2.1 INTRODUCTION

The most important phase in the process of moving to a truly democratic South African society was completed in April 1994 with the national elections. All systems, including those of defence and national security, were influenced by this radical turn-around of political control and social changes. Shifting priorities in government spending, the rapidly decreasing probability of external/conventional military threats to the country and societal demands for a more representative defence management structure, have all contributed to the increasing pressure on the Department of Defence (DOD) to undergo a fundamental transformation.

2.2 DEFENCE TRANSFORMATION IN DEMOCRATIC CONTEXT

The establishment of a new government has brought about different policies and priorities. Strategically the biggest threat to South Africa's stability lies with socio-economic challenges – poverty, unemployment, poor education, the lack of decent housing and the absence of adequate social services. In order for government to address these concerns successfully, it needs to free financial resources by especially reviewing the spending on those areas that have traditionally absorbed big chunks of the budget, such as defence. Furthermore, the pressure on governments all over the world to subscribe to the principles of disarmament and to redirect spending to the upliftment of people and democracy (De Vries, 1999), holds especially true for developing countries, of which South Africa is generally regarded as being part of. Transformation also saw a change in the role of the SANDF (and SAAF). Apart from having to defend the country against external aggression, its role as a peacekeeping force in the region became more prominent. A vital part of transforming the DOD is therefore to determine the most effective way of providing these functions. A smaller defence structure will be faced with the task of doing more with less, a challenge which could only be achieved by unleashing the creative and innovative potential of the workforce (Hall, 1994) through effective leadership practices, supported by constantly focussing on identifying and understanding core values and especially work-related values (also see Chapter 3). In the multi-cultural South African milieu, leaders will therefore have to break away from traditional patterns of leadership where "one style fits all".
The DOD that came into being with the change in government, is the result of the amalgamation of a variety of different defence structures and a stronger civilian component. Naturally it was to be expected that the face presented by the DOD would also change, especially with regard to the management structures. A change from the traditional military structures to something congruent with the political and social requirements of today, would see more black and more female representation in the top and senior management structures of the DOD (De Vries, 1999). This would indicate to society at large that the DOD is a true product of all the people of the country and it would therefore contribute significantly to its credibility.

The White Paper on the transformation of the Public Sector (1995) lays down clear guidelines for changes in management philosophy and practice for the public sector that are also applicable to the DOD and the National Defence Force. These guidelines include the following:

- The introduction of new and more open, flexible and participative organisational structures, concentrating less on the application of rules and more on the creative use of consultation and team work.

- Structural changes will need to be accompanied by a major shift in organisational culture, from a rule culture to one that is focussed more on the achievement of tasks and the meeting of needs.

- The effective mobilisation, development and utilisation of human resources with a high level of motivation and morale will be critical for the success of the transformation process in general.

- The DOD, like all other public institutions, will increasingly become rainbow workplaces, representative of the cultures and people of South Africa. The leaders of tomorrow will therefore need to be skilled in handling the complex processes of change in this environment of increased diversity.

In addition to the above-mentioned, the white paper also calls for an increased empowerment of the work force (as part of total quality management) through delegation, training and transformational leadership. Furthermore, all these changes and requirements will need to be supported by parallel changes and adjustments in the way the DOD is managed, led and controlled. One cannot ignore the fact that the DOD was (and to a certain extent still is) staffed in the majority by people who were part and parcel of a defence structure with an entrenched culture, functioning in almost complete autonomy. The future DOD will be totally different. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the transformation of the DOD should address entrenched mindsets and possible
resistance to the required changes. The unique and new composition of the DOD’s manpower in general and the SAAF specifically, from different social and organisational cultures, will pose enormous challenges to supervisors and leaders at all levels. Followers will have to be led into the new direction by focussing on a common vision and developing and supporting a set of shared values.

2.3 CULTURE AND VALUE SYSTEMS

When dealing with human (and therefore employee) behaviour one is almost always confronted with the issue of cultural and value-related differences. Culture not only influences individual behaviour, but can also be regarded as the collective personality of a group or society. It determines the unique identity of a group (Hofstede, 1980: 26) and can be regarded as the "interactive aggregate of personal characteristics" that influences the response of each member of the group to the environment (Guilford, 1959).

This "personality" consists of and is formed by, amongst others, values - a construct used to explain one’s tendency to select or prefer one alternative to another in a given situation. The definition provided by Rokeach (1972: 159) is "... an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end-states of existence". Therefore, values often dictate the choice of appropriate behaviour. The best way to describe a particular culture is to study the unique visible behavioural patterns associated with the culture in order to make deductions about the complex array of underlying values. Hodgetts et al (1997:96) calls it the "acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behaviour". Culture affects how people think (Theron, 1992) and how they behave (Mead, 1994: 6-14). Therefore, it has a clear perceivable and visible component (ie. behaviour) and a more complex and abstract invisible component. Kluckhohn (1951: 86) defines this visible part as "patterned ways of thinking, feeling, ……traditional ideas and especially their attached values".

As organisational transformation entails the influencing and change of human behaviour, the effect of cultural and value differences cannot be ignored. One of the fundamental characteristics of the South African work force is multiculturalism. Today the SAAF population is becoming more and more representative of this diversity of cultures, having to work together and interact in a number of different work roles, thus presenting leaders with increasingly difficult and complex problem solving and decision making dilemmas. If leaders do not develop a sense of urgency for understanding the unique cultural preferences of the groups and individuals they work with, they will soon experience an inability to inspire and motivate ordinary followers to extraordinary levels of performance. In this regard Hofstede (1993) also refers
to the need of American organisational leaders for understanding and addressing the needs of work groups from diverse cultures.

The huge amount of culture (and value-) related research, writings and discussions found in literature today indicate that the study of the construct is no easy task. The reason for this could arguably be found in the extreme complex nature of the construct itself. It is made up of many variables and components and is manifested in many different ways. Not only is it abstract in nature, but the difficulty to define it unambiguously has led the concept of culture to be the subject of considerable academic and social debate over the years. The difficulty in providing and accepting a single common description is portrayed in the example used by Schein (1992, p8). In discussing culture with colleagues, he often found that they agree "it" exists and that "it" is important in its effects, but then indicates that ...."we have completely different ideas of what 'it' is". He also had colleagues telling him ....."pointedly that they do not use the concept of culture in their work, but when I ask them what it is they do not use, they cannot define 'it' clearly". A detailed description of culture as a social and organisational determinant of individual and group behaviour as well as a formal definition thereof, which will serve as a point of departure and reference for this research, will be provided in Chapter 3.

In exploring the differences in thinking and social action between members of different modern nations and to understand value differences across national cultures, Hofstede (1980) studied 116 000 employees in more than 40 countries and identified four main dimensions on which country cultures differ. They were labelled and defined as follows (Hofstede, 1991):

- **Power distance:-**
  
  The degree of inequality in power between a less powerful individual (I) and a more powerful other (O) in which I and O belong to the same (loosely or tightly knit) social system.

- **Uncertainty-avoidance:-**
  
  The extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and to which feelings of uncertainty about the future are harboured.

- **Individualism-collectivism:-**
  
  A situation in which people are supposed to look after themselves and their immediate family only and/or a situation in which people belong to in-groups or collectivities which are supposed to look after them in exchange for loyalty.
• Masculinity-femininity:

A situation in which the dominant values in society are success, money and things (masculinity) or caring for others and the quality of life (femininity).

Theron (1992: 132) regards Hofstede's study as "the most comprehensive, expansive, all encompassing research on international differences in work-related values". After identifying the four dimensions by means of theoretical reasoning and massive statistical analysis, Hofstede, in association with Bond (Hofstede and Bond, 1988: 4-21) identifies a fifth dimension that Hofstede calls "long-term-short-term orientation". It refers to the degree to which people emphasise values associated with the future (such as persistence) versus values focussing on the past or present (such as tradition). The nature of the Hofstede value dimensions and its research base will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

Culture-related studies are not new in an African context either. For example, a work-value study on Western-oriented and tribal-oriented black employees was done in South Africa (Orpen, 1978: 99-111). The differences found were explained in terms of the differences in cultural backgrounds of these two groups. However, where many other previous studies (i.e. Trompenaars, 1993; Hodgetts & Luthans, 1997) have focussed on the effect of cultural differences on management techniques and approaches, this study will attempt to analyse the effect of culture (specifically value differences) on leadership and follower behaviour in a transformational paradigm. As it is so difficult to fully understand and describe other cultures from an own-culture-perspective, the study will have a strong focus on the effect of cultural and value differences on transformational leadership rather than attempting to only describe these differences.

2.4 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Since organisational culture sits at the very core of the organisation's functioning and performance (Theron, 1992: 29), it stands to reason that any significant change in its environment necessitates a change in its culture in order to ensure sustained effective functioning. The changes to particularly the political and social environment of the DOD (and therefore the SAAF), also require the introduction and internalisation of a new culture (and shared value system) within the organisation. DOD leaders will be fundamental in creating, developing and maintaining a healthy organisational culture and climate. They should serve as behavioural models and play an important role to ensure that shared beliefs and values are established throughout the DOD.
As indicated earlier, the culture of an organisation cannot be influenced or changed without influencing the values of employees and particularly the shared values that apply in such an organisation. Values, and thus work-related values, form an integral part of the current culture in an organisation. In the mid-nineties the SAAF began to focus on the importance of developing a core set of work-related values and the fact that these values play an important role in the way in which leaders influence the behaviour of followers. By this time it was clear that the quality of the SAAF’s leadership was an absolute predictor of its success and a prerequisite to ensure durability and continuity of optimal performance. Institutionalising appropriate leadership practices became more and more important in order to bring the organisation in line with the guidelines of the DOD.

Culture, and therefore values, and effective leadership are inseparable concepts since organisational culture is to a very large extent determined by leadership through firstly, the behaviours of leaders being imitated by followers, and secondly through those aspects in organisational life which leaders control and thereby influence follower behaviour (Drennen, 1992; De Beer, 1997). These aspects are typically:

- What leaders pay attention to, measure and control.
- Leaders’ reactions to critical incidents and organisational crises.
- Deliberate role modelling and coaching.
- Criteria used for the allocation of rewards and status.
- Organisational design and structure.
- Organisational systems and procedures.
- Formal statements of organisational philosophies, creeds and charters.

The above-mentioned covers a wide range of issues in organisational functioning and therefore has a direct and profound influence on the culture of the organisation. As it is the leaders of the organisation who control and influence these issues, they directly influence and even determine the culture to a very large extent.

There is no better example than South Africa for the forging of a new leadership paradigm. The new SANDF came into being with the integration of seven different armed forces into one and this integration brought together different leadership and social cultures. The situation necessitated a review of leadership practices as well as the renewing of the organisational culture in order to allow it to harmonise with environmental and international requirements. To achieve this, the SAAF has embarked on a road of focussing on transformational leadership (see Chapter 5) rather than the often ineffective transactional approach, as experienced by both leaders and followers in the organisation. The appropriateness of a transformational leadership approach in a cross-cultural work environment such as the SA Air Force has, however, not been tested and investigated properly.
2.5 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND TRANSFORMATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Although Bass & Avolio (1993: 118) suggest that there is a constant interplay between culture (and therefore values) and leadership, and that "……the reliance on developing transactional leadership styles will clearly fall short of the leadership challenges confronting most organisations today", certain seemingly opposing factors regarding transformational leadership and work-related values also exist, which call for a hypothesis that one leadership style or approach will not suffice across a range of different cultures. It proves the necessity of examining and understanding the nature of dominant values influencing leader and follower behaviour. The most important of these factors will subsequently be discussed.

2.5.1 HIGH POWER-DISTANCE VS EMPOWERMENT

In explaining the nature of a transformational leadership culture, Bass et al (1993: 118) suggest that, in an organisational culture which is highly innovative and satisfying, one would likely find leaders who build on assumptions such as "… people are trustworthy and purposeful; everyone has a unique contribution to make; and complex problems are handled at the lowest level possible". It follows thus that these assumptions could only be justified if followers share a common set of work values that indicate that they are willing to assume responsibility for own actions and for making own decisions. Workers supporting a high Power-Distance culture, accept a hierarchical or unequal distribution of power in organisations (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 1994) which suggests that lower level workers sharing these cultural values would prefer seniors to take important decisions - something not highly valued by transformational leaders.

2.5.2 INSPIRATIONAL MOTIVATION VS SHORT-TERM ORIENTATION

In a transformational culture leaders inspire followers through exhibiting a sense of vision and purpose (Bass, et al, 1993: 118) and empowering others to take responsibility for achieving the vision. Charlton (1992: 50) cites two reasons why leaders should provide and portray a positive vision or image of the future. Firstly, it motivates people and enables them to find their own roles within the organisation. Secondly, it provides a sense of focus as to where the organisation is going. It should be borne in mind that, in accordance with the national cultures framework of Hofstede and Bond (1984: 417-433), some people have a short-term orientation and emphasise values that focus on the past or present, such as social obligations and tradition. This is in contrast with long-term, future-oriented values such as thrift and persistence and could pose difficult challenges to leaders wanting to create and foster a culture of
creative change, improvement and growth where people are encouraged to focus on a shared vision of the future.

2.5.3 INDIVIDUALISED CONSIDERATION VS MASCULINITY

By paying attention to the individual needs and potential abilities of followers, transformational leaders continuously encourage them to develop beyond their present jobs and abilities. Individualised consideration (Bass et al, 1994) refers to the importance leaders assign to supporting, mentoring and coaching individual followers to higher levels of performance. Charlton (1992: xiii) pictures this individualised consideration as "...meeting the cry of the human heart, ...putting the humanity back into organisations". The leadership philosophy of the DOD also clearly states that leadership at all levels of the organisation should first and foremost be people centred in the belief that subordinates inherently have both the willingness and potential to do what needs to be done and to be empowered to do so. However, the development of a leadership culture where each individual is regarded as an important contributor to the success of a team will be difficult in an organisation where the so-called masculine traits, such as assertiveness, independence, competitiveness and insensitivity to feelings are regarded as dominant values (as is commonly found in many Western organisations today).

2.5.4 INSPIRATIONAL MOTIVATION VS INDIVIDUALISM

In a transformational culture, leaders do not only provide vision, but also inspire followers by communicating high expectations of both the individual and the team as a whole. They express the importance of teamwork and highlight the successes and achievements of the team. In contrast with this approach, in an individualism prone culture people focus more on working as individuals rather than on working together in groups. Schermerhorn et al (1994: 83) provide an example of an individualistic culture where employees want their seniors to be experts as well as to be decisive and authoritarian. According to them, Latin American employees may feel uncomfortable with a boss who delegates too much authority to them. Such preferences could prove to be difficult to accommodate with a leadership approach where participative procedures and employee involvement take priority, as is required by the DOD transformation guidelines.

2.5.5 UNCERTAINTY VS INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION AND CHANGE

"Uncertainty-avoidance" as a work value dimension of Hofstede (1980) is the degree to which people in a society prefer structured versus unstructured situations. One of the characteristics of a transformational leader is his or her
ability to prompt careful problem solving through intellectual stimulation. This is achieved by questioning assumptions and by encouraging followers to look at old problems in new ways. It inevitably brings about change and it is therefore anticipated that such leaders will be faced with difficult situations when working with followers showing a high preference for uncertainty-avoidance.

The above mentioned factors (among many others) indicate that the success of a transformational approach towards leading subordinates will be influenced by preferences regarding certain work-related values which form part of the current organisation culture and sub-cultures. Identifying and understanding these values will support leaders in choosing an appropriate leadership style in a given situation. As leaders need to be attentive to cultural (and therefore value related) differences, this study will focus on the analysis of these differences and the influence thereof on effective transformational leadership behaviour.

2.6 LEADERSHIP AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

One of the dimensions of culture which finds itself at the centre of human existence involves the role people assign to their natural environment. In his need for survival man is in constant interaction either against or with the environment. This environment also includes the people around us and those having an influence on our very existence and behaviour.

The construct of Locus of Control is used by Trompenaars (1993: 125) to describe the abovementioned interaction. The inner-directed believes that nature (i.e. the environment) can be influenced by imposing one’s will upon it. This is a kind of culture that sees the organisation “…as a machine that obeys the will of its operators”. The outer-directed culture perceives the environment as something that man is part of and where man “… must go along with its laws, directions and forces”.

Initial research (Rotter, 1966: 9-17) suggests that an internal orientation towards the environment and others is typical of more successful Americans and that an external orientation (or locus of control) is typical of relatively less successful Americans. This notion is supported by a study of almost 3000 working males (Andrasani and Nestel, 1976: 164) that indicated that internally-oriented individuals earned higher compensation, had higher status occupations and were more satisfied with their jobs. Despite these findings Trompenaars (1993: 128) states that this is not applicable to non-American cultures and that an approach of adapting to external pressures and influences could also prove effective. Outer directed may not always mean to leave outcomes to luck or fate, but could also mean to be directed by external
influences that has for example proven to be best options or decisions in the past.

In the modern era reconciliation of both internal and external control has become important. This is particularly essential in the multi-cultural South African workforce. In the transformed SAAF, where the focus is moving away from rule-controlled employees, to followers being led in a transformational way with individual consideration, intellectual stimulation and participative procedures being the determinants of effective follower behaviour, it is essential to keep in mind that when one inner-directed person wants to control and effect the environment, all other parties become the environment (Trompenaars, 1993). Inner-directed individuals feel successful when they experience that their way of thinking have won over those of others. This is clearly not in line with the principles and objectives of the new DOD. A transformational leader, for example, will typically stress how much he has learnt from his mistakes and from the feedback received from others - which is outer-directed behaviour. Inner-directed behaviour, nevertheless, remains important especially in a military environment where strategies have to be put in place in order to sustain a competitive advantage and to prevent the environment having a negative effect on the performance and sustained competence of the organisation. A clear understanding of the nature of locus of control and the effect of an internal or external orientation on leader and follower behaviour is thus essential. The SA Air Force which, during the last five years, was fiercely promoting the value of a transformational approach towards leadership will, as a result of an ever increasingly diverse population, have to distinguish more and more between the different needs of internal and external oriented leaders and followers. Theron (1992:12) refers to the importance of this by noting that "internal and external loci of control have direct and exhaustive effects on organisations". His explanation of external behaviour, i.e. "... being compliant with the wishes and demands of both superiors and subordinates, consider good relationships of utmost importance, are natural followers, and are easy to supervise", as opposed to internal behaviour, i.e. "......believing that they can control outcomes and rewards and exert more control in the work setting than externals", is a clear indication of the need for applying a full range of leadership styles, varying from transactional to transformational in nature.

A comprehensive analysis of variables affecting leadership behaviour in organisations will therefore not be complete without paying attention to the important construct of locus of control.

2.7 AIM OF THE STUDY

"The survival of mankind will depend to a large extent on the ability of people who think differently to act together" (Hofstede, 1980).
Having briefly discussed the political and social changes taking place in South Africa and influencing the behaviour of all leaders and other individuals in organisational life, the context of this research could well fall within the scope of the above-mentioned quote as well as the question: should one lead differently in different cultural settings? The need to learn more about the cross-cultural differences in behaviour and the effect of these differences on individual and work team performance coincides with the rapid cultural diversification of the South African workforce. A major shift in the composition of new entrant numbers will be in favour of black ethnic groups, Indians, Coloureds and especially female members of all population groups.

"Are current leadership and management models valid for explaining the behaviour and motivation of culturally different work groups?" This question, posed by Jung & Avolio (1999) holds special truth for the changing composition of the SA workforce. The answer of Hofstede (1980) is that "……psychological, philosophical and managerial models are far from universal, as is often believed, but are deeply culture bound".

The aim of the study is to do a detailed analysis of work-related values, locus of control, and leadership behaviour in a multicultural South African workforce and their interrelations within the ambit of a transforming military organisation. The critical questions to be answered are two-fold. Firstly, the researcher wishes to determine whether leadership theories and practices developed in the western world can merely be applied in the African world of work. Secondly, the analysis will strongly focus on the effect of culture (specifically value differences) on transactional and transformational leadership behaviour displayed by leaders and their followers, so as to determine the appropriateness of the DoD’s choice of transformational leadership as a suitable approach to be institutionalised across all cultural groups in the organisation.

Research into culture and leadership generally focuses on two approaches. Firstly, cultures are studied to determine whether or not there are significant differences in leadership behaviours across them, in other words whether cultural differences prompt different leadership behaviours (Trompenaars, 1993, Hofstede, 1980). In the second approach culture is treated as a key contextual variable (Pierce & Newstrom, 2000). Here the key question is whether or not the effectiveness of leadership behaviour is culture specific (Jung & Avolio, 1999; Dorfman, Howell, Hibino, Lee & Tate, 1997). Although behavioural differences in terms of leadership between cultures will be analysed in this study, the researcher will at the same time ensure a strong focus on those cultural elements (i.e. values) influencing effective and less effective leadership behaviours.
2.8 CONCLUSION

Since 1992 the process of transformation that affects organisations in South Africa in general and the civil service (on which this study will focus) in particular, has been a process of radical change and involves, *inter alia*, the grouping together of various individuals from diverse cultures. Cultural diversity, as well as the effective management thereof in the workplace, could be regarded as the single most important challenge facing South African human resource managers and leaders at all levels for the first decade of the new millennium. The diversity of the South African work force and the resultant challenges and demands it puts to HR managers and leaders were referred to in chapter 1. In the African context, South Africa could be referred to as a special case where a process of social transformation has to result in the integration and empowerment of all culture groups, including the previously disadvantaged, mostly black, majority of the South African population. One of the first obstacles in the new political dispensation in South Africa for the past ten years was to overcome and change traditional and conservative mindsets and negative assumptions regarding abilities, potential and needs of those people not belonging to one’s own cultural group, especially white resistance to black advancement into positions of leadership and management. Getting rid of these restraints through changing perceptions, stereotypes and attitudes will be a major step ahead, but real progress in South Africa towards improving productivity and becoming a respected competitor in the global arena, will only become a reality once leadership acquire a proper understanding of ethnic and cultural differences and how they can unleash the strengths of this diversity towards higher levels of individual and group performance. Van der Walt (1997) reaches the same conclusion: “Not only do we have to passively accept cultural differences, but we have to positively value them …a future together will only be possible if we are willing to identify and acknowledge the weak and strong points in each other.” Research on the development of a workable and effective leadership model, which can be applied across all cultural boundaries in South Africa, is necessary and long overdue, given the transforming social and political circumstances in the country. The literature study as well as empirical research will focus on the attainment of the objectives as set out in this chapter.