

**CORPORATE CULTURE IN A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated whether the different home languages of employees of a large financial institution in the Western Cape had an influence on their perception of organisational structure and processes.

The author conducted a series of interviews with management-level employees who speak Afrikaans, English and Xhosa as home languages in an attempt to ascertain the extent of the influence of individual cultures on perceptions and actions in corporate society. Specific attention was given to how these individuals perceived meetings, decision-making processes and conflict.

These interviews were transcribed verbatim and studied by means of narrative analysis using a specialised software package to provide a better insight into the roles language and culture play within the South African organisation.

Based on the narratives provided by the respondents in this study, the author concluded that individual culture does play a significant role in the perceptions of organisational structures such as conflict management, interaction during meetings, decision-making and acceptance of authority.

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**DECLARATION**

I, Ronelda Visser, herewith declare on this 7th day of February 2005 that according to my knowledge all the information contained in this document is the author's own work unless stated otherwise.

## CONTENTS

### 1. CHAPTER 1

1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	PROBLEM STATEMENT	2
1.3	LIMITATIONS OF STUDY	4
1.4	CURRENT RESEARCH	5
1.5	STRUCTURE OF THESIS	6
1.6	THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCENARIO	7
1.6.1	GOVERNMENT POLICIES	7
1.6.2	URBANISATION	9
1.6.3	EDUCATION	11
1.6.4	TERTIARY EDUCATION	12
1.7	EMERGING CULTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA	12
1.8	UNPACKING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	15
1.8.1	CULTURE AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL	15
1.8.2	INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION	16
1.8.2.1	LANGUAGE AND CULTURE	17
1.8.2.2	ELEMENTS OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	17
1.9	INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	18
1.9.1	THE EASTERN PERSPECTIVE	18
1.9.2	THE WESTERN PERSPECTIVE	20
1.9.3	THE SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE	23

### 2. CHAPTER 2

2.1	INTERDISCIPLINARY INFLUENCES ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	26
2.1.1	CONTRIBUTING GENRES	26
2.1.2	MANAGEMENT THEORY	27
2.2	OVERVIEW OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	29
2.2.1	INTERDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	30
2.2.2	TWO DECADES OF CORPORATE CULTURE	33
2.2.3	WORKPLACE DIVERSITY	35
2.2.4	LANGUAGE AS CORNERSTONE OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	38
2.2.5	THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	40
2.2.5.1	INTERNATIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONFLICT	44
2.3	A CULTURAL APPROACH TO MEETINGS	46
2.4	A CULTURAL APPROACH TO DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES	49
2.5	A CULTURAL APPROACH TO FEEDBACK AND REWARDS	52

### 3. CHAPTER 3

3.1	SUBJECT OF STUDY	56
3.2	METHODOLOGY	58

3.3	INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL VALIDITY	62
3.4	MODE OF RESEARCH	62
<b>4.</b>	<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	
4.1	RESPONDENT PROFILES	67
4.2	CONCURRENCES AND DIVERGENCE BETWEEN GROUPS	76
4.3	FINDINGS BASED ON NARRATIVES	77
4.3.1	SELF CONSTRUAL	77
4.3.1.1	PERCEPTION OF MODESTY	77
4.3.1.2	CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS	79
4.3.1.3	CORPORATE CHANGE	81
4.3.2	PERCEPTIONS OF CONFLICT	83
4.3.2.1	GENDER AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO CONFLICT	84
4.3.2.2	CULTURAL APPROACHES TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	87
4.3.2.3	CONFLICT REGARDING PERFORMANCE EVALUATION INTERACTION	94
4.3.2.4	MEETINGS AS A BACKDROP TO CULTURE	94
4.3.3.2	FORMALITY VERSUS INFORMALITY	96
4.3.2.5	CULTURAL ACCEPTANCE OF DIRECT INTERACTION	99
4.3.4	DECISION-MAKING	101
4.3.5	POWER DISTANCE	105
4.3.5.1	MENTORING	108
4.4	CONCLUSION	110
<b>5.</b>	<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	
5.1	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	112
5.2	IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE CULTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA	113
5.2.1	REWARDS AND RECOGNITION	113
5.2.2	MENTORING	113
5.2.3	EXPOSURE TO INDIVIDUAL CULTURES	114
5.2.4	GENDER ISSUES	115
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	117
	HYPertext REFERENCES	125
	ADDENDUM A	126
	ADDENDUM B	127
	ADDENDUM C	130
	ADDENDUM D	219

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

South African society deals with a diversity of cultures and nowhere does it have a greater impact than in the workplace. Du Gay (1997: 259) argues that the organisational culture, which exists within an organisation directly influences the performance of such an organisation. This influence is evident not only in the effectiveness of the organisation, but also in the unity, motivation and consensus amongst employees. However, when organisations face such a cultural diversity within its workforce as is the case in the South African scenario, establishing a unified organisational culture becomes more complex.

Social scientists (Havilland, 1993; Lustig & Koestner, 1993: 298 & Randlesome, 2002: 65) have argued that language and communication are key elements of culture. They act as driving principles behind the formation of an effective organisational culture. It will be argued that language forms an integral part of organisational structure, decision-making processes and behaviour, which contribute to the creation of an organisational culture. Language also impacts on how these elements are understood by different cultural groups within an organisation.

Cultural groups in South Africa have traditionally been defined through race and ethnic groupings. For example, both Afrikaans and

English-speaking White South Africans have been viewed as a homogenous cultural group based on race. Similarly, ethnic groups such as the Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Venda and Tswana have been racially grouped as Blacks. Racial class within ethnic groups has been under review during the past few years with the Coloured population, for example, divided on whether they should be classified as Black/African.

Although South Africa currently has eleven official languages, the three prominent languages used by the population of the Western Cape, where the study is centred, are Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. Statistics released by SA Statistics based on the 1996 Census (href1) show that 59.2% of the Western Cape population speak Afrikaans as the home language, 20,3% English, 19,1% Xhosa and 1.4% other languages.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This study intends to explore how language in the South African, and specifically Western Cape scenario, affects organisational culture with specific focuses on conflict, decision-making processes and meetings.

By concentrating on these three aspects, the author intends to explore the following research question:

**Does home language influence the perception of structure and decision-making processes in organisations in the Western Cape?**

Although conflict is not necessarily viewed as a negative influence within an organisation, it is argued that Afrikaans, English and Xhosa each brings its own cultural heritage in terms of values, beliefs, attitudes, rituals and behaviour into the organisation. This study aims to investigate how conflict within organisations is influenced or caused by employees' different cultural backgrounds. Specific attention will be given to how language differences cause conflict in meetings, decision-making processes and performance evaluation, all of which contribute to the formation of an organisational culture. The study explores whether the different home languages of the employees, have an influence on how meetings are conducted. The study also examines whether decisions are taken through majority vote or consensus and what impact this has on members of different cultural groups. In addition the study investigates whether decision-making processes regarding promotion and corrective actions cause conflict within organisations due to the cultural backgrounds of the employees. Emphasis is placed on how performance evaluations are done and by whom it is conducted. The study determines how employees from different cultural groups react to feedback regarding job performance. The study also investigates whether cultural differences have an effect on how employees perceive performance evaluation in terms of promotion and corrective actions within organisations in the Western Cape. Promotions are explored in terms of merit, employment equity, length of service and whether it takes place internally or externally. How different cultural groups perceive the levels of promotion, namely salary increases, new job titles, more responsibility and increased benefits are also considered.

This study hopes to provide a better insight into the roles language and culture play within the South African organisation. Such an understanding can establish not only a more effective organisational culture, but can also ultimately help South African business to deal with cultural diversity and conflict in the workplace in a more creative way.

Although the study is limited to a private financial organisation in the Western Cape, it is believed that it could be replicated and adapted for the specific circumstances in other provinces in South Africa.

### **1.3 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

The study will not include non-government or community-based organisations as these organisations are normally more culturally representative of the community in which they operate than private organisations. In most cases the hierarchical structures are less formally defined than those of private companies. These organisations are also prone to be affected by political campaigning as was the case prior to the 1999 national elections.

For the same reason, inclusion of government or para-statal organisations will not be considered as the responses from employees could be influenced by loyalty to their current employer. To ensure that a fair representation of cultural groups is covered by the

study, only organisations with more than 150 employees are considered for this study.

Due to confidentiality issues, availability and willingness to participate in such a research study, ABSA Bank - a national financial institution with 32 000 staff members and widespread representation in the Western Cape and specifically the Cape Peninsula - has been selected as the subject for the study.

#### 1.4 CURRENT RESEARCH

Due to a lack of formal South African research in this specific field, South African organisations are not geared to understand how employees' language affects organisational culture. A literature search on organisations and organisational culture has shown that 5 401 theses and dissertations on the subject have been completed in South Africa. The research has concentrated predominantly on organisational structures, management styles, processes within the organisational environment and analysis of specific organisations. However, the specific role that language has played in the creation of organisational culture and how it influences conflict within the organisational culture has thus far been neglected theoretically. To the author's knowledge there has been no specific research in the Western Cape based on the role language plays in the multi-cultural organisation and how it affects meetings, decision-making and performance evaluation.

The available literature on organisational culture and strategic management procedures is mainly based on Western, and specifically American research. In addition, researchers have paid little attention to the complex cultural diversity, which is part of the South African organisation. An analysis of the role which language plays in organisational culture could lead organisations and their management to a better understanding of how different cultural groups in their organisations perceive and influence the organisation's culture. Randlesome (2002: 70-71) argues that culture and language can impact negatively on the daily routines within the workplace and can seriously affect the productivity of such a company.

The importance language plays in current organisational culture in South Africa can be illustrated by the success of T.A.L.K., a company, which teaches Black language to White managers of large organisations. Participants in these courses have observed that knowledge of a Black language helps to create goodwill with Black colleagues, breaks down cultural barriers and open up communication channels (The Economist, February 1996: 14).

### **1.5 STRUCTURE OF THESIS**

Chapter One provides an introduction to South African organisational culture and how it has been shaped by international influences. Chapter Two contains a review of the available literature on

organisational culture from a South African, Western and Eastern perspective. Chapter Three describes the research design and methods used to address the research. Chapter Four consists of an evaluation and interpretation of the data gathered. Chapter Five provides a summary of the study with the author's conclusions and recommendations.

## **1.6 THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCENARIO**

The South African labour market has been influenced by a variety of factors, including governmental policies, education, urbanisation and international influences. Political policies played a big part in the shaping of organisational culture in South Africa, especially during the past fifty years and will continue to do so.

### **1.6.1 GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

Evidence of governmental influence on the local labour market can be found in the transformation of the trade union movement since 1979 when a report by the Wiehahn Commission advocated governmental acceptance of labour unions. Following in the footsteps of political changes, labour unions have also been shifting emphasis from the earlier patriarchal systems to forming partnerships with the government after the 1994 elections. In the decade since South Africa's first democratic elections, strong coalitions have formed between the ANC government and trade union movements such as COSATU, but the labour movements have also become vocal opponents of certain

government initiatives such as privatization. Similarly the government's labour policies of employment equity, which promotes the appointment of Blacks, Coloureds, women and people with disabilities also impact on organisational culture. Although no formal employment equity legislation existed prior to 1998, organisations were already moving in that direction to obtain government-awarded tenders (McCune, 1997: 14).

The Employment Equity Act was adopted in 1998 and aims to promote equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination and to implement affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce. The Act further states that

*"No person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds including race, gender, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language, and birth."*

The government's commitment to adherence to this legislation is demonstrated in a nationwide campaign launched by the Department of Labour in November 2003. During the course of this campaign, officials focused primarily on South Africa's Top 100 companies during the course of the week to check compliance to all aspects of the Act. (href2).

However, when looking at political influences on organisational culture, it is important to differentiate between governance, which sets the rules, legislation and organisational politics, which afford power and influence within an organisation. Although this study does not concentrate on party political issues, the effect of governmental influence on the labour force has to be considered.

### **1.6.2 URBANISATION**

Tomlinson and Addleson (1987: 86-87) maintain that the migration laws, influx control and state policies regarding Black urbanisation have had a direct impact on the composition of the South African labour market. In the Western Cape, these laws were also supported by the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, which promoted the employment of Coloured people above that of Africans. The effect of this prohibition of free migration for Blacks, especially from the bantustans, to major urban settlements became evident in the 1980 census which showed that Africans comprised only 18% of the total

population of Greater Cape Town, compared with the Coloured population of 51% of the total population of the area. The abolition of influx control and preferential employment policies in 1989 quickened the immigration of Blacks to the Western Cape. The Western Cape is currently considered a highly urbanized community with 88% of the total population residing in metropolitan/urban areas (href3).

According to a 1997 Wesgro report, the Western Cape's Black population almost tripled from 285 000 in 1980 to 890 000 in 1996 (href4). Census 1996 provides populations figures of 3,9-million people in the Western Cape province of which 21% are classified as African/Black, 21% White and 1% Indian/Asian (href5). According to statistics from the City of Cape Town, which amalgamated six metropolitan councils in 2000, the Unicity population of 2,683 000 people are divided into the following population groups: 1,313 000 Coloureds, 702 000 Blacks, 631 000 Whites and 37 000 Asians (href6).

These policies have impacted directly on the composition of the labour force in the Western Cape and therefore the current organisational culture. Although White males constituted only 11,6% of the total Western Cape population in 1996, a study of 51 companies by the Labour Research Service has shown that in December 1997 only 22,1% of total management consisted of Black and Coloured managers, while 26,2% of managers were women (Review of Key Social

Benchmarks, 1998). These figures are supported by a survey by the Textile Industry Training Board, which discovered that 80% of managers in the textile industry were White, although only 9% of textile employees are White. Although women constitute 39% of all textile employees, only 9% occupied management positions (The Argus, 1998: 3).

This inequality in cultural representation was also reflected in a report by a Presidential Commission investigating the development of a comprehensive labour market policy (1996: 141), which emphasised the lack of women and other cultural groups in management positions.

### **1.6.3 EDUCATION**

Statistics released by the South African government show that the Western Cape has the highest adult education levels with only 6.7% of the population older than 20 years not having any schooling ([href7](#)). The Province also has the highest adult literacy in the country of 80% ([href4](#)). Only 6,2% of the same population had tertiary qualifications ([href3](#)). If these statistics are viewed against the fact that education for Black children only became compulsory in 1981 (Human & Hofmeyer, 1985:14) and that government educational policies were devised based on racial groupings, it becomes evident that the skills levels of the different cultural groups are unequal. The effect of this on the entrance of more Black people to managerial positions is illustrated by a study conducted by Human and Hofmeyer. In this study, potential Black

managers identified the need for training in planning, organising, leadership, control, analytical ability and decision-making, all of which impacts on organisational culture.

#### **1.6.4 TERTIARY EDUCATION**

South Africa's education system has traditionally been modelled on the British system and has led to predominantly social-science graduates, but not enough technical graduates. A survey conducted in 1991 showed that South Africa produced five times more social graduates than engineers and four time more lawyers than mathematicians (The Economist, 1995:14). According to the article, this has also led to a shortage in qualified and experienced Black workers. Organisations have acknowledged that it is difficult to find properly qualified and experienced Black employees. Several South African organisations have opted to appoint Black employees and then train them in-house, but admit that these employees are likely to be head-hunted by other organisations. In the case of the organisation used in this study, several of the Black employees are part of an Accelerated Management Programme.

#### **1.7 EMERGING CULTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

With the emergence of the Xhosa culture in Western Cape organisations, it becomes important to look at what the culture brings to the organisational environment. One of the most important aspects, which encompasses the Xhosa culture, is ubuntu. According to Mbigi (1997:12), this concept of collectiveness can play a major

role in how organisations function in the new South Africa. Mbigi maintains that the acceptance of the principles of ubuntu into organisational culture, can lead to higher performance levels for organisations. While acknowledging the contribution of Western and Eastern values to South African organisational cultures, Mbigi advocates the incorporation of Xhosa cultural heritage such as their strong oral history and features such as rituals, forums and consensus decision-making into South African organisational culture.

Other influences have contributed to the shaping of South African organisational culture. Historically, Western business practices such as rigid hierarchical structures, strong emphasis on individual performance and development of an organisational culture have been strongly incorporated into the South African way of doing business. It cannot be presumed that Western organisations are culturally homogenous as American, British and European organisations have all been shaped by their own cultural backgrounds. Although there are individual differences in management styles, these organisations follow relatively similar management philosophies. This premise is supported by an analysis by Adler (Norburn et al, 1990:452) which showed that 80% of 11 000 manuscripts on international management published in 24 management journals within a ten year period were based on studies conducted in American organisations and written by American authors. Based on the findings of a study conducted in fifteen countries worldwide, Hofstede (2002: 798-799) concludes that various cultures subscribe and support different business goals.

An exploration of traditional South African organisational structures reveals a dominance of White males in managerial positions. Similarities can also be found in the strong hierarchical structure of South African organisations and the emphasis on individual achievement, which can be attributed to the strong individualistic trends of both Afrikaans and English cultures. Lessem (Christie et al, 1993: 17-19) argues that South African organisational culture has long been a manifestation of Western influences, while ignoring Afrocentric management approaches. Khoza supports this and maintains that South African organisations have imposed an organisational culture based on European and American concepts, instead of including African traditions and cultures which focus on a community concept of management (Christie et al, 1993: 117, 122).

South African organisations reached a watershed in the late 1980's and early 1990's, when negotiations between the government and opposition parties were instituted which resulted in the unbanning of the African National Congress, a more tolerant approach to trade unions and the movement towards a South African democracy. This process culminated in the general elections of 1994 and the entrance of more Black people into the organisational environment.

The question must now be asked whether South African organisations have investigated different approaches than the traditional

Western/Eurocentric management perspectives approach to offer the required cultural flexibility to South Africa's diverse organisational society. Koopman is of the opinion that there exists a mismatch between the strategies and culture of South African organisations (Christie et al, 1993: 46-47).

## **1.8 UNPACKING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

### **1.8.1 CULTURE AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL**

Although the term organisational culture is relatively new in academic research (Bate, 1990: 214), it has become an important strategic management tool in organisations. Social scientists have argued however, that structure is the easiest place to start with changes. Pepper (1995: 29) argues that viewing organisations from a cultural approach lends a wider perspective to understanding organisational activities. This includes insights, which would be overlooked by using systems theory and viewing an organisation as a structure of complex parts which functions as a whole and is interdependent on other components such as external environments, competitors as well as social and political influences. A cultural approach to organisations takes into account the values, beliefs, attitude, behaviour, norms and understanding of the employees. It also requires researchers to focus on traditional communication practices and activities such as meetings and decision-making procedures.

Social scientists are still divided in their interpretation of how organisational culture affects organisational life. Some argue that organisational culture is a manipulation by top management for the benefit of the organisation. Others believe that the different subcultures in the workforce directly influence the organisational culture (Du Gay, 1997: 247). The concept of organisational culture also becomes a topic of controversy amongst social scientists when the idea of cultural change is introduced. Researchers like Keene (Du Gay, 1997: 259) have raised the question whether it is ethical to try and change an employee's underlying beliefs and values to fit in with an organisational culture, which is normally manipulated by top management.

### **1.8.2 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

Intercultural researchers like Gudykunst and Kim (1992: 390) have noted that when people communicate interculturally, levels of uncertainty rise. They argue that a better understanding of another culture would probably lead to better communication and lessen the chance of aggressive behaviour. It has also been argued that cultures communicate differently to reduce uncertainty. For example, individualistic cultures will use direct, verbal communication to reduce uncertainty when communicating, while collective cultures will use non-verbal, indirect communication (Ting-Toomey, 1986: 385).

Although Gudykunst (1992: 381) reasons that most of our relationships are with people who are relatively similar to us, the working environment in a multicultural society offers a different situation. When it is considered that relationships are developed based on how communication is perceived and that language is a carrier of culture, new light is shed on organisational communication between different cultural groups. Researchers (Gudykunst, 1992: 380; Havilland, 1993; Hesselbein et al, 1997: 154 & Ting-Toomey, 1988) agree that the best way to interact with other cultures is to understand their language. Although this would be an ideal solution, this becomes very difficult in a country like South Africa with eleven official languages.

#### **1.8.2.1 LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**

Morgan (1986) views the study of culture in organisations as critical, because it calls attention to the symbolic and the use of language processes to create shared meaning. Although cultural theorists view different elements as key to the understanding of culture, Hansen and Kahnweiler (1993: 1391) suggests that the language of an organisation's employees is the key to understanding its organisational culture.

#### **1.8.2.2 ELEMENTS OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

When investigating organisational culture, it is relevant to look at the various elements, which contribute to such a culture. McWhinney (1997: 131) includes elements such as corporate philosophy,

organisational identity, corporate processes and activities, career development patterns, organisational relationships, recognition and reward systems as well as employment processes and purposes, standards, values and norms. Drucker (1997) includes another element, namely self-orientation. However, Havilland (1993) as well as Lustig and Koestner (1993: 298) maintain that language impacts directly on how different cultural groups within an organisation understand all these elements.

## **1.9 INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

### **1.9.1 THE EASTERN PERSPECTIVE**

According to Professor Themba Sono (1993) the ties between Africa and East Asia can be traced back for centuries to 1528 when Portuguese trade ships carrying African sailors regularly sailed between Africa and Japan. Jan van Riebeeck was stationed in Nagasaki before establishing a Dutch settlement in Cape Town in 1652. These ties have been maintained through the years as is evident in the fact that in 1988/89 Japan was South Africa's biggest trading partner.

The Eastern perspective of corporate structure, management styles, processes and activities has developed from a relatively homogenous workforce. It cannot be argued that Eastern organisations have been isolated from exposure to Western influence, but there remains a marked difference between the two organisational cultures. Chu (1992: 23-24) maintains that the organisational culture of each

nation is rooted in its history, social development and national values. Japan has received international recognition for its customer-oriented approach to business. Several management practices such as consensus decision-making, constant improvement and a strong emphasis on group effort have contributed to their economic success (Hunt & Targett, 1995). Japanese organisations also focus less on hierarchical structures and view their organisational structures in terms of collective units, concentrating more on interdepartmental co-operation and team building rather than individual job descriptions (Tomasko, 1993: 119). According to Nonaka (1988: 57), the creation of free-flowing information throughout organisational levels has become a key characteristic of the Japanese organisational culture. It is accepted by researchers (Kincaid, 1987: 11-12; Morishima, 1982: 194 & Sommer et al, 1996: 977) that Asian countries like Japan, Korea and China all have collectivist cultures with emphasis on group commitment rather than individual performance. A key organisational philosophy is that of mutual long-term commitment between an organisation and its employees, instead of short-term productivity (Picken, 1987: 139).

In countries such as China, Japan and Vietnam, managers will also make use of feng shui or Chinese geomancy to aid the wellbeing and prosperity of their organisations (Lip, 1979; Schmitt & Pan, 1994: 32-48). The belief in the supernatural that is shared by many Asian

cultures, is normally unfamiliar to Western cultures, but well-known to African cultures such as the Xhosa.

Growing economic concerns in Japan have, however, caused organisations to evaluate those traditional management philosophies, which were regarded as the pillars of the Japanese system, namely permanent employment, seniority grading and enterprise unions (Lincoln & Nakata, 1997: 33-55). Although restructuring in the form of early retirement or intercompany transferals is taking place in Asian organisations, companies are still shying away from interfering with the fundamental principle of permanent employment (The Economist, 1997: 14). However, according to Umeshima and Dalesio (1993: 27-31), the increasingly competitive global market is forcing Asian organisations to face unprecedented changes in traditional management philosophies.

### **1.9.2 THE WESTERN PERSPECTIVE**

Researchers (Cotter, 1995: 131; Havilland, 1993; Hoover, 1997:3) agree that the American corporate society has traditionally focused strongly on individual achievement with a strong emphasis on reward, promotion and competitiveness. Americans are viewed as a strongly individualistic culture and Hoover supports this notion by referring to the role of the corporate heroes of American business who served as inspiration and role models for self-achievement such as Henry Ford, Lee Iacocca and Bill Gates.

However, faced with the economic success of Asia and specifically Japan, American organisations turned their attention to some of the management philosophies and techniques inherent in Japanese organisations. Strategic management tools such as corporate re-engineering, corporate change and organisational redesign were used to focus on establishing flatter management structures (Cotter, 1995: 77), team building and group assignments (Hoover, 1997: 3) and commitment to the individual within the company (Hesselbein et al, 1997: 34). This redesign has also influenced American tertiary institutions, which are gearing up to follow the lead of corporate America. For example, the College of Business Administration at the University of Tennessee started grading their students on how well they performed as team players (Tomasko, 1993: 141).

Hallstein (1994: 16-17) agrees that American organisations can learn valuable lessons from their Eastern counterparts. According to him, one of the fundamental challenges facing corporate America is to move away from a "testing culture" which focuses on individual performance, instead of encouraging continuous development and creative risk-taking. However, Maital (1993: 53-54) maintains that the fact that America places such a strong emphasis on the right and freedom of the individual, remains the major reason for not adapting Japanese management techniques successfully.

American organisations are facing the challenge of a global economy and with that comes new corporate strategies to deal with re-

engineering, restructuring, corporate change and information technologies. According to Prusak (1997: 18) all organisations are feeling the pressure of having to adapt quickly and being more innovative in order to compete internationally. He argues that organisations' success can be contributed to knowledge - what they know, how they can use it and how quickly they can access this information. This theory of knowledge management has led to the creation of multi-layered hypertext organisations where non-hierarchical, self-organising structures work together with the traditional, formal hierarchies. Prusak maintains that the management of knowledge in an organisation not only impacts on the organisational structure, but also contributes directly to the organisational culture. In the South African corporate scenario, concepts such as transparency, open internal communication channels and access to information have become requirements within organisational structures.

McNeilly (1996: 6) has added yet another strategic management tool in comparing business and military strategies. He advocates the adaptation of Chinese warlord, Sun Tzu's war strategies into the corporate world. He argues that the competition for market share and leadership should be viewed in the same way as a military battle where your foremost objective should be to overcome your opponent. This might provide a provoking insight into South African organisational culture when viewed against the fact that White South African males were faced with two years' compulsory military duty

until 1993. This acceptance of quasi-military strategies within a local corporate environment was put under the spotlight during the 2003 Rugby World Cup when it became public that the national rugby team attended a military-style training camp in preparation for this prestigious international rugby championships (Rapport, 23 November 2003: 1 & 22).

### **1.9.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

Although South African organisations deal with a culturally heterogeneous work force, it can be argued that some aspects of Eastern organisational culture may suit some cultural groups better than the previously accepted Western styles. An exploration of the influence of language differences on conflict in South African organisations highlights whether there are some culturally unique principles driving South African organisational culture. It also reveals if South African organisations have merely adapted international guidelines or whether they have taken into account the fact that the different languages spoken by employees might have an effect on their organisational cultures.

Only internal management meetings, which represent a cross section of the hierarchical and departmental structures within organisations are included for the purpose of the study to obtain a representation of cultural groups as well as different levels of education and experience. The groups have been meeting regularly for at least six months, which makes it possible to explore the developing group

dynamics. The meetings are fairly structured with a chairperson and agendas to enable the author to identify any hidden agendas within the meetings.

The decision-making procedures do not only focus specifically at top hierarchical levels, but also include interdepartmental decisions. Specific attention is given to whether decisions are reached by directive or participative processes. Koopman (Christie et al, 1993: 46-47) argues that while Afrikaans and English-speaking White South Africans make use of assent decision-making, Black South Africans approach the decision-making process from a viewpoint of lack of dissent.

Although human resource scientists have developed various performance appraisal models and methods, this study concentrates on how different cultures view performance evaluation in terms of promotions, rewards and disciplinary actions and how feedback, whether it be positive or negative, is received by the Afrikaans, English and Xhosa culture.

## CHAPTER 2

In Chapter One, the question was posed whether home language influences the perception of structure and decision-making processes in organisations in the Western Cape. In an attempt to address this question, the author explores organisational structure by concentrating on employees' perceptions of meetings and decision-making processes and in terms of how performance evaluations including feedback and rewards or disciplinary actions are perceived. It is argued that language acts as a carrier of culture and therefore has a direct impact on organisational cultures and employee perceptions of those cultures.

The concept of creating unified organisational cultures in South African organisations becomes more complex when it is considered that South Africa has eleven official languages. To manage this complexity, the study intends to concentrate on the three predominant languages in the Western Cape, namely Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. The investigation explores how these home languages influence employees' perception of structure and decision-making processes and whether these perceptions contribute to conflict in organisations. Factors, which influence South African organisational culture such as government policies, education, urbanisation as well as emerging cultures and international contributions from Eastern and Western perspectives are part of this discussion. Chapter Two is a literature review on organisational

culture, interdisciplinary influences on the development of organisational culture as well as a multi-cultural perspective on organisational structure and decision-making processes from both an Eastern and Western viewpoint as it relates to current organisational practices in South Africa.

## **2.1 INTERDISCIPLINARY INFLUENCES ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

It is important to recognise that any social science study such as the exploration of organisational culture and its influences cannot concentrate on an isolated academic field. Organisational culture has to be viewed from an interdisciplinary perspective as it has developed from and has been influenced by various different academic genres such as anthropology, sociology, psychology and ethnography. These dynamic interactions and exchanges have been evident throughout the twentieth century.

### **2.1.1 CONTRIBUTING GENRES**

Both the scientific and structural genres contributed to the neoclassical managerial approach of the 1920's, which was influenced by sociology and psychology and was concerned with human interaction within groups in a work situation. This shift of focus from the mechanical to the behavioural aspect laid the foundation for the study of human relations in organisations, which developed between 1930 and 1950. One of the most influential contributions to this genre was the Hawthorne studies, a series of studies conducted in 1924. These studies investigated the effect of the work environment on the productivity of employees by measuring the output of

employees working in, for example, well-lit or badly lit areas. It was found that workers reacted differently to the same environments because of different individual attitudes, motives and perception (Landis & Bhagat, 1996: 129). Although the Hawthorne studies received criticism, they emphasised that employees cannot be viewed as mere extensions of organisational structure and that the human element must be taken into consideration. This approach was the major influence on the behavioural genre, which introduced motivational theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and McClelland's Socially Acquired Needs (Callahan et al, 1986: 24-25; Bowditch & Buono, 1994). These motivational theories are based on the presumption that people are not only motivated by money, but that self-esteem, appreciation and security also play an important role. According to Bowditch and Buono (1994) these models formed the foundation for management and organisational development up to the 1980's.

### **2.1.2 MANAGEMENT THEORY**

The study of organisational culture and climate also benefited significantly from earlier research into management theory. Bowditch and Buono (1994) argue that the Industrial Revolution necessitated not only the study of organisations and work roles, but also the people within these organisations. According to Bowditch and Buono (1994), Fayol, Weber and Taylor were major influences on modern management and organisational theory. Administrative theorist, Fayol, identified the four basic management functions

namely planning, organising, leadership and control. Taylor, on the other hand, concentrated on the scientific measurement and structure of work. Other contributions from the scientific management field included the Gillbreths' time and motion studies and Gant's chart, which focused on production efficiency. Although part of the genre of scientific management, scientists such as Weber and Taylor argued that employees could not be viewed as mere elements forming part of the organisational structure. However, the structural school of thought still concentrated mainly on the structure or bureaucracy of organisations.

These scientists focused predominantly on the structure of organisations and received criticism from social scientists for ignoring the human element (Bowditch & Buono, 1994).

One field of study, which overlaps significantly with organisational culture is organisational climate. Moran and Volkwein (1992: 19-47) maintain that organisational climate has developed from studies of hierarchical organisational structures, employee perceptions of organisational environment and interaction between employees. Moran and Volkwein (1992) are of the opinion that these studies are based on organisational theory and that the cultural approach has been added to offer an understanding into the climate of organisations. These researchers argue further that both organisational culture and organisational climate share interdisciplinary influences, but that it is important to realise that the two concepts have developed from two different academic schools of thought - organisational climate

from social psychology and organisational culture from anthropology. Bowditch and Buono (1994) distinguish between organisational culture as addressing the nature of employees' beliefs and expectations about organisational life and organisational climate as an indicator of whether those beliefs and expectations are met.

## **2.2 LITERATURE OVERVIEW OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

Just like any ethnic group belongs to a specific culture, it can also be argued that each organisation has its own culture. This culture is formulated by different elements such as hierarchies, structure, management styles and corporate goals and objectives. Organisational culture is reflected by how things are done within the organisation. This contributes to the fact that organisational cultures are complex to define and analyse. The influence that organisations' employees may have on the formation of an organisational culture has often been neglected. However, the author argues that each employee brings into the organisational culture the elements, values and beliefs from his or her own culture, which have a significant impact on the culture of that specific organisation. Although researchers have not reached consensus on a definition of organisational culture, it has been agreed that organisational culture is holistic, determined by history and related to anthropology as well as being socially constructed and difficult to change (Hofstede et al, 1993: 53-61).

Gudykunst and Kim (1992; 242-244) refer to culture as a system of knowledge that is shared by a group of people and provide

behavioural guidelines as well as methods to interpret other people's behaviour. Sackman (1991: 295-317) argues that the existing definitions of organisational culture increase the difficulty of studying the subject. When it is considered that organisational culture is a relatively young academic subject and that researchers are still to reach consensus on which elements form organisational culture, it becomes evident that the study of organisational culture is complex. It has to be taken into account that the culture of any given organisation does not develop or exist in isolation, but that both internal and external environments have an influence on organisational cultures.

#### **2.2.1 INTERDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

Organisational culture is influenced by different elements and academic genres and it is this interdisciplinary nature of the subject, which contributes to its ever-changing scope and definition. It has to be realised that organisational culture cannot stand isolated from changes, but has to react to socio-economic conditions and political changes, both internationally and nationally. In a South African and specifically Western Cape context, the author maintains that organisational cultures have to adapt to factors such as globalisation and the increasing cultural diversity of the workforce to ensure competitiveness and survival.

Researchers have suggested that a link exists between a strong organisational culture and long-term corporate performance (Burt et

al. 1994: 345-370; *The Economist*, 1992: 14). Kilmann (1985: 62-68) concurs and states that organisational culture provides the social energy, which leads an organisation either to productive action or destruction. He also maintains that this is the reason why the field of organisational culture has received such extensive academic attention over the past two decades since its introduction in 1979. Although the phrase 'organisational culture' was first coined in 1979, it must be acknowledged that research into management theory, organisational behaviour - a term first used by Argyris in 1957 (Porter, 1996: 262-269)- and organisational climate, by social scientists such as Weber, Fayol, Taylor as well as later cultural studies by Hofstede, Schein and Gudykunst, contributed to the development of the concept.

Peters (1990: 56-57) maintains that the previously accepted linear and hierarchical models used to understand organisations need to be revisited as they are no longer appropriate in the ever-changing business and economic circumstances. Evidence for this need for change can be found in the introduction of disciplines such as corporate change, which played a major role in organisational research from the late 1980's. One of the advocates for the study of corporate change is American management expert, Kanter, who maintains that the ever-changing social, economic, political and technological environments require organisations to change themselves to keep up the pace (Kanter et al, 1992: 334-336). This need for change is reiterated by Sherriton and Stern (1997: 54) and

includes the needs for globalisation, rightsizing or downsizing, corporate reengineering and for staying competitive. A prominent example of this need for change is the creation of a European Union. According to Randlesome (2002: 65-73), this change of strategies was partially due to cultural and geographical needs and the belief in unity through diversity. Verwey (2000: 56-57) argues that businesses have been forced to rethink almost every aspect of their behaviour within the new global context and that flatter hierarchies and an empowered workforce are crucial elements to this paradigm shift.

Pascale (1994: 20-26) argues that many organisations look at corporate change just for the sake of changing and do not view it as a transformation process of the organisation's mindset, values and culture. He maintains that many American organisations view these methodologies as quick fixes and do not make the effort to transform the fundamental way of thinking in the organisation.

However, organisational culture tends to become the focus during the change process as it becomes unconscious, automatic rituals like daily decision-making and task allocation (Sheriton & Stern, 1997: 72). Deal and Kennedy (1983: 498-504) attribute this focus on the cultural and symbolic aspects within organisations to the fact that structure, strategy and politics are no longer the major thrust in organisations. Instead it has been realised that organisational culture and symbolism, which is manifested through elements like the

corporate logo and colours, provide the driving force to successful organisations.

### 2.2.2 TWO DECADES OF CORPORATE CULTURE

The dynamic nature of organisational culture necessitates an overview of how the study of organisational culture has developed over the past two decades. The next section provides a summary of the major influences and contributions to the field of organisational culture. As the study of organisational culture is constantly adapting to changes in the corporate environment, it is important to realise that the nature of organisational culture may once again change significantly during the new millenium.

When Pettigrew first introduced the term organisational culture in 1979, he defined culture as 'the system of publicly given and collectively accepted meanings operating for a given group at a given time.' He went on to include aspects such as symbols, language, ideology, belief, ritual and myth in his definition (Grieco, 1988: 84-87). However, the inclusion of organisational culture in the study of organisational life only became popular during the 1980's (Bate, 1990: 83; Fine, 1995: 21; Moran & Volkwein, 1992 19-47; Sinclair, 1993: 63-73). Fine (1995: 21) suggests that this popularity stems from the fact that researchers were moving away from the traditional approaches which focused predominantly on structure and towards more interpretive theories of human behaviour. Although the concept of organisational culture has enjoyed

widespread appeal for the past decade, Bate (1990: 83) implies that it must still prove itself in terms of successful application in business.

Fine (1995: 21-25) maintains that the earlier work on organisational culture was based on organisational climate, character, image and ideology, but that a shift towards social construction took place during the merger and acquisition era of the 1980's. Although the theory of social construction does not exclude other existing theories, it focuses on seeing individuals as inter-dependent on their community, nation and species. According to Vallance (1995), social construction is based on shared characteristics, which are passed on through language. For example, when first joining a new organisation, the way things are done might seem foreign to new employees, but after time these employees would adapt the same practices and share them with the rest of the organisation. This might include dress codes, interaction with colleagues and superiors and how decisions are reached.

However, Fine (1995: 560) argues that the view of organisational culture as a commonly-held belief by all members of the organisation is flawed as it was based on a predominantly White male perspective which did not take into consideration the introduction of women and other cultures to the American workforce. This argument led to the inclusion of the concept of workplace diversity in organisational culture studies.

### 2.2.3 WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

One of the major influences on cultural studies was a longitudinal, cross-cultural study conducted by Hofstede between 1967 and 1973 to establish whether cultural differences played a role within organisations. Data was gathered from employees of a multi-national company in 64 countries (Hofstede et al, 1990: 53-61). After analysis of the data gathered during the study, Hofstede developed four criteria to gauge differences between cultures, namely power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism and masculinity versus femininity (Callahan et al. 1986). Power distance deals with the behaviour between employees of different ranks and how this inequality is accepted by specific cultures. Individualism and collectivism refer to a person's behaviour towards a group. For example, individualistic cultures might be more concerned with their own and immediate family's interests, while collectivist cultures feel strongly about loyalty to the groups they belong to. The masculinity/femininity dimension of culture focus on gender characteristics. A masculine culture will, for example, expect men to be ambitious and competitive and women to care and serve. On the other hand, feminine cultures view the roles of the sexes as overlapping and regard interpersonal relationships as very important. The dimension of uncertainty avoidance relates to how people accept or avoid situations, which may cause conflict. This also impacts on how cultures react to unstructured and unpredictable situations (Gudykunst & Kim 1992: 242-244; Hofstede 1993: 286-316;

Vitell et al, 1993: 753-760). Although Hofstede's four dimensions of culture have been widely used and replicated in research by other scientists, he warns that the nature and complexity of cultural studies might require the addition of other dimensions. He emphasises that his dimensions only provide a tool for analysing cultural information and should not be regarded as concrete entities (Hofstede, 1993: 286-316).

Later research by Hofstede and other scientists have shown that a further dimension, namely the long-term orientation of a specific culture, might impact on the economic growth of a country. This dimension deals with individuals' attitudes towards past and present oriented values such as stability, respect of tradition and reciprocity and future oriented values such as persistence, status-ordered relationships and thrift (Yeh & Lawrence, 1995: 655-669). Researchers such as Yeh and Lawrence (1995) criticise this theory and claim that, although culture might have an influence on economic growth, there are many other conditions such as international and historical factors, which need to be taken into consideration when researching economic growth. It is also necessary to add that this argument could only be valid in a culturally homogenous country. However, when the length of Hofstede's initial study is taken into account, his work has to be considered as a benchmark in the study of organisational culture. The four dimensions of culture, which Hofstede developed from this study are still widely used and

referred to in work by other social scientists like Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey and Pascale.

Hofstede's earlier research focused on national cultures, but it can be argued that, in a culturally heterogeneous society like South Africa, the different cultural groups might fall on opposite sides of these criteria. For example, English speaking employees might be more individualistic than Xhosa speaking employees who come from a more collectivist culture with a strong sense of group belonging.

Similarly, both Afrikaans and Xhosa males grew up in a culture where masculine traits such as assertiveness and aggression are admired and encouraged and women's roles are seen as that of caregivers and nurturers.

Hampden-Turner (1990: 25-30) emphasizes that, although there is a distinct difference between organisational and national cultures, all organisational cultures are influenced to some extent by the larger cultures in which they are functioning.

He argues that the Western preoccupation with individualism might not be as successful as it seems, especially when compared with the Eastern philosophy of co-operation and teamwork. He argues that individualism does not necessarily mean innovation and creativity and substantiates this point of view by the fact that the Japanese are registering twice as many patents per head of population than the United States. Hofstede (1993: 286-316) agrees that national cultures influence organisational cultures, but also found marked

differences in the organisational cultures of companies within the same country. He attributes these differences to the fact that national cultures have underlying roots in values. On the other hand, organisational cultures are created more superficially through practices such as symbols like the corporate logo, heroes who are admired and seen as role models and rituals like award ceremonies and promotions which might be relevant only to employees of a specific organisation. Deal and Kennedy (1983: 498-504) concur with this by stating that the core assumptions, understandings and rituals will differ between organisations as the people who work in those organisations shape them. Although the first Hofstede study was conducted over 30 years ago, the findings have been validated by more recent cross-national studies (Hofstede, 2002: 798) and other researchers still acknowledge his contribution to the field of cross-cultural understanding (Clark, 2003: 151).

#### **2.2.4 LANGUAGE AS THE CORNERSTONE OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

In the South African corporate environment, English has been identified as the accepted language of use, but it has not been considered that each of the other ten official languages brings their own culture and perception into the organisation. The use of the English language has also led to the adoption of mostly Western business practices and management principles without considering that some cultures might have difficulty in understanding or agreeing to these methods. According to statistics revealed in the 2001 Census, only 8.2% of South Africans speak English at home even

though it is widely considered the language of commerce and science (href8).

Researchers agree that language is the channel through which culture is learned and transmitted (Bate, 1990: 83; Deal & Kennedy, 1983: 498-504; Gudykunst & Kim, 1992:242-244 and Hofstede, 1993: 53-61). Gudykunst and Kim (1992) state that language is a product of culture and vice versa. They add that language influences perception and thought and that the process through which a child learns his or her mother tongue has a powerful impact on how that child will interact with future environments. It can therefore be argued that cultural diversity in the workplace will not only affect how verbal behaviour is interpreted, but also cause differences in how non-verbal messages are perceived.

Based on a three-year organisational development study conducted at British Rail, Bate (1990: 83) finds that language is the primary cultural form of any organisation. He maintains that an understanding of language provides access to the understanding of an organisation's culture. Deal and Kennedy (1983: 498-504) agree with this viewpoint and add that organisations are governed more by symbolism than by logic. They continue by stating that language forms the basis of symbols, meaning, feeling, play and fiction within organisations. If this viewpoint is applied to the South African organisational scenario, it can be deducted that employees

from different cultures will have contrasting perceptions of these symbols and meanings, which form part of organisational culture.

A study conducted by Hall (1995: 38-44) emphasises that shared meaning and mutual understanding are essential to the effectiveness of organisations and that communication therefore plays an important role in organisations. The study found that the diversity of the South African workforce in terms of home languages increases the possibility of misunderstanding between co-workers as well as between workers and management. Cultural differences affect not only how verbal messages are interpreted, but also non-verbal behaviour such as eye contact, perception of time and space orientation. For example, while Western cultures view direct eye contact as important, the Xhosa culture traditionally viewed averted eyes as a show of respect. Similarly, the perception of space is regarded differently by English, Afrikaans and Xhosa cultures. It is, however, important to realise that continuous contact with Western cultures is increasingly breaking down some of these traditional cultural perceptions.

#### **2.2.5 THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

The previous section highlighted that cultural diversity as reflected by language can create different levels of meaning and may cause conflict in organisations. When conflict due to language differences and cultural diversity is examined against both the historical and current social and political backdrop of South

African society, it is seen as a very sensitive issue. Unfortunately, this conflict is often attributed to ethnocentricity, stereotyping or racism without taking cultural backgrounds into account. However, conflict cannot always be regarded as a negative influence on organisational culture. The next section examines the positive or negative impact that conflict can have on organisational culture. The author asserts that a better understanding of cultural differences as expressed through language can lead to conflict being used as a positive influence in South African organisations.

Bowditch and Buono (1994) define conflict as the disagreement or differences between members or representatives of two or more groups over authority, goals, territory, or resources.

Within a Western Cape organisational context, it is suggested that cultural diversity may be a cause of conflict within organisations as members from different cultures may view these aspects of organisational life differently.

Hamada (1995: 162-185) proposes that conflict can occur in any situation where interaction between different cultures takes place. It is, however, a misconception to assume that all conflict has a detrimental effect within an organisation. Organisational behaviour scientists (Eisenhardt et al, 1997: 77-85; Pascale, 1990: 20-26) are of the opinion that internal conflict can be of advantage to organisations when it is used to sharpen competitive instincts. Evans (1992: 49-51) supports this opinion and views conflict as a

natural, inevitable way of life, which could prove of value to an organisation if handled correctly. She advocates a new approach to conflict resolution, which should take culture, gender, communication style and non-verbal behaviour into account. Capozzoli (1995: 3-5) suggests that group membership does not preclude conflict and offers the following as potential causes for conflict: diverse cultural values, attitudes, needs, expectations, perceptions, resources and personalities. This argument can be viewed as particularly valid in the South African, and specifically Western Cape, organisational environment where members of different cultures interact on a daily basis. One specific issue, which can be traced back to a cultural perspective, is that of so-called 'African time'. Although punctuality is considered as very important by both English and Afrikaans cultures, the Xhosa culture view time as a commodity to be adapted according to need. They may thus argue that issues of great importance require more time than other cultures want to afford it.

Although much of the work done on organisational behaviour and culture has emphasized the need for harmony and shared meanings within the organisation, Grieco (1988: 84-87) implies that organisational culture cannot be studied effectively without including the concept of conflict. Researchers have determined that conflict is multi-dimensional and while it frequently improves the quality of decisions, it could also adversely affect consensus and acceptance. Amason (1996: 123-148) distinguishes between functional

or cognitive conflict which is task oriented and dysfunctional or affective conflict where disagreements are taken personally. Capozzoli (1995: 3-5) agrees that conflict should not automatically be viewed as a negative influence in an organisation as the lack of conflict can cause complacency and stunted development within teams. He argues that conflict avoidance can cause members to agree on issues just for the sake of consensus and not because they really approve.

Lee (1993: 57) on the other hand defines conflict in terms of constructive and destructive conflict and maintains that it is determined by how conflict is managed within organisations. According to Lee, it is important to identify the source of conflict as either structural such as recruitment policies, promotions and performance appraisal or as interpersonal, which reflects the employee's individual needs. Destructive conflict can lead to frustration, aggressive behaviour and the disruption of organisational processes, while constructive conflict can increase the creativity and productivity of both employees and organisations (Bowditch & Buono 1994; Callahan et al. 1986).

Unfortunately, researchers in South Africa have not paid specific attention to how cultural diversity in organisations may impact on employees or whether it is a cause of conflict in organisations. It has to be acknowledged that South Africa's history of employment inequality, a volatile labour market and the political and social

changes following the 1994 elections have caused sensitivity when the subject of conflict due to cultural differences is raised. Therefore it can be argued that when employees from various cultural backgrounds interact, they attach different meanings to and have different perceptions of organisational structure and decision-making processes. However, it is important to realise that even intercultural conflict within organisations does not necessarily have to be regarded as a negative influence. Gudykunst and Kim (1992: 242-244) agree that interaction with unknown cultures might cause anxiety and stress, but emphasise that it is possible that such interaction can have a positive and creative influence in organisations if handled correctly.

#### **2.2.5.1 INTERNATIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONFLICT**

A discussion of conflict will not be complete unless attention is also paid to how conflict is regarded from different international perspectives. It is important from a South African point of view to observe other cultures' attitudes to conflict and conflict resolution. Such observations can be instrumental in finding ways of handling conflict due to cultural and language differences in organisations more effectively. South African and Western Cape organisational cultures have been extensively influenced by Western perceptions of conflict, but due to the increasing cultural diversity in organisations it has become necessary to also examine how other cultures such as the Asian culture interpret and deal with conflict.

According to Gudykunst and Kim (1992: 242-244), the languages of different cultures make communication more difficult. They state that communication with other cultures can often lead to apprehension, because verbal messages are misinterpreted. Black and Mendelhall (1993: 49-59) claim that conflict is inevitable when communication transcends cultural borders. Citing Japan and America as examples, the authors illustrated how the two cultures view conflict from different points of view. Where Americans view conflict resolution as the first step to establishing group harmony, the Japanese approach both conflict resolution and conflict avoidance as a means to avoid obligations to others (Black & Mendelhall, 1993).

These assumptions were further substantiated in a cross-cultural study (Dyer & Song, 1997: 467-492), which showed that, while an assimilation of management practices is taking place between Japan and America, conflict resolution and mechanisms differ significantly. In Japan, workplace conflict is approached from a holistic point of view and handled in such a way that the organisation always benefits (Callahan et al. 1986).

Researchers (Dyer & Song, 1997: 467-492; Gudykunst & Kim, 1992: 242-244; Sherriton & Stein, 1997: 23-40) argue that these differences could be attributed to the collective versus individualistic cultures of Japan and America respectively. These findings are also

supported by a similar cross-cultural study of the People's Republic of China and Canada (Tse et al, 1994: 537-555). According to the authors, the study confirmed that home culture in terms of individualism or collectivism directly influences reaction to conflict. According to Callahan et al. (1986), the Japanese will generally avoid conflict because they belong to a culture of high uncertainty avoidance. Pascale, however, disagrees and feels that American organisations have become trapped in the notion that there should be a shared purpose between employees and division, which should exclude the presence of conflict. He argues that this attitude is stifling American creativity and competitiveness (Brown, 1991: 12-20).

### 2.3 A CULTURAL APPROACH TO MEETINGS

Meetings play a significant and often time-consuming role in South African organisations and are also viewed as important communication tools. Meetings make extensive use of language in either its written or oral form. In South Africa, the English language is used extensively for business, although there are eleven official languages. It has been argued that members from other cultures might attach different meanings to messages which are not in their own home languages and the author will argue further that these language differences could lead to opposing perceptions of meetings by different cultural groups (page 50).

The structure of an organisation is determined through various elements such as its external environment, goals and policies, size, hierarchy, infrastructure, personnel as well as the organisational culture (Cronje et al. 1993). Many of these elements are manifested through the channels of communication, which exist within an organisation. One of the most commonly used methods of communicating in organisations is meetings. In fact, Sandwith (1992: 29-36) maintains that meetings are the most powerful tool of communication in organisations after the organisational grapevine. According to Butler (1996: 24-28) meetings are essential to today's organisations, because meetings provide the opportunity for communication, discussion and decision making. Butler (1996) also maintains that meetings are crucial to organisational participation. The important role meetings plays within the organisational structure is reflected by the fact that between 69 and 80 percent of managers' time is spent on scheduled and unscheduled meetings (Callahan et al. 1986; Johann, 1994: 369-377).

Bowditch and Buono (1994) are of the opinion that, although group behaviour has been the topic of extensive research, the study of group meetings has been neglected. They maintain that group meetings should be explored as manifestations of rituals and social metaphors. Referring to the importance of rituals in cultural anthropology, they reason that meetings provide a mechanism through which group members interpret the social reality of their organisation. Johann (1994: 269-277) adds that meetings provide a

miniature display of an organisation's culture and that this aspect has been neglected as current research into groups is based on work done during the 1950s and 1960s which assumed that all groups are basically the same. Sandwith (1992: 29-36) supports this argument by stating that meetings have both a functional and symbolic purpose. He argues that meetings can be used to establish norms and values and to develop networks of communication and support. If meetings are perceived as culturally based rituals, it can be argued that members speaking different home languages might interpret these rituals from their individual cultural perspectives.

However, Martin (1994) maintains that most meetings are ineffective, because they lack purpose and aim. He attributes this to the fact that meetings have previously been defined too liberally and attempts to solve this by defining meetings as follows:

A gathering of essential participants only, each of whom has something to contribute, to discuss a problem touching all their interests, to arrive at certain decisions, all as required by the pre-determined aim of the meeting itself (Martin, 1994).

Pollock (1993: 24-27) supports this definition by stating that the success of any meeting depends on how it is organised and conducted. According to Pollock (1993), meetings differ in purpose, scope and participation, but the need for meetings to be productive and efficient remains the same. Booher (1994: 54-63) adds that it is essential to have a set agenda and to invite only essential participants.

Nixon and Littlepage (1992:361-369) identify five issues which link meeting procedure to the effectiveness of meetings, namely the meeting leader, agenda, group participation, a systematic approach and punctuality. Closer examination of these issues show that they can be traced to cultural perceptions, such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions of power distance which deals with handling of authority and individualism or collectivism which governs behaviour in a group situation. Similarly, it can be argued that the concept of time can also be interpreted differently by various cultures. The traditional approach of the Xhosa culture towards time and group belonging was discussed earlier in this chapter and serves as an illustration of how meetings can be perceived differently by members from different cultures.

#### **2.4 A CULTURAL APPROACH TO DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES**

Decision-making processes in organisations are direct reflections of the organisational cultures of these organisations. When decision-making processes concentrate on the evaluation of employee performance, which can result in either the rewarding or disciplining of employees, it becomes evident that effective decision-making is a critical aspect in organisations. It is the opinion of the author that different cultures have opposing preferences when it comes to not only decision-making processes, but also reward and disciplinary actions and how feedback is provided.

Callahan et al. (1986) describes decision-making as the core of the managerial process. However, research has shown that cultural differences impact on decision-making processes. For example, in Japan decisions are reached by consensus (Callahan et al. 1986; Fine, 1995: 21-25). Problems in the workplace are normally addressed through quality circles at peer level and lower on the hierarchical structure. According to Fine (1995) the collectivist nature of Asian culture plays a critical role in the decision-making processes as the individual is required to put the well-being of the group before his or her own. However, Abbasi and Hollman (1991: 7-11) maintain that this reluctance to dissent during the decision-making process is not only limited to Asian cultures. In fact, they continue to argue that at least seven out of ten people in American corporations will remain quiet even if they do not agree with the decision being made. Furthermore, Abbasi and Hollman (1991: 7-11) argue that dissent during the decision-making process ensures that all aspects are reviewed and that successful organisations encourage open discussions, clashing viewpoints and opinions during the decision-making process. Thompson & Kahnweiler (2002: 273-275) maintain that the perceived control over decision making may actually influence the level of participation in the process. They further state that when members are open to learning and change, they are more likely to participate efficiently in the decision-making process.

The evaluation process is often the cause of conflict in the workplace (Callahan et al. 1986; Martin, 1994). Callahan et al. (1986) argue that this type of conflict is in most cases dysfunctional, because it is often due to unclear goals, expectations and performance standards. The authors anticipate that the forms of performance appraisal systems used during the 1980's will give way to behaviour-oriented, performance-based systems like Management by Objectives and BARS (behaviour-anchored rating scales). The need for organisational change is duplicated by performance evaluation. Bunich (1997: 41) maintains that performance evaluation is an evolutionary process, which has to adapt to the changes within the organisation. She states that this is one of the reasons why performance evaluation is currently moving away from being a top-down, annual exercise to becoming a monthly or quarterly, goal-oriented self-evaluation done in co-operation with an immediate supervisor with the emphasis on performance management by each employee.

Other researchers (Lindo, 1997: 12-15; Martinez, 1997: 109-116) argue that performance evaluations that focus on specific tasks provide valuable opportunities for employees to improve their job performance. This study does not intend to explore the various types of performance appraisal systems that are used in organisations, but will rather focus on how performance evaluation is perceived by employees from different cultures.

## 2.5 A CULTURAL APPROACH TO FEEDBACK AND REWARDS

According to Callahan et al. (1986) feedback is one of the most important aspects in communication. Bowditch and Buono (1994) support this statement and argue that feedback should be used to reduce gaps and distortions in communication. Feedback also plays a critically important role in the performance evaluation process. Employees need the feedback to improve their productivity and to set specific goals for themselves. However, it must be noted that members of different cultures will react differently to how the feedback is delivered. For example, a member of a culture who is strongly group-oriented may react negatively when faced with feedback on his or her individual performance and would prefer to be evaluated as part of a group.

Motivational theorists such as Maslow, Vroom and McClelland have argued that people are motivated by different types of rewards, but agree that most people behave in a way that will either lead to reward or avoid punishment (Callahan et al. 1986). Therefore, it can be argued that either reward or disciplinary actions demonstrate feedback from performance evaluations. According to Sherriton and Stern (1994: 152-154) reward systems in organisations are used to provide the motivation for employees to behave according to expected patterns. These reward systems can be either monetary-based such as vacation, cash, saving bonds or shares and gift certificates or non-monetary-based such as awards, commendations, public recognition,

training, opportunities to interact with senior management or being trusted with more responsibility (Sherriton & Stern, 1997: 152-154).

Disciplinary actions are seen as the ultimate message to measure employees' commitment to the organisational culture (Sherriton & Stern, 1997: 12-23).

### CHAPTER 3

This study aims to investigate the influence of language and culture on organisations in the Western Cape. In Chapter One, the author raises the question whether employees' perceptions of organisational processes, specifically meetings and decision-making processes in organisations in the Western Cape can be influenced by culture, and in particular, by their respective home languages. It is further argued that different cultures use different approaches to view and handle conflict situations in organisations. The author also addresses the issue of individualism versus collectivism and how these cultural characteristics play out in the South African organisational scenario. The literature review in Chapter Two includes studies on organisational culture and the interdisciplinary influences that have made an impact on the development of organisational culture. It is stressed that the study of organisational culture has not only borrowed from sociology and anthropology, but also from psychology. Organisational structure and decision-making processes are viewed from a multi-cultural perspective and emphasis is placed on how it relates to the South African scenario. The role that Eastern and Western organisational perspectives play in the development of organisational culture is also highlighted. The author contends that South African organisations have readily adopted Western management styles and principles, without considering the influence that Eastern

perspectives may have on the increasingly multi-cultural workforce in South Africa. It is argued that the collectivist nature of the Xhosa-speaking culture may find the group-orientation perspectives of decision-making embraced by Eastern cultures more suitable than the generally accepted Western standards of individualism.

Since Hofstede's longitudinal benchmark study between 1967 and 1973, individualism and collectivism have regularly been used as variables in cultural studies (Calahan *et al* 1986, Gudykunst & Kim, 1992: 242-244, Ting-Toomey, 1988: 384-400). However, during the past decade many researchers have focused on the issue of self-construal (Kitayama *et al*, 1997: 1245-1267, Markus & Kitayama 1991, Rao *et al*. 1999, Singelis, 1994: 580-591). According to these researchers, an individual's self-esteem and how he/she views him/herself and interaction with others are directly influenced by whether the individual perceives him/herself as independent or interdependent on others. These researchers maintain that the individual's perception of dependency can be directly linked to the collectivist or individualistic nature of a specific culture. Gudykunst & Lee (2003: 256) further argue that members of individualist cultures generally learn the dominant values of their cultures, but that they may also exhibit collectivist tendencies and that this intra-cultural differences bring self-construal into play.

Chapter Three focuses on the design of the research study and how the study will be conducted. Although qualitative methods such as

ethnomethodology and conversation analysis have been criticised for not being as scientific as quantitative research methods, social scientists argue that to understand human actions and interaction, they have to become part of the particular setting in which people operate (Graddol et al, 1994). South Africa is a country in a state of transformation, a fledgling democracy, where members from different cultural groups are beginning to interact on a daily basis in organisational environments. In the Western Cape, this interaction takes place in an environment that generally accepts Western management principles and is mostly conducted in English, although 78,3% of the Western Cape population speaks Afrikaans and Xhosa (href1). Viewed against this statistic, the author argues that it is important to explore how language differences influence employees' perceptions of organisational processes such as meetings and decision-making. The issue of cultural differences has remained a sensitive subject in South Africa, and even more so in the months prior to and after the 1999 national elections. However, the author is of the opinion that it is necessary to research these perceptions in order to understand possible conflict between and varying perceptions of employees from different language groups.

### **3.1 SUBJECT OF STUDY**

The focus of the study will be the provincial head office of ABSA Bank, a national South African financial institution with fifty-four branches in the Western Cape. The financial and business services sector in the Western Cape contributed 17.4% of the Gross Domestic

Product of the province in 2000, which makes the selection of a financial institution relevant in terms of its overall importance in the province (href4). The branches cover a geographical area from Fish Hoek to Swellendam, Worcester to Malmesbury. In May 1999, the organisation employed 2 986 people categorised into the following six hierarchical levels.

<b>HIERARCHICAL LEVELS</b>	<b>JOB DESCRIPTIONS</b>	<b>EMPLOYEE NUMBERS</b>
Level A	Cleaning/maintenance	144
Level B	Clerical	1 752
Level C	Specialists/consultants	433
Level T	Supervisory	364
Level M & P	Branch managers/ Management Specialists	293
<b>TOTAL</b>		2 986

For the purpose of this study, the author requires five males and five females in supervisory or managerial positions from the three predominant language groups in the Western Cape. As can be seen from the above table, the size of South African organisations necessitates a smaller sample size to ensure balance between gender and language.

Statistics show that the proportion of Blacks, Coloureds and females in managerial positions are relatively small when compared to the number of White males (Chapter One, page 12). The author is, therefore, unable to increase the number of respondents in each category without threatening the balance of the study.

### 3.2 METHODOLOGY

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted with thirty members from a sample population of 567 employees in supervisory and managerial positions.

Afrikaans	5 males	5 females
English	5 males	5 females
Xhosa	5 males	5 females

The respondents were selected according to the three predominant cultural groups of the Western Cape, namely Xhosa, Afrikaans and English with an equal male/female distribution. Each respondent provided approximately 45-60 minutes of narrative.

Freeman (1986: 298-303) has criticised qualitative researchers for not drawing large samples from theoretically meaningful populations. This sample size is admittedly much smaller than would have been the case if this were a quantitative research study. However, Graddol et al (1994) maintain that what qualitative research lacks in breadth it makes up in depth. These researchers claim that a lack of in-depth investigation poses a risk that relevant information can be lost and key elements misunderstood. The author's decision to select only one organisation should be viewed against the backdrop of the current South African situation. Previous mention has been made about the sensitivities surrounding the issues of cultural differences as well as affirmative action or employment equity policies. Organisations are being subjected to scrutiny from both

government and the general population regarding the cultural representation of their workforce. Employee uncertainties regarding job security and the intention of this research study should also be taken into account. At this stage, potential companies considered for this study were particularly sensitive to comparative studies and regarded confidentiality seriously. The above sensitivities are reduced significantly by only selecting one organisation for interviews.

The interviews were recorded verbatim and transcribed. This produced approximately forty hours of narrative, which was explored by means of narrative analysis. The narratives were coded and explored to identify recurring patterns or thoughts expressed by the respondents. Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 32) describe coding as a process of identifying key themes and patterns and organising data into analysable units by creating various categories. The author intends to use questions adapted from Singelis' Self-Construal Scale (Rao et al. 1999, Singelis, 1994: 580-591) as this scale focus predominantly on individualistic and collective tendencies and have been used extensively internationally. The responses are to be coded into five categories, modified from Hansen and Kahnweiler's 1993 corporate culture study. The following categories are to be used to classify responses: self-concept, conflict, interaction, decision-making and deviating behaviour. The category of self-concept deals with the individual's view of him/herself within the organisational environment. The occurrence of conflict in

organisations is discussed in Chapter Two (p41-43). This category addresses the individual's reaction to and involvement in conflict situations and how he/she views conflict resolution. The category on interaction focuses on the individual's interplay with other members in the organisation, specifically those from different cultural groups. The decision-making category concentrates on how individuals perceive the current decision-making process in the organisation and whether it differs from their own cultural-based approaches. In the category of deviant behaviour, expectations and assumptions about other cultural groups are to be examined.

According to Berger (1997: 6-12) narratives form part of our daily lives as they provide us with a method to learn about the world as well as a means of telling others what we have learned. People are exposed to a variety of narratives on a daily basis, which include fictional narratives on television, radio, in novels, comic strips and fairy tales as well as real life narratives in conversations, journals and psychotherapy. People are involved in conversations not only as speakers and listeners, but also as representatives of social categories, groups, communities and cultures (Van Dijk, 1997: 1-38).

Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 51-68) maintain that narratives of everyday life are used not only to build and share cultural values, meanings and personal experiences, but also to express power and influence. Although organisational studies have become popular with

social scientists, the use of narrative analysis as a method of enquiry is fairly recent (Hansen & Kahnweiler, 1993). They maintain that the analysis of narratives within an organisation can be used to examine interpersonal relationships found in organisational cultures and subcultures as narratives act as a cultural code. Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 51-68) concur and add that narratives present a way of retelling key experiences and events which can be used to pass on cultural heritage and organisational culture.

This study focuses on the narratives regarding decision-making processes, conflict and meetings of the thirty employees in an attempt to address the following research question:

**Does home language influence the perception of organisational processes, specifically meetings and decision-making, in organisations in the Western Cape.** This question will be unpacked according to

- how individuals from different cultural groupings view and react to conflict,
- how they perceive and participate in meetings,
- how they interact with members from other language groups during decision-making processes and
- how the individualistic or collectivist approach of their culture influences these perceptions.

### **3.3 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL VALIDITY**

Freeman (1986: 298-303) argues that knowledge of organisations is based on samples that provide little external validity, which in turn decreases the ability to generalise the findings of organisational studies. However, Hansen and Kahnweiler (1993) dispute this criticism by maintaining that external validity in ethnographic studies is irrelevant as researchers seldom try to predict or generalise treatment effects. They presume that the uniqueness of socially constructed meaning should be the key feature in directing cultural studies.

Hansen and Kahnweiler (1993) also argue that it might be difficult to replicate cultural studies and generalise the results to larger populations, especially if these studies are aimed at analysing perceptions. This argument is especially true in the South African context where eleven languages are officially recognised and each one of the nine provinces has a distinctly different cultural composition. The challenge for the author, as well as other South African researchers, will be to take the research structure and instead of replicating it, use it to firstly determine key perceptions in local context and secondly address the unique concerns in each province.

### **3.4 MODE OF RESEARCH**

The research was conducted over a two-year period within several Western Cape branches of a national South African financial institution. The respondents of this study range in age between 25

and 54 years and occupy various positions within the company ranging from consultants and specialists to branch managers and supervisors. In-depth interviews were conducted with each respondent resulting in at least sixty minutes worth of narrative per respondent.

The interviews consist of the following:

- a demographical section (Addendum A)
- a set questionnaire with twenty-four questions based on Singelis' Self-Construal Scale (Addendum B). The questionnaire is divided into an individualistic and collectivist section with qualifying questions to address the research question.

The interview period took longer than was initially anticipated due to the complex organisational structure of South African businesses. Due to the positions the respondents in this study occupied, interviews had to be scheduled to fit in with the respondent's time schedule. Several interviews were cancelled more than once and the author arrived for several interviews to find that the respondent was not available. In the two-year period during which the study was conducted, some of the potential respondents initially identified left the company.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using the NUD\*IST Vivo software package (Addendum C). This package was selected as it provides the researcher with a tool capable of linking and recording narratives and to search and explore complex

patterns derived from the narratives. Specific attributes were ascribed to each respondent based on demographic questions on age, language preferences, work experience and position within the company (Table 1). Another set of Boolean attributes were created based on true or false statements to the twenty-four questions (Addendum D). Each true statement was valued at one point, therefore both the collective and individualistic sections were given a total value of twelve points. A high value would therefore score a high collective or individual tendency. Scores have been interpreted as follows:

0-3: low

4-6: below average

7-9: above average

10-12: high

For confidentiality purposes, the respondents were coded to depict home language (A = Afrikaans, E = English and X = Xhosa) and gender (F = Female and M = Male). AF1 would therefore be the first Afrikaans-speaking female interviewed for the study.

The transcriptions were done in Microsoft Word, saved in rich text format and imported into Nvivo as project documents. A tree node was developed to contain all twenty-four questions contained in the Singelis questionnaire. All responses to a specific question were linked together to enable the author to make comparisons between each respondent's feedback to the various questions.

CODE	AGE	EDUCATION	PREFERRED LANGUAGE	JOB TITLE	MARITAL STATUS	PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE	PERIOD
AF1	52	Education Diploma	AFR	Manager: Client Service	Divorced	Teacher	20
AF2	41	HR Diploma	AFR	Manager: ATM Centre	Single	Fleet sales	4
AF3	51	Marketing Diploma	AFR/ENG 50/50	Manager: Personal Finance	Widowed	None	24
AF4	51	Education Diploma	ENG	Operations Manager	Married	None	18
AF5	34	Cert Computing	AFR	Supervisor	Married	General Assistant	8
AM1	36	Cert Property	AFR	Portfolio Manager	Married	None	19
AM2	27	BComm	AFR/ENG 50/50	Business Analyst	Single	None	4
AM3	37	Matric	ENG	Manager: Computer Division	Married	None	17
AM4	35	Matric	AFR	Portfolio Manager	Married	Banking	8
AM5	37	BAccount, Proj Man	AFR	Product Specialist	Married	Banking/Health Care	2
EF1	43	Bank Management	AFR	Senior Team Leader	Married	None	16
EF2	51	Bank Management	AFR/ENG 50/50	Administrative Manager	Married	None	22
EF3	52	Advanced Exec Prog	ENG	Regional Manager	Single	None	19
EF4	47	Bank Management	ENG	Branch Manager	Married	None	24
EF5	39	Matric	ENG	Team Leader	Divorced	Transport	4
EM1	43	Bank Management	ENG	Relationship Manager	Married	Banking	11
EM2	44	Bank Management	ENG	Business Banker	Married	Banking	3
EM3	31	BComm	ENG	Business Analyst	Married	None	8
EM4	54	Bank Management	ENG	Training Officer	Married	Insurance	23
EM5	40	IOB Diploma	ENG	Area Manager	Married	Banking	6
XF1	25	Bank Management	ENG	Enquiry Clerk	Single	None	5
XF2	28	IOB Diploma	ENG	Client Service: Personal Finance	Single	None	6
XF3	34	Bank Management	ENG	Consultant: Home Loans	Married	Banking	10
XF4	31	Bank Management	ENG	Supervisor: Customer Service	Married	Banking	8
XF5	29	Matric	ENG	Customer Service Liaison	Single	None	8
XM1	35	Midwife	ENG	Team Leader	Married	Nursing	5
XM2	31	Matric	ENG	Sales Consultant	Single	None	8
XM3	26	Accounting Diploma	ENG	Customer Service	Single	None	2
XM4	33	Bank Management	AFR/ENG	Sales Consultant	Married	None	8
XM5	32	BSC, MBA	ENG	Business Banker	Married	Tobacco Industry	2

TABLE 1: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The questions were then grouped under specific categories according to categories identified in Chapter Three from Hansen and Kahnweiler's corporate study (page 64), Hofstede's cross-cultural study (page 37) and Singelis' Self-Construal Scale. Hansen and Kahnweiler categorised their findings under Self Concept, Interaction, Conflict, Decision-Making and Deviating Behaviour. Hofstede grouped his findings under Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance and Long-term Orientation. Hofstede's latest study (2002: 799) shows that Power Distance has a distinct influence on the perception and goals of business leaders in organizations.

Due to the vast amount of narrative obtained from the thirty interviews, the author developed five categories, namely Self-Construal, Conflict, Interaction, Decision-making and Power Distance in order to address the research question. With these responses contained in each category, the author intends to address the research question by concentrating on respondents' perception and reaction to conflict, perception and participation in meetings, interaction during decision-making processes and individualistic versus collective tendencies.

## CHAPTER 4

Chapter One provides an overview of South African organisational culture and how it has been shaped by international influences. Chapter Two contains a review of the available literature on organisational culture from a South African, Western and Eastern perspective. Chapter Three is a description of the research design and methods used to address the research question. Chapter Four consists of an evaluation and interpretation of the data gathered. Chapter Five will provide a summary of the study with the author's conclusions and recommendations.

### 4.1 RESPONDENT PROFILES

AF1 is a 52-year old female, who speaks Afrikaans as her home language. She is divorced, has a Teaching Diploma and has been working for the organisation for twenty years. She is currently a Client Service Manager and Afrikaans is her language of preference in the workplace. She insisted that the interview be conducted in Afrikaans. She scored above average (7) on collective and high (10) on individualistic characteristics.

AF2 is a 41-year old female, who speaks Afrikaans as her home language. She is single, has a Human Resources Diploma and has been working for the organisation for four years. She is currently Manager: ATM Centre and Afrikaans is her language of preference in the workplace. Her previous work experience was in Fleet Sales.

She scored below average (6) on collective and high (12) on individualistic characteristics.

AF3 is a 51-year old female who speaks Afrikaans as her home language. She is widowed, has a Diploma in Marketing Management and has been working for the organisation for twenty-four years. She is currently Manager: Personal Finance and prefers a 50/50 split between Afrikaans and English within her working environment. She scored below average (5) on collective and high (10) on individualistic characteristics.

AF4 is a 51-year female who speaks Afrikaans as her home language. She is married, has a Teaching Diploma and has been working for the organisation for eighteen years. She is currently an Operations Manager and English is her language of preference in the workplace. She scored above average (7) on collective and (9) on individualistic characteristics.

AF5 is a 34-year old female who speaks Afrikaans as her home language. She is married, has a Certificate in General Computing and Bookkeeping and has been working for the organisation for 8 years. She is a Supervisor and prefers speaking Afrikaans in the workplace. Her previous work experience was as a general assistant at an insurance company. She scored high (12) on collective and above average (7) on individualistic characteristics.

EF1 is a 43-year old female who speaks English as her home language. She is married, holds several Bank Management Certificates and has been working for the company for sixteen years. She is a Senior Team Leader and Afrikaans is her language of preference in the workplace. She scored below average (5) on collective and high (11) on individualistic characteristics.

EF2 is a 51-year old female who speaks English as her home language. She is married, holds Certificates in Bank Management and has been working for the company for twenty-two years. She is Manager: Administrative Support and prefer a 70/30 Afrikaans English language split at the workplace. She scored above average (8) on collective and individualistic (7) characteristics.

EF3 is a 52-year old female who speaks English as her home language. She is single, has completed the Advanced Executive Programme and has been working for the company for nineteen years. She is a Regional Manager and English is her language of choice in the workplace. She scored below average (5) on collective and high (12) on individualistic characteristics.

EF4 is a 47-year old female who speaks English as her home language. She is married, holds several Bank Management Certificates and has been working for the company for twenty-four years. She is a Branch Manager and prefers English in the workplace. She scored below

average (6) on collective and above average (8) on individualistic characteristics.

EF5 is a 39-year old female who speaks English as her home language. She is divorced, has a Matric certificate and has been working for the company for four years. She is a Supervisor and Team Leader and English is her language of preference at work. Her previous experience was in the transport industry. She scored above average (9) on collective and high (12) on individualistic characteristics.

XF1 is a 28-year old female who speaks Xhosa as her home language. She is single, has completed a Bank Management Course and has been working for the company for five years. She is an Enquiry Clerk and English is her preferred language at work. She scored above average (9) on collective and high on (11) individualistic characteristics.

XF2 is a 28-year old female who speaks Xhosa as her home language. She is single, has an IOB Diploma and is a Receptionist: Personal Finance Division. She has been working for the company for six years and English is her language of preference in the workplace. She scored above average (9) on collective and (8) on individualistic tendencies.

XF3 is a 34-year old female who speaks Xhosa as her home language. She is married and has completed several internal courses. She is a

home loans consultant and has been working for the company for ten years. She prefers English as language of choice in the workplace. She scored below average (6) on collective and above average (9) on individual characteristics.

XF4 is a 31-year old female who speaks Xhosa as a her home language. She is married, has completed internal banking courses and works as a Customer Service Supervisor. She has been working for the company for seven years and prefers English as language of choice at work. She scored high (10) on collective and above average (9) on individual characteristics.

XF5 is a 29-year old female who speaks Xhosa as her home language. She is single, has a Matric Certificate and is a Customer Service Liaison. She has been with the company for eight years and prefers English as language of choice in the workplace. The recording of the initial interview with this respondent was damaged and although five further appointments were set up to redo the interview, the respondent did not arrive for any of the appointments. No further suitable Xhosa female subjects were available to fit the respondent requirements.

AM1 is a 36-year old male who speaks Afrikaans as his home language. He is married, holds a Certificate in Property Finances and has been working for the company for 19 years. He is a Portfolio Manager and Afrikaans is his language of preference in the workplace. This

respondent insisted that the interview be conducted in Afrikaans. He scored high (10) on collective and individualistic (11) tendencies.

AM2 is a 27-year old male who speaks Afrikaans as his home language. He is single, holds a Bcomm Degree and has been working for the company for four years. He is a Business Analyst and prefers a 50/50 split between Afrikaans and English at the workplace. He scored below average (6) on collective and above average (7) on individualistic characteristics.

AM3 is a 37-year old male who speaks Afrikaans as his home language. He is married, has a Matric Certificate and has been working for the company for seventeen years. He is a Manager: Computer Division and English is his language of preference in the workplace. He scored high (10) on collective and above average (7) on individualistic questions.

AM4 is a 35-year old male who speaks Afrikaans as his home language. He is married, has completed several internal banking courses and has been working for the company for ten years. He is a Portfolio Manager: Business Banking and prefers speaking Afrikaans as language of choice in the workplace. He scored below average (6) on collective and high (11) on individualistic characteristics.

AM5 is a 37-year old male who speaks Afrikaans as a home language. He is married, holds a degree in Accounting and a Diploma in Project Management and has been working for the company for 18 months. He is a Product Specialist and prefers Afrikaans in the workplace. His previous experience is in finance and health care management. He scored above average (9) on collective and high (11) on individualistic traits.

EM1 is a 43-year old male who speaks English as a home language. He is married, holds a Matric certificate and several Bank Management certificates and has been working for the company for eleven years. He is a Relationship Manager and prefers English in the workplace. His previous experience was also within the banking industry. He scored above average (8) on collective and (9) on individualistic characteristics.

EM2 is a 43-year old male who speaks English as a home language. He is married, has internal qualifications and has been working for the company for 2½ years. He is a Business Banker, prefers speaking English and has 22 years of experience in the banking industry. He scored above average (8) on both collective and individualistic traits.

EM3 is a 31-year old male who speaks English as a home language. He is married, holds a Bcomm degree and has been working for the company for eight years. He is a Business Analyst and English is

his language of preference in the workplace. He scored above average (8) on collective and high (11) on individualism.

EM4 is a 53-year old male who speaks English as a home language. He is married, has completed several internal courses and has been working for the company for 23 years. He is a Training Officer: Small Business Units and English is his language of preference in the workplace. His previous experience was in the insurance sector. He scored below average (6) on both collective and individual traits.

EM5 is a 40-year old male who speaks English as a home language. He is married, has completed several IOB qualifications and has been working for the company for 6 years. He is an Area Manager and English is his language of preference in the workplace. His previous experience was in the banking industry. He scored above average (9) on collective and (6) on individual characteristics.

XM1 is a 35-year old male who speaks Xhosa as a home language. He is married, has a Midwife Certificate and internal training certificates and has been working for the company for five years. He is a Team Leader and prefers speaking English in the workplace. His previous experience includes nursing in the public sector. He scored above average (9) on collective and (7) on individual characteristics.

XM2 is a 31-year old male who speaks Xhosa as a home language. He is single, holds a Matric Certificate and has been working for the company for eight years. He is a Sales Consultant and prefers English in the work place. He scored high (10) on the collective and individual (11) questions.

XM3 is a 26-year old male who speaks Xhosa as a home language. He is single, holds a Diploma in Accounting and has been with the company for two years. He's a Customer Service Liaison and prefers to speak English in the workplace. He scored high (11) on collective and above average (8) on individual traits.

XM4 is a 33-year old male who speaks Xhosa as a home language. He is married, holds a Certificate of Marketing as well as several other internal banking qualifications. He has also completed two years of a B.Proc degree. He works as a Sales Consultant and has been with the company for eight years. He prefers English or Afrikaans as language of choice at work. He scored high (10) on collectivist characteristics and above average (7) on individualistic traits.

XM5 is a 32-year old male who speaks Xhosa as a home language. He is married, holds a BSC and MBA degree and forms part of the group's Accelerated Achievement Programme. He has been working as a Business Banker for the company for the past eighteen months. He

prefers speaking English in the workplace and his previous experience was with a tobacco company. He scored below average (6) on collective and high (12) on individualistic tendencies.

#### 4.2 CONCURRENCE AND DIVERGENCE BETWEEN GROUPS

With the exception of AF5, the Afrikaans-speaking females showed predominant individualistic tendencies. The Afrikaans Female group concurred on fifty percent of the questions although the group had the biggest age difference with eighteen years between the oldest and youngest respondent. Although the Afrikaans Male group was fairly similar in terms of age with only ten years between the oldest and youngest respondent, they were the most heterogenous of all respondents concurring on only six of the twenty-four questions of the Singelis questionnaire.

The English-speaking females were predominantly individualistic with the exception of EF2. As a group, the English Females agreed on only seven of the twenty-four Singelis questions, while the English Male group was more homogenous and concurred on ten of the twenty-four questions.

The group of Xhosa females agreed on nine of the twenty-four Singelis questions. The group was fairly homogenous in terms of age with all respondents being between twenty-five and thirty-four. The Xhosa females also shared similar educational backgrounds and all started their careers at the company. The Xhosa males were the most

homogenous in terms of the Singelis questionnaire with a fifty percent concurrent level.

### 4.3 FINDINGS BASED ON NARRATIVES

#### 4.3.1 SELF-CONSTRUAL

The category on Self-Construal dealt with the respondents' self-concept as well as group behaviour. This included masculinity and femininity as well as collectivist and individualistic properties.

It was argued that the theory of social construction focused on seeing individuals as inter-dependent on their community, nation and species and that social construction was based on shared characteristics, which are passed on through language (page 38). Hofstede maintained that individualistic cultures might be more concerned with their own and immediate family's interests, while collectivist cultures feel strongly about loyalty to the groups they belong to (page 40).

This attitude was supported specifically by the Afrikaans and English females, but should be viewed against the multiple roles of professionals, wives and mothers that women play in the South African society.

#### 4.3.1.1 PERCEPTION OF MODESTY

In contrast with the Western acceptance of self-advancement, many cultures specifically those with predominantly collectivist

tendencies admire modesty. Although this organisation was governed by Western influences, most respondents felt that overt self-promotion was unacceptable.

"I think it's related to the office environment and the corporate feel. If you brag too much about yourself or you do something good, you'll always find somebody who will try to knock you," (AF 2, Section 5, Paragraph 18). "The respect that you then have for that person, because gee, that person has actually achieved a lot without them having to tell you that. That's how I look at it," (EF1, Section 5, Paragraph 16).

Although most respondents admitted to admiration for modesty, discrepancies existed regarding the cause of this attitude and few related it back to their cultural backgrounds. "I don't like people like that and I don't think much of people who do that. For people like that, I don't have a lot of respect. It has nothing to do with my cultural background, it's about values," (AM5, Section 5, Paragraph 16). "I have a great degree of respect for people who are modest, because I don't like big mouths. My attitude probably comes from experience and meeting different people and through parental grounding at home," (EM4 Section 5, Paragraph 16). "I think it comes more from my upbringing than from the culture, but maybe the upbringing in our family is part of our culture as such. My parents always instil their morals and values in us, which is to respect everybody as they are," (EM3, Section 5, Paragraph 16).

Specifically Xhosa respondents traced their attitude towards modesty to their culture. "Cultural background and the home I grew up in has been an influence. I grew up in a very modest family," (XM1, Section 5, Paragraph 16). "My culture have influenced this, but I think it's also about learning to understand other people and mixing with other groups. When mixing with different groups, your attitude does adjust," (XM4, Section 5, Paragraph 15).

#### 4.3.1.2 CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS

Researchers maintained that self-concept was strongly influenced by cultural perceptions. Culture was defined as a system of knowledge shared by a group of people, which provided behavioural guidelines as well as methods to interpret other people's behaviour (page 32). In the South African context, it could be expected that a cultural sensitivity would exist and that this would spill over to the corporate environment. Respondents declared a significant influence in their self-perception due to their interaction with other cultures within the working environment.

"The more cultures are thrown together, different viewpoints are created. And I think since about five or six years ago when we started these diversity courses, I was one of the first that realised that the reason it takes somebody else twice the time to do what I'm doing, forgetting that they did not have the opportunity of coming through the ranks. In ten years time, they're going to be

much better and I think the people who are in ABSA, people of colour and women, that there's really not that much difference between us - not when it comes to expectations. We all want to provide somebody or ourselves with a comfortable living. We all want to be liked. We all want to be accepted. We feel the same pain. We feel the same joys. So, I think we as a company has grown and the diversity courses we've held in the past, have really opened my eyes," (AF3, Section 23, Paragraph 63)

"It was a few years ago, because I was not used to working with people of colour. As you grow older and you get more mature and you get to know the people, you find out that it is not the colour of the skin that matters," (AF4, Section 5, Paragraph 19).

"Especially, and I don't want to get racially whatever, but white people and coloured people and black people have a huge difference in the way they think. Not to generalise, but I think the struggle and apartheid caused people of colour to be more, not demanding, but more progressive in the way that they're thinking," (AM2, Section 5, Paragraph 16).

Respondents did admit to concerns raised by cultural diversity and how it influenced the corporate culture. "So it's important that business etiquette should be standardised across all cultures. In a professional environment, the protocol should override cultural differences. Definitely, so that everybody is comfortable and that

there's no one... I can give you an example that I haven't resolved for myself yet is whether you pray before you eat at a business function," (EF2, Section 21, Paragraph 63).

Several respondents reflected on race as a behavioural influence, but as this remains a sensitive issue within the South African context, it was difficult to accurately gauge the impact it had on the individual. "And I think the fact that I'm a coloured individual makes a difference. He thinks before he speaks to me, because he does not want to let something slip. So he tends to listen. I don't know if I'm right or wrong, but whenever I speak to him it's as if he takes a step back," (AM2, Section 20, Paragraph 61). "It's part of my culture. It's part of my dad allowing me to make certain mistakes and then to learn from them. I feel that the struggle and trying to get where I want to be, I did not sacrifice my culture and who I am by trying to achieve what I've become," (AM3, Section 17, Paragraph 52).

#### 4.3.1.3 CORPORATE CHANGE

During the past decade, South African corporate society had to undergo significant changes, which led to resentment in several subcultures. Earlier it was argued that although distinct differences existed between organisational and national cultures, all organisational cultures were influenced to some extent by the larger cultures in which they are functioning. It was asserted that the Western preoccupation with individualism might not be as

successful as it seems, especially when compared with the Eastern philosophy of co-operation and teamwork. "At times it feels as if everything has not been thought through and that it's been forced to change just for the sake of change and to follow what the other banks are doing or what the Americans are doing. We're still very much part of the Third World and not the First World as the American or European banks," (AF 3, Section 11, Paragraph 31). "ABSA is a group of people, but within ABSA you get individuals. Every staff member is an individual. But ABSA has a culture. But who is creating that culture? The individuals by allowing that culture to suck them in. Nobody's speaking and while nobody's speaking, you're sucked in," (AM2, Section 23, Paragraph 69).

"But I believe that the management is currently so diverse and the different business units make it even more so. People came from different backgrounds and mindsets and since the amalgamation four years ago, you had to put those different people together. And there were really a lot of growing pains," (AM1, Section 5, Paragraph 17). "Although there are still fairly conservative approaches within the bank, the image that the bank projects externally is definitely not conservative. If you look at the type of things that the bank is involved with such as athletic sponsorships, community development projects," (AM1, Section 15, Paragraph 47).

It was also maintained that individualism does not necessarily mean innovation and creativity. It had to be taken into account that the business of banking and finances did require strict rules and policies, but feedback from respondents showed that creative opportunities were appreciated.

*"I think if you work for a bank, there's very little expected of you to be creative. So I think what we do, is we tend to live out our creativeness in our private world,"* (AF3, Section 15, Paragraph 40)

*"The current environment is not at all suited to creativity, because of the nature of the job. It is very analytical and facts-driven. You can only lend money on facts and not on assumptions,"* (EF2, Section 15, Paragraph 46) *"And every year we say that we need more creative people. We need to have more out-of-the-box ideas and I think any organisation is just heading for disaster if we don't work ourselves out of jobs and find really out-of-the-box ways of doing things,"* (EF3, Section 15, Paragraph 46).

#### 4.3.2 PERCEPTIONS OF CONFLICT

The category on Conflict dealt with the respondents' reaction to and behaviour during conflict situations. Questions relating to gender issues, group harmony and loyalty as well as conflict situations and directness of communication approaches were grouped into this category. Although all respondents admitted to conflict occurring within their working environment, few references were made to language or cultural differences as contributing causes to conflict.

Due to the historical and socio-political backdrop of South African society, it had to be considered that cultural diversity as a conflict contributor would be viewed with sensitivity for fear of accusations of ethnocentricity, stereotyping or racism. "I used to work in an environment where a lot of the staff members were white and we were only two or three blacks in the group. We used to have problems, but then we'd try to address them and succeeded. We did not fight. We'd try to convince them. This was early in 1995 when we still had the past to deal with," (XM4, Section 12, Paragraph 36).

#### 4.3.2.1 GENDER AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO CONFLICT

Gender inequality, whether real or perceived, was offered as one of the main reasons for conflict within the company. The historical employment record in South African society had to be considered and cognisance was taken of the fact that corporate South Africa and particularly the banking industry were predominantly male dominated. Although the gender bias changed rapidly during the past decade, most organisations still feature a male dominated management structure. Several of the female respondents directly attributed gender differences and the employment history within the company as causes for conflict.

According to AF3, "there have been major changes in the last ten years. If you look at the younger females in managerial positions now, they don't have the same struggle that we used to have just to

prove yourself. You had to be a bit tougher then and a bit meaner and you had to play a role. You had to be hard not to take anything personally. The younger women are very well qualified. They are knowledgeable. They make use of their opportunities. They're not afraid to speak out. If you look at the females' qualifications and the males', there is no comparison. Every single woman or nearly all of them on managerial level has some sort of qualification behind her or is busy with something to improve herself. While the men could move up the ranks by just being here between 8 and 5 and doing their jobs. I'm proud of the females, especially the young ones, for what they've achieved up to now within our group - black, white, pink - they've got excellent futures in this company" (AF3, Section 23, Paragraph 63). I still think that there is a male-female situation. That would take some time to get changed. But there's definitely no black-white situation. If you look at the ABSA structure, the decision makers on Exco, on regional exco, on head office exco, the majority of them are still male," (AF3, Section 4, Paragraph 17).

AF4 was of the opinion that "...the males in the banking environment still have a very arrogant attitude. The bank has always been male-dominant in terms of managers and they've got a long way to go to see that they're not the only people who can manage. And unfortunately our white South African males have not made that mind shift yet" (AF4, Section 12, Paragraph 45).

"...because they don't believe a white woman should be doing this work. Any woman, actually. Traditionally, they've had thirty years experience of the bank and it was male dominant. And I think they still probably have a bit of a gender crisis. You seem to have to proof to them by tremendous results before they'll actually give you an opportunity or a chance (EF2, Section 12, Paragraph 37).

As the gender profile within the organisation changed, many females were appointed in supervisory and managerial positions - often over male colleagues, which further contributed to feelings of distrust and resentment between the genders. "I think generally speaking men don't want to work for a woman," (EF3, Section 7, Paragraph 22). "99% of the time the conflict will be with a woman and I have no idea why. In general it's with Afrikaans women, maybe because most of my colleagues are Afrikaans. My thinking behind this is probably that it's a female thing," (AM1, Section 11, Paragraph 35)

"I think one of the advantages of being a female, is that the system does not necessarily see you as being a boss. So I find that I have a lot more credibility in an average group, because I'm female and I don't go in and say I'm the boss," (EF3, Section 7, Paragraph 22).

"Sometimes it's because there is this male-female thing. It is an obstacle to the guy, because they feel very threatened that a woman could actually work on a business level at the same level as what they are. I think they're more uncomfortable than I am. Then you're

*in a situation and they're offering for you to walk out of the door first and that's in their male culture to allow a woman out of the door first. And you've been sitting in a meeting together as colleagues working on the same thing!,"* (EF2, Section 4, Paragraph 13).

Some male respondents also admitted that their behaviour is governed by a culture with highly developed masculine tendencies. These statements validated the researcher's opinion that masculine cultures expected men to be ambitious and competitive and women to care and serve (page 38). Although women are playing an increasingly dominant role in the South African corporate scenario, the findings of this study has indicated that their assumption of senior level management positions are still cause for conflict within the working environment, specifically with Afrikaans speaking male colleagues. *"It's probably a little to do with my culture as we grew up having to respect women. We used to get up in the trains for the women,"* (EM4, Section 4, Paragraph 13).

#### 4.3.2.2 CULTURAL APPROACHES TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The different cultural groups offered varying approaches to conflict management. Based on the responses from the various interviewees, the author noted that the English group was markedly more accepting of conflict than the Afrikaans and Xhosa groups. While the English speaking males and females were quite willing to deal directly with conflict situations, the Afrikaans group was more reluctant to

initiate conflict and the Xhosa group would avoid conflict in order to maintain harmony within the group situation. Once again, the gender influence was played out and the female respondents were in general more willing to regard conflict as a negative occurrence.

The Afrikaans females revealed a non-confrontational approach and placed emphasis on listening as a method to resolve conflict situations. Although they did not back down from conflict, it was clear that they would not deliberately cause conflict and would prefer to maintain harmony within the group. *"I handle conflict by listening. It's very important to me to listen. The first thought that crosses my mind in a conflict situation is: Why is this person behaving this way?"* (AF1, Section 2, Paragraph 9)

*"I won't look for an argument,"* (AF3, Section 1, Paragraph 5). *"The fact is that I'm the type of person who does not like to disagree with others. I would prefer to just leave the topic and go on,"* (AF5, Section 12, Paragraph 37).

In contrast, the English females were more confrontational, specifically where work-related issues were concerned. Several also quoted the language difference as a cause of conflict. *"I don't like to avoid conflict at all. I think it's important for you to sort things out, but I think that conflict should be handled by the people who are in conflict with each other. I don't think you handle it in an open environment,"* (EF1, Section 2, Paragraph 7).

"I get extremely frustrated when I'm not being heard. When they don't want to understand what I'm trying to bring across and I feel that I put it fairly clearly to understand, although there is an Afrikaans and English difference here," (EF5, Section 2, Paragraph 7). "The people I most often disagree with are all Afrikaans males. I don't want you to think that I have something against Afrikaans men. From a work perspective I can give you a specific example of a thing that I have an issue with. I am English-speaking. I understand Afrikaans perfectly well. I went to college to try and learn to speak Afrikaans. I came here full of this fervour that I'm learning this new language and tried to speak it. And they started laughing at me, so unless I know someone incredibly well, I will not speak Afrikaans to them or with them. So, I understand where people are coming from, but we definitely have an environment where people are clinging on to a language, which is not a universal business language. I have no objections against our meetings being in Afrikaans, provided that the rest of the group is happy with that. (EF3, Section 12, Paragraph 37). These statements have to be viewed against the historical background of South African society. Enmity between Afrikaans and English speaking sections of the population can be traced back to the early history of the country with the British settlers, colonization of the provinces under British rule and the ensuing Anglo-Boer wars. The post-1946 Nationalist government, which was predominantly Afrikaans speaking, in turn raised many socio-political antagonism under the African/Black population, including Xhosa-speaking South Africans.

Although the acceptance of cultural diversity has been promoted vigorously since the 1994 democratic elections, some of the historic antagonism and mistrust still exist and this plays out particularly with language use.

Both the Afrikaans and English males cited personality differences and job-related issues as major causes of conflict. Although they would not necessarily instigate the conflict, they tend not to address it within a group situation, but to handle it on a one-on-one basis. *"You just have to learn to work around such problems without hurting anyone's feelings. Personal feelings don't have a place at work, because it influences your work. It boils down to just a personality type. You know, I don't think about a person's background in terms of which division they came from. More conflict stems from poor service than anything else and because I'm very systematic, I can't handle it,"* (AM1, Section 11, Paragraph 35).

*"I handle conflict one-on-one and not in a group situation. I won't confront somebody in a group situation, but if there are personal differences, you have to approach it individually,"* (AM4, Section 11, Paragraph 35). *"You have to remove the emotional content, focus on the facts,"* (AM5, Section 2, Paragraph 7).

The English males expressed a distinct preference for trying to resolve the conflict directly. *"I would try and resolve the conflict, not ignore it,"* (EM2, Section 2, Paragraph 7). *If you*

don't talk about it, you won't solve the issue," (EM 3, Section 2, Paragraph 7).

The Xhosa respondents were much more concerned with maintaining harmony in the group. The females tried to avoid conflict and expressed a reluctance to become confrontational, while the males also expressed a reluctance to become involved in conflict situations, but were more willing to approach the other person and discuss the matter openly. "Normally, I try to avoid conflict," (XF1, Section 2, Paragraph 7). "I try to talk to a person and show them my point of view instead of us fighting unnecessarily," (XF3, Section 2, Paragraph 7) "I would just withdraw because I don't want to argue. Or I would just avoid the conflict," (XF4, Section 2, Paragraph 7). "It's very important to maintain harmony within the group, because you have to focus on teamwork in order to achieve things," (XM4, Section 2, Paragraph 6).

The narratives from all respondents concurred with Capozzoli's (1995) suggestion that group membership does not preclude conflict and that diverse cultural values, attitudes, needs, expectations, perceptions, resources and personalities could be potential causes for conflict within organisations (page 45).

#### 4.3.2.3 CONFLICT REGARDING PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A large number of motivational theories are based on the presumption that people are not only motivated by money, but that self-esteem,

appreciation and security also play an important role (page 28). It was argued that South African organisational culture was a manifestation of Western influences, instead of including African traditions and cultures, which focus on a community concept of management (page 13-14). This argument was validated when the issues of performance appraisal and the subsequent rewards or acknowledgements were raised with respondents. *"I only want someone or my boss to acknowledge that I've done well. I don't play for the pavilion. I prefer the personal approach,"* (AM1, Section 16, Paragraph 50). *"There is a culture for under-the-table rewarding. There's no transparency about things like that,"* (AM2, Section 16, Paragraph 49).

McWhinney (1997: 130) included recognition and reward systems as contributing factors to the corporate culture (Chapter 1:18) and the respondents' perception of this system within the ABSA culture reflected a distinct discrepancy between the various groups. Although most of the respondents accepted and even craved acknowledgement, the execution of these rewards and the matter of inclusivity proved problematic for many. Some respondents expressed discomfort with the reward system in general. *"It makes me feel awkward. Uncomfortable. I don't like the focus to be on me. As loud as my mouth is, I don't like the focus on me,"* (EF4, Section 16, Paragraph 62). *Once you do that, it seems to me as if you create groupings of people. In my nature, I'm not comfortable with praise,"* (EM 4, Section 16, Paragraph 49)

"I haven't achieved it alone. It was the group, the branch, the staff that achieved it. So why must I get the praise as if I had all the ideas. I would have felt more comfortable if it was acknowledged that there was a branch behind me," (AF3, Section 16, Paragraph 42). "If it was a group thing, I don't like to be singled out," (AF4, Section 16, Paragraph 59).

A strong emphasis on group effort and recognition was revealed, which showed remarkable similarities to the Eastern management practices where group commitment was preferable to individual performance (Chapter 1: 22). "If my team achieves something, I won't go out there and say I achieved this. I would go to the team and if there is some reward, they would get it. I feel that I'm a team guy and usually it's the team succeeding or creating or achieving something. I wouldn't want them doing the hard work and me getting the praise," (AM3, Section 7, Paragraph 22).

Some respondents did still adhere to the dictates of American corporate society, which traditionally focused strongly on individual achievement with a strong emphasis on reward, promotion and competitiveness (Chapter 1: p23). "The nature of my social profile is that I thrive on recognition and I do welcome that. We do have a culture of financial incentives, which is very encouraging and I am very happy with that," (AM5, Section 16, Paragraph 49). "Obviously, you are proud of your achievement and to see it

*acknowledged, but for me it very important, actually it's more important for me to acknowledge what the others put into it and the input and effort from the rest of the group," (AF1, Section 16, Paragraph 64).*

### 4.3.3 INTERACTION

The category on Interaction highlights respondents' involvement in meetings and communication methods when dealing with colleagues and clients. Issues surrounding participation during meetings, informal approach in use of first names, directness of communication and interaction with people are included in this category.

In Chapter Two it is argued that English speaking employees might be more individualistic than Xhosa speaking employees who came from a more collectivist culture with a strong sense of group belonging (Chapter 2: p42). In the South African environment, English has been identified as the accepted language of use and this acceptance was verified by the fact that most respondents preferred English as language of choice within the working environment (Table 1: p72).

#### 4.3.3.1 MEETINGS AS A BACKDROP TO CULTURE

It was further argued that a better understanding of other cultures would probably lead to better communication (Chapter 1: p18). One of the most commonly used methods of communicating in organisations is meetings. The author maintains that language differences can lead

to opposing perceptions of meetings by different cultural groups. The respondents were questioned about their participation in meetings and both the Afrikaans and English groups indicated willingness to participate and provide their own opinions during such forums. Many ascribed this attitude towards public speaking as part of their personalities and cultural background.

*"I don't have a problem addressing a group, but I must feel well prepared. If I can speak with conviction about a subject that is comfortable to me, then I don't have a problem,"* (AF1, Section 14, Paragraph 56). *"I'm a very extroverted person, so I have no problem to air my views or speak up in any situation,"* (AF2, Section 14, Paragraph 52). *"I think I'm quite an extrovert,"* (AM1, Section 14, Paragraph 44). *"You must see such meetings as a platform to further yourself and to develop yourself,"* (AM5, Section 14, Paragraph 43).

Despite the Xhosa cultural heritage of a strong oral history (page 12), the Xhosa respondents were not that comfortable with speaking out during meetings. This could be attributed to the language difference as the majority of the meetings were conducted in English. *"I'm not the type of person who would, during the time of the meeting, who will stand and say that I'm not happy or I don't agree. I won't just stand up in the big group and say what I want to say. I think I am shy - that's my problem,"* (XF1, Section 1, Paragraph 4). *"I'm not outspoken, even at home I'm not like that,"*

(XF2, Section 14, Paragraph 41). *"I'm a person, who listens first. I listen when people talk,"* (XM2, Section 14, Paragraph 43).

#### 4.3.3.2 FORMALITY VERSUS INFORMALITY - PERSONAL PREFERENCE OR CORPORATE NORM

The author states in Chapter Two that individualistic cultures use direct communication to reduce uncertainty when communicating, while collective cultures use indirect communication (Chapter 2: p18). One of the questions posed to the respondents dealt with informal approaches to clients. This issue was greatly influenced by the cultural backgrounds of the respondents.

Many of the Afrikaans and Xhosa speaking respondents preferred a more formal form of address and related the preference back to their upbringing and cultural background. *"Sometimes it is also a question of respect and if I have to show respect in such a manner, then I'll do it,"* AF1, Section 19, Paragraph 77). *"I would prefer to be a bit more formal until he says: Hi, I'm Johnny, please call me by my name,"* (AF3, Section 19, Paragraph 49). *"Not when I first meet someone. They must tell me that I can use their first name,"* (AF5, Section 19, Paragraph 57). *"I'm also not going to address someone by their first name without their permission,"* (AM1, Section 19, Paragraph 59).

Although the Xhosa respondents, specifically the females, adopted the informal form of address within the working environment, they reverted to cultural norms in the community. *"...but only at work.*

Let me explain. We Africans are not allowed to say the name of the person. It's like you have to use Mrs even though we won't use Mrs," (XF1, Section 19, Paragraph 58). "Maybe this is because of our cultural background as well," (XF3, Section 19, Paragraph 57). "If people are older than me, I don't feel comfortable. I would prefer to call them Mr or Mrs. It's a personal preference," (XF4, Section 19, Paragraph 56)

"Then I realised it was a trend in the Western culture and that people preferred their first names. From a cultural point of view, I still prefer to say Uncle. I must be very honest with you, as far as the culture is concerned I'm comfortable with the first names at work, but when I go home to live in the culture," (XM1, Section 19, Paragraph 58). "I prefer Mr or Mrs before I say their first name. It goes with professionalism and also my culture. In my culture, you're not allowed just to say someone's name," (XM3, Section 19, Paragraph 57).

English speaking respondents indicated a preference for more informal communication and forms of address. "I think I called everybody by their names from the day I was born. It just seems very natural to me to speak to people," (EF2, Section 19, Paragraph 58). "And I like the comfortableness of being on a first name basis," (EF5, Section 19, Paragraph 56).

The various narratives from respondents did, however, indicate that a corporate preference for informality existed and was adhered to.

*"I think it's the accepted standard within the group. I also think that within the corporate environment and the type of jobs that I did, it makes it so much easier, because you deal with different levels all the time,"* (AF2, Section 19, Paragraph 70). *"ABSA's policy favours addressing clients by their first names to make them feel valued,"* (AM4, Section 19, Paragraph 59).

*"As I was going through the corporate world through the years, they actually encouraged using people's first names, especially in terms of us senior guys. We started making a concerted effort,"* (EF 4, Section 19, Paragraphs 73-74).

From the responses during the interviews, the author concludes that the corporate norm within the ABSA group shows preference for a more informal approach both towards colleagues and clients. Although some cultural groups such as the Xhosa and Afrikaans find this informality foreign, the narratives show that they adapt to the accepted corporate preference and revert to their own cultural preferences outside of the work environment. This approach is indicative of the influence of a strong corporate culture on the behaviour of the individual. It is, however, significant, that the respondents who expressed discomfort with informality still adhered to culturally acceptable behaviour in their personal capacity.

#### 4.3.3.3 CULTURAL ACCEPTANCE OF DIRECT INTERACTION

The respondents were asked whether they changed their communication habits to adapt to different individuals. *"I adjust myself. It depends on if it's business or personal,"* (AM2, Section 21, Paragraph 64). *You get people that you just have to approach differently,"* (AM4, Section 21, Paragraph 65). *"I therefore adapt my approach to the various social styles of my clients or colleagues that I deal with,"* (AM5, Section 21, Paragraph 64).

Specific allowances and changes in communication methods were also made for subordinates or superiors. *"Mostly when you speak with your junior staff, you can't be too direct, especially if it comes to the emotional side of things. Then yes, your approach is different and I'm often criticised because I am too direct,"* (AF3, Section 20, Paragraph 53). *"Maybe with my manager, I'll feel uncomfortable if I have to be direct or to tell her this is how to do it,"* (AF5, Section 20, Paragraph 60). *"In terms of my position, I know the personalities. So, I know who can take directness and who can't take it,"* (EF4, Section 20, Paragraphs 77-78).

The reactions to this question showed that most individuals would adjust their communication to accommodate other people and that sensitivity remained where members from diverse cultures were concerned. *"When it comes to culture, you have to be very careful. Race, you have to be very careful talking to a black person. If you're trying to be coaching for instance, they can take it wrongly*

and say Listen I might be black, but I'm not stupid," (EM1, Section 21, Paragraph 64). "You can say that people from a culture do things this way or people from this religion do it that way, but sometimes you can make the wrong assumption. I like to wait until I know the individual before making assumptions," (XM1, Section 20, Paragraph 61). "It depends and boils back to the age thing as well. Culture has a lot of influence, because you might think that when it comes to a white person and a black person, the black person would actually feel comfortable being dealt with by another black person," (XM2, Section 21, Paragraph 64). "For example, if you were in my shoes and going to this client, a new client you're facing, depending on how he reacts to you being black, being young, being short or tall, he might decide to like you. Or he might decide he does not like you, because of your hairstyle. So, it goes both ways. But what helps me with these things is to be professional. That is a standard thing. Being black or white or red, that's only thing that can make or break you in a client's eyes," (XM5, Section 21, Paragraph 64)

"When the client speaks to me in Afrikaans, sometimes I understand what he is trying to say to me, but they want me to answer back in Afrikaans. Then when I say that I don't speak Afrikaans, they want to talk to an Afrikaans speaking person and that makes me cross. Afrikaans clients sometimes make me feel uncomfortable," (XF2, Section 20, Paragraph 59).

This phenomenon has been responsible for many misconceptions between the various cultural groups in the South African society - both corporate and social. Many White South Africans have stereotyped the communication style of African cultures as vague and circumspect due to the indirect method of interaction. However, this avoidance of direct communication shows correlation with the Xhosa culture and Asian preferences as discussed in Chapter Two (52-53). The different communication styles have been cited as causes of conflict within the corporate environment and the blanket acceptance of English as language of commerce has caused resentment within cultural groups.

#### 4.3.4 DECISION-MAKING: THROUGH PRESENCE OF CONSENT OF LACK OF DISSENT?

The Decision-Making category focuses on the respondents' perception of decision-making processes within the company, their reaction to consensus decision-making and acceptance of group decisions. In Chapter Two, it is argued that decision-making processes in organisations are direct reflections of the organisational cultures of these organisations (page 56-57).

The general tendency within all respondent groups was to recognise decisions, which were accepted by the majority of the group. The consideration of benefit to the company or greater good to group objectives were also expressed as a reason for accepting decisions, which went against the individual's opinion. It was generally

accepted that the sacrifice of self-interest for group benefit was essential. "If it's for the group's benefit, I'll go with them and give it my all," (EM3, Section 6, Paragraph 19). "If the other party's points make sense, then sacrifice of self-interest is a small price to pay for looking at the bigger picture," (EF4, Section 6, Paragraph 24).

"I'll support the decision, especially if I have faith in the people taking the decisions. They'll probably base the decision on expertise and experience they have gained and I would not have a problem supporting such a decision," (AF1, Section 9, Paragraph 36). "If there is not a governing sense of honesty or you get the feeling that people are only there for their own good or own agendas, then I need to distance myself from that (AF1, Section 11, Paragraph 44).

Although acceptance of majority decision was the norm amongst respondents, they were willing to offer their own opinion when not in agreement. "I tend to speak up and give my point of view and the reason why I think so. I always state reasons for why I would differ from the group's decisions, but I won't just acknowledge their decision if I really think it's the wrong move," (AF3, Section 6, Paragraph 21). "The bank has a policy and this is probably one of the few instances where that policy is basically law and you have to operate within those guidelines. But, we have certain ways of approaching specific matters and this is normally discussed within a group context. My thinking is that if everyone agrees, who am I to

differ. I don't always agree with the decisions, but if it's being agreed to by everyone else, then I'll do it their way and agree with that decision," (AM1, Section 6, Paragraph 20).

The respondents' reactions to consensus decision-making could be attributed to the acceptance of democratic principles after the 1994 elections. The groups generally viewed decision-making as fair as long as the majority of the group supported the specific decision. "That's democracy. You can't be happy all the time. Sometimes you need to compromise, but at the end of the day the end result should always be for your benefit," (AM2, Section 6, Paragraph 19). You'll have to accept the majority rule as long as the process is fair. (AM5, Section 6, Paragraph 19). "We normally try to get consensus by the general knowledge that we have regarding the topics and the business that we're in," (EF2, Section 2, Paragraph 7).

The Xhosa group expressed specific acceptance of majority decision, which reiterates Koopman's (1993: 47) argument that black South Africans approach the decision-making process from a viewpoint of lack of dissent (page 27). Mbigi advocates that the incorporation of Xhosa cultural heritage such as their acceptance of consensus decision-making is beneficial to the South African organisational culture (Chapter 1: 14) and the narrative from the Xhosa respondents underlines this opinion. "Sometimes it's difficult to accept, but if the decision has been reached by the number of votes, I can't do anything about it," (XF3, Section 9, Paragraph 28). "If the vote

and the quorum is against me, then I must obey that decision," (XM3, Section 6, Paragraph 19). "If most of the group agree, then your individual disagreement does not count for much. Because it's a group decision, it's more important than an individual one," (XM 4, Section 6, Paragraph 18).

Some English female respondents expressed resentment regarding majority rule. "Possibly if a democratic vote are made and ten people agree and only me disagree, you might have to leave the situation like that. But I might not in myself feel comfortable with it. Not really, but it seems it's the way the whole country is going and that majority rules. Even though I might feel that the majority rules, I don't necessarily will change my own mind regarding that situation," (EF1, Section 9, Paragraph 28). "I find it very difficult to hold back. I'd certainly put my opinion on the table," (EF5, Section 6, Paragraph 18). "If I don't support a decision, I will make it known to the group that I don't support the decision and that there has been a majority rule consensus and that I will ensure that my side of the story is put on the table," (EF2, Section 1, Paragraph 4).

On the question of decision-making, it appears as if the organisational approach within ABSA is the acceptance of consensus decision-making. If this attitude is measured against Fine's argument that the collectivist nature of some cultures play a critical role in the decision-making processes as the individual is

required to put the well-being of the group before his or her own (Chapter 2: 58), the corporate culture within ABSA accepts a predominantly collectivist tendency as opposed to individualistic trends.

#### 4.3.5 POWER DISTANCE

The Power Distance category includes perceptions on authority, the importance of showing respect and perceptions of leadership in terms of career advice and mentoring. According to Hofstede's cross-cultural study, power distance deals with the behaviour between employees of different ranks and how this inequality is accepted by specific cultures (Chapter 2: 40). The author is of the opinion that existing cultural influences such as chivalry towards women and reverence of age play an important role in how authority, respect and leadership are perceived within the ABSA group.

The responses from the Afrikaans females indicated that working relationships were based strongly on the issue of respect and authority. Although this group holds positions of seniority within the company, they admit to a reluctance to express their authority and feel the need to downplay their managerial positions. This phenomenon can be traced back to the traditionally accepted role of Afrikaans women in a very patriarchal society, which was definitely more subservient. It was customary for the women to be mothers and housewives, while the husbands fulfilled the roles of sole breadwinners. When women did enter the job market it was still in

the roles of caregivers in occupations such as nursing and teaching. "I don't like playing the role of being their superior. For me, we all work for one group and we all work towards one goal. The more I bring them on par with where I am, the better results I get from them. So, I really do think in a group situations where I am the superior person, I tend to downplay my role," (AF3, Section 4, Paragraph 23).

The historical predominance of males in managerial positions within the organisation has led to a situation where the lines between patriarchal attitudes and authority have been shrouded by gender resentment and feelings of entitlement. "It's really a very male dominated environment and I believe that the culture in this organisation is very patriarchal in that people think that because they are senior to you, they deserve respect," (EF3, Section 4, Paragraph 13).

Within the organization, respect for authority figures are influenced not necessarily by the position of an individual, but definitely by the individual's expertise and experience. The respondents show a preference to managers who commanded respect through their actions rather than demanded respect due to their level of seniority. "You have to have respect for authority figures not because they are in positions of authority, but because of each one of them as individuals," (EM3, Section 1, Paragraph 4). "It is

*important for me, because they're the superiors and they know what they are doing,"* (XF1, Section 4, Paragraph 13).

Within the organisational culture, it becomes clear that gender issues further obscured the respondents' perceptions of respect and authority. Many of the male respondents mention their cultural backgrounds as a basis for their reaction to their female colleagues. *"For a woman, I'd stand up. I think it just the way I was raised. Back in the days when I was brought up, it was called manners,"* (AM2, Section 4, Paragraph 13). *"I'd probably do it if it is a lady, but not because he is older or more senior,"* (AM3, Section 4, Paragraph 13). *"I will offer that seat not because she's my superior, but because she's a lady. So, it's a gender thing, not a cultural thing,"* (XM5, Section 4, Paragraph 13).

Du Gay (Chapter 1: 18) was of the opinion that the different subcultures in a workforce could have a direct influence on the organisational culture. This notion was proved by the Xhosa group of respondents who maintained the strong African cultural tendency of respect for leader figures and elders. *"According to our culture, you have to do it. It's a norm that you have to show respect in that way. I would say culture and respect play a big role,"* (XF3, Section 4, Paragraph 13). *"From my point of view and in my culture, when the person is older than you, you can't sit down and let that person stand,"* (XF4, Section 4, Paragraph 13).

"Our cultures are so diverse. One has to adapt to the fact that females have a right and one has to think twice before making a point that you're male," (XM2, Section 4, Paragraph 13). "It's very important according to my culture, you know. If someone is older than me, I have to give her that respect," (XM3, Section 4, Paragraph 13).

#### 4.3.5.1 MENTORING

During the period of the study, it was found that no official mentoring programme existed within the ABSA corporate structure. Although most respondents identified a particular person, who they regarded as mentor and advisor, a more formalised programme could be beneficial to the establishment of a united corporate culture. In view of the fact that the employment arena was undergoing rapid changes in profile, expertise and experience could play a significant role. Many of the mentors were identified as members of the Afrikaans male category, but the employment profile of ABSA had to be taken into account. "We've grown up together although he's a couple of years older than me and he's been here longer than me. He's better educated than me and he went through the strides and he's the same ethnic group as myself and we're from the same town. So, obviously we talk a lot about work and I use him as a mentor," (AM2, Section 8, Paragraph 25). "I've had a couple of mentors over the years. Mainly male, because that's how it was. Fortunately, that's changing and we've got people here like Juliette, who as a female, is great and she's like a breath of fresh air," (EF3,

Section 8, Paragraph 25). "My previous manager was an Afrikaans, white male, probably in his early forties. I've always viewed him as my mentor, because I could bounce anything off him - work related, personal, academic, anything. So I've regarded him informally and unofficially as my mentor," (EM3, Section 8, Paragraph 25).

"My whole career has been mentored all along and Gerhard (AM5) has been one of the people, who have pointed me in the right direction," (XM2, Section 8, Paragraph 25).

From the feedback of female respondents, it also becomes evident that same gender mentoring is preferable. "I think I got a mentor that I basically confide in and somebody that I use to bounce ideas off. I would not possibly respect each of my superiors' insight into my career development. You must be honest in your feedback. And I think that's what she gives me. I would look for somebody who has a good balance between business and being people-orientated. The person must understand that you have a family and come from other walks of life, that you're a balanced person and that you don't just live at work. Because there are some mentors who are workaholics and I prefer and really try to balance my life. Work hard when you work and play hard the other times. So, I like somebody who have almost the same background or opinion about life," (EF1, Section 8, Paragraph 25) "EM4 is my mentor. She tries to make me feel comfortable in the working place," (XF1, Section 8, Paragraph 25)

Several respondents commented on the fact that mentoring was not actively promoted within the organisation and expressed a willingness to take advice from other sources. *"It's very limited today, but there are some opportunities to council with superiors and I do take their advice into account,"* (EM2, Section 8, Paragraph 25). *"To me, it looks like that if we get a candidate in or, and this is the picture I have of our human resources, if they manage to recruit you in, then afterwards they just disappear without asking where you want to craft your career to,"* (XM5, Section 8, Paragraph 25).

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

The narratives from the respondents indicate that individual cultures do have a strong influence on how perceptions of organisational structures such as conflict management, interaction during meetings, decision-making and acceptance of authority are formed.

It was, however, also evident that a strong corporate culture exists within the ABSA group. The ABSA brand has become very prominent in the public eye since the group amalgamated in 1996 and the brand was launched in 1998. According to the 2002 Markinor-Sunday Times Top Brands Survey, ABSA has been voted the most loved financial services

brand in the country. The company was also ranked seventh among the top 10 'Most Admired South African Companies' in the same survey, the highest rating received by any of the South African banks. The survey is conducted among adults 16 years and older, living in residential homes in South Africa and runs across all races, geographical areas and income groups. A total of 3 500 personal, face-to-face interviews were conducted in nineteen different categories. The group has also once again been awarded the Bank of the Year 2003 award by the magazine The Banker of London, published by The Financial Times Group of London([href9](#)).

The company also came first in the Best Company to Work Survey conducted by Deloitte and Touche Human Capital Corporation in October 2003. The survey analyses three main inputs: from executives/employers, comprising the CEO plus executive team; a random sample of employees and a market contribution. A heavier weighting is given to employee ratings than on employer input, whereas the market dimension deals with awareness of the organisations as well as how the market would rank them. When scores differ notably between employer and employee responses, there is clearly a perception difference, which indicates that employers are not in tune with employees' attitudes - a warning that a particular issue needs attention ([href10](#)).

## 5. CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the author is confident that the research sample was of sufficient size to provide validity in this study, future researchers might be interested in replicating Singelis' Self-Constructual Scale on a bigger sample of the South African population. As this research revealed a prevailing corporate culture within the ABSA group, it could be relevant to repeat this study across organizations as well as hierarchical levels as this should provide relevant insights into the question whether South African corporate cultures can dominate individual cultural tendencies.

It could also be of interest to select samples with higher homogeneity in terms of demographics such as age, educational levels, home language. Hofstede's Cross-Cultural study used tertiary institutions as populations for data, which could be used with success in the South African scenario.

The management and perception of conflict within organizations and the impact cultural differences can have on conflict resolution are areas where insufficient research has been done from a local South African perspective. Exploration of the causes for intercultural conflict can provide valuable data for corporate society.

## **5.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE CULTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

From the narratives derived during the interviews for this study, the author gained valuable insight into the different elements, which form a basis for a strong corporate culture within the ABSA group. Although these are based on a distinct perspective of one organization, South African corporate society can draw significant information from this study.

### **5.2.1 REWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

Based on the distinct discrepancies in the respondents' perceptions of the reward and recognition systems employed within the ABSA organisation, the author would recommend that the method of performance evaluation and feedback be reconsidered. The minority of respondents expressed complete ease with public acknowledgements and a large number showed preference for praise and rewards within a group or team environment. The strong emphasis on group acknowledgement and the importance team structures played within the narrative shows that the traditionally accepted focus on individual performance within the workplace should be reconsidered and adapted for the South African context.

### **5.2.2 MENTORING**

During the research period, it became evident that no formal structures for internal mentoring existed within ABSA and that the process is handled on a fairly informal basis. Due to the rapidly changing face of the South African corporate community, the author

suggests that the implementation of a formalised mentoring structure be considered. The demographic profile obtained in this study show an increase in younger managers/supervisors. Although these younger managerial staff members are normally well qualified theoretically, they can nevertheless benefit tremendously from the expertise and experience of older colleagues. Mentoring can also play a significant role in the establishment of a corporate culture that incorporates individual cultural preferences while maintaining crucial internally acceptable elements.

A more formalised mentoring programme can assist in creating synergy between subcultures within the working environment as it will create a closer contact between members from different cultural groups.

### 5.2.3 EXPOSURE TO INDIVIDUAL CULTURES

Hofstede maintains that individualistic cultures might be more concerned with their own and immediate family's interests, while collectivist cultures feel strongly about loyalty to the groups they belong to (Chapter 2:38). This was evident specifically in individuals' responses regarding the difference in behaviour at work and in their personal lives. This can also be attributed to the fact that most respondents adhere to the rules of the ABSA corporate culture while at work and then revert to their own individual cultural preferences outside of the workplace.

Although post-democratic South Africa is celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2004, analysis of the narratives provided by the thirty respondents still indicates a marked unawareness of specific cultural preferences. Specific communication styles adopted by the Afrikaans, English and Xhosa groups within the ABSA group and the intercultural perceptions that are maintained, show that intercultural differences are still contributing to conflict and misconceptions occurring within the corporate environment.

The author strongly recommends that South African corporate society institutes formal cultural awareness training programmes to assist in demystifying perceived cultural idiosyncrasies. Employees should be shown the necessity for tolerance of various cultural manifestations as expressed by their colleagues and the best way of creating this is by deconstructing the myths surrounding different cultures.

#### **5.2.4 GENDER ISSUES**

The narratives from the various female groups, specifically the Afrikaans and English females showed that gender issues are strong contributors to interpersonal conflict within ABSA. It has to be taken into account that most South African cultures are historically extremely patriarchal and that females in the workplace, specifically in positions of seniority, are a fairly new phenomenon.

This is an area that has not been given the same prominence as cultural diversity and is therefore not viewed with the same

sensitivity. However, since the Employment Equity Act clearly states that women are considered a designated group, it can be inferred that the face of the South African management is bound to change to include even more women. Viewed against this fact, it is vital for organizations to address gender inequalities not only in terms of salaries, but also where recognition and support for female staff on all hierarchical levels.

The author is of the opinion that the increase in sexual harassment cases against employers can be attributed to a lack of sensitivity when dealing with gender issues.

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ADDENDUM ADEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS:

NAME: Given/called name (Note: English/cultural)

DATE OF BIRTH:

HOME LANGUAGE:

LANGUAGE OF PREFERENCE IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT:

MARITAL STATUS:

EDUCATION:

POSITION IN THE COMPANY:

YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT WITH ABSA:

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE:

ADDENDUM BSINGELIS QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING TWENTY-FOUR QUESTIONS

COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings?
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.  
QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures?
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in. QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision?
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.  
QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships.
8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.  
QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor.
9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.  
QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to

accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible.
11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy. QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group?
12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument. QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood.
14. Speaking up during a meeting is a problem for me. QUESTION: Why is that?
15. Having a lively imagination is important to me. QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged?
16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards. QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel?
17. I am the same person at home and at work. QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different?
18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.
19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am. QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit?
20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met. QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with. QUESTION:  
Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this?
22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in  
many respects. QUESTION: What do you think makes  
you different from others?
23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very  
important to me. QUESTION: Why is your identity  
important.
24. I value being in good health above everything.

ADDENDUM CAF1

## COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
 QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings?  
 Yes. I will listen if it is a manager as I believe that those people did not get there easily. They've got the relevant experience. You can listen to them and pay attention.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. I handle conflict by listening. It's very important to me to listen. The first thought that crosses my mind in a conflict situation is: Why is this person behaving this way? Something must be motivating them to cause the conflict. I'll always try to find the person behind the conflict and try to understand why this person acts in this manner. Then I have to decide how I am going to react to this conflict. But it is the person behind the conflict that remains important to me. We all have different perceptions of things and there's never a right or a wrong. What might be right for you could be wrong for me.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. No.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
 QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes. It is not a problem for me to offer somebody my chair, because it is not that important for me to sit on a chair. I like moving around, so it's not an issue. So to offer my chair does not mean that I'm offering up my authority. I also don't expect it from somebody else. It's up to that person's own perception and it's not an issue for me.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
 QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/what do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. For me, it reflects that a person knows what they want and where they come from and they know where they're going to. I find it very amusing if it's a person who has something to brag about, I always think Well, he's got reasons to brag, so he may brag and he may say that he's good and be a yuppie. If I think about it and think it's unsubstantiated, then I don't like it. But if it's someone who has proven himself to me and shown me that he has reached this level through achievement and hard work and I can see that it is not idle boasting, then I'm fine with it. I was raised to show respect to other people and to respect the difference in each person. And I don't begrudge anyone their place in the sun. Each person is unique in his own way and if this is how they want to handle it and they have reason to, then it does not bother me.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
 QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? No. I can make peace

with such a decision. I am very important to myself and I think it has something to do with my age. I think you realise later on that you are important and if you don't view yourself as important, you can't give it your best shot. Then you also don't give other people the respect they deserve. So, if it happens that the decision is contrary to what I agreed with, then I can actually identify with the decision. I'm not going to make myself unhappy by constantly thinking about it. It all depends on what I have to give up. If it's something that's not going to affect my personal being, then I don't have a problem. If somebody else sees a problem differently and they saw the advantage in the decision, then I'll support the decision, especially if I have faith in the people taking the decisions.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. No. I'm not a person who will pull rank to achieve something, so I feel quite comfortable with who I am.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. Because I believe that everyone has an input in what's happening, it is important for me. I'll listen to people who I respect and I like to gain insight and knowledge from people who I respect, because people I allow close to me are important. You can always learn something from others. I'll always listen and then make up my mind accordingly. I value honesty in people and as long as they don't have a hidden agenda, I'll value their input.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. If it's a management decision, I feel that they probably base the decision on expertise and experience they have gained and I would not have a problem supporting such a decision.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. Yes.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? No. Although I won't easily abandon a group, you quickly realise when you're not going to fit in with the group or agree with what they're doing. If the decisions are contrary to my personal principles, I will remove myself from the group. If there is not a governing sense of honesty or you get the feeling that people are only there for their own good or own agendas, then I need to distance myself from that.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. I won't avoid an argument

when I know that I'm right. But sometimes I also realise that the person I'm arguing with does not have the necessary insight. However, if it is a case of principle, I won't back down. It's not a question of being right or wrong, it should be based on principles and I strongly believe in standing up for your principles.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. Yes.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is a problem for me.

QUESTION: Why is that? No. I don't have a problem addressing a group, but I must feel well prepared. If I can speak with conviction about a subject that is comfortable to me, then I don't have a problem. It also comes with experience. If you've done it so many times, it becomes easier.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. Creativity gives you more tools with which to approach problem-solving. If you look at an issue and try to solve the problem creatively, it gives a different solution. There's a right way and a wrong way for everything, but once you look beyond the black and white, there are many different approaches. I'm a total supporter of the need for creativity - even in a work environment such as a financial institution. If you start relying on the stereotypes, then work becomes routine. You need to look at different options.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? No. I received the Star Achiever award three times within nine months. Obviously, you are proud of your achievement and to see it acknowledged, but for me it very important, actually it's more important for me to acknowledge what the others put into it and the input and effort from the rest of the group. You know there are thirteen branches involved in the monthly evaluation and obviously you are very proud of such an achievement, but it's very important to realise that there has been a group effort behind it.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. I am a very phlegmatic personality. And even if I take my work home, there are different priorities and how you handle it is based on your personality. But you have to be true to who you are and then you can't change.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.

QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? Yes. It also depends on how comfortable you feel with the person. I personally prefer to call somebody by his first name, but I'll take guidance from the specific situation. Some people prefer to be addressed more formally. Sometimes it is also a question of respect and if I have to show respect in such a manner, then I'll do it.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. It is important that you have to give constructive criticism in my position, but you have to take the other person's frame of mind into account. Something like this has a direct effect on the morale of the work environment and you have to be careful how you approach such situations. With maturity, you also get the necessary skills to deal with such situations better. You have to see this directness in the way it was meant.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes. In my family, respect is of utmost importance. I treasure honesty and place high expectations on people I know to do the same. So, people know what they have in me and they know that I expect the same from them.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I love pretty things and like to make my immediate environment pleasing to the eye. I hate pretentiousness and prejudice. I expect respect from others, not only because of my position, but because I'm a woman and older than them - most of the time anyway.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. I have my own distinctive personality and I don't believe you should be a puppet to anything and any person. You are constantly subjected to other people's expectations of you, but you have to be true to yourself.

24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

## AF2

### COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.

QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings? No. Because they don't make honest decisions. Well, I will tell them the reasons I don't agree with the decisions.

2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority

figures? Yes. Common grounds. You have to get to a win-win situation. So you have to fall in with a decision if it's for the good of the group.

3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. No.

4. I would offer my seat to my superior.

QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. No. It's important up to a point, but does not depend on the person's background.

5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.

QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. I think it's related to the office environment and the corporate feel. If you brag too much about yourself or you do something good, you'll always find somebody who will try to knock you. So, sometimes it's about self-preservation.

6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.

QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? No. I'll challenge them and if they can explain to me why, I'll go with the decision.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes. I can think very fast on my feet and sometimes I'll make a quick decision that people will feel uncomfortable with. Then I'll go in and explain to them why and sometimes I will withdraw to make them feel more comfortable about it.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. No. Predominately females. If I know that the person knows what they're talking about and that they have the necessary experience about I will listen to their advice, but not always take it.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. If it works, I'll go with it.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. No.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? Yes. I can handle conflict. Happiness comes from inside.

A group does not make me happy. I'm quite happy to take from the group what is needed and then go with what makes me happy.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. Yes. Look, if I can see their point and understand it, I'll grant them that. But, if they don't make sense to me, I'll argue it out with them. To me, if you make a decision to benefit the ABSA group and you can add value, then I don't have a problem, no matter who you are. But if it does not make sense and it does not add value, then I'll take it up.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. Yes.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me. QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. I'm a very extroverted person, so I have no problem to air my views or speak up in any situation.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. In this environment, it's definitely important, because it can change in a minute. New ideas are not encouraged. People tend to try and push you down. I will do what is necessary to make my environment work, even if it's not acceptable in the group.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes. It was the beginning of this year when we had a good audit. Obviously, it makes you feel good. Look, we're very open here, so whatever goes around, everybody knows it.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. People must accept me for who I am, no matter where.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.

QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? Yes. I think it's the accepted standard within the group. That Meneer or Sir or whatever is gone. I prefer that, because I have a name and they must call me that.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you

uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. Especially where clothing is concerned, you know, the corporate wardrobe. We have to fall in with ABSA's policy and I also believe that your appearance is very important. And not everybody feels the same, especially the younger generation.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes. I am very comfortable. I also think that within the corporate environment and the type of jobs that I did, it makes it so much easier, because you deal with different levels all the time.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I care about my people and I make a difference in their lives.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

QUESTION: Why is your identity important. No. I'm a very independent person and I don't depend on others to survive. I can look after myself and I'm quite happy inside me with who I am. Look, if you're in a corporate environment, there's a lot of things that happen that you don't agree with and that will make you unhappy. But I don't allow that, because then you will carry it through to your home and I won't do that.

24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

### AF3

#### COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.

QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings? Yes. I think at this stage of my life, I am uncomfortable disagreeing with something if I feel it is necessary. I won't look for an argument, just for the sake of arguing or if it's a case of whom I am agreeing or disagreeing with.

2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. Well, there are times when the conflict needs to be out in the open. And it's not always for me personally a good thing that we keep to the office politics and just make the right noises. So at times, I would leave people to tell exactly what and how they feel. In other situations where I think it could influence decision-making, I would speak to the people concerned and ask them to keep whatever it is for discussion later.

3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. No.

4. I would offer my seat to my superior.

QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. No. I don't think that by giving them a seat would show them respect. I think the whole manner in which you approach them, would show that you respect

them. You don't necessarily have to let them sit in your chair. It often happens that they come and visit you and sit on the opposite side of the table or it will happen when I go and see a person that reports to me, that I will let them take the chairman's seat. I really and honestly think that within ABSA colour does not exist. I still think that there is a male-female situation. That would take some time to get changed. But there's definitely no black-white situation. If you look at the ABSA structure, the decision makers on Exco, on regional exco, on head office exco, the majority of them are still male. And they are influenced by each other making decisions. The females are still very much in the minority and unless that changes obviously, the male thinking will still be in the society. In the higher levels, there has been a change in the ratio, but you will always.. It's there because of the women who are really educating themselves and that can do the job equally as good as the men. But I don't think it would have been there if it was not forced on them. It is not a decision made by themselves. I think, it was purely a decision because government puts pressure on us, all companies. 80% of it is women moving up through the ranks, but again, at head office level you also find that they buy a lot of women from other companies.

5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.

QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. I think I come from an era where, and I'm talking background in ABSA or the working environment, if you were a manager, you must have a big office. There was a certain stage where you had to have a red telephone and you had to have a computer - even if you don't put the damn thing on. The image must be correct. So, I am not a person for images. For me, it counts who the person is, what input that person can give and generally what attributes the person have, not the image. I'm absolutely, totally against images and creating empires for yourself, unless it's based on performance.

6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.

QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. I tend to speak up and give my point of view and the reason why I think so. I always state reasons for why I would differ from the group's decisions, but I won't just acknowledge their decision if I really think it's the wrong move.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes. I think I always tend to, although others might not see it that way, when I feel strongly about something, I would come across very assertively, but when I am with juniors, I don't like playing the role of being their superior. For me, we all work for one group and we all work towards one goal. The more I bring them on par with where I am, the better results I get from them. So, I really do things in a group situations where I am the superior person, I tend to

downplay my role. But when I'm with the same level people as myself, I come across very strongly.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. No. Not always that well. I would listen and take from it what I feel is necessary - sometimes to my own detriment. But I would just take what I feel I could use from the discussion. A person such as Pieter van der Merwe - he's one of our exco people. He's well qualified, but he's got no chip on his shoulder, no attitude. He gets down to do the job and disappears amongst the group, but when he gets on the forum, he stands out. Then he has that presence that says: Now, you listen, I'm talking. But amongst the group, he won't force it on you. You won't even know that he's one of our Exco people.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. No.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? No. In the various scenarios that we've had where we discussed the changes within ABSA and I don't agree with everything that happens (80% of it), but sometimes they want all of us to Yeah-Yeah everything and praise everything or Allah everything that comes from Exco. Then I would excuse myself and would say: I don't buy in or maybe I need more time to buy in, maybe I need to think about it, so count me out for the present. Then I'll rethink it and decide yes or no. And if I still feel that I don't fit in, I'll pull out. I very much believe that the group is embracing change, but at times maybe too fast. At times it feels as if everything has not been thought through and that it's been forced to change just for the sake of change and to follow what the other banks are doing or what the Americans are doing. We're still very much part of the Third World and not the First World as the American or European banks.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. It's never personal. It's normally statements that are made or functions that are changed, that I don't agree with. Normally it is work-related, but hardly ever on a personal basis.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. No.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me. QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. I think because being in a managerial position for so

long, you have to speak with your people on a daily basis. You have to speak with clients. You have to have meetings. You have to attend meetings on more senior levels, so you forget about the people, you concentrate on the subject you're busy with.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. I think it is important, but I think if you work for a bank, there's very little expected of you to be creative. So I think what we do, is we tend to live out our creativeness in our private world. But within the working environment, there is very little creativity. You have to do things a certain way. Rules and regulations.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? No. OK, there are various ones, but the one that stands out was when we got together as a group and the branches all had targets to meet. We were the various different banks and the branch that I had, did the best in the marketing. There were four branches, one from each division of Allied, United, Volkskas and Trust Bank. I was with the Allied one and my branch won the competition with Allied nationwide. I had to stand up in front of 500 men, I think we were only three women and tell them what we did right. And I was thinking: Well, we just did our jobs. How can I tell these 500 old toppies (I still see them as old toppies, even though I'm an old woman myself) How can I tell them how to go about things. It wasn't me. I haven't achieved it alone. It was the group, the branch, the staff that achieved it. So why must I get the praise as if I had all the ideas. I would have felt more comfortable if it was acknowledged that there was a branch behind me.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. Maybe, it's because I've been single for a long time. I don't have somebody that I need to go and play another role for. With the kids, I'm Mom. I talk in the same voice than at the office, I do the same silly things or the same. I don't need to go home and play another role. I was comfortable being just me at work and at home. Maybe, it's not good. It could be a negative point, but I don't put up a front. I'm as comfortable being with Pieter van der Merwe as I am with the garden boy and to me, it's the same person. Maybe, because I have boys and they're both ambitious and they like talking about what's going on in the outside world, maybe that's it.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.

QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? Yes. If I've introduced myself and they ask me to call them by their first name, I'm comfortable doing that. But I won't go out to a client and Hi Johnny him. I would prefer to be a bit more formal until he says: Hi,

I'm Johnny, please call me by my name. I'm quite comfortable doing that, but I won't walk around in anybody's office saying Hi Piet, how are you. Because of that person's behaviour, it might not be acceptable to him. For me, it's fine to call them either by their names or Professor or whatever makes them feel comfortable.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. Mostly when you speak with your junior staff, you can't be too direct, especially if it comes to the emotional side of things. Then yes, your approach is different and I'm often criticised because I am too direct. But I feel that, on the level that we work on, people that are on my level I don't like playing games with. I tell them what I want and what I expect and what's in it for me and what's in it for them. I'm not very good at playing the politics. To me, it's a waste of time. We're here. We have to make targets. We have to grow the company. So, leave the politics when it comes to the emotional things. Normally at this level, you don't work with the emotional stuff. You work with facts and figures. But yes, with my staff I would approach them in a different way. Workwise - direct, if it's targets or work to be done. But if it comes to their personal and private stuff, then my approach won't be as direct.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes. I think it comes with age and maturity, even though I might not be the most mature person. You can't say because you're old that you're mature. Maybe I'm contradicting myself as well, because you will have a different approach when it comes to the emotional side of things. But I don't try and act. I try and be as genuine as possible. But when it comes to the emotional things, a woman tends to react not act differently.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I would say and I have a bit of difficulty here, because I don't think I'm that unique or different. I just think I know what I want out of life and I don't have a chip on my shoulder about who I am and where I come from. I don't see it as unique, that's just me. I don't have a problem with who I am and what I look like. I've accepted that. When you're younger, you all want to be, well I wanted to be Anneline Kriel or Margaret Gardner, but then there's nothing you can do about it. And as you mature, you accept that this is what I am, this is what I want out of life, this is what I'm prepared to give and you're comfortable with it. Well, I am. I can only speak for myself.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. I would not want to change who I am to fit in with what the company wants from me. I'm not the nicest person on earth, but I would not want to compromise what I'm comfortable with just to be somebody in a company. I think there's

enough space within the company for all of us to be ourselves and still contribute. If we're all going to be moulded into what the company wants, then there's not going to be growth, ideas flowing and the bit of creativity that's left. I don't like the idea that everybody is being moulded to being the same way, because the company expects it or behaves the same way, because it's expected. The more ideas flow, the more creativity comes out. The more cultures are thrown together, different viewpoints are created. And I think since about five or six years ago when we started these diversity courses, I was one of the first that realised that the reason it takes somebody else twice the time to do what I'm doing, forgetting that they did not have the opportunity of coming through the ranks. In ten years time, they're going to be much better and I think the people who are in ABSA, people of colour and women, that there's really not that much difference between us - not when it comes to expectations. We all want to provide somebody or ourselves with a comfortable living. We all want to be liked. We all want to be accepted. We feel the same pain. We feel the same joys. So, I think we as a company has grown and the diversity courses we've held in the past, have really opened my eyes. It was hilarious. The things we thought about ourselves, about people of colour in our organisations and what the men thought about the women and the way we perceived people, it's really changed so much. We had a provincial manager, a coloured woman, being appointed a few years ago. And the men behind their hands were fairly derogatory. And she stood so proud and she made them feel so small by her behaviour. She was so professional that within six months they were all like little boys, wanting her attention and just wanting her to notice them. Looking from the outside, I could not believe that these were the same men, who could accept a coloured woman. She was not ashamed of where she came from. She told us her whole history. She's well educated. She knows what she's doing. She knows where she's going to and she knew what they said about her behind her back. I think to go through all that and still stand strong, she's really a role model. Not only to coloured women, but to all women. You don't see that person as a coloured woman. You call her by her name. She was one of the first to say I'm not a Mrs or a Miss. There have been major changes in the last ten years. If you look at the younger females in managerial positions now, they haven't got the same struggle that we used to have just to proof yourself. You had to be a bit tougher then and a bit meaner and you had to play a role. You had to be hard not to take anything personally. The younger women are very well qualified. They are knowledgeable. They make use of their opportunities. They're not afraid to speak out. They're not afraid to say where they want to be within this organisation. And there's space for them. If you look at the females' qualifications and the males', there is no comparison. Every single woman or nearly all of them on managerial level has some sort of qualification behind her or is busy with something to improve herself. While the men could move up the ranks by just being here between 8 and 5 and doing their jobs. I'm proud of the females, especially the young ones, for what they've achieved up to now within our group - black, white, pink - they've got excellent futures in this company.

24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

AF4

## COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings?  
Yes. If you respect people, you will get involved in meetings and how you act depends on the people involved and on you as a person.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. I won't run away from conflict. I believe conflict can be used as a positive tool. Conflict should be handled to get to a win-win situation.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. No.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes, if it's really necessary. I will if it's an older woman than me, but definitely not if it is a man. They (authority figures) did not get there because of their culture of gender, hopefully. I will respect any person if they've earned it. I won't show respect if they have not earned it.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. At this stage of my life, my background does not have such a big influence on it anymore. It was a few years ago, because I was not used to working with people of colour. As you grow older and you get more mature and you get to know the people, you find out that it is not the colour of the skin that matters. It is the actual background and class.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. If I don't agree, I will give them my opinion as to why I don't agree. I would listen and if I'm the only one whose wrong, I'll take a step back and see why I am wrong.
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.  
QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. No. Recently the two business centres have melted together. I've always regarded myself and have been seen in the region as one of the best operations managers and with the amalgamation, they've actually chosen the other lady because she is younger than I am. I was actually told that I am fifty and she's thirty and there's a long-term relationship still going there. So, I've been in such a situation.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes, if it's to my benefit and not only to their benefit because you've got to be happy in what you're doing. I normally take advice and work through it. I take what I think is applicable to me and what is not applicable, I'll disregard.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. A few years ago, I would have been upset, but not anymore. But as I've said, you grow older and learn to see what's good for the company and not only what's good for you as a person.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. No.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? No. I normally get along with members of the group, but if I don't get along I would go to them and tell them why I feel threatened or unhappy. I would always try and get to a happy medium. It's not always possible. What I've done now when I could not get along with people in a group. I've tried everything from my side there and decided to make a move to another department.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. I think the male members, because the males in the banking environment still have a very arrogant attitude. The bank has always been male-dominant managers and they've got a long way to go to see that they're not the only people who can manage. And unfortunately our white South African males have not made that mind shift yet.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. No.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me.

QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. I think because I've got a lot of confidence. I do believe that I know what I'm doing and if I don't speak up, then I can't sit back and say that I'm not happy with the decision that was taken. You are what you allow.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. You've got to be creative. I've only been here for two days, but I've already picked up things that I can see I'll have to try and get across to them. Especially if you come into a new environment, you pick up new ideas

very quickly. I hope that it is encouraged in this new department. Normally in ABSA it is very strongly encouraged to bring out new ideas.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? It depends. It depends when they give the praise and rewards. If it was something that was to my doing only, yes. But if it was a group thing, I don't like to be singled out. Two years ago, I was nominated for one of the management awards by my staff members. It was made public in the region. You get a certificate and they have a little get-together and you get the certificate. It made me feel good. I think it will make any person feel good.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. There is no difference. What you see is what you get. I've gone through experiences in my life in the banking environment when I just became a manager. And one day I realised that I'm not me anymore, I'm a plastic person. I know the management status went to my head like it does in most cases. It took me some time to realise that I'm not myself anymore and that I'm being this plastic person. I'm becoming exactly like the males of the bank. Then I had to take a step back and decided just to be myself. And I think any person, who has known me long enough will tell you that out of work and at work, I'm exactly the same. There are times where you would act more professionally, especially where clients are concerned. At home I might swear more than at work, but generally I'm the same person.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am. QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? No. It's a personal preference. When I started working in the bank, it was very Meneer and Mevrouw. They've used that to say that's management and that's not. I believe that you don't respect a person by calling them Mr or Mrs and you don't necessarily disrespect them by calling them on their first name.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. If it's a situation where I've got to address somebody or something that I don't like, it does make me feel a bit uncomfortable. But I'd rather do that than to just accept that and I'm not happy with it.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.  
 QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I think what makes me different from others are number one my name. And I'm different because I don't just accept something just because it's been said by a senior person. If I'm not happy, I will question it and in a bank environment there are very few people who would do that. I've been trying to teach the staff for a long period of time that our growth charter says you've got the right to challenge. It's the very first line of the charter and people still don't believe it.
23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.  
 QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Not necessarily. It depends on what the situation is. My name is a known name in ABSA and I appreciate it that because people know you, but I've also earned that respect and people knowing me. But if it's a group situation where everybody stands together, then it's not.
24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes, most definitely.

### AF5

#### COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
 QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings? Yes. If you have respect for your superiors, you will understand each other. There won't be problems in terms of things that you need to do. You'll do things correctly and follow his/her lead.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. I would ask to see them privately to discuss the matter and to see if there is a solution to the problem.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. Yes.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
 QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes, if it has to be. I don't think the seat issue is important. It depends on the person. I think it might be influenced by your culture and how you grew up.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
 QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. That's the way how I do things and how I deal with people.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
 QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. When I don't agree with a decision, it's normally very difficult in my situation. I'll talk about it. I'll explain why I disagree with the decision and

if they're not satisfied with it, we need to talk some more and see if we can find another solution.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes. The fact that I'm the branch manager or supervisor here, but if there are no tellers, then I need to be a teller or if there's no one at enquiries, I need to stand in for them and be an enquiry clerk.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. If my superior suggests that I should apply for a job as a branch manager for example, I would go and sit with her and ask her for her opinion. I'll ask for her opinion and what type of training she thinks I'll need for that job. My branch manager is my advisor. She's a woman and we've been working together for over a year. I trust her opinion.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. It depends on how the voting went. If it's in a line where I can see they might have made the right decision, then it's OK with me. But if I think they are not right and I must just go along with them, then I'd feel a bit down and think that I'm wrong.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. Yes.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? Yes. I will feel a little bit furious about it, But in my job, you can be furious for a few seconds, but then afterwards you have to leave that feeling behind and go on with your job.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. Yes, I try to. The fact is that I'm the type of person who does not like to disagree with others. I would prefer to just leave the topic and go on.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. No.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me. QUESTION: Why is that? No. I don't speak a lot in meetings. In our meetings, our manager talks a lot. The rest of us normally just listen or talk when she asks a question.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes. I receive it every day. For me it's praise when somebody thanks you if you do your job right. It makes me feel good when somebody tells me I've done a good job. The fact that I'm a teller, a consultant and enquiry clerk at times makes me feel good, because I know how to do everything.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? No. The fact that you've got a lot of stress at work, makes you want to not take it out on the other guys or be rude to them. Then you go home and you're rude to your family. I'm friendly at work and a little stricter at home.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.

QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? No, not when I first meet someone. They must tell me that I can use their first name. I think it's more a personal preference, because I prefer people to call me by my name.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. No. Maybe with my manager, I'll feel uncomfortable if I have to be direct or to tell her this is how to do it.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes. That's who I am.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes, I suppose so. The fact that I'm smiling every day. Even if I have problems, I won't come to work and let them see it on my face.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. If I don't look after my own identity, nobody else will do it for me.

24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

AM1

## COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
 QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings?  
 Yes. I think we're all grown-ups, so I don't think we have a problem with whoever is chairing the meeting or leading the conversation. Our way of handling meetings is in anyway based on participation, so there is no authority issues except that the person speaking is the only one speaking.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. This happened not long ago, but it was sorted out on the same day and the next day everything was OK. The conflict was due to a business decision with which I did not agree. It was a difference of opinion regarding a decision this person made and I raised my opinion and explained to him why I felt that way.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. Yes.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
 QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes. I think it's very important. Nowadays I don't know if it's still as important as it was ten years ago, but I believe that a senior person deserves to be where he is. Although it might not always be the case today, but in my work environment it is still the case. I really don't have a problem with seniority or superiors who I'am working with. I don't have a problem respecting them.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
 QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. I think every individual is his own person and no two persons are the same. I have friends, who have achieved a lot in sports and you'll never hear about from him. You'll always hear about his achievements from other people. This is how he is and I respect him for that. If I've done something well, even though I won't broadcast it or volunteer the information, I'll let you know if we're talking about the subject. But it does not have anything to do with a culture within ABSA. I don't think ABSA is a culture, I think it has a very diversified culture from the Allied, United, Trust Bank and Volkskas days. For example, Volkskas was well-known, because it was such an old bank, for its people being very conservative. Trust Bank was less conservative and then you get people from United who were completely different, because there were more English people. This is a very complex compilation of the various organisations. In the beginning, this was a big issue. It depends on the people who are in charge of a specific branch. If it is predominantly Volkskas, then it will be more conservative. But I believe that the management is currently so diverse and the different business units make it even more so. People came from different backgrounds and mindsets and since the amalgamation three years ago, you

had to put those different people together. And there were really a lot of growing pains.

6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
 QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. In a banking environment there are certain things that you really can't make decisions about - it basically boils down to how you approach certain matters. The bank has a policy and this is probably one of the few instances where that policy is basically law and you have to operate within those guidelines. But, we have certain ways of approaching specific matters and this is normally discussed within a group context. My thinking is that if everyone agrees, who am I to differ. I don't always agree with the decisions, but if it's being agreed to by everyone else, then I'll do it their way and agree with that decision.
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.  
 QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes. I am a person who is fairly perfectionistic and have very high standards for myself. But I prefer a nice working relationship and I will do anything to maintain that. I'll take a step back where authority is concerned in order to create harmony between my group. It is very important for me as you can't work with someone you don't get along with.
8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.  
 QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. I've discovered that people aren't what they were like ten or fifteen years ago. It's rare to find someone who shows an interest in you as a person and in your progress, but they are more interested in what can be to their benefit and what will improve their position. Or what will make them look good. If I have someone working under me, I would approach it and I would like to see that that person should improve himself and maybe be able to fill my shoes at a later stage. But I get the feeling that nowadays it's a case of people will advise you on what to do as long as his position is not under threat. I don't know if everyone else will encourage subordinates or even recommend them for better positions. I'll take advice from whom it comes and then sit and think about it and interpret it myself. I've learned to sift all that information before acting on it.
9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.  
 QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. Everyone makes a decision based on what would be the best way of approaching a subject or problem. We all would have an opportunity to state our case. If somebody else has a better solution, you have to go with the flow and accept that decision. If something has to be done and we're looking for a specific approach,

then I won't back off if I had a different opinion. But I can accept it if people don't agree with me. Each person will have his own idea and sometimes mine is not necessarily the best one.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. No.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.  
 QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? Yes. I think I'm currently in such a situation and you just have to learn to work around such problems without hurting anyone's feelings. Personal feelings don't have a place at work, because it influences your work. In this case, it's more of conflicting personalities. It's about a person, who I view as a subordinate, and you since you depend on that person's service, you just have to accept certain things. I've actually spoken to this person as an adult and it boils down to just a personality type. You know, I don't think about a person's background in terms of which division they came from. More conflict stems from poor service than anything else and because I'm very systematic, I can't handle it. 99% of the time the conflict will be with a woman and I have no idea why. In general it's with Afrikaans women, maybe because most of my colleagues are Afrikaans. My thinking behind is probably that it's a female thing. Have you ever seen the fighting between a group of women? If it was a group of men, they'd sort it out quickly, but women will still be angry with each other a year later.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. Maybe it's because I won't shut up even if it's my regional manager. I have my opinion and I will voice it no matter who I'm talking to. And I know that sometimes that's not necessarily to my advantage, but that's just how I am.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. Yes.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me.

QUESTION: Why is that? Yes, I think that's my personality. I come from a very conservative family and it was not part of growing up. I think it is basically due to a personality type. You're either an introvert or an extrovert and I think I'm quite an extrovert.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. Once again, it again comes down to teamwork and participation. Everyone has his own opinion and whether you've been encouraged to think creatively or not, this company encourages you to be creative and provides the opportunity for this. If you think about the banking industry of ten and fifteen years ago, you're making a mistake. Banks have changed so much. Although there are still fairly conservative approaches within the bank, the image that the bank projects externally is definitely not conservative. If you look at the type of things that the bank is

involved with such as athletic sponsorships, community development projects. We've actually built a school somewhere in Gauteng and we've got a television channel for training with programmes. So the conservatism, which existed fifteen years ago, is no longer there. You can democratically come up with new ideas and it's actually encouraged to try new solutions and new ways of thinking. The only thing that's still absolutely set is the credit policy. But in terms of the people and training and social interaction, it is definitely being encouraged.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a reward. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes. With the diverse business units, the reward system has changed a bit. Previously, the whole branch would be called together for a branch meeting with between 120 to 130 people. The managers would have to get up and be publicly acknowledged. And I don't mean that I'm a person who needs to be placed on a pedestal - I don't want that. I only want someone or my boss to acknowledge that I've done well. I don't play for the pavilion. I prefer the personal approach.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. I think it comes down to your specific personality, although my wife says that she does not want to be my secretary at the bank. I've got an absolute aversion to people, who try to lead a double life. It's not about a double life actually. You get people who are absolute pigs at work and a pleasure at home and vice versa. I try to be the same and to maintain a status quo in terms of behaviour. Obviously there are things that you can do at home that you can't do at work. I don't undergo a metamorphosis when I go home and take off my tie. I'm the same person. I'll tell the same jokes. I like to communicate with people. I like to be social. I'm an extrovert, so I like to have people around me, whether it's at home or at work. Unfortunately, I have to do my job too.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am. QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? Yes. You know, I hate it when people try to force down authority as it was done in the army. If I wanted to be in the army, I would have joined permanently. I believe that you will get much further with a person if you treat them on the same level. I'm not saying that you have to degrade yourself down to someone else's level, but I'll much rather try to uplift that person to my level. I don't have a problem addressing someone as Professor or Doctor or Mister. I'm also not going to address someone by their first name without their permission. But I just feel more comfortable on a first name basis and that does not mean that I don't respect that person. Four or five years ago, you'd have called your branch manager Mr So-and-So. And unfortunately, there are still branch managers who insist on that formal address. Fortunately, even the regional managers encourage first names addresses. For me, there is still a line between respect and non-respect. One of my colleagues is about my age and his

dad, who is about the same age as my father, came as a temporary relief for a couple of months. And he was a branch manager and he comes here and works on the same job level than me, but he is my senior. He does the same job and asked me to call him by his name. Everyone else did, but I'm the youngest in the division and it was actually very difficult. Eventually I went to him and told him that I'd use his first name, but that it was no sign of disrespect. I think my Afrikaans background probably has a lot to do with that. My brother-in-law is English and his dad does not want me to call him Uncle Peter. He wants me to call him Peter and I actually find that difficult. I have to agree that it's a very Afrikaans cultural thing to respect someone, who is your senior in age, by calling him Uncle or Mister. You'll find in the more rural areas and I worked in Moorreesburg five years ago, you don't address clients as Mister, you call them Uncle and Aunt. It is a generally accepted thing and clients actually take offense by that. I prefer kids not to call me Uncle even if they're younger than ten, because I'm OK with that. It's not about respect, it's about whether you're comfortable with that.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. Obviously you need to adapt to certain situations. But like I've said before, I'm a certain type of person and I deal with situations in a certain way. If people don't like that, then that's their problem.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? No. No. I'm not going to treat the Professor the same as I'm treating you. I believe you have to adapt and this is about the relationship between the bank and a client. You always have to try and satisfy the client. So, I'll try to act on the same level and I even treat my clients differently. Some people prefer the more formal approach, but I remain the same person. I won't try to be somebody else, but will be trying to help them and meet their needs.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? There is no one who is exactly like me. Every person is unique and each person is an individual. People don't change. They are who they are. Some things you can subtly work on and change slightly. For example, with some people you can joke and with others you can't. Each person is unique.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. It boils down to being true to yourself. You have to be who you are and not try to pretend to be something else.

24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

AM2

## COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings?  
Yes. It does not influence my involvement at all. I tend to not let things like that influence my behaviour. I tend to speak my mind.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes, if it's necessary. But if it's necessary get a point through to enhance business, you can't keep everybody happy. You need sometimes to shake up the system a bit. There are two things, there's no such thing as conflict in my book: There's a way to do things and there's facts and nobody should take it personally. If you walk out of that meeting, the only thing that should stay behind is the facts. And that is how I look at it. But I know that people are playing political games and using that, but I don't do it.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. No.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. No, I've never done it. For a woman, I'd stand up. I think it just the way I was raised. Back in the days when I was brought up, it was called manners.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. I think a clear way of thinking was created by the environment, which I come from, where you had to think about what you're going to do in order to get somewhere. There were always barriers and you had to work through those things to get where you wanted to be. And I think in the working environment, that is helping me a lot in getting where I want to be, but other people see that as a threat. Especially, and I don't want to get racially whatever, but white people and coloured people and black people have a huge difference in the way they think. Not to generalise, but I think the struggle and apartheid caused people of colour to be more, not demanding, but more progressive in the way that they're thinking.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. That's democracy. You can't be happy all the time. Sometimes you need to compromise, but at the end of the day the end result should always be for your benefit. If it's not to your benefit, then you're unhappy all the way and you need to make a decision about where you want to be. Is this organisation for you or not? Normally I voice my opinion and

substantiate why I say this and if the group does not agree with me, then I'd have to go with it. You can't do anything about it.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. No, I don't think so. It's a difficult question, because your relationship with somebody should not depend on what you are or what you've accomplished or achieved. But in the working environment, it can be. People tend to look at you differently when you've accomplished something or not, for that matter. But I tend not to. I've done it, because ABSA has got a particular culture and I have not worked in different companies and environments before. I haven't had the opportunity yet, but I know a lot of people in different organisations and all the Afrikaans companies have got this culture where you need to oblige as to what management say. You need to give in. If management says yes, then you need to follow. It is the way it is. That's how Afrikaans people think. You don't stand up for yourself. You don't do that. You don't say that you disagree. If a teacher in class says X is X, then you must agree with X. Or if the minister in the Dutch Reformed church says Brothers, this is how it is and the bible says so, you can't question it, because that's the way they've been brought up. And in certain ways, you are influenced by that culture, because you might feel that you're going to shoot yourself in the foot here if you go against the flow even if that's the right direction to go. And a lot of people are thinking that way, but they're scared to voice an opinion. They'll talk amongst each other about going in the wrong direction, but they're afraid to say But Mr Chairman, because they're afraid Mr Chairman will nail them at the end of the day.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes, but I'm very sceptical here in ABSA, because the culture is such that when somebody tells you something, you're always thinking about what is he really saying. There are very few straight shooters and you must always think what might be behind this. And that is very disturbing at the moment in an organisation like this. People don't trust management. They don't trust each other. So how can you make appropriate decisions on advice that comes from a manager that everybody is talking about as being this and that. I just feel that I hear what they say, but I tend to think for myself as well. I listen to what they say. There is someone in the organisation, who is a true friend of mine. We've grown up together although he's a couple of years older than me and he's been here longer than me. He's better educated than me and he went through the strides and he's the same ethnic group as myself and we're from the same town. So, obviously we talk a lot about work and I use him as a mentor.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to

change your opinion. Yes. I don't change my opinion. If the group decides that this is the process flow of the thing, even if I don't agree with it, I need to adjust. There's no way that I can say Listen, I'm going to change my opinion. My opinion is still X, but I need to commit myself to the decision and that is important. I think that's the future growth to be a good manager and to lead people. You need to assess whether to change opinion on a matter or respect others' opinions and people should respect your views and you should respect theirs.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. No.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.  
 QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? No, if I'm not happy, then you need to get out. You can't work in a place for X amount of years and not be happy in your work. Then you must seriously consider a different environment. I stay out of people's way when I don't get along. I'll speak to them when I need to - only business related - and I don't tend to make conversation with them, because I feel that that person is not true in their ways with me. So why should I now pretend and have conversations or go to a braai at his house if I know that this guy is trying to nail me. At the end of the day, I just keep it to a professional, working relationship. That's what I'm being paid for.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. If I strongly disagree, I would raise my opinion and I will substantiate it. If you can call that an argument, I will. Argument as in words - no. For me it's about principle. I don't look at any racial lines or ethnic lines or religion or whatever and say because this guy is Muslim, I can't agree with him. Or because he's white or black, I can't agree with him. You must look at the facts on the table and make an informed business decision. You can't let all these things influence you.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. No.  
 Just to say no leaves a perception in people's minds that you are not open.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me. QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. I see myself as a leader. I've always been in leadership positions and for me it's a principle to speak. You need to voice your opinion, otherwise people aren't going to know what you think and you might have a brilliant idea.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? No, to me it's not important. It is encouraged, but hardly implemented here.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes. There is place for that in the workplace. Here in ABSA there is a culture for under-the-table rewarding. There's no transparency about things like that. I won't know if you've received an incentive bonus this year. Even if you did your work and did more than what was expected of you, I won't know that. Mr X down there, he might be weak in his job and his team might know that, but management might decide to give him something. And that is one of the reasons where there is this culture in this organisation of backstabbing. Nobody says nothing. If you get something, you keep your mouth shut, because nobody must find out. That is the culture, even within my business unit. People are not open, management are not open. There are various committees, which are supposed to be people from different levels of the organisation and they should be transparent, I believe. The development board should help in assisting management to filter all the information through and to say these guys are the top 20% of the unit, but it's not happening. To me as a coloured individual, it's not happening. For me, transparency is one of the cornerstones of an environment like this. If you call the way a country is run as democracy, transparency is not happening here because of the cultural differences. If you step in here, you need to adjust to the culture. There should not be a culture. You should come here, do a job and go home.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? No. People in this place think that they are living up here and their circle of friends are similar. They do the same jobs, are in the same income bracket, stay in the same areas. I tend to be different in that respect. I come from a rural area. In the day, I'm working with these people and at night when I go home, I get along with people on farm worker level to professional people. It's a diverse society. At work I'm very professional in what I do and the way I go about with clients. I switch off when I walk out of here. I go back to what I do. I play in a band with 80 members and we share the same thing - making music. One guys a plumber, one is a banker, one is an architect and one works on a farm. I tend to speak to a lot of people from different environments and organisations.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.

QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? Yes. In the business environment here, most clients are older than me. I'm 26 and the typical client I'm dealing with is 40 plus, some even in their 50's. And a lot of them are from upcountry - Piketberg, Porterville, Moorreesburg. And there the people tend to Aunt and Uncle, but I tend to introduce myself and check the vibe coming from that person. If he's comfortable in saying that he's Ronnie, then he's Ronnie to me. I would prefer it to be first names. If it's a much older person, I would adjust somewhat.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. Well, first of all, when you first meet someone, you sum up that person. There's a perception in your mind immediately when you meet him. Even subconsciously, you do it. I attend these diversity workshops and you go there and speak your mind, but it's not working, because it's not implemented. But most of the time, I'll be fairly direct. There's this client for example. He's been with a couple of bankers here, because he could not get along with them. He shifted money all over the place and something was not kosher. But at the moment, I'm very straightforward with him on how we're conducting business. And I think the fact that I'm a coloured individual makes a difference. He thinks before he speaks to me, because he does not want to let something slip. So he tends to listen. I don't know if I'm right or wrong, but whenever I speak to him it's as if he takes a step back - I don't know why. It would make me uncomfortable to be that direct with management. If you go against the grain, then it's a bit touchy. You do it, but you feel uncomfortable. If you always go with the flow, I don't think you will be satisfied with who you are. I believe you need to speak your mind if you believe in something. It's not management as such, but the person in management. And sometimes I think that person is not driving the boat the way he should be. And then I think you have to, very diplomatically, put it down and that person can do with it what he wants. He can either burn you or not and then everyone will know where he stands.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? No. I adjust myself. It depends on if it's business or personal. You're more professional with business and it's more freestyle, laissez faire type of personality. I tend to be very professional in my work or I try to be and it influences you and the way you behave. It depends from client to client or company of people. If tonight you're in one company of people and they discussing politics, then you tend to adjust to their level. And tomorrow night, you're with other people and they're talking about sport and the local rugby club's game last Saturday, you tend to be different and act appropriately.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I enjoy that in other people. People need to be different, otherwise this world will be very boring. But I think what makes me different here in ABSA, is that people know I'm prepared to speak at least. I know that I've burnt a couple of bridges, but I know that I'm going to get somewhere.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes, because that's who you are. You should not change yourself to fit in with a group of people. For instance, ABSA is a group of people, but within ABSA you get individuals. Every staff member is an individual. But ABSA has a culture. But who is creating that culture? The individuals - by

allowing that culture to suck them in. Nobody's speaking and while nobody's speaking, you're sucked in. But I think, you should not change yourself. You can change your behaviour to fit a particular circumstance like tonight you're in the cricket box with ten clients and tomorrow you're at Grand West. You act different, but you don't change yourself for other people.

24. I value being in good health above everything. No. It is important, but not more than anything else. You need to keep a balance.

AM3

COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings?  
Yes. Previously it was difficult coming from the ranks, but now I think I've made my point and my participation is much more than in the beginning when I became a manager.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. Usually we would have our normal meetings, but being aligned is what is most important. We work together in a group to achieve a common goal. And that is very important. There is no use for me doing one thing and the next man doing another thing. So obviously I would go to him and say Listen this is my idea of what should be done. Do you agree or disagree? If we disagree, then we talk about it and if we agree, we get on with it. But the alignment is the main point.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. Yes.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. No. I must say that I'd probably do it if it is a lady, but not because he is older or more senior. I'm usually the one that organise the meetings, so there will be enough seats. My gender and age used to play a role, but now it's different. It's the same as making my point in a meeting. Previously I would maybe keep quiet and not say anything, but with the experience I've gained, it does not really anymore.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. I think it's by coming through the ranks and by struggling and fighting for what I thought was rightfully mine and for achieving my goals. I think it has made me a stronger person.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes, that's the way I operate. If you refer to me being the manager or leader of the group,

I'd go with what the group decides. That is if it is for the best of the company, obviously.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes. I think if you don't have the support from around you, you're not going to accomplish anything. So, you got to have the support to keep you up there and to really make everything work out. If you look at the way we operate. Everything that we do, if my team achieves something, I won't go out there and say I achieved this. I would go to the team and if there is some reward, they would get it. I normally would never say that we as a cost centre achieved this, I'd go to the specific individual and he gets the credit and everything, because he worked for it.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. I look at it and if it's valuable, I'll use it. If it's not valuable, I won't say to someone that they're talking nonsense, but I take everything that I get and use it as I see fit. I actually have a mentor, which is our regional manager Ivan Marais. The relationship came from scratch and we've brought it up where we have this understanding as he's like the father figure in my relationship with him as well as with my career plans.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes, very important - even if it's wrong. You see, I don't have a problem with this. The decision made is definitely going to be the right one. Even if I don't agree, just remember that I'm part of the group then. I'm not the leader. If I'm part of the group and someone else decides, then maybe.. Let me put it this way. I always say that when I give a decision, it is a one-man decision, but if the group gives a decision, it is twelve brains. It must be better than one.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. Yes, if I'm involved. It might look like interfering, but I'll go there and ask whether they need assistance. Obviously, if they say no, then I'd think they're capable of handling it.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? Yes, I'm a team guy, so I don't think I'll ever be unhappy in a group. If I'm unhappy in a group, I'll actually make them know. If I can take the teambuilding sessions we keep, it's open and honest. I believe if you're open and honest, people will get to know you better. They'll learn to understand you and that's how I feel about a

team. So, I don't think that I'll be unhappy in a team. But if I am, I will surely make my feelings known within the group.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. At first, it was very tough not to argue, but like I've said with the experience I've gained and with my knowledge and the togetherness of the team, it's easier to differ. We have a saying in our management group that it's never personal. It's always business when it comes to business decisions. I could have a better relationship with some and maybe it's because I've not gotten to know them that well. We've hit it off and we are a very close team, but there are some guys that I'd disagree with more than the others.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. No. That always has a way of coming back to you. So sort out the problem. With experience I've learnt that if you just say No to avoid something, it always comes back.
14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me. QUESTION: Why is that? No. Not anymore. I think I'm much more confident. I'm much more knowledgeable. The team I came into, I was the youngest. I was almost half their age when I first got into the team. So it was very difficult, because I worked for all of them. I used to be their clerk or supervisor. So it was very difficult, but since the last year or so it's been much easier.
15. Having a lively imagination is important to me. QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes, definitely. I promote that. My department knows exactly what I stand for. They know what their career paths are. They know exactly what I expect of them and I know exactly what they expect from me.
16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards. QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? No, not really. I feel that I'm a team guy and usually it's the team succeeding or creating or achieving something. I wouldn't want them doing the hard work and me getting the praise. I don't think it's not fair in any case. Usually I single out people when they do excellent work. I single them out within the whole group. Praise and thank you are the order of the day. It's part of my department's culture to thank a person and to disagree with a person. Praise makes you feel very good, but if it was a problem that was sorted by some of my guys, I would go to them and tell them. Or I'd encourage the guy giving me the compliment or praise to write a little e-mail to say This is what this guy did.
17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. I'm probably a bit more authoritative with my children. I allow them to practise their rights. I allow them to choose whatever they want to choose, but I would advise them to a certain extent. Eighty percent of the time I would say yes. I think it is a part of how I was brought up. It's part of my culture. It's part of my dad allowing me to make certain mistakes and then to learn from them. I feel that the struggle and trying to get where I want to be, I did not sacrifice my culture and who I am by trying to achieve what I've become.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes. Providing for my family is very important. Being spiritually connected is very important to me.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.

QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit?

Yes. When I came into the team, it was Mister this way and that. As I grew with experience and my mentor came in here and he encouraged me and pressed me to do certain things. He used to say to me that if you do this, this is going to happen. So, all that came back to me with me learning to cope with certain situations. I think it's still a personal preference at this stage. In my department I encourage first names. Everybody else calls each other and myself by their first names, but the bridge needs to be crossed. I'm still struggling to bridge that issue with my department to address the first name issue.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. No. I'm a little more cautious. I would not just go out there and put my cards on the table. I like to hear both sides of the story. So I would like to know what this guy is all about and who he is and then we'll take it from there. If I do not know a person, directness might make me feel uncomfortable, but if it's blatant I'll confront someone. If I know him, it will obviously be more comfortable to be direct.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? No. I would act in the manner that is appropriate. In other words, if I'm with my team members I would act accordingly. If I'm with senior management I would act according to that situation. It's not that I'm putting on something, but certain situations require certain actions. To some extent, I think my culture plays a role and I think it will always be there, but I don't think it's a major role.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I love being unique and it's nice, but it's also nice to be sharing. I

like sharing more than being unique. Being fair, being open, being honest, being sharing. And my main point sitting here is taking the rest of the team with me.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.  
QUESTION: Why is your identity important. No, independent of others, no. I thrive on team work.

24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

AM4

COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings?  
Yes. It does not really have an influence. Our new management style is fairly open and relaxed.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. I handle conflict one-on-one and not in a group situation.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. No.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. No. It's not a question of respect, but the current management style is an open process where everyone can deliver input.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. No. As a white South African, I grew up in a specific way and was raised accordingly and that's how I still live.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? No. One normally tries to find a compromise, but you still have to put your opinion across and you have the right to do that.
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.  
QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes, to a certain extent.
8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. I accept and encourage advice from other people.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. I have to respect decisions, because I have to implement them. You sometimes feel uncertain on how to deal with that, but things change quickly. Here you have constant change. Things change on a daily basis, so you learn quickly to adjust to changes - you have to.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. No.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? No. It's not always possible to move, but I will always try and make the necessary changes to ensure my happiness. I won't confront somebody in a group situation, but if there are personal differences, you have to approach it individually.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. You have to accommodate people. At the end of the day, it's all about business, not about personalities.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. Yes.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me.

QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. Again, within our work environment in ABSA, the management style and levels require of you to raise your opinion and give your point of view. Otherwise you're going to get lost.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? No. It is encouraged in ABSA.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes. We have weekly meetings and every now and again, you do something right that gets acknowledged. The portfolio managers at three different branches get together and achievements are mentioned at these meetings.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. I am comfortable who I am here and at home.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.
19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.
- QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? Yes. Absolutely. ABSA's policy favours addressing clients by their first names to make them feel valued and I feel comfortable with.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.
- QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. When it could lead to confrontations, it can be uncomfortable. Bombastic and arrogant people will make me uncomfortable.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.
- QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? No. For me it's about how the other person treats me. You get people that you just have to approach differently.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.
- QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I think differently about a lot of things - it's probably about values.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.
- QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. I don't want to be like the rest of the crowd. I don't want to be viewed as just another one of the group.

24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

#### AM5

#### COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.
- QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings? Yes. There is a difference between respect and focusing on the solution for a problem. They are two different things. I tend to focus on problems.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. Especially in my field as a product specialist, I depend on networking abilities. Therefore I need to maintain harmony at all times. I'll remove the emotional content, focus on the facts and address the problem purely theoretically and academically.

3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. Yes.

4. I would offer my seat to my superior.

QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes. For me it's not a cultural thing. It's purely a respect issue and comes back to the previous question regarding networking and maintaining harmony within a bigger organisation.

5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.

QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. I don't like people that and I don't think much of people who do that. For people like that, I don't have a lot of respect. It has nothing to do with my cultural background, it's about values.

6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.

QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. I strongly believe in team work and yes, from time to time, one would get involved in a situation where the decision will go against you. You'll have to accept the majority rule as long as the process is fair.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes. I do focus quite a lot on relationships and it is for me more important than my own achievements.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. No. IN my field, superior's advice is not directly involved in paving my career plan, but if it was, I would have taken note of their advice. It is in my nature to consult with as many parties as possible before making a decision. In my lifetime I've come across at least two people, one male and one female, whose lessons will stick with me forever.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes, very much so. It does not bother me. I suppose theoretically it bothers me, but in practice not. Our family believes in the turning of the wheel, so what you lose now, you'll win at a later stage.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. No. My situation as it is at the moment is a bit isolated, because I do not rely on any co-workers at this stage. But if I was reliant on co-workers and they failed, it obviously would have affected me. Therefore I would have

been responsible for them. At this stage, I'm not responsible for the development of any co-workers.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.  
 QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? Yes. I normally tell them.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. I welcome an argument or let me put it this way, I don't like arguments, but I like disagreements or debates. If statements can be verified and supported and argued accordingly, then I listen and insist that the other person listen to my side of the situation as well. But arguments... The word argument creates the perception of people screaming at each other. No, I don't get involved in screaming and shouting. I state my case, I support it with facts and it will take a very good debate or point to make me change my point of view. At this stage in my environment I do not have any personal clashes with any colleagues.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. Yes.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me.

QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. It's actually a golden opportunity to voice yourself. You must see such meetings as a platform to further yourself and to develop yourself. To talk in front of people is not a problem for me. The nature of my work is consulting and also presentations in front of audiences continuously.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. It will maintain balance. Especially if you're involved in the solution of a client's financial needs, yes.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? The nature of my social profile is that I thrive on recognition and I do welcome that. We do have a culture of financial incentives, which is very encouraging and I am very happy with that. About two days ago, it was done formally during a meeting and it was minuted as well. It made me feel good.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. It's because of the methodology that I apply in my relationships.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes. Absolutely, it's the core of my existence.
19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.  
 QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit?  
 Yes. I'm not a Mr and Mrs type of person unless it's a fairly elderly person. If I'm of the perception that the person is of retirement age, then I would address them as Mr or Mrs. In business, it's strictly first name basis.
20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.  
 QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. In my line of work, very much so. I cannot allow expectations to be created with a client. I need to lay the cards immediately on the table with regards to needs and expectations of the particular product. In other words, I can't play the violin for him. I need to give him a quick yes or a sudden death. One can be direct with a client in a respectful manner and it does not have to lead to an uncomfortable situation. Being direct does not mean being rude.
21. I act the same no matter who I am with.  
 QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? No. I have a very high versatility in terms of my social style. I therefore adapt my approach to the various social styles of my clients or colleagues that I deal with.
22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.  
 QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I'm a non-conformist and therefore enjoy being unique and different.
23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.  
 QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. It's the core of my existence - without an identity, you're nothing.
24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

**EF1**

1. Respect for authority figures with whom I interact. Yes, I think of myself if I have something to say irrespective of who I am in a meeting with I would give my honest opinion. And I don't think, even though I have respect for authority figures I see it more in a sense of the way I may be approaching an answer and then you know instead of maybe being direct and blunt I may be more diplomatic when I give an answer or voice my opinion.
2. Yes, it is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. Conflict .... I don't like to avoid conflict at all. I think it's important for you to sort things out, but I think that conflict should

be handled by the people who are in conflict with each other. I don't think you handle it in an open environment with everyone having a look to see whose having a big issue. I think you need to put both parties' opinion on the table and then come to some sort of a compromise. Not really. At the moment I think I am in an environment where maybe not having subordinates where you have to sit and reprimand people. It is actually quite nice - I think the environment I'm in I don't encounter much conflict at this stage.

3. Yes. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me
4. No. I do think it is important to show respect, but I don't think I'll go as far as offering my chair up for somebody else, because they are a person just like I am. And I also believe that if maybe they come to a meeting five minutes early they also would have a seat. But I think from their side, they need to plan ahead and I don't think it is a lack of respect if you don't offer your chair to somebody who maybe is in a higher position. *Would you do that irrespective of age, culture of gender.* Yes, yeah.
5. Yes. I have respect for people who are modest about themselves. *What has influenced this attitude.* Hmm, if I look at a person who has achieved something and they are modest, I almost feel as if it's not like they are bragging about the fact that they have achieved something. Or people who are successful don't have to tell you they are successful. They actually will show that in their actions in the way that they come across. The respect that you then have for that person because gee, that person has actually achieved a lot without them having to tell you that. That's how I look at it.
6. No. If I don't agree with them, I think you know a lot of the time you might think or I might think that my opinion is the most valid, but at the end of the day I think that you have to reach a situation where if somebody else has tried to persuade you why your opinion is not maybe as correct as their's is, I would leave there feeling OK now I agree with that person - then I would feel comfortable with it. If I leave there and really in my heart feel that what we've decided is incorrect, then I would feel... possibly if a democratic vote are made and ten people agree and only me disagree, you might have to leave the situation like that. But I might not in myself feel comfortable with it. *If a decision is put to a vote and the majority agrees, would you feel comfortable with it?* Not really, but it seems it's the way the whole country is going and that majority rules. And in certain situations, you're not going to satisfy everybody. In the one case I might be with the majority and the other I might be against. But if they put valid reasons, I think it's my duty to put other valid reasons as to try to sway other people to my side. And if doing that still does not convince them, then maybe I'll feel that you have to obviously go with majority rule.
7. No. I think maybe an example I could use, is marketing when I still worked in a branch. On a monthly basis the branch - in fact that was a sub branch in Claremont - and even through possibly the marketing I did, as a whole the team got the reward. And I think there it was important for the team to actually come together and for the team to be recognised. For a lot of the staff, it encouraged the others to do

more with each month that we'd win the award, their contribution became more and more. I think this brings out the best in other people as well - when you don't take all the credit for something.

8. Yes. I think I got a mentor that I basically confide in and somebody that I use to bounce ideas off. That happens to be Noeline as well. Well, I think having her as a superior of mine, I would not possibly respect each of my superiors' insight into my career development. Possibly her I've selected as a mentor just because I can go to her and discuss things. Actually just to clear stuff up in my own mind as opposed to Look give me the answer on whereto from here. So I think from that respect, I have selected a mentor that I can confide in and that have, I would say, superior knowledge to me about the whole set-up. And I would not just approach anybody and I think sometimes people can think that they're telling you constructively that you should be doing this or doing that and you need to take that from where it comes. You need to really weigh up if this is the real situation. I think we've come a long way and we've built a rapport with each other and I feel that she, irrespective of what I say or do, she gives me her honest feedback. And I think that's important. I think you can't live in a world of dreams. You must be honest in your feedback. And I think that's what she gives me. She almost puts my feet back on the ground and says These are your options. Have you looked at all the options or reasons.
9. No. I don't think I would change my mind and I would probably go with having tried to convince the others otherwise and put my opinion on the table and what I feel possibly could be a solution. And then, if it's still a situation where people feel differently, because each person sees a circumstance differently, then even though I might feel that the majority rules, I don't necessarily will change my own mind regarding that situation. *What would your reaction be to implementing such a decision.* I think when you've made a decision and it is in conflict and you walk out the door, what you feel has to stay behind. When you walk out that door and you're representing the management team or whatever, you need to go out there and actually implement what you've decided. You can't turn around and say Well I did not really wanted to. You have to stand by that decision and implement it even though in your heart you feel it was the wrong decision.
10. No.
11. No. Once again I can actually give you an example. I been with a group in the Claremont Trade area and I was managing the student bureau before I came here and the management team - just certain little things that people did you know behind closed doors and I thought to myself one day What am I doing here because there are certain things that I don't believe in. Everyone in Absa now have a lot of team building exercises where you go and you discuss dynamics in a team and what people do wrong and what people do right. And I was the only one out of the whole group who actually said Hold on a second. We're not so good. There are things that we maybe we need to look after in our own little departments. But I think from that context I decided I don't belong here and I'm moving on. And I did and I think that is a living example of me actually leaving a team, because I don't actually feel I'm adding value anymore or that their values are different from mine

and it's not a situation where you're happy to go to work. When you walk out of that boardroom, you need to know that the decision they've made, they listened to your argument. And I didn't. So I decided I should not be there. I just believe that people should say what they believe and then mean it. You don't say to yourself in a management meeting that we have to do it like this. You're actually deceiving people who don't see the whole set-up and you shouldn't. In that respect I have always had a leadership and management who've been open and honest and that whole underhanded behaviour is unacceptable.

12. No. Not necessarily. I think I don't necessarily disagree with someone because they're male or female or black or white or whatever. If your disagreeing with someone it's not because of their specific view point, but with what they're saying. People are what they are. I think even with your femaleness in the corporate world, you still have to walk out and still have to be a team member. You still have to get on, so I think more than anything else, once you've had your say in that situation, you need to. I don't think disagreements happen because I'm a woman and he's a man. I hate when that happens. It's horrible to think that you're too young to have an opinion or you're a woman or you're there because of affirmative action - something like that. But I think you do get it to a certain extent. I worked on the female development training programme within Absa and I think that at the end, as a group, we all decided Guys why do you want to be labelled as a female development programme? And we actually stopped it. And we said no, we're going to progress our careers, we're going to do what we'd normally do and achieve what we normally would achieve. But it's not because we're part of this little group. That's not going to help anything. So we're actually discontinued it and then we had another, which fell away. And then we had something like for affirmative action candidates and we said Guys, why are we actually labelling ourselves? Why are we doing this? We're don't actually need this to progress. You need development courses, you need the practical experience, the academic knowledge and that should be sufficient to progress in your career.
13. Yes.
14. Yes. I must admit that since I've come to this unit and I've been exposed a bit to the Afrikaans culture, it is a bit difficult because I know that if I give my opinion it's going to be in English. Half the time I'm sitting and translating what that guy is really saying. So by the time I've thought of something to actually say, it's a situation of OK, now I have to remember that so that I can maybe raise it with my manager. As opposed to in a meeting. But if he comes in directly I'm quite happy to give him guidance and share my knowledge on that subject. I don't think it is a problem, but I do think that Afrikaans is still a bit of a barrier for me. I do speak and understand Afrikaans, but I just think that with them being 'true Afrikaans speaking people' I must still sit and translate and then react. I'm getting into it, but it's taking a little while.
15. Yes. I think it definitely is not the kind of environment that will encourage you to do strange things. But we do want people to put suggestions on the table. We actually have a suggestion forum where you can put a suggestion in on how it's going to affect the whole process and it's submitted to head office. So there are channels to do things like that and I think that I've never in any Absa environment where there has been a suggestion of change, nobody's ever said no it

won't work and we've done it this way for fifty years and we'll continue to do it this way. So I think that's very positive. We're so used to change in Absa, that when change comes or when you suggest something, it is not actually taken as a threat, but rather as positive action towards the work process.

16. Yes. With the last temporary bonuses that we got, I got one. I think that was about two months ago and although it was not an open display for everybody where they heard who got performance bonuses, but it was more unofficial. Hmm, but I think the parties that handed them out knew about it. And I think from that respect it was quite nice to know that from all the staff members I got a bonus. And then I got a letter from Laetitia van Dijk, who is the top person in training at Head Office, to say that congratulations for being one of the top students. It was just a letter that came out and nothing official, but I felt quite proud of that. I even showed my husband and said 'Look what I got.'
17. No. I just think it's a case of you've got your kids and your husband at home. I feel there are different roles - the one is more professional and the one is the more motherly, wife whatever. You can't treat your husband exactly like you treat your colleagues at work or speak to your children like you speak to your workers. It's different roles that you play. I don't think I'm completely different person, but I'm probably just more professional at work and at home more relaxed, down-to-earth. If I have to think of a personal example, with the kids I'll probably scream and shout and carry on, which I'll probably wouldn't do at work. And at work I'll dress up, wear make-up and do something with my hair, while at home I'm more natural and more casual.
18. Yes.
19. Yes. I think it's a personal preference. In the old Allied branch, a lot of staff called each other by their first names, but on the United and Volkskas side it was more formal Mister and Mrs So-and-So. But coming from the old United background, it took me quite a while to call people by their first names, but now we've grown accustomed to it, I do it quite naturally. It depends on which branch staff came from, for example people coming from Volkskas still do the more formal thing out of habit more than anything else. But I think on our managerial level, I feel that we can call each other by our first names.
20. Yes. Hmm, I don't think it makes me feel uncomfortable because that is actually just the way I am. I'd rather say something as it is. I hate people who will tell me a long story to get to the point. So I don't feel it makes me uncomfortable. If you need to say something, I'd rather that you say it than don't and wish you have. I suppose managers people that I don't know too well will influence it, but since I know most of them. For example Andre Rossouw, I've only met him a couple of times, but I'm quite direct with him. My boss I'm quite direct with. I suppose, maybe somebody that I didn't know that well, I'll hesitate before saying something too direct to them.
21. Yes. I think that having been with Absa for so long, you become comfortable within the organisation and I think from that point of view it's actually easy to act and be who you are. Otherwise during the day you likes this with some people and later different - and it shows.
22. Yes. Hmmm. I think (and this is my personal point of view) because I'm ambitious. There other people who in twenty years time will probably be sitting in the same job. And I think that I've built quite a bit of rapport not only with the staff here who I work with such as

human resources. So I think from that point of view, things like I chair the disciplinary committee which even though it puts a bit of pressure on my work, but at the end of the day I'm actually getting exposure within the organisation. And the next time somebody hears my name, they'll actually know me and remember me instead of somebody else who do not involve themselves in the organisation. And that is what you need to do to progress in your job.

23. Yes. You need to know who you are. So, to have your own personal identity is how you've been raised, what you believe within your organisation. And I believe you can't just be a lot of sheep following one direction. If you don't have the few people that make the difference in an organisation, you're going to have no changes, no imagination. You're going to have no vision within the organisation. If I think since being a child and since going to school, I've been in leadership roles at school by being netball or house captain and things like that, I didn't see myself as a natural leader. It was very difficult for me, like for example in assembly one of the house captains had to go out and read the sports results and that was the worst thing you could do to me. So although I did not see myself as a natural leader, I think as I got older I changed to such an extent that even if I feel that I'm quite an introverted person, there are certain roles that you have to perform as an extroverted person. You might have to do a bit of public speaking or present a workshop or be the chairperson in a hearing. And I think if I compare that to my childhood, I don't feel that as a child maybe this is how my mom and dad brought me up to the person I am. I feel that as I've actually grown up, I've become more outspoken, taken on more challenges and have seen what my potential really is. And from that I've actually tried to make the most of in the specific situation.
24. Yes.

## EF2

1. Yes. There definitely is a little bit of job title and protocol involved in the process. If I don't support a decision, I will make it known to the group that I don't support the decision and that there has been a majority rule consensus and that I will ensure that my side of the story is put on the table. I'll give them another chance to sway me to their side. If it really gets to the bottom line, I will concede and say that I will implement what you want, but give me the input and the tools for me to do it your way. Because sometimes I won't have the tools to do it the other way.
2. Yes. In terms of working environment and voting, we normally try to get consensus by the general knowledge that we have regarding the topics and the business that we're in. So we don't normally have to go through a vote. But I think there your manager or kingpin should sometimes be called in to act as referee. What is your decision? Where does the strategy take us? And then as soon as the leader comes in, we all seem to his goal or strategy with the topic that you're talking about. And then consensus is normally reached as you've got the same vision.
3. No.

4. Yes. I think this is partially due to how I was raised. And I'll still make allowances based on the distinction of age. But sometimes it's because there is this male-female thing. It is an obstacle to the guy, because they feel very threatened that a woman could actually work on a business level at the same level as what they are. It becomes very difficult when you start - I think they're more uncomfortable that I am. Then you're in a situation and they're offering for you to walk out of the door first and that's in their male culture to allow a woman out of the door first. And you've been sitting in a meeting together as colleagues working on the same thing! But he'll get up and pull your chair out and let you out of the door first. So the role swings very easily in the circumstances that I work with and the people that I meet, because they are mature (as in age) gentlemen that come from very strong backgrounds. They believe a lady is always a lady. And they find it very difficult. At this moment in time, I think they have a clear distinction between what's going on around the boardroom table and when they step aside for me to get into the lift first. I think they've learned to understand that I will be a lady under those circumstances, but around the boardroom table we are colleagues. I will always maintain my femininity and I'll always be proud to be a female. To me, that is good. What I do find an obstacle though is that when you come into the area of money, I'm still of the opinion that the guy pays when you're in a restaurant. Sometimes I don't think that's fair in the business environment as the guy's inclined to take his purse out and say Right, I'm going to pay for the drinks or whatever. I will allow him to do it once, but if you're sitting for a longer period of time, I'll do it the second time. And I'll always do it under the guise of 'It's on the bank.' I'll never take it from the point of this is me giving you something. And I think they feel more comfortable with that umbrella. I'm still inclined to fall in the trap of allowing the guy to pay.
5. Yes. I can normally see right through bragging. For me it is important to show it through somebody's actions rather than through verbal.
6. Yes. I can think of many times when I've done that to make team participation better. Sometimes subordinates look for guidance and you have to set clear goals for them. In terms of a mandate and your own personal management style, you need to set it in context. Specifically for younger staff, you need to stick to protocol
7. No. It's difficult to give you an example, but in general terms I try not to say who I am and where I'm coming from. I do find that it happen during conversations that it comes out and you can't hide it. An example would be my 17-year old daughter has for the past couple of months had a steady boyfriend and now the two families have met. He comes from a very very stern Afrikaans family. Also with a mother and father still married to each other and the mom has been a housewife for twenty-three years. And in conversation with me, one of the first things she said within the first half-an-hour was 'You're a bank manager, aren't you?' So, I'm obviously

saying something or doing something that is different as she could pick it up as a housewife. So, although I try not to say who I am and I never told her what my status is at work and I talked to her as the mother of Leanne, she still picked it up. I'm a little bit concerned and need to look in the mirror perhaps - at the role. It depends whether you start talking about business. If it comes to business, I'm quite happy to give you my business acumen and discuss it on that level. But if I'm talking to a housewife, I'm quite concerned for her not actually feeling threatened that the bank manager is talking to her. I don't believe that she should be uncomfortable with that and I'll be flexible. So, whomever I'm talking to I'll adapt.

8. Yes. I like to ask for advice and not the advice coming to me voluntarily. If I need to make a decision about my career or something, I will ask. I love gathering information and I will go out and not ask one person, but many people in the network or circle to give me some information. But I sometimes sit back and say thank for the advice, but I don't take it lightly - especially if you're telling me how to do it. I like doing it my way. When you're in a formal session where feedback is required, I'll accept your opinion and I will thank you if it's positive. If it's negative, I'll thank you afterwards, but I sometimes need to go and think on it and tell myself that you're quite correct in your assumptions. But I sometimes need a little time to take note and make judgements. *On mentoring.* I'll go across the board and find someone who'll give me the best advice under those circumstances, but I wouldn't go to just one person and say you're looking after me. Because I think that I want to be in control and while I'm in control, I'll go and seek advice for what I'm busy controlling. I would look for somebody who has a good balance between business and being people-orientated. The person must understand that you have a family and come from other walks of life - that you're a balanced person and that you don't just live at work. Because there are some mentors who are workaholics and I prefer and really try to balance my life. Work hard when you work and play hard the other times. So, I like somebody who have almost the same background or opinion about life.

9. Yes. Again, because I think I'm flexible, I will implement the decision that was taken. I'd be able to live with it for a while, but you'll probably find that I start using negotiating techniques or manipulation and I'll start coming at the decision from another angle. And in the end, you'll probably find I'll influence it to a degree. I will probably allow you to think that your decision was the one that was taken. *On changing opinions.* I'll probably gather enough information along the way to either change my opinion or accept it, but something will happen.

10. No

11. Yes. I am quite and I don't use the word withdraw, so that I can think about what you're saying and to choose my words well. There will be a time where I'll act as devil's advocate and I'll only open my mouth to play devil's advocate and to swing the whole conversation to where I want it to be. In other words, I manipulate the situation. But I need silence in order to get my mind right. No, I take stock, be quiet, listen for a while and then I'll come in with something.

11. No. It's very difficult for me to answer, because I don't have much to choose from other than the white, Afrikaans male. So, it's difficult as they could all be classified in the same group. I find that the females would give you a run for your money on an open basis. They will knock on your door and say 'I didn't agree with what you said and this is what I want to say - both Afrikaans and English. And they will tell you 'Listen to me' but they will never do it in a group context, they will come on a one-on-one basis thereafter. I think they're probably also suffering a bit with white, male culture and there are a few females coming in. And I think they're just more comfortable on a one-on-one basis. Men would rally support and normally would challenge in group context. One-on-one they don't challenge. But it's like with a golf club where they'll get together in their little teams and a spokesperson will come and say something. And then I'll normally challenge the spokesperson and if it becomes something that I don't believe they have the right information about or if the person themselves believe in it so strongly, they would normally rally the support of their superior. And then they'll do the little team effort thing of 'Let us get together' but never one-on-one. The ones who do, are the ones who are developing positively. And the ones that are building positively, but there are very few of them. Maybe because they don't believe a white woman should be doing this work. Any woman, actually. Traditionally, they've had thirty years experience of the bank and it would be male dominance. And I think they still probably have a bit of a gender crisis. You seem to have to prove to them by tremendous results before they'll actually give you an opportunity or a chance. Then, you'll get another male who'd say 'employment equity - give them a chance.' And you'll say that it proves nothing to you - going from one extreme to the next. There does not seem to be a balance. What has happened here is that they have taken a certain skill out of the bank and they've centralised it. That predominantly was that of finance and credit lending, which was a case of the man would lend the money. He'd make the money decisions and because we're a credit assessment centre, all the credit lenders are 90% male.

13. No.

14. Yes. I suppose I am who I am. I think that if you talk about meetings, I'm probably there as an expert and I need to give expert input to those in the meeting. But I have taught myself to listen to their views as well. When something needs to be said from my work environment, I'm quite happy to give my expert opinion. After years and years of working, you know best practices and you're confident.

15. Yes. I love putting ideas on the table, but I'm sitting with these analytical types.

You have to adapt your creativity. If you just look around the office here, you'll see creativity in action. It's all in colour. It's visual and in different textures. You'll find a lot of it coming out. But yet, when you need to present it to the credit specialist, you need to be clinical and do it in format. The current environment is not at all suited to creativity, because of the nature of the job. It is very analytical and facts-driven. You can only lend money on facts and not on assumptions. So, all this airy-fairy stuff as they call it, has got nothing to do with what they do on a daily basis. And because they focus

on it all the time, that creativity is way out of line. And yet what happens is that we'll have a cultural day or a market day and we'll allow the creativity to come out. And everybody who does home craft or has an entrepreneurial business will come into our big boardroom and have a display and sell their wares and have a wonderful day. But they will show and use their creativity on a visual basis. But we actually have to set the day aside, tell everybody that it will happen two months before and that it will happen between x time and y time and that table belongs to so-and-so. You've got to give the information and the facts and then on the particular day, they'll be a bit creative.

16. Yes. In 1999, I won an Absa National Quality Award. I went through quite a number stages. I was nominated on two areas, one being a forum, which I chaired for the past six years called AbsaNet. This is a forum to develop staff within the Absa Group. I won the Western Cape award and then they nominated me for the national award and I went and was one of the final ten. Three were gala events and my husband was invited along. It was in Gauteng and it was on our television. And there was a gold medal and a statuette and money. It was the biggest and flashiest award ceremony that I've ever seen. It is something that is televised through the whole of Absa, so a lot of people you haven't seen in a long time, e-mail me. I was on Cloud 39 for about ten days. That was very nice. I must admit that I couldn't say thank you enough to the person that put pen to paper to write the award, because without her input it would not have happened. And I think that I don't know even today if I did enough to thank her. But it absolutely reinforces to me that people are what makes the difference. And there was one person who put pen to paper for me and why I got the award. You don't nominate yourself, somebody else does it.

17. No. I think there are a couple of similar roles, but you have to be the mom. You have to be the physical mom who hugs and kisses and sits on laps and things like that, which is something you do not do at work. You have this distance. You do not touch unless you're shaking hands. That is a very big difference to me - the physical contact. The family supports me with my work. They help me when I need it and it's very difficult to make sure that the work does not come before the family. If we're talking about family support, there are times when the work does not support the family. But if you're talking about an afternoon off to take the kids to the dentist, they will support and allow you the time off. You almost feel guilty in allowing that side in. While I'm working I love to get them involved wherever possible. For example, I'd love my daughter to continue working as a casual here, but the other staff are saying "Oh, but your daughter is working here." And you've got to be a bit careful about that.

18. Yes.

19. Yes. I think I called everybody by their names from the day I was born.

It just

seems very natural to me to speak to people. I do believe that we've been for the past fifteen years really been trying to speak to people and not Mr this and Mrs that. I don't feel comfortable when people want to address me as Mrs. I still only find it coming out of the Volkscas staff and that's I think a deep-seated culture they have that in a working environment everyone is Mr and Mrs. From my side, I've always be very

comfortable with first names. And yet, I think if you ask me to speak to the CEO of Absa, I'd call him Mr Bosman. For what reason I really don't know. Yet if I talk to you about him, I'll call him Nallie. But if I have to face him and I have done so at the award show and I had to shake his hand and thank him and I said "Thank you Mr Bosman." Where it came from I don't know. Perhaps it is just that acknowledgement of his status in the organisation.

20.No. If you don't know the person, you can't even know when you crack a joke

with them that's going to be offensive. You've got no idea of what their backgrounds are and say I wanted to have a naughty joke and the guy might just be a little bit weird himself. So you need to find out before you start being open or too open with regard to what you're saying. I do not like to intentionally or unintentionally hurt people. And words can be really very harsh. So I'd rather suss out the scene a little bit and get to understand them and then be able to add something in a positive way. Because I can be open and forthright, but I at least want to know that you're gonna play me on the same field. You know, it's only on the AbsaNet side that I deal with a lot of diversity in terms of colour. And in certain circumstances, I work with employment equity as part of my portfolio. And then sometimes communication becomes a bit of a problem. So, it depends on who you're talking to or about and unless you understand. I'll give you an example. The other day we had some staff members helping us to prepare for a function and a person that I know to be a Muslim was eating off the braai and having a beer. And my perception was that he was a Muslim and they don't eat other people's meat and certainly don't touch alcohol. So he surprised me and I don't think I would ever have walked up to him and offered him a beer or meat. I would probably have asked him if we can organise something separately or I would have made the assumption that he would rather not participate or partake in what we're doing. Again, that's why you need to begin to know the people. You need to start to learn about different people.

21.No. I think that example I used about the boyfriend's mom at the moment being

a housewife. I'd rather talk to her about things that are comfortable to her, rather than the latest share prices. So, I think I would definitely behave differently. You just adapt to the circumstances you've got. For instance, if we're at a family braai, I'd eat the chop with my hands and fingers, but if we're at work the knife and fork would come out. Why everybody tries to be all laney (you know when somebody does eat his chop with his fingers), it think it's the business etiquette side. So, I definitely change my behaviour between personal and professionally. I do think in a professional environment you're required to be a bit more stuffy, where you don't want to offend anybody else and you raise your standards, so that everyone is on the same level - no matter what background you're from. In the professional environment, you'll have your business etiquette and you abide by those etiquette's because you're all on the same par. But if you come from your own home and you're Muslim and you eat with your right hand, you may do so. But you're not going to do that in a business environment. So it's important that business etiquette should be standardised across all cultures. In a professional environment, the protocol should override cultural differences. Definitely, so that everybody is comfortable and that there's no one... I can give you an example that I haven't resolved for myself yet is whether

you pray before you eat at a business function. OK, if there's a protocol around that, it has never been laid down in any of the workshops I've ever attended. And I still don't know whether to pray or not to pray. Or if openly is acceptable to all. In the environment that we do work in, there is a request that it should happen. But I don't know if that the correct thing.

22.No. I don't believe that everyone should be packaged in the same uniform. I

think everyone has their own style of portraying themselves as individuals. In terms of being somebody who likes to be myself, I don't go about life wanting to look like somebody else. I am who I am and I will make the best of who I am. And I'm happy to be different from everybody else. I might not be the 36-24-36 dimension that some people might say you need this slim and trim figure to be in business. So, I think in that way I'm quite happy to be unique and I accept that in anybody else. For instance, you have an odd person or two working in our environment, who is obese. But if they can do the job, so what? You don't have to conform to a certain measurement and in the same way when you want to portray a corporate image, do you have to do it through means of a uniform or can you achieve it through your own dress code. That is something that I prefer - to be myself. Ja, I just like to be independent and to drive my own car. It's important to be able to go out there and do your own thing and not having to rely on other people. And there are a lot of women out there who still want to be driven around and taken places. It still happens.

23.Yes. I like to achieve. I like to see things - my motto is continuous improvement

and if I see continuous improvement in my life, in all aspects, then I'm a happy chappie. As soon as I start to plateau out or dip down, then I pull myself together and say 'Come there's no improvement going on here - let's see what we can do. I think I started off life in a very poor environment and continued right from being a child to actually improve. Never profess to be the next billionaire, but saying to myself 'Come, you're actually the only one able to get yourself out of this environment. If you don't like the house you're living in, because it's too small - what are you going to do about it? You have to put in the position to buy something bigger and more suitable to what you want. I think my personality likes pretty things. I like to see nice things. I don't like dirt and little things like that would lead me to decisions based on what would look nice, rather than what would be practical.

24.Yes.

### EF3

1. No. When I answered the question, it was for a particular reason. In general I would think that people would not necessarily know that, although I do have a face that kind of gives a lot away. But yeah, obviously it does have a negative impact on my credibility probably. I think it is based on my corporate environment. I don't think the particular environment in ABSA don't encourage people who think wider than authority.

2. Yes. I would address it. Absolutely, I would address the issue. Whether I'd address it in the right way or not is my personal concern as I think I'd probably just put it out there and maybe not address it in a diplomatic way.
3. No.
4. No. Look, it's really a very male dominated environment and I believe that the culture in this organisation (and I can't compare it with any other organisation) is very patriarchal in that people think that because they are senior to you, they deserve respect. MY philosophy is that I respect only people who have earned that respect. And you don't get it just because you're my boss. So, if the roles were reversed, I definitely won't give up my seat just because it's a superior.
5. No. I hate it. I think there's absolutely nothing to be gained by playing small. If I'm interviewing people, I always ask the question 'Now why must I give you the job?' And if they say - hmm, because I'm good, I want them to say: Because I'm brilliant and I'm the best person you'll ever get. It might be well be how I was brought up or a cultural thing, particularly as I have some brilliant coloured people, who are now knocking on the doors to the senior level. I was reading an article yesterday about how the wider implications of the apartheid system was that people were made to believe that and they grew up in an environment where they sincerely believed that they were second-place citizens. So, maybe it's a cultural thing.
6. Yes. You know I'm in a situation at the moment where I've been told to close down a specific area, which is going to mean that I go in there and retrench 160 people. Obviously, this is not something that I want to do, but I understand the wider implications for the business and I understand that it has to be done. So, if I look at what I would have wanted to do, it might not have been to do it in the way it's being done now. But I will do it and everyone will think that I'm fully supportive of the decision.
7. No. I think one of the advantages of being a female, is that the system does not necessarily see you as being a boss. So I find that I have a lot more credibility in an average group, because I'm female and I don't go in and say I'm the boss. I'll go into an ABSA branch as a customer and something's gone wrong. I'm not going to walk up (as I know a lot of my colleagues do) and say I'm the regional manager and I want something different to everyone else. I've done it once when I've had such uphill that I've actually just been frustrated beyond belief. And I said, look I'm a regional manager and I'm not going to come back next week for something that I know is available right now. I would not normally do that, except as a last resort.
8. No. It would depend very much on who it came from. If I look at someone here like one of the other regional managers, they have often given me advice, which I undoubtedly would take cognisance of. If my boss gives me advice, I would too. I think I've had a couple of

mentors over the years. Mainly male, because that's how it was. Fortunately, that's changing and we've got people here like Juliette, who as a female, is great and she's like a breath of fresh air. But mainly in the past, any mentors or coaching I've had, has been by male bosses.

9. Yes. I would always strongly make a point, but it will again depend what group I'm in. Probably, if it was my management team and again, this arose this morning. Someone suggested something for someone who I believe does not support ABSA values in that she has no integrity. I made my point known to the group, but said that they might be aware of other things as she's on a lower level. And my one interaction with her had been that she lied about something. So, I made my point clear to the group and when it came to a vote, I abstained. And it was carried in the end, albeit though in a different format. So, it depends on what it is. If it's something I feel very strongly about, I won't have a problem in objecting, but I think too many people object for the sake of objecting.
10. Yes.
11. Yes. It happens all the time. It's OK. Sometimes I feel obviously feel uncomfortable, but you'll know that I'm uncomfortable. But yeah, I can't possibly expect to love all the people I work worth - although I do try.
12. No. I have to say if I think about it, the people I most often disagree with are all Afrikaans males. But I must say, I also have inside work very good Afrikaans male friends. So I don't want you to think that I have something against Afrikaans men. From a work perspective I can give you a specific example of a thing that I have an issue with - I am English English-speaking. I understand Afrikaans perfectly well. I went to college to try and learn to speak Afrikaans. I came here full of this fervour that I'm learning this new language and tried to speak it. And they started laughing at me, so unless I know someone incredibly well, I will not speak Afrikaans to them or with them, because I will not be laughed at. I do have friends that I will converse in Afrikaans with, but I know and they know it's more than their lives worth to laugh at me when I make a mistake. But I find in meetings, because I am generally speaking the only English-speaking person there, that if I've said something that is contentious or if I've disagreed with something, they'd always switch to Afrikaans. Now I don't know if that's because they think that I'm not that fluent and maybe they'll get something past me. And I keep thinking that I'm going to challenge a group at some stage, but I must say I've never had the balls to do it yet. The ABSA culture is still very Afrikaans. We took the top 300 in ABSA and I was part of that group three years ago that took the decision that our communication language internally would be English and it just does not happen. Half the communication I get, is Afrikaans, which I accept as the majority. I mean, I've stood up for it. We've had a whole new leadership programme a couple of years ago and I sat in on a couple of things, just to see what level it was pegged at and the English was so high, that I said 'Your average employee in ABSA, I don't understand even understand some of the words you're using, so if you take someone in Blikkiesdorp, he's not going to

have a clue. So, we need to either make the English far more understandable or offer the course in Afrikaans. So, I understand where people are coming from, but we definitely have an environment where people are clinging on to a language, which is not a universal business language. I have no objections against our meetings being in Afrikaans, provided that the rest of the group is happy with that.

INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. YES.

14. YES. Yeah, you know I never attributed it to my background, but maybe it is that. MY kids have brought that home to me. They've been born in this country, but have both spend a lot of time in England where my whole family still lives. And they say that it so much more of a freer environment to speak your truth rather than playing the political games. And I don't think ABSA is unique in the political game-playing that goes on. So, I think that maybe the South African culture has been that you have to play the right game. And I'm really not very good at that game.

15. Yes. *On creative environment.* Definitely not. And every year we say that we need more creative people. We need to have more out-of-the-box ideas and I think any organisation is just heading for disaster if we don't work ourselves out of jobs and find really out-of-the-box ways of doing things. But if you suggest those things, it's 'Sorry, it's going to cost R10-million to change the system and this won't work, because of that. So there's always a reason why it won't work. I have a feeling it's probably banking industry related - serious, grey shoes, don't rock the boat to much stuff.

16. Yes. That one over there was the Chief Executive Award three years ago. And if I can tell you, I took the money that they gave me and I gave it to the staff, because I got it for retrenching people. My boss nominated me and it really rankled that someone wants to give me an award, because I put 200 people out on the street. But anyway, that was the last one I got. I love rewards and fortunately I get invited to our big award ceremony every year and I think it's great. I would be delighted to get one for the right reasons - not for firing people.

17. YES. It has never occurred to me to be different at home and at work.

18. Yes.

19. Yes. That cheeses these Dutchmen off no end. Look, if I can tell you when I first came to this country, I worked for Lloyd's Bank in England and I was Miss Hartman. I did not even have a first name. So when I first came to this country, I found it was wonderfully freeing that all your colleagues called you by your first name. OK, with the boss it was still Meneer. I suppose if I think about it, there's probably one or two people, still from those days, who I will (if I bump into them, because some have retired) I will call them Mr So-and-So, because I was very junior that's how I looked at them. And I would probably be quite uncomfortable calling them by their Christian names. But now, I think if you're introduced to me as Ronelda whatsoever, I won't call you

Miss.. In ABSA, it is still Meneer or Mevrou or my all-time worst Mam. I absolutely hate that.

20. Yes. Not in my environment. I think with people, because I'm inclined to be too direct, it's people who I don't know very well. If I feel passionately about something, I will confront them no matter who they are. I did it with Danie Cronjé, our CEO, a couple of years ago. So yeah, I'll do it to anyone if I feel strongly about something. I find with the younger people and probably people under 25 of any race, colour or gender, they are so much like sponges and they're so much more open. I mean, I walk around one of the buildings and the youngsters will say 'Hello Sue and how are you today?' whereas the people over 40 will say 'Hello Mevrou.' So, there's a big difference between how the young people react and how the older people react - and that's probably cultural. I think generally speaking men don't want to work for a woman and in previous positions. Fortunately by the time I came to Cape Town, I could say 'This is me and I'm not wasting any energy in telling you I'm it and sorry for that.' Previously I wasted so much time proving to people that I am capable of doing the job, I was very clear when I came to Cape Town that I was not going to do that. I said 'I'm here. At least I'm white, because the next one is going to be black. And that's happened with Juliette, who is coloured, and that has really put a rock in the system and I love it. But yeah, men do not like working for women and they feel personally affronted if I do attack an issue. Even though I always try to attack the issue and not the person, but I think males particularly are inclined to take it a lot more personally than women. And that might be the fact that I'm English-speaking, because I don't really have some older English guys working for me.
21. Yes.
22. Yes. I think the fact that truth and integrity is very important to me. I really can't tell you how much I dislike people playing games - and that's probably in any culture, any gender. I think people just get to a certain point, where they don't want their truth out there. And this is exactly who I am and you'll know exactly where you stand with me in the first three minutes of meeting. And if you don't like it, it's your problem. It's certainly not mine. And I'm not going to lose any sleep over it.
23. Yes. I think if I look at myself 5-6 years ago, I was always very keen not to look very English. And I actually went on a course outside ABSA and I actually thought I'm quite proud of where I come from. I absolutely love South Africa and would never go back to the UK and I love it here. But this is who I am, it's part of what makes me who I am - the fact that I was born somewhere else. So why should I try to conform to what anyone else wants me to be, when this is in actual fact who I am. I'm really too old now to change.
24. Yes.

EF4

1. Yes. In terms of protocol, I would behave myself. But I won't not voice my opinion. I won't attack you personally, but it won't stop me from voicing my opinion.
2. Yes. I'll try and calm everybody down. And I'll say: Hang on, this is getting out of hand. Let's get back to basics. Get back to the reason we're arguing about. Try to clarify and let everybody see reason and let them understand why a certain route is the better one of the two.
3. No.
4. No. I think it's important to show respect, but I won't get up and stand for anyone. If there were a seat short, I won't give up mine because the MD has walked in. He can look around and find a seat for himself.
5. Yes. This comes from a personal background. I admire people who are modest within the workplace and outside. People will find out your position as they go along anyway - I won't introduce myself as such.
6. Yes. If it's for the better of the group or to obtain the group's objective, I will sacrifice my views or own interest. If it's for the group's benefit, I'll go with them and give it my all.
7. Yes. I find that I do that more as the years went on. The more subordinates I have reporting to me, the more you find you do that. I think it's obviously to motivate others. You give them an idea when they work on a project, you just plant the seed and they develop and run with it and it's a success. And you can stand back and you watch. I think you get more satisfaction out of that. You will not then say 'That's actually my idea. You gain more self-satisfaction from such a situation.
8. No. I take the advice, I'll toy with the idea and listen. But at the end of the day it's going to be my decision. I've just taken a major decision in my life against the advice of my employers. There were two people in my career, the one woman is no longer with us, and one guy who I'd say I saw as mentors. The woman was bilingual, probably more English than Afrikaans and the guy was an Afrikaans male.
9. Yes. If I don't agree with the group, I'll probably sulk a bit and then go with the group's decision. It does not make you feel good if you have to give up your view or your thinking. But at the end I'm strong on team and group. If that's what the group wants, then OK.
10. No.
11. No. I've got no problem in walking out of a meeting where things did not go my way and meet to have a drink outside where we can laugh and chat and no problem. I cut off there and say OK, I've lost that battle and we leave it at that. Leave it in the boardroom. So, I won't sulk for hours. I'll actually watch it unfold and later (which is something I should not do, I know) if things don't work out, I like to say 'I told you so'.
12. No. I tend to disagree with people or rather specific personalities. Show-offs, loud, that type of personality. So, you shut down and you close up as soon as the person says something. So you tend not to listen what they say and you also lose out on valuable information like that. But it's definitely based on personalities.

## INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. Yes.

14. Yes. I actually think it's something I developed over the years. The more confident you get, the more you know your subject, the less problems you have. But I know I was not like that ten or fifteen years ago. I think it's due to maturity and confidence.

15. No. Not in the environment that I'm in. It's more the guys in marketing and sales and the guys that work with the vision and mission. I'm not saying it's not important. I'm saying it is important, because that will keep the company going and people must come up with new ideas. That is not the field I specialise in. It's almost like you leave it up to those guys, they will come up with ideas and we will implement. Within this bank, they actually encourage that type of thing and thinking. There's channels you use to direct that type of thing. So for me personally it's not important, but for the group it is.

16. No. It makes me feel awkward. Uncomfortable. We've got a very good audit for instance for which I'm held responsible. But for me, it was my staff and my team and I'm just managing the processes, you see. But at the end of the day, the buck stops with me. If that audit had not been good, I would have got it. We've got a very good audit, so the attention was on me and the e-mails went out, but I felt uncomfortable about it. I don't like the focus to be on me. As loud as my mouth is, I don't like the focus on me.

17. No. I think it's because they always remind me at home that this is not work. Be mommy now. I've got kids and you have to be the mother. I'm probably tougher at work than at home. I always try to switch off when I drive home and think 'OK, I'm home now.' So I do try and be different.

18. No.

19. Yes. As I was going through the corporate world through the years, they actually encouraged using people's first names, especially in terms of us senior guys. We started making a concerted effort in moving away from Mr and Sir and Meneer and that and using first name terms. I've got no problem with using a first name.

20. Yes. In terms of my position, I know the personalities. So, I know who can take directness and who can't take it. I'll tone it down a bit.

21. Yes. Tessa is Tessa most of the time.

22. Yes. I think or I was often told that's because I am so direct. My previous manager always used to tell me that when they handed out diplomacy, I was last in the queue. He always teased me about that and I think that's what makes me different. I will call a spade a spade.

23. Yes. I don't want to be one of a crowd. I want people to know me - Tessa.

24. Yes.

EF5

## COLLECTIVE:

1. Yes. In a meeting, if I believe strongly about something, I will certainly interact with someone in authority about it. I will certainly debate the subject with respect, but I won't back down from a standpoint I firmly believe in. If, however, the person in authority has got something very viable to say and I can see the logic in it, I will say 'Yes, I agree with you or I do apologise, I made a mistake' and I'll backtrack. But I'm not afraid to state my point.
2. Yes. It's something I've recently experienced. It's very depending on who the co-worker is, what the type of personality is. I think you live and learn every day. My own personal level and my colleague, with whom I actually had a run-in with on Friday, it was very difficult, because this specific person is very dominating. So, I had to almost raise my voice, because I get extremely frustrated when I'm not being heard. When they don't understand what I'm trying to bring across and I feel that I put it fairly clearly to understand, although there is an Afrikaans and English difference here. She is very Afrikaans and I'm not that worried about languages. So, I feel I've come to a point where I have to express myself in Afrikaans to this particular person, because I don't feel I'm getting understood in English. I will speak it out. I hate things shoved under the carpet. I like things to be spoken about, dealt with and obviously taken aside, away from everybody else.
3. Yes.
4. Yes. Anybody to me, even age, anybody whose a senior to myself, I automatically (due to my own personality) respect that person. And I do expect it from my subordinates as well. It is very important. However, there is two sides to respect as well. But I do respect someone in authority. However, I'm not afraid to speak on their level and to debate with them on issues if I have to.
5. No. I think it's both corporate and how I've been brought up. I've certainly learned a lot through ABSA and their various interventions and training like the diversity courses. Unfortunately, they've put a stop to it, but apparently they're bringing it back again. I learned a lot about the different cultures through this and that was an eye-opener. At various soft skills courses that I've done, I've also learnt a lot. I would say modesty, I respect someone that can say 'Look here, I do a damn good job'. If they believe in it and if I can see it.. especially if I look at my own subordinates, I don't see anything wrong with it.
6. Yes. I will certainly say something. I find it very difficult to hold back. I'd certainly put my opinion on the table. However, if someone can debate against it and I can see logically that it's not a positive thing that I've put on the table, I will retract. But I certainly would, if I don't agree with something, put it on the table.
7. Yes. If it was necessary and that person had a low self-esteem and it was needed to be done, yes. I would certainly do it. I would sacrifice myself.

8. Yes. Well, sometimes. I always do feel and I've been lucky that I've learned a lot from my superiors, but there are times where personalities are different and where my superior don't always know me to the fullest extent as I know myself. So they won't always know what's good for me and my future. So, I wouldn't necessarily always take it into account. I'd listen to their opinions certainly and give my opinions, but I wouldn't necessarily go to someone in authority. I believe in the Human Resources department and I'd take someone in HR. There were a couple of people I greatly admired in human resources throughout the courses - such as Shirley Vrinjas. That was someone I greatly admired. I think the reason being that my passion lies in this. I do have a passion for people, the psychology, how the human mind thinks and yeah, I admire people in that profession.
9. Yes, especially in our business.
10. No.
11. Yes. In a situation or a group, I've learned. Before I would take a leap and a bound and would have run away. But I've learnt that it's not fair to myself to do that. So, to tackle the situation or tackle the problem, whichever the case may be, to make things more comfortable for myself. It's very important to me to be happy in my job and to be happy in the group that I'm working in. And if I find that there's not a group that I can be happy with in the future and I find that I can't change things, then I'd probably move on. Then I'd find somewhere that I'll be happy.
12. No. It would probably be people on my own level - my colleagues, irrespective of gender or culture. It's definitely more personality clashes.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. Yes.
14. Yes. I would say in my family you were allowed to voice your opinion. You were encouraged to voice your opinion. So, it is very much the way I was brought up. It's needed more and more to be so as a woman in the ABSA group - more so than years gone by. I see more and more women standing up for their beliefs and points etc. So it's important, yes.
15. Yes. At this point in my life there is a lot of scope here. You can create and you're given the opportunity. People in authority actually encourage it.
16. Yes. To me it's very important and I know for some it's not, but for me it's important. Praise whether it's verbally said or an award, whether it is financial or a promotion, it's important. I am very much for rewards. I recently got a verbal praise as late as Friday and yes, I also have to thank the lord for that because I have a manager that also looks after you in that respect. It's very important to me. I

need it and as I've said not everybody needs it, but I like to know where I stand, what I'm doing wrong, where I'm going to and etcetera. So I believe in it. It's very acceptable in the rest of the group. Maybe because I do promote it, because I'm passionate about it. I do promote it a lot in my area and I think it's a general human thing that people like to know that they're doing a good job. So, it's generally well accepted in this environment.

17. Yes. I have a 16-year old daughter and an 11-year old son. I think it's just a personal thing within myself - I can't be two different people. I am a Gemini and the saying goes that they have a split personality, but I don't feel like I have one. I am the same at work and at home. Naturally when it comes to your work situation and authoritative styles here may differ with my children. Although at times I hear myself acting the same with my kids than I act with them here. So, I don't believe that a person should be false. I do believe you should be the same at home than you are at work.

18. Yes.

19. Yes. I would say it's a personal preference. I worked in the post office many years ago and there it was very formal and Mr or Mrs So-and-So. You were never known by your first name and you never knew people by their first names. And I like the comfortableness of being on a first name basis.

20. Yes. In fact, just as recently as Friday with my colleague. At times, maybe I can be impulsive and maybe also because of the English and Afrikaans thing I don't think I was understood, because I said it in English. And I was direct. Sometimes I do hold back because I'm thinking of that person's feelings. Because I'm so interested and passionate in the psychology of people, I try and size that person up and decide who I can do it with and who I can't. So there are people that I can be more direct with and others where I can't. And sometimes I burn my fingers, but I'm comfortable with it. But I do consider other people's feelings, I'm very considerate of that. I also think there was a bit of personality differences involved as well because we operate so differently and yet we are our own little team. She's stubborn and perhaps I'm stubborn and yes, there is a language barrier there. I feel a lot that it's because she's very Afrikaans and she refuses to speak English. I do try with the Afrikaans, but I feel more comfortable naturally in my own language. So, especially if I'm expressing certain things that I want to get across. And I've learned over the time to adapt and I suppose everybody sometimes gets frustrated with things, you know and things just spill over. She is under a tremendous amount of stress at the moment so I think it was also the tip of the iceberg type of thing. So we needed a bit of an explosion, but is nice is that we are able to sort it out and walk out here and still continue to respect each other and work together. And that is the main thing - to respect each other.

21. Yes. Maybe, the age thing. I work with a lot of younger people. Naturally, they're my subordinates and maybe I'll be inclined to be the motherly figure at times. But, otherwise I find that I can mingle into different situations easily and adapt to situations easily.

22. Yes. Genuine passion for people. I know there's a lot out there, but I have a genuine passion for people and their feelings are a passion for me.
23. Yes. I think the acknowledgement and to be acknowledged for a job well done. I would say years ago, and yes with age comes maturity, you'd have to dangle a carrot in front of my eyes. But it's no longer that, it's become for the love of the job. Satisfaction, for achieving something that you've worked hard for. To be unique in the sense of achieving something and getting recognition for it, for me it's important. And as I've said, it does not have to be a financial reward. It can be a simple verbal word, which I feel there's generally a lack of. To get recognition as an individual, that you're doing a damn good job - that's important to me.
24. Yes.

XF1

## COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings?  
Yes. When I'm in a meeting, I would listen to what the meeting is all about. But I'm not the type of person who would, during the time of the meeting, who will stand and say that I'm not happy or I don't agree. What I'd normally do, is the person who was chairing the meeting, afterwards I would phone them and say my say. I won't just during the meeting time say whatever.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. Normally, I try to avoid conflict. Sometimes when I feel someone is cross with me or I've done something without noticing it, I'd go to the person and speak to them and find out what is the problem, so that we can sort it out. I don't want to let it grow, especially not at work.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. Yes.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes. It is important for me, because they're the superiors and they know what they are doing. Even though I might not agree with something, I need to let them know so that they can know how I feel. But I do have respect for them. It's the case in a personal environment as well.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. I think it's a general perception and I grew up that way.

6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
 QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. First of all, if I don't agree, it means I've got something else which I need to address. So I would have to tell them what I think and what is my input. If the decision is being made and I don't agree with it, I would tell them that I don't agree and I would have my point why I don't agree. But if it is at the end that nothing is going to be done, I would have to stay with it and accept it.
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.  
 QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes. I am a friendly person and I like to see that people around me are happy with me, so I'd try to fit in.
8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans. Yes.  
 QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. I've got lots of advice in the working place and I took the advisors seriously and they helped me along the way. Tessa Goslett is my mentor. She tries to make me feel comfortable in the working place. Before she became a branch manager, we were together at Ops. Whenever there is something or there is a conflict or even if I'm not happy with something, it was free for me to go to her and speak to her and try to sort it out with whomever. She influences me a lot.
9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.  
 QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. No. It's just a matter of trying to sort it out. I used to withdraw, but not any longer. When I withdraw, then I don't tell myself that I will have to sort it out. I'd tell myself that that is the way it has to be, but it does not have to.
10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. No.
11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.  
 QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? No. I can confront the person or I can speak to the person and find out what is the problem and try to sort it out. Especially in the workplace, because we're here the whole day and for long hours.
12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument. QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. You can't just be at work and feel that you're not happy with something. So, whatever I'm not happy with at the moment, I go to the person and speak to them and try to solve it. I won't sort it out in the group, but sort it out one-on-one.

## INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. Yes.
14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me.  
 QUESTION: Why is that? No. What I normally do in such a situation, I won't speak up to the group as they're there in the group, I will just be in the meeting and after the meeting is done, I'll make time with myself and the person who ran the meeting so that I can say my views or how I feel. But, I won't just stand up in the big group and say what I want to say. I think I am shy - that's my problem.
15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.  
 QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. The reason being is, even though I've never worked before and ABSA has been the first company that I've worked for, I'm happy to be working for them.
16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.  
 QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes. Last year a client wrote a letter telling my manager about the service I was giving to that client. That was mentioned in the meeting, so I was given a Woolworths voucher. Everyone was very happy, because they know how I work. But sometimes you can be a good person, but it is a good thing when you get such a response from the person you're helping because you get to know how you're doing your job. If no one is saying anything, then you won't know. It makes me feel very happy. When I received that letter last year, each and every day with the clients that I'm helping it's like it's the same client who wrote me the letter. I want to give the same service to everyone, so that letter influences me a lot.
17. I am the same person at home and at work.  
 QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. It's the same person. I don't believe that you can be different. I can't. I must be the same person at work and home, because I can't make myself two different people.
18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. YES
19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am. QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? Yes, but only at work. Let me explain. We Africans are not allowed to say the name of the person. It's like you have to use Mrs even though we won't use Mrs. Like, if someone is Rene for example, my mother is Irene, but I can't call her Irene. Or if I'm talking about my aunt, I can't use her first name. I have to put a Sisi (Xhosa for sister) in front or something like that. But in the working environment it is different, because the clients feel comfortable if you mention their names. I'm comfortable with it at work, but in my own environment I'll use it the way I'm supposed to.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. Whatever the situation is, it has to come out the right way. So it does not matter if the person said something to me that is direct, but that's the way I felt and I'm going to have my input in that.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes. Not at all.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I will say it's that I am always the same. I don't change. I won't be one thing today and something else tomorrow. I'm always the same and that is quite unique to me.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. The way I grew up is what makes me who I am today. My family. The way we were brought up is a big influence in life. The way you grew up and the way we used to do things and the way your family was supporting you in whatever situation you were in - that was a big influence in my life. I grew up in the Eastern Cape and moved down to Cape Town in 1989 and then started doing my Standard 4. In the Eastern Cape I was staying with my aunt and when I moved down to Cape Town is stayed with my mother.

24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

## XF2

### COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.

QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings? Yes. In this branch, if we have a meeting, because we have three different departments, so if we have an enquiry meeting, the supervisor is the one in charge. But they give us chance, if you've got questions and all that, to voice your opinion. Even if it's a branch meeting, they ask each one of us if you've got a question or are you clear on what they're asking us or telling us.

2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION:

How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. We're really working as a team. I'm not scared to ask someone and if I don't like something, I'm not scared to go and tell that person. OK, for example today. I had a client who came to me. He shouted at me and he was blaming me and it was not even my fault. So afterwards he realised that it was not my fault and he apologised to me, so I was fine with it. If there is conflict with co-workers, they

must always know that what I don't like I don't like. So they must not carry on doing it. We manage to sort it out within our co-workers.

3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. Yes, definitely.

4. I would offer my seat to my superior.

QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes. It's not really because that person is superior or he is that colour, it is because they are my colleagues. And if that person is older than me, sometimes I do that. It does not matter the age, we all need to have respect for each other. It does not matter if I'm younger than you. Even if I am younger than you, you have to show respect too, so that we can work as a team. We must all respect each other's cultures.

5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.

QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. Where I work, there is only one guy who always does that (brag), but we really just laugh about it.

6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.

QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? No. If I don't agree with it, I won't go with it. At the end of the day, I feel that I don't become confident, because they don't listen to what I'm saying. Then you feel that you're not confident enough.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes. Sometimes, if you feel like carrying on or wanting to work for ABSA for a long time, then sometimes all of us have to understand each other in order to build the relationship between colleagues and all that. What normally happens, is like when I've helped a client and I go the extra mile, then the client does not say that he's going to the manager to tell him that. Then I just hear from the manager that this client said this and this about me.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. It depends if it's something that I also want. Then I listen and tell that person and give him my opinion on that. If it's something not on the same track where I want to be, then I'd tell that person that it's not my place. The person that is my supervisor now is really great.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate

decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes, but it depends if I agree with it. If it's a good thing for the group. I don't just agree with it or go with the flow. I first want to understand it, then if it's good for the group, then it's fine. Before we were supposed to get our increases, something in a meeting affected all of us. It was confidential, so I can't tell you, but it all affected us because it had to do with our increases. So with things like that you sometimes just want to blame someone. I feel really down when the vote goes against me. I do say something about it to my other colleagues and I'll say: You know in the meeting we were saying this and this. How did you feel about it? Then I hear what that person is saying and when that person tells me what they were thinking, I'll tell them my opinion.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. No.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.  
QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? No. You don't feel happy at all.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument. QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. Yes. There's only one guy and we're always fighting. But he's really joking and sometimes he'd say something and he doesn't like mean it. But he can make you cross and afterwards he comes to you and apologise and all that. But you feel like you want to *klap* him sometimes. I think he likes to play a lot - he's very childish. And he says something that upsets you and he'll laugh about it, because he doesn't mean it. But when he comes to you, you feel like you want to kill him.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. No.  
I'd rather explain to that person what I'm trying to tell them.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is a problem for me.  
QUESTION: Why is that? Yes, if it's like a big meeting at the other branches. If it's just with the people I'm working with here, I don't have a problem. I can stand up and say whatever, but if we have to go to another branch and see people that I don't know, then sometimes (I won't say always) if I have to be the one leading the meeting, that would be a problem. I'm not an outspoken person. I'll just say what I'm supposed to say. I am too shy. I'm not outspoken, even at home I'm not like that.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.  
QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? No. Sometimes we'd like to change things, so it is important and it is encouraged in our working environment.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.  
QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes. I think in March

I received a reward for something I did. I had a compliment and they write a memo to say you awarded for this or for working as a team. It felt great.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? No. Sometimes, when I get home, I'm so tired and I don't feel like talking to anyone. If I had a rude client and this is not to say that I'm taking it home, but you're still cross inside. The worst thing is if you know it's not your fault, then you still feel cross. At home I must see to my child. I'm a mother and I have to cook, prepare supper and here I have to help the clients and do everything. So it's very different.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes. From Standard ten I have been independent until now.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.

QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? Yes. I prefer to use the first name, because sometimes there are people with long surnames and you can't even pronounce it. So then I like to call clients by their first names. In ABSA, they only want you to call the client by their name, so it does not matter if it's first name or surname. They want you to use the name that you're comfortable with or what the client is comfortable with. If you know the client and you call them by name, they appreciate it, because they know that we know them.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. When the client speaks to me in Afrikaans, sometimes I understand what he is trying to say to me, but they want me to answer back in Afrikaans. Then when I say that I don't speak Afrikaans, they want to talk to an Afrikaans speaking person and that makes me cross. Afrikaans clients sometimes make me feel uncomfortable.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I will say that I'm confident. I know that if I help a client, even if it's an Afrikaans client and if they want somebody else to help them, I won't feel offended because of my colour. I know that I've got the knowledge and that I try to help the clients. All the clients that I help are always very happy with my service and they'll always say that I give them good service. That's why I'll say that I'm special.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.  
 QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes, the people must be able to see me as a person.
24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

**XF3****COLLECTIVE:**

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
 QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings?  
 Yes. It does not really affect me during meetings. I feel free to communicate anything with them that I want to communicate.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION:  
 How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. I try to talk to a person and show them my point of view instead of us fighting unnecessarily. It is important to respect each other's points of view and see where we can meet.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. No.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
 QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes. According to our culture, you have to do it. It's a norm that you have to show respect in that way. I would say culture and respect play a big role, but not necessarily gender.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
 QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. This is not really a cultural thing. I think it's based on positiveness - I try to be positive about everything I do.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
 QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? No. It depends. I have not yet come across a situation like that, so it will be difficult for me to give you an answer on that.
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.  
 QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. No. I think the two must balance each other.
8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.  
 QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. No. Not

all the time. If it's good advice and I see that it will be beneficial to me, I will accept the advice. There are a lot of people, not necessarily here in the branch, that I've worked with and I see them as mentors, specifically one man and one woman.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.  
 QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. Sometimes it's difficult to accept, but if the decision has been reached by the number of votes, I can't do anything about it.
10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. Yes. Sometimes when your co-worker fails, you feel responsible because you're doing the same thing and you feel that you should have helped or should have done something that would have made the situation different.
11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.  
 QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? No. I'm an outspoken person, so if I don't like something that you did to me or maybe said to me, I'll approach you so that we can talk about it and see if we can sort it out.
12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.  
 QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. Yes. Maybe it's because of the environment that we work in. Everything is open so we discuss everything that must be done in an open discussion where everybody must have input.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. Yes.
14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me. QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. I think it is because of the environment our superiors have created for us. Everybody know they can say whatever they feel like saying.
15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.  
 QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. Especially in the position I'm in, this is encouraged.
16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.  
 QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes. Especially if I really deserve it. It's been a while though. We managed to save R25 000 from being fraudulently withdrawn by a client. At that time we were still reporting to Claremont from Khayelitsha. The branch manager came to us and gave us special name badges, which were custom made for us. I felt that was great.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.  
QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? No. I'm two totally different people. I think I'm at home normally more relaxed than at work. At work I've got to portray this professional image, but at home I can really be myself and a mom.
18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.
19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.  
QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? No. Not really. Maybe this is because of our cultural background as well. It's a personal choice.
20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.  
QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. No. I would say it depends on the situation, but with clients it is normally quite difficult. Maybe a client would come in and he'd like to apply for a facility such as a home loan. So you see that they don't qualify at all and you have to be tactful when saying whatever you need to say to them instead of being direct. Because I have respect for clients and I feel for them and because they sometimes don't understand, I can't just be direct with them.
21. I act the same no matter who I am with.  
QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes. Sometimes age will have an influence. Sometimes with old people you have to be more tactful and show respect as well.
22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.  
QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I'm different and I'm a very honest person. I say whatever I feel like saying, especially if I know it's going to affect me work wise. I don't know what the other people think. There's this friend of mine that I work with and sometimes she does not say what she feels like saying.
23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.  
QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. It is important because I need to be known - who I am, what I like and don't like.
24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

XF4

## COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
 QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings?  
 Yes. I have respect for everybody, in fact. When you have a respect for someone, it has an affect. Say they want to address something and you don't have respect, then you would maybe argue or attack that person in a way. If you do have respect, you don't.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION:  
 How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. Fortunately, I've just been in a conflict-handling course. I've really learnt a lot there. In the beginning like if there was conflict, I would just withdraw because I don't want to argue. Or I would just avoid the conflict. But I've learnt now how to handle conflict.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. No.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
 QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes. It will depend though on the situation. It is important to show respect, but say for example I'm not feeling well and I'm sitting down, then I won't stand up. From my point of view and in my culture, when the person is older than you, you can't sit down and let that person stand.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
 QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. In a way, culture does. For instance, when I was working in customer service, in my culture it is disrespectful to look at adults. Like you must practise eye contact, but in my culture if I look at an elder, it is disrespectful. So in my work, it's bad because I must to give a client eye contact. So it's a little bit difficult. When you give eye contact, the person knows you're concentrating and you're with him all the time.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
 QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. It will depend on the situation. If I don't agree with the decision, most of the time I will say how I feel. Still, at the end of the day, whether I agree with the decision or not, the decision has to be made. There are going to be decisions that you don't agree with, but it's for the best.
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.  
 QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes. Sometimes you just don't want to hurt other

people. But sometimes you have to hurt them in order for you to do the right thing.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. First of all, it must be positive when someone gives you advice. Sometimes when someone is advising you, you'll think that it's not coming in a good way. But when you sit down and think about it, you'll see that it was right. There is a man that I would prefer as a mentor.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. It's not a nice thing, but sometimes you just have to accept it.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. Yes, but only if I had something to do with it.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? Yes. If they really need me, I'll sacrifice and stay. I feel very bad if I don't get along with one person, so now you can imagine what it feels like if it's a whole group. It's definitely not right.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. I used to, but not any more. Most of the time it will be the same people. See, I like to argue and sometimes there will be people in the group just like me. So, definitely me and that person won't see eye to eye. That's why it's important that a group must have different people, so that if I can't handle that person, someone else can come in between and break it.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. Yes.

Sometimes it is good to say no when you have to. If you try to explain, then that person won't understand or he tries to be difficult. So, I prefer to say no as long as I know that I'm right.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is a problem for me.

QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. It's not a problem at all. I'm a good listener and I know if I have to say something, I've thought it through already.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. It is important to be creative and it is encouraged by ABSA.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes. When I made chairperson of the EE process, I got a Well Done. It was implemented on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February and there was an inspection on the 27<sup>th</sup> and it was excellent. I had to go through the whole process within two days and make sure that staff members understood what it was all about. I felt good, great.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. Sometimes the way you are at home, you can bring it with to work. I'll say you will bring it to work. Say for instance you are an arrogant person at home, you will be arrogant here. You'll forget that you're not at home. But say you practise to be the same person, then it will work.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.

QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? No. If people are older than me, I don't feel comfortable. I would prefer to call them Mr or Mrs. It's a personal preference, but at work it's unprofessional to call a person by his first name. You must use the surname.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. I'll make an example of when I worked for Trust Bank. When we had meetings, we had the meetings in Afrikaans, which I was not comfortable with. When I spoke to my head of department, I told him that I was not going to attend the meetings because they're in Afrikaans and I don't understand Afrikaans. I don't mind, but I don't understand. I think you must respect the fact that I'm there and use English. But he was told me that 99% of the staff was Afrikaans speaking and I was a little bit angry, but in the end I thought was that really necessary. Within work and even outside, you get people with different characters and there will be people that make you feel uneasy.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes. I'm genuine.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.  
 QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. I stand up for what I know is right and I believe in myself.
23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.  
 QUESTION: Why is your identity important. No.
24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

XM1

## COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
 QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings? Yes. I think what I normally do if I disagree with something, I prefer not to just disagree because I have to disagree, but to put an opinion forward as to how it can lead to a solution to this problem. I do respect my superiors, but I also feel that if there's reason, you have to disagree. But you have to address it in a very sensible manner.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. I prefer to be quite objective. I look at the facts and why we have to agree and what we can do about it. I will pull them aside and if there are two people involved, I would say to my team leader who are involved. I tend to be quite calm and I don't want to act irrationally. I like to collect facts before I act.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. Yes.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
 QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes. If I may say it, personally I believe it's important to show respect, irrespective of where you come from, how old you are. If you're the best and you can do the best work, then I will respect you irrespective of culture, colour, race. If you have the potential, I'll believe in you. I've been in the lucky position that my co-workers have been predominantly female, so it's not a problem for me.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
 QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. Cultural background and the home I grew up in has been an influence. I grew up in a very modest family. Personally, I'm also not a person to brag. I prefer modest people. I'm very accommodating so I don't reject people who brag. I can still live with them, but I tend to withdraw from them. Not by being rude, but in a very subtle manner.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
 QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. I believe that

if I don't agree, I will raise my objection to that and I'll put forward my proposal. If it is rejected by a majority, then I feel that if the group's going to benefit as a whole and they make a quorum, then I'll go with the decision.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. No. What I was saying was that relationships are not that important in terms of what I want to achieve. There was an incidence when I grew up, I think I was very naughty. At a very young age such as twelve or thirteen, I started smoking to conform with a group, but then I realised at a stage that I had to take care of myself. It was important to be part of a group, but I also think it is important to look after myself. I made the decision at an early age to stop smoking and that I had to concentrate on my own health.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. I'm a person who would look at advice in two ways. I'd listen to the advice and then I'd take what is important and what is relevant to me. Some of the advice I get might not be relevant to me, but it might be for others. I worked with Daan Oosthuizen. He's a very modest person and I found from talking to him and listening to what he says, he has been a very big influence on my career. Without him, I won't be where I am today. Although I was not really particularly happy with some of the things in his team, which he had no control over, but I've grown a lot with him. I met him at a forum and I don't think he was aware of me. Only when I started working here, did we get to know each other.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. I think one tends to regret it sometimes when you are outvoted. You feel powerless, but at the end of the day I tend to sit down with myself and say Well you lost, but you've got to live with the decision even if you did not make it.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. Yes.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? No. Not getting along with a person can sometimes just be from perception. It can sometimes be a real thing, but I think sometimes it happens. If it's a real problem I can deal with it, but if it's just a perception then I will surely address it to get to the bottom of the problem.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. If it's a work-related issue, I always tend to say that we've got work relationships not personal relationships, so it normally does not affect me that much. I think it's a growth process when disagreeing with a group. At the end of the day, we tend to find common grounds.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. No.
14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me. QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. It is not a problem if I've got an opinion on an issue.
15. Having a lively imagination is important to me. QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. I think more on an operational level and I think that my views and opinions have been taken in a very positive way.
16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards. QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? No. I tend to do the impossible. I completed my standard eight and I did not have funds and I had to be away from school for two years. I went to do some work and returned to do standard ten. When I was in standard ten, I got sick just after the June exams and I was away for a month. When I made the decision not to go back to school, the principal wrote me a letter to say that I can come and write my exams just to get a passing grade. This I did and I actually got an exemption. So he addressed this in the whole class and it felt like an embarrassing situation at the time. I think what I do, I normally just try to do my best but when opportunity arrives I don't regret it.
17. I am the same person at home and at work. QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. I'm quite happy with who I am. It might be because of my background. We had nothing, but I think we had quite a happy environment at home. We had some funny moments. My former lecturer who used to teach me sociology always used to say that a person from the farm would greet you in the morning, he'll meet you in the afternoon and when you see him that night, he'll still greet you. And that is my upbringing and I think I believe in that.
18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. No.
19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am. QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? Yes. It was difficult for me when I first came here, but I have actually adjusted quite well. I've got comfortable with the names because I remember that at one stage I met Dan Retief, the reporter for rugby, and he addressed me and said

What is your name. And he said I'm Dan. And the next day I said Mr Retief and he said, call me Dan. Then I realised it was a trend in the Western culture and that people preferred their first names. From a cultural point of view, I still prefer to say Uncle. I must be very honest with you, as far as the culture is concerned I'm comfortable with the first names at work, but when I go home to live in the culture. So, I'm very adaptable.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. No. One tends to make mistakes when meeting people for the first time. I confronted this man at one time when we met and I felt that it was uncalled for of him to say something. So I always prefer to hold back until I get to know someone better. I felt that the way he addressed me at the time he just said This man from Worcester and I did not realise he meant it as praise. Sometimes I feel that you should not be prejudiced meeting someone for the first time. You can say that people from a culture do things this way or people from this religion do it that way, but sometimes you can make the wrong assumption. I like to wait until I know the individual before making assumptions.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? No. We have been brought up to respect anyone older than me.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. If I look at where I come from and where I am today, I don't think many people would be where I am today. I had some really difficult times in my life. I feel that I've achieved the impossible.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. I've come here all the way from Transkei and very involved in the church and I knew at the time that we have our own ways and many people don't conform. Especially the youngsters think we're outdated. When I arrived here I found a couple of guys who belonged to the church. But they could not live up to the expectations of the church, because they had to conform to their other colleagues. I've decided this is who I am and what I must be. I tend to adhere to the difficulties of the culture. When I do it, it's not something that I do consciously, but I'm proud of who I am.

24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

XM2

COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
 QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings?  
 Yes. Hundred percent. Ninety percent of the time they portray who they are as supervisors or managers. The whole ABSA system have changed, so you have a supervisor who is running the tellers and enquiries and then you've got your sales manager, who is running the sales consultants. So, we don't actually have a choice as he's the one who will be giving us our sales targets. He decides it and we have to abide by the rules.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. If you don't, you'll never make it. It depends on the conflict and you get it on a daily basis. You get a client, who is unhappy with the service he received from another sales person and you have to counter offer the whole things. First, you have to apologise to the client for what happened. Then you have to sit him down and after you've done what he wanted, you have to go to the other person and ask that person what actually happened. You might find that the whole thing was actually a misunderstanding between that person and the client. That's why it's important that you go first and sort out the whole thing. Besides, if you don't sort it out it will end up going back and forth.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. Yes.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
 QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes. You might find that your superior has more experience than you have, so it's important to acknowledge that and look up to him. Our cultures are so diverse. One has to adapt to the fact that females have a right and one has to think twice before making a point that you're male.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
 QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. Modesty is a big word. I think it's probably to do with my culture. First of all, you might find that the approach people have towards me is that never mind that I'm a male, the fact that I'm black as well, it means that people will approach me totally different than from a white person's perspective. It's very important for me to portray myself as a person who knows what I'm talking about.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
 QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. My participation in the group will actually benefit the group first. That's why I feel it is important that if I do sacrifice my opinion, at least I have made some change. There are people who are self-righteous

and if I made it a point that I'm doing the best from my side, they might understand that and look at my side too.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes, I think the two go hand in hand. In the sales environment, it is actually very important for one to self-motivate most of the time. So, one way or another, the accomplishment of your own self is very important for at the end of the day, they look at you as an individual. They don't look at the group eventually. We recently take over the administration part of our jobs where we had to take over the release of securities. One of my colleagues dealt with a client and he ended up in my chair. So, I thought the client was actually sorted out, but he ended up back with me. So, I had to find out from the client what had happened. You spend a lot of time doing sales, you need to spend a lot of time doing sales not queries. The release of securities part of it is a query you don't really need to hang around with. So, in that instance I had to for the sake of my client, take it over and make sure that the client is happy.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. At the moment and throughout my career with ABSA, it been a case of people, who actually showed me the way and said This is the way, take it. And eventually, you have to see it that way. My whole career has been mentored all along and (AM5) has been one of the people, who have pointed me in the right direction.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes, very. If you pull your own way without the group, you might actually fail on your own at the end of the day. It differs. If I know my opinion is actually good, it's different. Look at it this way, the decision that was actually reached by ABSA, was for us to actually do administration work. We did not want to and some people are still fighting that whole decision. But trust me, whether you fight it or not, at the end of the day it's still our job and it's not going to go away.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. Yes, because we work as a group. In each environment here people work in a group and you could have contributed a positive attitude to that person.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? No. It's difficult. If the group is heading for failure, I would prefer not to stay around that group, because it is leading me to failure too. If I can make a difference and the people within that group accept my contribution, then I'll stay. But if I make a

contribution and they don't want to take the advise that I'm giving them, I'd prefer to quit. To be honest with you, it hardly happens that I don't get along with people. Wherever I've been working, I can't think of an incident where I did not get along with everyone.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. Arguments will always be there. Rather state what your opinion is so that whatever the misunderstanding is about and it often is just a misunderstanding, I'd rather argue the point before deciding that we don't understand each other. Rather argue it and you might find out that you're talking about the same thing, but in different ways.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. Yes. Sometimes a no works. It depends on the environment you're working in.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me.

QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. I'm a person, who listens first. I listen when people talk. Within ABSA I've actually grown a lot. Before things were not like this, especially when we started. Shirley taught us a lot and some of us came from backgrounds, where we were so quiet, we never said anything. But she brought us out and we could actually say something.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. It's very important. It's encouraged in this environment.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes. Towards the end of last year, I was actually running the whole service centre. There was an incentive bonus and we were not supposed to get the bonus as the branch decided we're not getting it. So, we had the task of actually going to fight for it. I felt that the people I work with got less than I got. I did not think that was wrong, because I knew from the beginning that I worked for that money. I know that I gave it a 100% and there was not even one day that I actually left the centre without knowing what was going on. The people knew it, even the clients at the centre knew it. At the end of the day I was proud and I knew that I worked for it and that I deserved it.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. I think it's based on my upbringing as well as the fact that I've prayed not to change.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am. QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? Yes. The environment where I'm working in at the moment, actually encourages me to call the person by the preferred name. But before I even do that, I would prefer the person to guide me before I'll actually do it. Age does have an influence. My upbringing actually taught me differently. Culture wise, there was a guy working here who was much older and I would have preferred to call him Uncle Des, but he simply said to call him Uncle Des.
20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.  
QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. There is one thing that this job has taught me and that's to be cautious. If I'm dealing with a client, I have to make a point that the client actually understands what I'm talking about. So being direct is one thing, but sometimes you have to explain.
21. I act the same no matter who I am with.  
QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? No. It depends and boils back to the age thing as well. Culture has a lot of influence, because you might think that when it comes to a white person and a black person, the black person would actually feel comfortable being dealt with by another black person. But when they come, they would actually act in a different way, because we've got clans and specific ways that people have to follow. When they sit in front of you, they'll ask you a couple of questions about you personally. Who are you, where did you grow up and stuff about the Transkei and Eastern Cape. So, it's actually totally different from a white person telling you that he's from Cape Town and that's it. He'll have to ask you your clan name and maybe you're related - so it's a long thing. We believe that each and every one of us as black people has a home somewhere. Although the kids now believe that this is their home and that they were born here, our generation would actually tell you that their home is in the Ciskei or the Transkei, even though they've never been there. They believe that their home is there.
22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.  
QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. Sometimes, because you might find that people are interested in learning from you or listening to you about things that your culture does. People actually want to know how your culture works. It does make a difference in a person. I don't normally consider myself such a different person, but the group that I'm working with at the moment is actually diverse in a way that I'm the only black person, though people would categorise the coloured people as black as well. It makes me feel unique.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.  
 QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. As I've mentioned, the clients can relate to me when they come to the bank. We know that ABSA is now moving into the black market, if I can call it that, or flexi-banking. The flexi-banking market is predominantly black people and that on its own makes you feel unique, because those clients can actually relate when they come to you. Especially in the environment to the service centre, we used to be open till 18h00 and the people would come to you from work and it was in the Golden Acre. People walked in and could ask you questions.
24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

XM3

## COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
 QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings? Yes. I've got respect, because I've got to respect my superiors. It does not influence me anymore unless I don't get the chance to say my bit.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. That's very important, because if I don't get along, it will be really difficult. In a conflict situation, I just want to find out the root of the conflict, because it's of no use starting halfway. You must to start at the bottom to find out what is the problem and you can then start to solve you.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. Yes, if they're not happy, I also won't feel comfortable.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
 QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes. Definitely. It's very important according to my culture, you know. If someone is older than me, I have to give her that respect, but I don't give her my seat because she's my manager. No, I would offer my seat to anyone whose older than me.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
 QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. I do respect them, but know I'll always try to motivate them so that they don't think they don't matter. It's not a matter of culture at work, it's just that it goes with professionalism. I don't judge people.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
 QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. I'd rather give them advice. It's of no use not to say anything. If the vote and the

quorum is against me, then I must obey that decision, but they must come with a valid reason.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. Yes. I always like to work as a team. That normally happens when we're working under pressure. Then I normally say to the others to do certain things.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. I always respond positively, because I do like advice from other people. Maybe they've experienced other things from me, so I have to take that. I take advice from my supervisor (AF5). We've been working together for almost six months now.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. It is very important for me, especially if something has been discussed by all of us. I always take it positively as it is of no use to have a bad attitude against it. It's not going to work.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. Yes, I feel responsible, but although if I've helped him or her, they must not next time do it again.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? Yes. I will stay for the reason that my point is taken by the group leader. She must sort it out. If she doesn't sort it out, it's better to quit. I always like openness from people. Maybe there is a reason for them to act like that. I always like them to give me feedback on their problems so that we can sort it out.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. An argument is very important to me. It's like a discussion. In order for me to change my attitude, we must discuss the matter so that I can get more explanations. There aren't people like that in my team, because of our co-operation.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. Yes. I always like to come straight to the point.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me. QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. I am used to speaking to people. It's because I've got self-confidence and I know how to present myself to people.
15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.  
QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. It is very important to me, because it concerns my future. It's important to be flexible and for me to have more ideas and not just stick to the same thing. It's encouraged to a certain extent, but you should not go beyond the company's policy.
16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.  
QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? No. I'm not comfortable with that yet.
17. I am the same person at home and at work.  
QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. I'm always the same person. Like they see me here, I'm exactly the same at home. It is just a way of making other people happy. If today I come with this attitude and tomorrow I'm another way, people won't enjoy it. They'll be scared of saying something to me, because they won't know how I'll be.
18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes. No one else is going to look after me, so I have to do it.
19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am. QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? No. I prefer Mr or Mrs before I say their first name. It goes with professionalism and also my culture. In my culture, you're not allowed just to say someone's name. In my opinion it is rather important to say Mister or Miss.
20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.  
QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. Sometimes you have to be direct, but in some cases you can't be too direct, because it's the first time to meet those people and you don't know their minds. When you say something direct to a particular person, sometimes they misunderstand the way you were trying to say something. That's why sometimes you better not be too direct, but as long as you give them the point. If they understand the point, I prefer doing it like that.
21. I act the same no matter who I am with.  
QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes. I always act the same even if I'm in my community or at work.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.  
 QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? No. If I meet a group of people, I have to change myself to adopt their style. Also if I meet another group, I should not isolate myself by coming with my own style. It's not very important. I'm very proud of how I was proud up, but I'm different because of my aims and how I present myself.
23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.  
 QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. It's because I like to be known by people for the right things. It's important for me to be identified.
24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

XM4

## COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
 QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings? Yes. Definitely. Like this lady who we just saw, she's our retail manager and I do respect her. In meetings, I'm not going to say that they like to dominate the meetings. Our meetings are more like discussions, so she'll come up with some things that have to take place and we'll contribute. So it's some sort of interactions between the whole group.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes. It's very important to maintain harmony within the group, because you have to focus on teamwork in order to achieve things. We support each other, so that we can get it done. I've never been involved in such a thing, so I can't say.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. Yes.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
 QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. Yes. In a meeting, you should. It's about respect and the way you see things. In a working environment, age, gender or culture does not play a role. I think we come from different backgrounds with different personalities.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
 QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. I think people have a right to be modest about themselves, but if people are not, you should respect that. My culture should have influenced this, but I think it's more about learning to understanding other people and mixing with other groups. When mixing with different groups, your attitude does adjust.

6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
 QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making, especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. If there's an aim to success, then yes. If most of the group agree, then your individual disagreement does not count for much. Most of the things that we do, we do in the form of a group. If you can't convince them to change, then obviously you have to be convinced.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. No. If you're doing something in a good way, then you have a positive mind and you have to show them.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. Yes. It depends on which way they drive you to respond with their advice. If it's going to the positive, you're going to respond positively. When it's not good, you will respond negatively. Our regional manager is my mentor.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. Because it's a group decision, it's more important than an individual one. It does not matter how you feel about it. If it was the decision of the whole group, you have to agree with it.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. Yes, because you did not play your role. If you are there and supporting of each other, he would not fail.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? Yes. That's a difficult one. If you're unhappy and the group needs you, then they have to make you happy. I try to address some of the issues. Previously I used to have problems like that, but I managed to address them and got through to the person. For instance, if I have a difference with you, I'll address it with you and sort it out. Then you'll know what I like and don't like.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. Argument should be healthy, then you want to convince the group and make them see your way. Previously, I used to work in an environment where a lot of the staff members were white and we were only two or three blacks in the group. We used to have problems, but then we'd try to address them and

succeeded. We did not fight. We'd try to convince them. This was early in 1995 when we still had the past to deal with.

INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. No.
14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me.  
QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. I feel that my opinion should also be voiced and that I should not keep it to myself.
15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.  
QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. We have to be creative and have new ideas and it is very much encouraged here. Normally you have campaigns as consultants. Then our retail manager will tell us to throw out new ideas of how we can reach our targets.
16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.  
QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes. I've never been in such a situation before so I don't really know how it would make me feel exactly. When the manager says well done, it makes me feel happy and important. What normally happens is that we have monthly meetings. In those monthly meetings, the people who have reached their targets would be announced in front of everybody.
17. I am the same person at home and at work.  
QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. If I'm around my family, I'm like when I'm around my colleagues.
18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.
19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.  
QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? No. I think professionally, it depends on the person and what they prefer. Professionally it should go to say Mr and the first name is not fitting. The surname shows respect.
20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.  
QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. You don't have to lie to clients, because you won't be able to deliver on what the client is expecting. So you have to be direct and say that the loan has been declined.
21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.  
QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? No. I don't think that I'm unique. I think I'm the same as other people. I'm not different than other people.
23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.  
QUESTION: Why is your identity important. No. There is no difference between me and you.
24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

XMS

COLLECTIVE:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.  
QUESTION: How does this influence your involvement during meetings? Yes, but not all of them. The involvement in meetings does not always play a role. The ones that I respect, don't attend the meetings. The ones that I don't respect, do attend the meetings, so I tend to just get with the flow and don't put too much effort into it.
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. QUESTION: How would you react in a conflict situation with co-workers/authority figures? Yes, very important. I think that the first way I would tackle that is to talk to the person and not let it slide and think that it would sort itself out on its own. I'd rather we sit down and say this is a problem and acknowledge it and see how we can resolve it.
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. Yes, especially if you work as a team. Sometimes you do work on your own, then you don't have to care much about others.
4. I would offer my seat to my superior.  
QUESTION: Why do you feel it is important/not important to show respect to authority figures irrespective of cultural group/gender/age. No. If it's a lady, I will offer that seat not because she's my superior, but because she's a lady. So, it's a gender thing, not a cultural thing.
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves.  
QUESTION: Has your attitude in any way been influenced by your cultural background/What do you think has influenced this attitude. Yes. I like modest people. Sometimes when you're dealing with pompous people, you lose respect for them because they will over-exaggerate their achievements. I would say on a language level, my attitude will definitely be reflected in the way I would want meetings to be conducted. For example, if I can't understand your language, there won't be much good that I get out of the meeting, but culture itself does not play that big a role.
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I'm in.  
QUESTION: How does this affect your participation in decision-making,

especially if you don't agree with the decision? Yes. If I aspire to the same goal and we're heading for the same goal, then I would sacrifice for the good of the group. I won't sacrifice any of my needs if I don't agree with what we're supposed to be doing. It would stifle whatever we need to do if I don't agree with them.

7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

QUESTION: Can you tell me of an incident where you felt that you downplayed your own success or accomplishment to improve working relationships. No. I'd like to accomplish my own goals and invariably the others would follow. I'm sure everybody else is like that too, unless you're Mother Theresa. When I joined this place, I had to be trained. I had to be on an Accelerated Training Programme and if this person who is training you, has lower school qualifications, you can't just go to them and say that you've got this MBA degree. This person, who is knowledgeable, knows what he should be teaching you, but just has not been to school, then there's no point in saying that you've got this and this and this. Then you have to downplay yourself for the benefit of getting along.

8. I should take into consideration my superior's advice when making career plans.

QUESTION: How do you respond to advice from others/Is there someone in the organisation that you would prefer as a mentor/advisor. No. I take advice from people, but it seems as if there's a lack of communication in terms of talking about one's career. To me, it looks like that if we get a candidate in or, and this is the picture I have of our human resources), if they manage to recruit you in, then afterwards they just disappear without asking where you want to craft your career to. Well, this is my personal perception.

9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

QUESTION: Can you explain how you feel when you have to accommodate decisions reached by consensus, even if it means that you have to change your opinion. Yes. Well, I've always said that you have to agree to disagree sometimes. If there's consensus and the feeling that it's the right way, even if you don't feel that way, if it's for the benefit of the larger majority, you tend to agree. In life you can't always get what you want.

10. If my co-worker fails, I feel responsible. Yes. If I am involved in whatever made him feel, I would. Otherwise no.

11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy.

QUESTION: How do you react when you don't get along with members of your group? No. This is a dilemma that I'm facing right now. The first thing that I do, is that I'd point it out that there is something that does not make me feel good. Then if that guy or girl persists in doing the same thing, my biggest weapon these days is to shut off and not to be part of the team. But only after you've shared your feelings.

12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

QUESTION: Are there specific group members who you are more likely to disagree with. Why do you think that is. No. I love arguments. It just shows that you've applied your mind in trying to solve a problem. You only argue when you have the facts from your side and equally from the other side. I tend to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. I don't like prejudging people. I only disagree with somebody when his facts and my facts are not getting along.

#### INDIVIDUALISTIC

13. I'd rather say "NO" directly than risk being misunderstood. Yes. During the past few months, I've been misunderstood purely because I've not been forthright. In hindsight, I'd rather say no directly and then people can hate you for that.

14. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me.

QUESTION: Why is that? Yes. I feel confident on expressing myself, more especially if I know that subject. If I don't know anything, I'd rather keep quiet than just plunge in.

15. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

QUESTION: Do you feel that it is important to be creative or have new ideas in your current environment. Is this encouraged? Yes. I think it is, because I don't like static things. I like things to evolve and develop. I think they're trying to be encouraging.

16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

QUESTION: When was the last time you received praise or a rewards. How was it done and how did this make you feel? Yes, if I know that I did, then I must be awarded for it. It feels good.

17. I am the same person at home and at work.

QUESTION: Have you ever thought why this is. In what ways are you different? Yes. When I'm at home, my wife normally says to me to stop doing something else. Like when we're having breakfast, I'm reading, but I need to be doing something else. I'm only different when I'm telling myself not to look at any books. For me to break away or to take a break, I must be elsewhere where I won't see my books or anything to do with work. I have to go away for a weekend.

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. Yes.

19. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even if they are much older than I am.

QUESTION: Is this a personal preference or an institutional habit? Yes, on a business level. It's a personal preference. The company that I worked for before, the institution preferred the Misters. With ABSA, I haven't picked that up, but I prefer to call people by their first names in the business sense.

20. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I have just met.

QUESTION: Can you give me an example of when directness would make you uncomfortable? Are there specific people that would make you uncomfortable if you have to be direct. Yes. Unfortunately, the environment where I'm working, you have to be direct with the client. For example, you have to say to the client that you're not allowed to write cheques, because you don't have the facility. You can't promise him to get a R100 000 by the end of the day, because it's not up to you. The environment forces you to be forthright. Some people get into trouble, because you want the client to be on your books. So you're between a rock and a hard place.

21. I act the same no matter who I am with.

QUESTION: Does age/gender/culture have an influence on this? Yes. Obviously, when you're with friends you won't act like with when you're with clients. With friends, you just talk and you don't care if you step on someone's toes, but with clients you have to be careful. That's the only difference, otherwise the personality does not change. I think it goes both ways. Their age and they're being non-black paint a different picture. For example, if you were in my shoes and going to this client, a new client you're facing, depending on how he reacts to you being black, being young, being short or tall, he might decide to like you. Or he might decide he does not like you, because of your hairstyle. So, it goes both ways. But what helps me with these things is to be professional. That is a standard thing. Being black or white or red, that's only thing that can make or break you in a client's eyes.

22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

QUESTION: What do you think makes you different from others? Yes. The goals that I've set for myself are definitely different from my friends. Sometimes you would benchmark your success with your friends'. But I know that mine are very different, that I have to be different in the way I act. So I can't be attending parties during the week and weekend, so I have to be different.

23. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

QUESTION: Why is your identity important. Yes. I have too much faith in myself. I tend to do things on my own. It's probably the way that I grew up or the fact that I come from a one-parent family. That might have changed the way I do things, so you tend to do things on your own. So my personal identity is very important.

24. I value being in good health above everything. Yes.

ADDENDUM DBOOLEAN ATTRIBUTES

Doc	COL	IND	Q1	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q2	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
AF1	7	10	T	T	F	F	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	F	F	T	T	
AF2	6	12	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	F	T	F	T	F	T	
AF3	5	10	T	F	F	F	F	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	F	T	T	T	F	T	
AF4	7	9	T	F	F	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	
AF5	12	7	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	F	T	F	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	
AM1	10	11	T	F	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	
AM2	6	7	T	F	F	F	F	T	F	T	F	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	F	F	F	T	T	F	T	T
AM3	10	7	T	T	T	F	F	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	F	F	T	F	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T
AM4	6	11	T	F	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	F	F	F	F	F	T	T
AM5	9	12	T	F	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T
EF1	5	11	T	F	F	F	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	F	F	T	F	F
EF2	8	7	T	F	T	F	F	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	F	F	F	T	T	F	T	T	T	F	T	T
EF3	5	12	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	F	F	T	F	F	T	T
EF4	6	8	T	F	F	F	T	T	F	F	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	F	T	T	T	F	T	T
EF5	9	12	T	F	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T
EM1	8	9	T	F	T	F	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	F	T	T	T	F	F	T	T	T
EM2	8	8	T	F	F	T	F	T	T	T	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
EM3	8	11	T	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	T
EM4	6	6	T	F	F	F	F	T	F	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	F	F	F	F	T	T	F	T	T	T
EM5	9	6	T	T	F	F	F	T	T	F	T	F	T	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	T
XF1	9	11	T	F	F	F	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
XF2	9	8	T	F	F	T	F	F	F	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T
XF3	6	9	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	F	T	F	T	T	T	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	T
XF4	10	9	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	F	F	T	F	F	T	T	F	T	T
XM1	9	7	T	T	F	F	F	T	T	F	T	F	T	T	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T
XM2	10	11	T	T	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
XM3	11	8	T	T	T	F	T	T	T	F	T	T	F	T	F	T	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
XM4	10	7	T	T	T	F	F	T	T	F	T	T	F	T	T	T	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T
XM5	6	12	T	T	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	T	T	F	F	T	T