultants	Found variously in indigenous organizations	Emergent through East Asian investment Some see as alternative
Strategy	Input & process orientation Risk averse	Results & market focus Risk taking	Stakeholder orientation	Market & results orientation Low risk taking
Structure	Hierarchical Centralised	Flatter hierarchy, often decentralised	Flatter hierarchy, stakeholder input decentralised	Hierarchical conformity
Decision making & control	Authoritarian, little consultation Rule bound Lack of flexibility Outside influence/control viewed negatively	Often consultative More emphasis on 'empowerment' Clear rules of action Flexible	Participative, consensus seeking (indaba) Benign rules 'Benign' outside stakeholder influence (e.g. government)	Consultative, but authority from top Consensus and harmony May lack flexibility
Character	May not act ethically towards stakeholders Static and may not be efficient Usually not foreign owned	More ethically responsible Change a feature Probably foreign owned	Stakeholder interest may be more important than ethics Success relates to employee well-being Indigenous	harmony & face may be more important than ethics May be slow to change
People orientation	Control	People and results	People & stakeholder	People/in-group
Management expertise	Educated elite, low expertise	Results orientation	Based on people orientation	Effectiveness based on collective skills
Internal HR Climate	Alienation common Weak or antagonistic unions Inter-ethnic tension Discourages diversity of opinions Promotion by ascription	Employee motivation Weak or cooperative unions Move to ethnic harmony/diversity Diverse views encouraged Merit based promotion	Motivation by participation Unions protect rights Ethnic harmony important Diverse opinions encouraged Promotion on status	Commitment important, but job satisfaction may be low Company unions Ethnic relations not an issue Consensus after consultation Seniority basis for promotion
HRM policies	Aimed at duties not rights Often discriminatory Adversarial relations	Non discriminatory, equal opportunities Stakeholder focus on responsibilities & rights	Access to opportunities especially for designated groups Employee interests & cooperation	Discrimination mainly gender based Employee relations seek cooperation & common goals
HRM practices	Reliance on rank and hierarchy Theory X	Some participation Positional bargaining with unions Theory Y Systems/procedures Performance focus	Participation Egalitarianism Communication open Relationship building	Consultation/ (ringi) problem solving Maintaining harmony/ relational Information sharing Theory X (out-group) & Theory Y (in-group)

LOOKING EAST: DIFFUSING HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK PRACTICES IN THE SOUTHERN AFRO-ASIAN CONTEXT

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He has published *Managing Resourceful People*, a book on Human Resource Policy and Strategy, and co-authored *On the Edge: How South African Companies Cope with Change*, which deals with critical factors in effective change strategies. He has over 70 refereed articles and book chapters, locally and internationally, in journals such as *Business in the Contemporary World*, *Human Resource Management Journal*, *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management (IJCCM)*, *Journal of International Compensation and Benefits*, *International Journal of Human Resource Management (IJHRM)*, *International Journal of Manpower*, *Industrial Relations Journal (IRJ)*, *Journal of European Industrial Training*, *Personnel Review*, *Public Administration and Development* and the *Work Flexibility Review*. He is on the editorial boards of the IJHRM, IRJ, IJCCM and other leading international and local journals. Frank Horwitz is Visiting Professor at Nanyang Business School Singapore, previously a visiting Professor in the Faculty of Management, the University of Calgary, Canada, and research associate of the Industrial Relations Centre, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia.

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Professor Horwitz was in 2000, Chair of the Commission investigating the effects of sub-contracting on the collective bargaining system in the building industry. He is on the national Council of the Industrial Relations Association (IRASA), and convenor in the Western Cape. He has acted as a facilitator in organisational change and conflict resolution in Canada, Namibia and South Africa. He was a (part-time) commissioner on the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), and Clothing Industry Bargaining Council Dispute Resolution Panel. He consults for both private sector and parastatal organisations locally and internationally and is active in community service organisations. Among these, he has served on the executive committee of the SA Institute of Race Relations and was chairperson of the Western Cape Region for three years. He is a past executive committee member and national treasurer of the SA Association for Conflict Intervention (SAACI).

Frank Horwitz was educated at Grey College and the University of the Witwatersrand. He is married with three children, is a passionate cyclist, enjoys good wine and plays a "mean" guitar.