Administratio Publica

ASSADPAM

About the Journal
Administratio Publica is a peer-reviewed journal accredited with the South African Department of Education and produced four times a year and aims to promote academic scholarship in public administration and management and related fields. Analytical articles in the form of original theoretical and empirical articles, debates, research viewpoints, review articles and book reviews in English will be considered for publication.

Page fees and Journal subscription
- Individual and institutional annual subscription 2009: Local R500.00; Foreign - Dollar 100.00; Euro 77.00.
- Authors are required to pay a fee of R200.00 per page for any manuscript printed in the Journal. Payment is due on receiving confirmation from the Editor that a contribution is to be published in a specific issue of the Journal. Payment for a special institutional issue of the Journal is R30 000.00 per Journal. Payment should be made directly to the University of Johannesburg, but proof of payment must also be submitted to the Editor to avoid any possible delay in the publication of a contribution.

Where to send articles
All correspondence concerning articles should be directed to:
Prof C J Auriacombe
University of Johannesburg
Department of Public Governance
PO Box 524
Auckland Park
2006 Johannesburg
South Africa
christellea@uj.ac.za
Tel: 011 5593225
Fax: 011 5593225

Contents

Editorial

Christelle Auriacombe
Chief Editor

Knowledge is the foundation for organisational capabilities. This edition of *Administratio Publica* pays particular attention to challenges, issues and solutions for the sustainable future of the theory and practice of public administration in the delivery of services. The need to generate and develop this knowledge base in transferring best practices in this edition ranges in scope from the improvement of high scholarly research, publications, to project-based methodologies and understanding ethics. Mixed in between these ends of the spectrum, we include strategies for disability employment and valuing and retaining employees, to case studies of Total Quality Management and the climate change policy environment. What appears on the surface to be unrelated issues and topics, are in fact on closer examination all related to the issue of the never-ending search for balance between theory and practice to improve public administration.

In the first article, **"Taxonomies for the analysis of research designs in Public Administration"** by Kobus Wessels, Koos Pauw and Xolile Thani, the focus fall strongly on issues of research methodology practice. The authors depart from the assumptions that the sustainable future of public administration as the delivery of services needs high quality scholarly research and that high quality of scholarly research is determined by inter alia the proficient application of sound research methods. Consequently, this article reports on the refinement of taxonomies for analysing Public Administration research. It argues that sound research is the result of a valid relationship between research methods, units of analysis and the units of observation. It is furthermore argued that an improvement in the quality of research can only happen if Public Administration researchers are proficient in the core research methods of Public Administration. Therefore, this article proposes a method for empirically identifying the core research methods of South African Public Administration. Ten research methods were identified that Public Administration scholars can utilise.

It is within the context for this search for balance that universities are confronted simultaneously with some great challenges as well as marvelous opportunities. Following this, the South African National Plan for Higher Education (2001) highlights research, innovation and development as key developmental areas. As a result, South African universities are increasingly implementing strategies to enhance research involvement and increase

research output. The pressure from government is augmented by the inherent academic benefits resulting from accredited research outputs which include the generation of subsidies and the creation of centres of competence and excellence. However, with the increasing demands on academic time from the teaching and learning component, it has become essential that alternative and novel means of data-generation and output be sought. This has placed renewed emphasis on the contribution of post-graduate students in the output generation process.

Against this background, in **"A strategy-based approach towards optimising research output in the master's dissertation in Public Administration"** Liezel Lues reviewed the research outputs of the Department of Public Management at the University of the Free State, and from an absence of publications from Master's in Public Administration (MPA) dissertations. Although publishing research results in peer-reviewed journals is an acknowledged criterion of success amongst academics, this is not necessarily a priority amongst MPA students who tend to focus only on one outcome of their studies – to obtain their degrees successfully. Given that publication of peer-reviewed articles in subsidised academic journals is also not a prerequisite for obtaining the degree, this aspect is often neglected. Since 2000, no articles from the compulsory dissertation have been published in subsidised peer-reviewed journals. In this MPA programme inadequate time and the absence of an established research culture were identified as impeding factors. The article investigates possible strategy-based approaches to optimise the research outputs of students registered for the MPA dissertation.

In line with the modernising, re-inventing and alternative service delivery paradigm, governments increasingly utilise project-based methodologies to improve service delivery. There is general agreement that projects are becoming increasingly important for government institutions to operationalise strategic objectives and policy programmes. This approach is commonly known as 'Management-by-Projects'. To adopt this approach requires of public institutions to adjust their existing structures to accommodate projects. The challenges associated with this, however, range from cultural, to technological, to organisational. It requires public officials to be both managers and individual role-players on a variety of projects. Establishing a successful project-based or matrix structure requires a formal, planned approach designed to suit the requirements and context of the specific department. In efforts to facilitate interfaces between projects and hierarchical, bureaucratic structures, mechanisms such as Steering Committees, Project Directors, Project Sponsors, and Project Coordinators are utilised. The contention of Gerrit van der Waldt in his article **"Towards a project-based service delivery approach: uncovering organisational tensions",** however, is that these attempts are superfluous and that the rapid movement

towards matrix, project-based, flat hierarchical structures with more delegated authority to Project Managers, is potentially a more permanent solution to fully utilise a project-based service delivery approach in the South African Public Service.

He argues that since the 1990s attention has shifted to the impact of new forms of governance. Not only did the ethos and practices change, but pressure is increasingly put on traditional organisational structures and hierarchies to adjust to more matrix-like, project-based structures. A shift towards the utilisation of projects as vehicles for service delivery brought about a networked form of governance within public institutions. This shift leads to serious questions: How should public institutions adjust themselves structurally to these changes, and what are the key tensions between traditional structures and more matrix, or project-based structures? This article aims to explore current applications of project management in the South African Public Service, and, based on a literature survey and qualitative research, to uncover current organisational tensions. It should be noted that a multitude of variables could influence successful project-based service delivery such as strategy, governance, maturity, resources, leadership, and so forth. This article, however, only focuses on the structural – broadly referred to as 'organisational' – variables that could impact on project-based delivery.

Promoting and maintaining a high degree of ethical behaviour and conduct became a constitutional mandate in terms of the 1996 South African Constitution. This formed the foundation for building into public service activity and practice, an ethics-centric paradigm. Such an inspiring paradigm is necessary for public service activity and practice to secure human well-being and promote common human interests. Senior managers of the South African Public Service as leaders, pace-setters and role-models became guardians of this constitutional mandate.

Danny Sing's article, **"Theoretical perspectives on understanding ethics: a challenge for South African senior public service managers"** is a value-adding endeavour to deepen the theoretical and conceptual insights of senior public service managers in understanding the nature and meaning of ethics. It is the belief of the author that dealing with ethical issues, ethical expectations and ethical priorities can best be managed by a firm grasp and appreciation of the meaning and nature of ethics and ethical theories. Concomitant to this requirement is the understanding of a constellation of ethics- related concepts, including elements of an ethical value system, the notion of ethical relativism, the nature of ethical dilemmas, conflict of interest as an ethical threat, and corruption as a form of unethical behaviour.

The advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 witnessed the enshrinement of the fundamental human rights of all citizens with Government's target for disability employment legislated at 2%, in 1995. Yet, in spite of employment

targets and disability rights being legislated for people with disabilities since 1995, such people within the public service represented only 0,15% of the total staff complement of the public service nationwide, as at December 2004. Hence, there is a compelling need for a structured approach to disability employment. The article by Derrick Morton-Achmad, Harry Ballard, MS Bayat and Elmien Steyn, **"A normative model for the employment of people with disabilities within the Provincial Government of the Western Cape"** investigates the trends in the employment of people with disabilities within the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC) and proposes a normative model to address the matter of low employment and progression rates of people with disabilities within the PGWC. The proposed normative model presented in this article incorporates eight sets of identified principles that must be adhered to in order to ensure a sustained increase in the employment and progression of people with disabilities.

South African public sector organisations have undergone a transformational shift in the post-apartheid era with the employment and recruitment of employees from diverse backgrounds. The government's efforts since 1994 in the transformation of human resource and labour legislation policies and strategies, have shifted from a process-driven public service approach to a people-centred approach. Vasi Govender in her article **"Valuing and retaining employees in South African public sector organisations"** builds on the theme of employment challenges. The government's efforts since 1994 in the transformation of human resource and labour legislation policies and strategies, have shifted from a process-driven public service approach to a people-centred approach. The challenge for public sector managers is the recruitment, retention, empowerment and development of employees. It is important that the service delivery challenges are not compromised as a result of employees leaving the South African public sector organisations. To meet the challenges of the 21st century and to retain employees for effective service delivery, it is critical for public sector managers to understand the critical determinants and components of the retention paradigm in order to implement meaningful measures and processes. This article also provided an overview of why employees leave organisations and also highlights the significance of conducting exit interviews. A discussion of the retention determinants such as organisational culture and values, career development and planning, employee benefits and rewards, job design and work, and valuing employees, is provided. To promote a healthy, productive and conducive working environment, the value and benefit of the emotional intelligence competencies to assist managers to manage their emotions, as well the emotions of the employees, is highlighted. The article concludes by indicating the integrative role and responsibilities of management, human resource practitioners and employees in recruiting and retaining

employees. A model is presented to reflect and highlight the management retention process which requires effective implementation by all stakeholders as they are interdependent and fundamental in ensuring best practice for retention of employees in organisations.

While Total Quality Management (TQM) has been used successfully in the private sector, its application in the local government sector is still debatable. Whereas there are world-wide cases where TQM has been used in the public sector, its application in the South African local government sector is relatively new. The article, **"Total quality management (TQM) in the public sector: a case of local government in South Africa"** by Jesse Lutabingwa and Christelle Auriacombe is concerned with the extent to which TQM can be applied at the local government level in South Africa. Through two case studies, one drawn from a local government and another from an organised local government association, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the article argues that TQM has relevance in the local government sector. The two case studies represent best practices in the application of TQM principles in the South African context. Each of the entities presented in the case has received an award for excellent services to customers and organisational change. Based on these two cases, it is, therefore, argued that TQM has the potential of increasing efficiency and effectiveness in local governments in South Africa.

Climate change with its potential to disrupt all facets of life on earth is arguably the greatest environmental threat that humankind has faced to date. The debates on the best methods and means of dealing with the threat are occupying the agendas of diverse actors in the international, national and local arenas. In an effort to address the effects of climate change, governments and policy-makers attempt to translate the results of this vibrant debate into meaningful policy at home. In their article, **"Think globally, act locally: Policy implications of the climate change regime"** Richard White and Kobus Müller attempts to describe this journey from debate through policy into action, taking the complexities of policy environment into account. At the outset the largely divided international climate change regime endorses the contradictory stance of energy-intensive developing nations such as South Africa and inhibits the fostering of a meaningful climate change policy environment at a national level.

The policy context with regards to climate change in South Africa is analysed and the salient causes of the troubled policy environment, aside from those commonly associated with developing nations, are identified as largely administrative. Finally, the policy environment in South Africa is examined at local level and, while local governments enjoy more autonomy under the new dispensation, the administrative fragmentation experienced at a national level permeates down to the local sphere, with the EThekwini Municipality serving as a case in point.

CHANGES IN THE PUBLICATION OF
ADMINISTRATIO PUBLICA

Universities have three roles: creating knowledge, disseminating knowledge and managing knowledge to meet existing needs, to identify and develop existing and acquired knowledge, and to develop new opportunities for the knowledge-based society. Hence, *Administratio Publica* responds to this challenge and future editions will be provided free of charge for all paid up members of institutions who are affiliated with ASSADPAM. Furthermore, because a growing number of researchers want to publish articles, the current practice of issuing two editions per year did not suffice. Therefore, the Department of Education (DoE) approved that the current bi-annual journal be published as a quarterly journal from 2009 onwards (ie Volume 17 and further). I trust that these important changes will stimulate the level of critical thinking, scholarly research and debate on public administration issues and their impact on our ordinary lives further.

Subscribers should also note that the above changes resulted in only one edition for 2008, namely Volume 16(1). This gap will be filled from 2009 by the increased publication rate of four editions from Volume 17 onwards.

Taxonomies for the analysis of research designs in Public Administration

J S Wessels
Department of Public Administration and Management,
University of South Africa

J C Pauw
Department of Public Administration and Management
University of South Africa

X C Thani
Department of Public Administration and Management
University of South Africa

ABSTRACT

This article departs from the assumptions that the sustainable future of public administration as the delivery of services needs high quality scholarly research and that high quality of scholarly research is determined by inter alia the proficient application of sound research methods. Consequently, this article reports on the refinement of taxonomies for analysing Public Administration research. It argues that sound research is the result of a valid relationship between research methods, units of analysis and the units of observation. It is furthermore argued that an improvement in the quality of research can only happen if Public Administration researchers are proficient in the core research methods of Public Administration. Therefore, this article proposes a method for empirically identifying the core research methods of South African Public Administration. Ten research methods were identified that Public Administration scholars can utilise.

INTRODUCTION

Frederick C Mosher (1975:3-7) wrote that research is the first step in improved practice. A fundamental assumption for this article is then that the sustainable future of public administration as the delivery of services to people needs high

quality scholarly research. A second assumption is that high quality scholarly research findings are determined by inter alia the proficient application of sound research methods.

Since 1984 various scholars from mainly the United States of America (USA) have reflected on what is called the research issues in Public Administration (cf McCurdy and Cleary 1984:49-55; Stallings 1986:235-240; Kraemer and Perry 1989:9-16; Houston and Delevan 1990:674-681; Cleary 1992:55-61; Adams and White 1994:565-576). This discourse has continued in the South African Public Administration fraternity (cf Hubbell 1992 Wessels 1999a; Wessels 1999b; Wessels 2004; Mabin 2004; Clapper 2005; Wessels 2005; Khalo 2006; McLaverty 2007; Cameron and McLaverty 2008; Wessels 2008). The issues of methodological rigour and quality were specifically raised.

McCurdy and Cleary (1984:49) relate the so-called failure to develop a solid research base to the inappropriate systematic training of researchers. Their sentiment that research methods have to be carefully designed to ensure valid findings is shared by Cameron and McLaverty (2008:69-96)[1] in their article based on a comprehensive evaluation of South African Public Administration journals. If they are correct, and we believe that they are, it seems to be necessary to start with a process of systematic training of researchers in the appropriate Public Administration research methods.

A key question focusing this research is: What are the appropriate Public Administration research methods? In a chapter written as far back as 1990 Perry and Kraemer (1990:370) identify ten categories of research methods, while Cresswell (2003) and Cameron and McLaverty (2008:69-96) restrict themselves to only three categories, namely quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods/desktop. This article proposes a refinement of their categorisation for evaluating South African Public Administration articles and theses in order to describe and evaluate the research methods used. We will **firstly** make a case that Cameron and McLaverty's (2008) classification of research methods, as well as the one by Cresswell (2003), may not discriminate enough between the various methods to serve as foundation for the improvement of the proficiency of researchers in Public Administration research methods. We will contend that the three categories are too broad and need refinement. As it may be argued that these broad categories are preferable because they tend to be mutually exclusive, we will investigate the necessity and possibility of a more refined, but still mutually exclusive classification system. Although it is possible to determine the most appropriate Public Administration research methods by analysing and classifying scholarly articles and theses, the following question may arise: What are the most appropriate research method in a particular case?

This article will **secondly** argue that there is supposed to be a logical relationship between the unit of analysis, the unit of observation and the research method of a research project. In fact, we will show that the unit of

analysis (e.g. a theoretical construct such as "rationality") excludes some units of observation of a research project (e.g. individuals and groups and collectives), and that the units of observation (e.g. individuals) exclude some research methods and techniques (e.g. conceptual analysis and hermeneutics) to be applied. For the same price certain units of analyses (e.g. "rationality") exclude certain research methods (e.g. quantitative studies such as surveys). The application of a research method not logically related to neither the unit of analysis, nor the unit of observation, will give a person reason to question the validity or appropriateness of the research methods and quality of the research.

For the purpose of this article we assume, firstly, that sound research methods are the result of a valid relationship between research methods and the units of observations for which they are applied. Secondly, we assume that a "turnaround in the quality of research" as Cameron and McLaverty (2008:94) suggest, can only happen if Public Administration researchers are proficient in the core research methods of Public Administration.[1] Therefore, this article will propose a method for empirically determining the core research methods of South African Public Administration. In doing so, a few possible indicators for determining the core research methods will be discussed.

RESEARCH TOPIC AS A POSSIBLE METHODOLOGICAL INDICATOR

In various previous analyses of Public Administration research attention was given to research topics and a categorisation of research topics (cf Perry and Kraemer 1986:217; Cleary 1992:58; Cleary 2000:449; Wessels 2004:174; Wessels 2005:1505; Cameron and McLaverty 2008:79-83; Wessels 2008:109-111), mainly because "research topic" as a variable focuses on the "distribution of research in the field" (Perry and Kraemer 1986:217). However, the authors of this article have decided to include research topic as a possible methodological indicator as this possibility is currently tested in a study by one of the authors (on which there will be reported fully at a later stage). The inclusion of this research topic is based on the assumption that categories of research topics may relate to specific units of analysis and especially units of observation.

UNIT OF ANALYSIS AS A POSSIBLE METHODOLOGICAL INDICATOR

The term "unit of analysis" seems to be not generally used in Public Administration literature. In fact, except for Houston and Delevan (1990:679), not one of the

initial participants in the discourse on Public Administration research use this term (cf Perry and Kraemer 1986; McCurdy and Cleary 1984; Cleary 1992, 2000). However, McNabb (2002:293) uses the term in his book *Research methods in Public Administration and non-profit organisations: quantitative and qualitative approaches*. What does this concept mean and why is it necessary to include it as an indicator of the appropriateness of research methods?

McNabb (2002:293) refers to the concept "unit of analysis" as "narrowing of the relevant data" allowing the researcher "to focus the study on topics identified in the research objectives". Focusing on the key topic seems thus the essence of his understanding of this concept. For the purpose of this article we rely on the definition that appear in standard works on social research, namely that the "unit of analysis refers to the WHAT of your study: what object, phenomenon, entity, process, or event you are interested in investigating" (Babbie and Mouton 2001:84) and that it is "the 'entity' or 'phenomenon' to which one's conclusions ought to apply" (Mouton 1996:91). We include the unit of analysis as a variable in the methodology for the study of Public Administration research methodology because we expect the "what" of a study to determine the research material or data sources chosen to do the study.

Mouton (1996:48-51), Babbie and Mouton (2001:85-59) and Houston and Delevan (1990:679) identify several categories of units of analysis. As their taxonomies differ from each other, we conflated them by developing our own taxonomy. For the purpose of the analysis of Public Administration research, we have selected the following categories for classifying research in terms of their units of analysis:

- **Individuals**: This category refers to studies of individual human beings in order to know more about their behaviour, orientations or characteristics within a specific historical context (Babbie and Mouton 2001:648; Houston and Delevan 1990:679). Babbie and Mouton (2001:648) observe that individual people are the most typical unit of analysis in social sciences although this is not necessarily be true for Public Administration.

- **Groups or collectives**: Houston and Delevan (1990:679) use a category "Group/Organisation". We followed Mouton's taxonomy by having two separate categories for groups and organisations. When we considered the category "groups or collectives" we asked ourselves: "How does this category differ from the first one?" To help us with our classification of articles and theses, we used Mouton"s definition of a "grouping" or "collective", namely "people who are (or define themselves as) members of larger geographical, political or cultural entities". Examples of entities in this category are nations, developing countries, provinces, cities, towns, communities and tribes (Mouton 1996:48). The emphasis is thus not on the characteristics or behaviour of the individual members, but on the nation, province or town as a distinct entity.

- **Organisations and institutions**: It is noteworthy that in his earlier work, Mouton had two separate categories for "organisations" and "institutions" (Mouton 1996:48) while in the book he co-authored with Babbie these two entities have been conflated in one category (Babbie and Mouton 2001:86). A study of Mouton's (1996:48-49) discussion of the characteristics of these two entities leads us to the conclusion that the differences between them, do not justify two distinct categories for the purposes of this study. As public administration takes place in and through a variety of public institutions, we regard this category as one of the core units of analysis. Organisations also comprise groups of people but with a more formal structure than our previous category. Examples of units of analysis classified in this category are the South African Defence Force, the Public Service and the Office of the Premier.
- **Social actions and events**: This category differs from the previous categories in the sense that the researcher is not interested in the individual, group or organisation and their actions or behaviour, but more in the actions themselves as phenomena (Babbie and Mouton 2001:87; Mouton 1996:49-50). Consequently, we regard articles and theses focusing on, for example, public participation, intergovernmental relations and disaster management as part of this category.
- **Interventions**: Bearing in mind the policy and regulatory environment within which public administration takes place, this category indicates a core of the research in Public Administration. Babbie and Mouton (2001:88) describe this category as "sets of actions and decisions that are structured in such a way that their successful implementation would lead to clearly identifiable outcomes and benefits". Articles and theses studying interventions such as legislation, policies, plans, programmes, courses and systems will fall into this category.
- **Social artefacts of cultural objects**: This category is a study of the products of human beings and their behaviour, such as a code of conduct, books and scientific journals and articles in scientific journals. Articles and theses in this category do not only make use of these artefacts or objects as data sources, but can use them as unit of observation.

The categories discussed above are all categories of units of analysis which are part of the so-called World 1 (Babbie and Mouton 2001:84-85). An important category of units of analysis that is not discussed in the books by Babbie and Mouton (2001) and Mouton (1996), but only briefly mentioned, is the category for World 2 objects, such as concepts or notions, scientific theories and models, and scientific methods and techniques (Babbie and Mouton 2001:85). With that in mind, we add a seventh category to the above list, namely the category of "constructs".

- **Constructs**: This category provides for articles and theses having non-empirical units of analysis such as theories, models, concepts and research methods. When we use the concept "construct", we refer to "theoretical creations based on observations but which cannot be observed directly or indirectly" (Babbie and Mouton 2001:16).

The foregoing discussion shows that units of analysis are categories of entities that are studied by researchers. Our preliminary analysis has not shown any specific correlation between the unit of analysis and the research topic. In fact, a specific unit of analysis such as the Department of the Public Service and Administration can be studied under various topics, such as Human Resource Management, Public Management Ethics and Public Organisational Development and Management. Although there is no proven relation between unit of analysis and research topic, Babbie and Mouton (2001:85) identify a close relationship between unit of analysis and unit of observation (data sources or material used). According to them, units of analysis in a study may also be the units of observation (Babbie and Mouton 2001:174).

UNIT OF OBSERVATION AS A POSSIBLE METHODOLOGICAL INDICATOR

Babbie and Mouton (2001:174) define a unit of observation as a unit of data collection and "an element or aggregation of elements from which information is collected". Not one of the textbooks on research methodology consulted presents a classification of units of observation, separate from the classification of units of analysis. The reason for this is probably because they hold the opinion that the "unit of analysis and unit of observation are often the same – the individual person" (Babbie and Mouton 2001:174). That might be true for typical social science, but as Wamsley (1996:364) observed, Public Administration is an "applied interdisciplinary field" without a dominant paradigm or epistemology and method. Therefore we believe that Public Administration as a subject can broadly be categorised as a human science. This includes the social, management and administrative sciences -- just to mention a few. One can expect from Public Administration as a human science to utilise a variety of data sources and material in its research endeavours. Consequently, we decided to compile a separate classification system for units of observation, consisting of the following:
- **Individuals:** This category includes their verbal (including written responses to questions posed by a researcher) and observable behaviour and characteristics (Mouton 1996:142).

- **Groups and collectives:** The description of this category is the same as it is as a unit of analysis. It also includes the observation of groups of people within organisations and institutions, e.g. focus groups.
- **Scholarly literature:** This category includes the use of scholarly articles and books as primary source.
- **Official documents**: This category includes all official documents such as Acts, policies, yearbooks and archival files.
- **Secondary data and statistics collections**: This category includes data not collected by the researcher him or herself such as statistical yearbooks and textual data.
- **Decision support technology:** This category includes inter alia the observation of computer software packages such as electronic decision support software.
- **Constructs:** This category includes all the so-called World 2 sources or material which are used in the research process, although they are not directly or indirectly observed in the empirical sense of the word.
- **Other texts:** This category has been created to include all texts which cannot be classified as scholarly, official or secondary data sets and includes speeches, newspaper reports and Internet blogs.

The above categories of units of observations can again be divided into three broad categories of data sources, namely human beings and their behaviour (individuals, and groups and collectives), products of human beings and their behaviour (scholarly literature, official documents, other texts, secondary data and statistics and interventions) and constructs. Bearing in mind that the methodology textbooks on traditional social science methods regard the units of analysis and units of observation to be more or less the same, one can expect a strong correlation between the selected units of analysis and units of observation in scholarly articles. Furthermore, we agree with Wamsley (1996:363) that Public Administration is not a "traditional or typical academic discipline of the social science variety", but an "applied interdisciplinary field", as he called it (Wamsley 1996:364).

Knowing what the possible categories of data used by Public Administration researchers are, the next step is to reflect on the categories of methods used by Public Administration researchers.

RESEARCH METHODS AND THEIR LOGICAL CONSISTENCY WITH THE VARIOUS INDICATORS

It seems to be reasonable to expect from researchers to apply research methods which are regarded as most applicable to the selected unit of analysis and

units of observation. As one can expect, the human sciences apply a variety of research methods. The question is which of these methods will be included in an analytical instrument? Perry and Kraemer (1986:216-220; 1990:370), for example, use ten categories which include the following:

- Recollected experience: anthropology
- Recollected experience: historical
- Recollected experience: descriptive
- Deductive reasoning: mathematical
- Deductive reasoning: logical argument
- Deductive reasoning: legal brief
- Empirical analysis
- Heuristic analogy such as simulation
- Literature review
- Other

It seems thus that their categories consist of one for so-called empirical research and eight for non-empirical research (Perry and Kraemer 1986:220; 1990:370). In his widely used textbook on research methods, Creswell (2003) uses three categories, namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. He uses the category "quantitative methods" to include surveys and experiments (Cresswell 2003:153). His category 'qualitative procedures' include methods such as direct observation of human beings as well as the reading of documents (Cresswell 2003:179-188). The category "mixed methods" seems to refer to mixing quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Cresswell 2003:208). We believe that the categorization of Cresswell (2003) is too broad and need refinement.

Bearing in mind a possible concern about the mutually exclusiveness of categories (Stallins and Ferris 1988:581), our classification system for research methods in Public Administration can be seen as a logical sub-division of Cresswell's three categories. For our analysis of articles published in three scholarly journals, we have divided, what is known as quantitative research, into two separate categories (representing two distinct methods). We have also split the category "qualitative research" into two sub-categories representing two distinct methodological traditions. We have added participatory action research methods, historical studies and comparison, as separate categories. Part of what Cresswell (2003:188) calls "reading of documents", was divided into two sub-categories, namely conceptual analysis and hermeneutics (including hermeneutics, discourse analysis, literature review, ideological critical analysis, and deconstructive research). We have consequently developed the following classification of research methods:

- **Quantitative 1**: The primary characteristic of methods falling in this category is that they do quantitative studies of people and their behaviour by means

of inter alia surveys, interviews, experiments and field experiments (cf Mouton 2001:152-153, 155-158). This category include Perry and Kraemer's (1990:370) category "recollected experience: descriptive".

- **Quantitative 2**: Where the methods in the previous category are used to study people directly in a quantitative way, methods in this category are used to study them indirectly by using (often sophisticated) statistical modelling and computer simulation studies (Mouton 2001:163) or secondary data analysis (Mouton 2001:164). This category include the Perry and Kraemer's (1990:370) category "heuristic analogy (e.g. simulation)"
- **Qualitative 1**: This methodological category is characterised by research methods used to study people and their behaviour in a non-quantitative way by means of inter alia participant observation studies (Mouton 2001:148-149), case studies (Mouton 2001:149-150; Perry and Kraemer 1990:370) and unstructured interviews (also Perry and Kraemer's (1990:370) "recollected experience: anthropology").
- **Qualitative 2:** Methods in this category include implementation and outcome evaluation research (Mouton 2001:158-160), programme evaluation and policy analysis.
- **Participatory action research**: The main feature of this research method is that these studies involve the subjects of the research as an integral part of the design (Mouton 2001:150).
- **Historical/narrative studies:** Methods in this category attempt to reconstruct the past and the chronology of events and include historical case studies, narrative studies, event history analysis and life history analysis (Mouton 2001:170-173; Craig 1999:417-435; Perry and Kraemer 1990:370). The narrative method as an interpretive approach resonates with the "constructionist epistemology" that suggests that knowledge of the world is socially constructed (Dodge, Ospina and Foldy 2005:289; Cf. Ospina and Dodge 2005:148).
- **Conceptual analysis:** This category includes methods used for the analysis of the meaning of words or concepts through the clarification and elaboration of the different dimensions of meaning and use. It also includes philosophical studies aimed at analysing arguments in favour of or against a particular position (Mouton 2001:175-176; Pauw 1999:464-473).
- **Hermeneutics:** This category includes methods such as hermeneutics, discourse analysis, literature review, ideological critical analysis, deconstructive research and critical reflexivity (Mouton 2001:179-180; De Beer 1999:436-463; Cunliffe and Jun 2005:230-236; Perry and Kraemer 1990:370).
- **Comparison**: Comparative studies focus on the similarities and differences between groups of units of analysis such as individual institutions, countries, public services, and individuals (Mouton 2001:154-155). Perry and Kraemer (1990:370) refer in this regard to 'cross-sectional, correlational analysis.

- **Content analysis**: These studies analyse the content of documents (such as policy documents, annual reports and legislation) for any meanings, pictures, symbols, themes or messages that can be communicated (Mouton 2001:165).

A hypothesis that will be tested in our analysis of scholarly articles and theses is that not all of the above methodological categories can be regarded as core Public Administration methods.

CONCLUSION: WHAT'S NEXT?

Very few scholars will differ from Mosher on the importance of research for improved service delivery. Most scholars will probably agree that high quality of research findings need proficient researchers applying appropriate research methods. This article reports on the development of a methodology for determining which methods are core Public Administration research methods.

In doing so, we have argued that the choice of appropriate research methods are supposed to be the result of a valid relationship with the unit of observation and unit of analysis used in a research project. Our research in progress will apply this rule to the existing corpus of research literature.

Our refined taxonomy of research methods, units of observation and units of analysis will enable us to identify possible discrepancies between the unit of analysis and units of observation of research projects, the unit of analysis and research methods of research projects, as well as between the units of observation of a research project and its research methods. If there are major discrepancies, it will indicate poor research decisions by scholars. If major discrepancies cannot be identified, it will enable us to identify the core research methods for Public Administration. By doing that, it will be possible to focus on developing the appropriate research competence amongst scholars and students.

NOTES

1   An anonymous reviewer requested that the authors of this article refrain from engaging with the article by Cameron and McLaverty (2008)

REFERENCES

Adams, G.B. and White, J.D. 1994. Dissertation Research in Public Administration and cognate fields: an assessment of methods and quality. *Public Administration Review.* 54(6):565-576.

Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. 2001. *The practice of social research* (South African edition). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Cameron, R. and McLaverty, L. 2008. Public Administration research in South Africa: an assessment of journal publications, 1994-2006. *Administration Publica*. 15(2):69-96.

Clapper, V.A. 2005. Developing the multi-discipline of public administration – propositions for South African and continental agenda setting. *Journal of Public Administration.* 40(3.1):182-193.

Cleary, R.E. 1992. Revisiting the doctoral dissertation in Public Administration: an examination of the dissertations of 1990. *Public Administration Review.* 52(1):55-61.

Craig, A.P. 1999. Narrative as method. In Wessels, J.S. and Pauw, J.C. (eds). *Reflective Public Administration: views from the South.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Cresswell, J.W. 2003. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Second Edition. London: Sage Publications.

Cunliffe, A.L. and Jun, J.S. 2005. The need for reflexivity in Public Administration. *Administratioin and Society.* 37(2):225-242.

De Beer, C.S. 1999. Reading texts and understanding meaning. In Wessels, J.S. and Pauw, J.C. (eds). *Reflective Public Administration: views from the South.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Dodge, J., Ospina, S.M. and Foldy, E.G. 2005. Integrating rigor and relevance in Public Administration scholarship: The contribution of narrative inquiry. *Public Administration Review.* 65(3):286-300.

Houston, D.J. and Delevan, S.M. 1990. Public Administration Research: An Assessment of Journal Publications. *Public Administration Review.* 50(6):674-681).

Hubbell, L. 1992. A lack of heterodoxy: political correctness in South African Public Admi-nistration. *Administration Publica.* 4(1):1-17.

Khalo, T. 2006. Improving public management research: methodological analysis. *Journal of Public Administration.* 41(3)557-569.

Kraemer , K.L. and Perry, J.L. 1989. Institutional requirements for academic research in Public Administration. *Public Administration Review.* 49(1):9-16.

McLaverty, L. 2007. Public Administration Research in South Africa: an assessment of journal articles. In *Journal of Public Administration* and *Administratio Publica* from 1994-2006. MSocSc dissertation in Public Administration (examination copy). Cape Town, University of Cape Town.

Mabin, A. 2004. The role of research and training in the transformation of the public service. *Administration Publica.* 12(2):50-69.

McCurdy, H.E. and Cleary, R.E. 1984. Why can't we resolve the research issue in Public Administration? *Public Administration Review.* 44(1):49-56.

McNabb, D.E. 2002. *Research methods in Public Administration and nonprofit management: quantitative and qualitative approaches.* Armonk: ME Sharpe.

Mouton, J. 1996. *Understanding social research.* Pretoria: JL van Schaik Academic.

Mouton, J. 2001. *How to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies: a South African guide and resource book.* Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Pauw, J.C. 1999. Philosophy as method. In Wessels, J.S. and Pauw, J.C. (eds). *Reflective Public Administration: views from the South.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Perry, J.L. and Kraemer, K.L. 1986. Research methodology in the Public Administration Review, 1975-1984. *Public Administration Review.* 46(3):215-226.

Perry, J.L. and Kraemer, K.L. 1990. Research methodology in Public Administration: issues and patterns. In Lynn, N.B. and Wildavsky, A. (eds). *Public Administration: the state of the discipline.* Chatham: Chatham House Publishers.

Stallings, R.A. 1986. Doctoral programs in Public Administration: an outsider's perspective. *Public Administration Review.* 46(3):235-240.

Stallings, R.A. and Ferris, J.M. 1988. Public administration research: Work in PAR, 1940–1984. *Public Administration Review.* 48(1):580–587.

Wamsley, G.L. 1996. A public philosophy and ontological disclosure as the basis for normative grounded theorizing in Public Administration. In Wamsley, G.L. and Wolf, J.F. (eds). *Refounding democratic Public Administration: modern paradoxes, postmodern challenges.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Wessels, J.S. 1999a. Research in Public Administration. In Wessels, J.S. and Pauw, J.C. (eds). *Reflective Public Administration: views from the South.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Wessels, J.S. 1999b. Social science methods in Public Administration. In Wessels, J.S. and Pauw, J.C. (eds). *Reflective Public Administration: views from the South.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Wessels, J.S. 2004. Public Administration research... a South African masquerade. *Journal of Public Administration.* 39(1):168-184.

Wessels, J.S. 2005. The challenges of knowledge production by researchers in Public Administration: a South African perspective. *South African Journal of Higher Education.* 19(special issue):1499-1515.

Wessels, J.S. 2008. South African trends in master's and doctoral research in Public Administration. *Administration Publica.* 15(2):97-120.

Wessels, J,S, Pauw, J. and Thani, X.C. 2008. *Research in South African Public Administration.* Research in progress.

White, J.D. 1986. Dissertations and publications in Public Administration. *Public Administration Review.* 46(3):227-233.

AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS

Prof J S Wessels
Department of Public Administration and Management
University of South Africa
PO Box 392
UNISA
0003
South Africa
wesselsj@unisa.ac.za
Tel: 012 429 6595
Fax: 012 429 3221

Prof J C Pauw
Department of Public Administration and Management
University of South Africa
PO Box 392
UNISA
0003
South Africa
pauwjc@unisa.ac.za

Me X C Thani
Department of Public Administration and Management
University of South Africa
PO Box 392
UNISA
0003
South Africa
thanixc@unisa.ac.za

A strategy-based approach towards optimising research output in the master's dissertation in Public Administration

Liezel Lues
Department of Public Management
University of the Free State

ABSTRACT

The South African National Plan for Higher Education (2001) highlights research, innovation and development as key developmental areas. As a result, South African universities are increasingly implementing strategies to enhance research involvement and increase research output. The pressure from government is augmented by the inherent academic benefits resulting from accredited research outputs which include the generation of subsidies and the creation of centres of competence and excellence. However, with the increasing demands on academic time from the teaching and learning component, it has become essential that alternative and novel means of data-generation and output be sought.

This has placed renewed emphasis on the contribution of post-graduate students in the output generation process. In a master's programme in public administration (MPA791), empirical data generated through dissertations have been identified as potential sources for research publications. Although supervisors are enthusiastic about assisting students to publish their dissertations, inadequate time and the absence of an established research culture were identified as impeding factors. Further investigation revealed the need for a distinct strategy for optimising research output in the master's dissertation in public administration. The paper thus investigates possible strategy-based approaches (based on reports by Huff *et al*. 2009) to optimise the research outputs of students registered for the MPA791 dissertation.

INTRODUCTION

The National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) in South Africa is very specific about the role of higher-education institutions in the development of research. The NPHE provides the following two outcomes for research i.e. research concentration and funding should be linked to outputs (outcome 13) and graduate enrolments and outputs should increase at master's and doctoral levels (Outcome 14) (Ministry of Education, 2001:65–67).

The research outputs referred to in the NPHE are comprehensively discussed in the document titled *Policy for Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher-Education Institutions*, which applies to all public higher-education institutions and came into effect on 1 January 2005. This policy is based on the information contained in White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997) and in the NPHE (2001). The purpose of this policy is to encourage research productivity by rewarding quality research output at public higher-education institutions (National Department of Education, 2003). For the purpose of this paper it is important to clarify research output, which, according to the DoE, is defined as "textual output where research is understood as original, systematic investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge and understanding" (National Department of Education, 2003). Recognised research output for the purpose of the DoE subsidy comprises journals (peer-reviewed periodical publications with an International Serial Number), books (peer-reviewed monographs, chapters in books, edited works) and proceedings (published records of conferences, congresses, symposia) (National Department of Education, 2003). A published peer-reviewed article is subsidised as a single unit (1 unit), whereas a book may be subsidised to a maximum of 5 units and proceedings are allocated a maximum of half a unit (0.5) (National Department of Education, 5:2003).

According to the new funding formula, the weightings for research outputs calculate one credit for either a publication unit or complete master's degree; thus shifting an important focus to the publication of peer-reviewed articles in subsidised academic journals (Ministry of Education, 2004). Against this background, the Department of Public Sector Management at a South African university review its own research outputs, especially the absence of publications resultant from the Master's in Public Administration (MPA791) dissertations.

Although publishing research results in peer-reviewed journals is an acknowledged criterion of success amongst academics, this is not necessarily a priority amongst MPA791 students who tend to focus only on one outcome of their studies – to obtain their degrees successfully. Given that publication of peer-reviewed articles in subsidised academic journals are also not a prerequisite for passing the degree, this aspect is often neglected. Since 2000, no articles from

the compulsory dissertation (Subject Code MPA791791) have been published in subsidised peer-reviewed journals.

However, publishing in peer-reviewed journals should be seen as a way for both academics and students to share their research results with their peers. This achievement implies that the paper has passed the rigorous peer-evaluation and editorial processes and ensures that the research has contributed significantly to the specific field. Fostering a publication culture amongst MPA791-registered students, where both degrees and publications are equally important, is thus crucial. This can only be done by the application of an effective strategy by departmental management (DM).

In order to attain this goal, this paper will consider the profile of students who registered for the MPA791 dissertation in January 2007 as a point of departure. The remainder of the paper will discuss a strategy-based approach, which builds on reports by Huff, Floyed, Sherman and Terjensen (2009), towards optimising research output for master's dissertations in public administration.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

A questionnaire survey (quantitative method) and personal interviews (qualitative method) were used for data collection. A pilot study using a draft questionnaire was conducted on two respondents and, based on feedback and observations, adjustments were made to the final questionnaire. These two respondents were not included in the final sample. The sample consisted of all students who registered for the MPA791 dissertation in January 2007 at a South African university. The questionnaires were distributed, completed and collected during a formal lecture attended by the MPA791 students. All the students were targeted (100% sample) for the questionnaire survey, amounting to a sample size (n) of 59. Forty-three of the students responded, presenting a 73% response.

Personal interviews, using a structured questionnaire, were conducted with the three senior academic staff members in the Department who acted as supervisors. All these supervisors are in possession of at least a doctorate. At the commencement of the interviews, a concise summary of selected descriptive statistics and general responses from the completed questionnaire survey was conveyed to the interviewees; however, care was taken not to influence their objectivity (Mouton 2001).

The responses to the questionnaire were encoded and analysed in collaboration with the Department of Biostatistics at the university. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the results in terms of frequencies and percentages for categorical variables, means or medians, as well as maxima and minima for numerical variables. The personal interviews were recorded and, together with

the data from the questionnaires, the information was used to formulate final conclusions and recommendations.

BACKGROUND AND PROFILE

The Master's Degree in Public Administration (MPA791) is an established, career-orientated postgraduate qualification aimed at high-level management in the public and related sectors. It is intended for graduates who do not necessarily have an undergraduate background in public administration or public management, but who have gained relevant career experience in the public sector and who wish to enhance their managerial knowledge (Faculty of Economics and Management Science, 2007:19). The rationale for this qualification is that universities have to contribute towards market-related and applicable qualifications aimed at the successful employability of graduates. When one considers the popularity of the course and the large numbers of students that annually enrol, this is clearly the case.

An honours degree is not a prerequisite for the MPA791 degree, and students are accepted for the MPA791 degree with a bachelor's degree, a satisfactory academic record and appropriate managerial experience in the public sector. The MPA791, also referred to as the structured master's degree, comprises eight one-semester modules and a dissertation on a subject in the field of public administration or public management (Faculty of Economics and Management Science, 2007:19). The MPA791 degree attracts a large number of students (annually an average of 30 first registrations since 2000) per year.

A hundred and twenty-five students were registered for MPA791 in 2006 (HEDA 2007). The Department of Public Management has an average of 10 MPA791 students (15,04% flow through) annually (HEDA 2007). A selective demographic profile of MPA791 students registered in 2007 is depicted in Table 1. The response group in this research had a mean age of 39 years, the youngest respondent being 30 and the oldest 56. Only three (8%) of these were full-time students.

With regard to race (Table 1) at the time of the research, African respondents (84%) were in the majority, followed by coloured (10%) and Indian (7%) respondents. It should be noted that white students also registered for the MPA791 dissertation but were absent during the collection of the data and will therefore not be accounted for. Male respondents accounted for the majority (56%) of the respondents (Table 1). This gender ratio is a clear reflection of the profile of the workforce in the South African public sector, which has shown that more African males than females are currently represented in both managerial as well as subordinate posts (Lues 2003:125). Nevertheless, for the purpose of

this paper, race and gender do not contribute significantly to its aim and will, therefore, not be discussed further.

Table 1 Demographic profile of MPA791791 students registered in 2007

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage (n=42)
African	35	84%
Coloured	4	10%
Indian	3	7%
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage (n=43)**
Males	24	56%
Females	19	44%

Table 2 summarises the profile of the highest qualification obtained by MPA791 respondents registered in 2007. In this study, 33 of the respondents (83%) received their undergraduate qualifications at a university, whilst smaller percentages studied at technikons (13%) and colleges (5%) (Table 2; column 1). It should be noted that it was only relatively recently (1996) that technikons in South Africa (transformed to universities of technology in 2004) started to award degrees in addition to diplomas and certificates. Thirty of the respondents (77%) held degree-equivalent qualifications whilst five respondents (13%) possessed honours degrees as their highest tertiary qualifications (table 2; column 2). This position is of great concern. The value of an honours degree as a prerequisite for a master's degree cannot be underestimated. The concern for students without honours degrees prior to registration for MPA791 is that during the honours degree the student makes the important transition from mere memorising and accounting for facts to the application of the acquired knowledge and experience of the student. The insight and application of the student have to be developed in such a manner that the student becomes an independent scholar. Whilst doing the honours degree the student will also be introduced to research methodology and application, which is a crucial step when further research is envisaged. Brynard (2005:368) confirms that the practical application of theoretical knowledge is often lacking because research methodology has not been part of the curriculum of the preceding qualification. Therefore, postgraduate students often display inadequate knowledge of research methodologies and poor or inappropriate levels of research skills (Mouton 2001:6). These difficulties soon surface in the first submissions of research proposals. Few students' submissions manage to prove

to the supervisor and university that they are worth the investment of a great deal of time and money (Lues & Lategan 2006:31). In addition, these research proposals often lack analytical, evaluative and assessment skills (Auriacombe, 2005:386).

Table 2 Highest qualification profile MPA791 students 2007

Institution (n=40)		Qualification (n= 39)		Field of study (n= 39)	
Other universities	53%	Degree	77%	Social Sciences & Humanities	44%
University of the Free State	30%	Honours	13%	Natural Sciences & Biology	21%
TechniKons	13%	Diploma	8%	Managerial & HRD	19%
Colleges	5%	Grade 12	3%	Finance & Business	15%

From table 2 it is evident that the majority of respondents (44%) had qualifications in the fields of the social sciences and humanities (Table 2; column 3), and disciplines such as political science, sociology, business administration and social science. It is imperative in this instance that MPA791-registered students should select topics that relate to their work in the public sector and that they conduct the research with the main purpose of contributing towards an existing challenge within a department. Furthermore, the research findings generated from these dissertations should be made known. Dissemination of the information contained in them can be done by means of the publication of peer-reviewed articles in subsidised academic journals, amongst others. The interviewee's responses indicated a clear willingness to assist students in publishing, although inadequate time and the absence of a strong research culture were mentioned as having contributed to the absence of publication of peer-reviewed articles in subsidised academic journals in the past.

This mentioned scenario clearly indicated the absence of a strategy-based approach towards optimising research output. Strategy is defined by an institution's position on exploration and exploitation (Burton, DeSanctis & Obel 2006). Successful strategy, for the purpose of this paper is thus the optimised publication of peer-reviewed articles in subsidised academic journals from MPA791 dissertations. According to Huff *et al.* (2009), the nature of strategy lies in answering three questions:

- What are the characteristics of effective strategy?
- How are strategists influenced by significant other strategists?

- Why are the influence of the successes and failures of other institutions important?

The application of these three questions will be discussed below.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGY

According to Huff *et al.* (2009), effective strategy should do several things concurrently (Figure 1). It should:
- communicate a convincing purpose or vision to others;
- connect institutional strengths with environmental opportunities;
- exploit current success while exploring new opportunities;
- generate more resources than it uses;
- coordinate and guide activities; and
- respond to new conditions over time.

What is obvious in these six functions of strategy of Huff *et al.* (2009), is the presence of well-defined verbs that direct the strategy to be measured and thus be accounted for – whether effective or not.

Strategy should communicate a convincing purpose or vision to others

Given the background and purpose of this paper, it appears that, in order to optimise the publication of peer-reviewed articles in subsidised academic journals, the Department of Public Management must apply the ability to provide a convincing image (*a strategy-based approach*) of what it wants to become or do (*vision statement*) which will accumulate in what will be done (*typically creating a publication culture and enabling environment*), by whom (*MPA791 students together with staff members in the Department who act as supervisors*), how, for whom and why (*mission statement*). Strategy is clearly a communication tool and therefore DM needs to ascertain that the right people (aspirant MPA students and current supervisors) know about the purpose and how it is being put into action. This purpose should be compelling to all the parties involved.

Strategy should connect institutional strengths with environmental opportunities

According to Huff *et al.* (2009), it is important to look at the match between institutional strengths and the environment where these strengths might be used.

Strategy connects an institution (i.e. Department of Public Management) to individuals (postgraduates) and other firms (i.e. public sector institutions, national departments and public administrations). They are all affected by a dynamic macro environment of technological changes, economic realities and socio-cultural values. At this point it is emphasized that it is impossible to connect institutional strengths with environmental opportunities without looking at the broader setting (policies). In an academic context the immediate strength that comes to mind is that of knowledge, expertise and skills which should be effectively applied in a dynamic macro environment (public sector) whilst adhering to policies in the higher education and public sectors respectively. Thinking about the departmental strengths and weaknesses will help DM see themselves relative to the environmental opportunities. A SWOT analysis, when used thoroughly, can summarize the evolution of strategy over time. In addition, it might indicate how an apparent weakness (absence of publication of peer-reviewed articles in subsidised academic journals) in one setting might be changed into a strength by the introduction of a new strategy.

Strategy should exploit current success while exploring new opportunities

To exploit current success while exploring new opportunities makes mention of two equally important methods when searching for opportunities. The strategy of exploration tries to create new value from unfamiliar resources and activities, thus stretching the institution's capabilities well beyond what they were in the past (Burton, DeSanctis & Obel, 2006). The alternative to exploration is the strategy of exploitation which tries to create additional value using current resources and activities (Huff *et al.* 2009). The latter strategy creates its value by rearranging and improving established offerings and taking advantage of the current environment (Burton, DeSanctis & Obel 2006). Because exploitation builds on what the institution already knows, it is often seen as less risky than exploration. In the South African higher educational environment where research concentration and funding should be linked to outputs (outcome 13), (Ministry of Education, 2001:65–67), both the strategies of exploration and exploitation should be applied respectively by DM.

Strategy should generate more resources than it uses

Strategy should be much more than words. Huff *et al.* (2009), suggest that the manner in which money and other resources (reputation, employee commitment and other intangibles) are deployed also be considered important. The balance between using and creating resources is critical. In this regard the emphasis of the proposed strategy is not merely on delivering an MPA791 dissertation on completion of a study but to further the dissemination of information as

intellectual property as well as to generate a subsidy through a publication of a peer-reviewed article. If this strategy comes to realisation, then it can truly be said that it generated more resources than it used. A strategic statement of "what, by whom, how, for whom, and why is it valuable" is, therefore, almost always an impressive achievement (Huff *et al.* 2009). However, caution should be taken lest this strategy become more of a personal driver for the supervisor than for the student and thus put pressure on the student to produce more (a peer-reviewed article) than the norm (dissertation). This situation should be avoided at all cost.

Strategy should coordinate and guide activities

Higher educational institutions exist to accomplish what individuals cannot effectively do on their own. In this, is strategy a helpful statement that indicates how individuals (*MPA791 students together with staff members in the Department who act as supervisors)* should work together? Whatever the answer, DM should merely guide, rather than explicitly direct activities within the Department of Public Management. A strategy thus provides a general procedure that helps people make detailed decisions in their particular domains or, in this case, their areas of specialization. This is a most challenging expectation for a supervisor. However, recently, multiple authors' names linked to peer-reviewed articles in subsidised academic journals often reflect the coordination strategy in place amongst disciplines.

Strategy should respond to new conditions over time

By now it should be realised that strategy in an ever-changing environment is an ongoing process and needs to be revisited, amended and often completely changed if need be. Mintzberg (2001) makes a useful distinction between intended strategy and realized strategy that fits the idea very well. Intended strategy is the plan before action begins; realized strategy reflects what is learned as events unfold. In the case of enhancing the publication of peer-reviewed articles in subsidised academic journals, it is an explicit statement of content and thus an intended strategy. But this strategy will not always achieve the desired results and so they often cease to be. However, realizing what has prohibited the achievement of the intended strategy by DM will lead to a new strategy and a response to new conditions over time.

THE INFLUENCE OF SIGNIFICANT OTHER STRATEGISTS

The nature of strategy lies in a second question, according to Huff *et al.* (2009), namely: how are strategists influenced by other strategists? The point of departure

here is that strategy is rarely developed by just one individual merely because it is difficult for one person to advance all the ideas needed to define what, by whom, how, for whom and why. Cross contamination within the development of strategy is not only a means of ensuring transparency but it is also built on experience and skills of others.

The overall conclusion to be drawn is that strategy is the results of interaction with individuals and groups known as stakeholders. The benefit from drawing input from stakeholders is that the institution gets to know exactly what it is that they do correctly as well as what they do wrong. For the purpose of this paper stakeholders will in terms of the (triple-helix), refer to university/ industry and government cross-stimulation. These stakeholders may vary in power (working MPA students at levels of directors and upwards) and contemplation (willingness to contribute to strategy), but even the possibility of positive or negative stakeholder activity affects the range of decisions the DM will consider or execute.

Each stakeholder is almost certain to see a given situation in a distinctive way because of their unique background and objectives. This complex, interactive, political environment – particularly in the field of public management – makes it difficult to develop coherent strategy. A classical problem for higher educational institutions involves reconciling inconsistent operational strategies that are likely to have incompatible objectives. For example, MPA791 students tend to focus only on one outcome of their studies – to obtain their degrees successfully; while the DM is likely to promote subsidy-driven research outputs. The DM needs to address this kind of pressure and limit inconsistent activities, because they make communication and coordinated activity difficult. Instead, strategy often tries to create synergies.

Departmental Management may, for example, build expertise in one operational area by drawing on skills from other areas (i.e. expertise within the public sector). This could be accomplished by applying the three steps for developing a strategy involving stakeholders as proposed by Huff *et al.* (2009). During step one the most important groups and individuals that can affect the outcomes of the institution must be identified. Step two proposes the specification of areas in which their interests are likely to be supported by the proposed strategy. Finally, the responses to these identified interests are brainstormed. The ultimate objective of stakeholder analysis is to develop a compelling statement of strategy that will be acceptable to a number of influential stakeholders, while also inspiring and coordinating internal actions that are beneficial to the institution.

THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The third question regarding the nature of strategy lies in answering the following question: "Why are the successes and failures of other institutions important?"

(Huff *et al*. 18:2009). This question may seem paradoxical at first, but this reality is based on the assumption that interaction with strong competitors can strengthen the capability of an institution. Strategists consider the performance of their rivals in the hope of learning from their experience without the cost and time required to do their own investigations. It is realised that any institution's competitive advantage is difficult to sustain over time, because rival strategists are highly motivated to copy success. Several SA HEI debate the question of how to enhance subsidized research outputs and, although universities differ in their strategy to accomplish this objective, the debates certainly contribute to insight.

OPTIMISING RESEARCH OUTPUTS: A STRATEGY-BASED APPROACH

The strategy approach towards optimising research output regarding master's dissertations in public administration is not seen as a once-off attempt but rather as a long-term investment. Against the background on the profile of a MPA students as well as the literature review on the nature of strategy, the following five objectives can be pursued.

Objective (i): Develop and implement a clear strategy

In addressing the objectives contained in the NPHE, the implied University has already developed a special Research Turn Strategy, with incentives and additional targeted funding (UFS 2002b:4). Although permanently appointed research staff are expected to publish no fewer than 1.25 units per annum (RSA DoE 15:2006) this strategy would imply that output above this threshold is rewarded in a special manner (UFS 2002b). The aim of the allocations was to introduce short- and long-term mechanisms for the promotion of research. The short-term objective was to establish an immediate increase in research output, whereas the long-term objective focused on building additional research capacity and developing research potential (UFS 2002a). These strategies achieved a 30% turnaround in the budget of the UFS in less than 3 years (UFS 2006b). Although the university has invested in building a research culture, this might have not yet cascaded down to all the departments. The absence of a clear strategy in the Department of Public Management was noted in the feedback of interview respondents which indicated that there was a lack of a research culture in the department. If the characteristics of effective strategy of Huff *et al*. (2009) should then be applied, it would entail that DM communicate a convincing strategy-based approach towards optimising research output in the master's dissertation in public administration to the MPA791-registered students. The department

should further connect departmental strengths with environmental opportunities through building future partnerships and coordinating/guiding the activities. It should also exploit the current success of the department whilst simultaneously exploring new and ground-breaking opportunities. Through these strategies it will undoubtedly generate more resources and capital than it uses.

Objective (ii): Initiate collaborative initiatives

Collaborative relationships should be established in a situation where there is goal congruence as well as the realisation that the potential gains from acting cooperatively will exceed the gains from acting individually and opportunistically. For this reason the Department of Public Management in collaboration with stakeholders must ponder questions such as: What range of possible relationships exist? Why should these ties or relationships be formed? How should these ties or relationships be formed among the triple helix? When should specific strategy combinations be used? (see Holland 2008). Through these initiatives, DM would recognise the important role of partnerships with industry/business and government to meet its research objectives but also to contribute to the well-being of the society.

Objective (iii): Assist MPA791-registered students with their time management.

The fact that there were only three (8%) full-time students in this study undoubtedly impacted on the time available for study and publication (this opinion is supported by Fraser & Killen, 2003:34 and Walters & Koetsier 2006). It was also noted that professional MPA791-registered students did not have time outside working hours to attend academic meetings and discourse. All these academically-related appointments were preferably organized during their working hours. It is common knowledge that professional students who register for part-time studies experience more pressure to manage their time than full-time students. Since the relationship between work and studies amongst adult learners has not received much attention since 1994, South African higher-education policy development has called upon higher-education institutions to accommodate adult learners especially in view of their circumstances (Ministry of Education 2001).

However, as is the case with all South African HEIs, students are given a sufficient amount of time to complete the MPA791 dissertation. A student for the master's degree in public administration at the mentioned university must be registered for a minimum of two years. Students who have not yet obtained the qualification after the minimum period of study for the qualification concerned

plus two years (calculated from the date of first registration for the master's degree) will often be allowed to complete the study on recommendation by the dean of the faculty (UFS 2006a). However, if the study has not been completed within five years, comprehensive reasons for further registration must be provided. The feedback from the responses to the interview indicated that requests by students to extend their studies often occurred. This extension of studies undoubtedly places a financial burden on the students and on the university.

The third objective is thus directed at assisting the students with the management and the achievement of objectives by means of a work schedule. Taking the respective regulations and target dates of the university and department into account, a detailed pro forma time schedule must be presented and explained to the students. This schedule will allow them the option of either finishing their dissertations within a year or extending their studies for another six months if they have not completed them within the current year. It was emphasised that such a schedule should be embarked upon as a team effort in order to accommodate the workloads of both the supervisor and the student. A second schedule directed specifically at the timeous setting and achieving of objectives of the study must be introduced. The students need to be advised to include this schedule in the first submission of their research proposal and use it as a term of reference.

Objective (iv): Establish working groups and encourage collaboration

The current number of MPA791 students allocated to a supervisor varies between 10 and 14. Although the students are encouraged to choose topics in an area of personal interest which are also intellectually stimulating (Brynard 2005:369), the department should provide support in the demarcation of the research topic when students struggle to formulate a topic in their fields of interest. The problem most commonly experienced is that the topic is not defined clearly enough and that the scope of the study is too wide (also confirmed by Brynard 2005:371).

When the initial research proposals are presented to the department, the topics of these respective proposals (MPA791) should be grouped under a holistic theme (for example, local government, finances, service delivery) and allocated to a supervisor in their area of specialization. This is a time-consuming task which, is of the utmost importance in order to prevent the duplication of topics and also to ensure that the topic is justified and researchable.

The purpose of this objective is twofold. Firstly, the supervisor can derive a broad topic from current research proposals and guide students under his/her supervision to complement one another's projects with as little duplication as possible. This initiative might allow the possibility of a combination of research

findings that could be adequate for publishing research results in accredited academic journals on completion of the dissertations. It should be noted that the manipulation of topics or results will not be allowed under any circumstances Secondly, the students are introduced to one another and encouraged to collaborate in sharing ideas with one another (this idea is also supported by Lues & Lategan 2006:32).

Objective (v): To reconsider the policy of admission to the MPA degree

The fifth objective of the department focuses on the future admission requirements for MPA students, as well as the preparation of the students regarding research methodology specifically. To admit students who, for whatever reason, have a slim change of completing their studies would be as unfair as admitting students with the potential to succeed and then not supporting them to realise their potential optimally (Fraser & Killen, 2003:26). The strategy from 2008 onwards, required that the MPA degree would comprise five instead of eight one-semester modules along with an extended dissertation. To be able to continue with the extended dissertation in the second year of study, the student must pass the newly introduced module: Research Methodology in Public Management (MPA732) (Faculty of Economics and Management Science, 2007:21). Upon completion of this module the student will demonstrate and reflect on the following aspects related to research methodology in public management:

- develop an understanding of the concept research and related aspects;
- generate an understanding of the definition and characteristics of research proposals;
- critically distinguish qualitative research as a research paradigm from other research paradigms;
- discuss some basic terms in the quantitative research process; and
- outline an understanding of professional conduct in research.

In addition, the dissertation counts 80 credits. It is obvious that research output will have more value to a higher-education institution if such it generates an income for the institution.

CONCLUSION

A strategy-based approach towards optimising research output in the master's dissertation in public administration has been canvassed in this paper. This has been done against the backdrop of the transformation initiatives since 1994

in South African higher education to increase research output and is also a reflection on a strategy-based approach towards optimising research output in the master's dissertation in public administration. The strategy discussed in this paper focused on the nature thereof as proposed by Huff *et al.* (2009), with emphasis on the three questions:

- What are the characteristics of effective strategy?
- How are strategists influenced by other strategists? and
- Why are the influence of the successes and failures of other institutions?

The role of the Department of Public Sector Management is clearly that of supporting MPA791 students in optimising their research output. It was noted that these students should be guided in managing the time that they allocate to their dissertations more effectively; that they should choose topics relevant to their fields of interest; and that they should allow more than one year for the completion of the dissertations. The importance of fostering a research culture in the department was also realized. The paper concluded with recommendations to the Department of Public Management to apply a strategy-based approach towards optimising research output in the master's dissertation in public administration

REFERENCES

Auriacombe, C.J. 2005. Writing Research Proposals for Theses and Dissertations in Public Administration: Problematic Aspects of Foundational Skills. *Journal of Public Administration.* 40(3.2):377–391.

Brynard, D.J. 2005. The Management of the Selection and Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students in Public Administration: Facing Difficult Challenges. *Journal of Public Administration.* 40(3.2):364–376.

Burton, R.M., DeSanctis, G. and Obel, B. 2006. *Organisational Design. A Step-by-Step Approach.* USA: Cambridge University.

Department of Education, 2006. Ministerial Statement on Higher Education Funding: 2006/7 to 2008/9. Pretoria: Government Printer. Faculty of Economics and Management Science 2007. *Programme: Public Sector Management.* Bloemfontein: Faculty of Economics and Management Science.

Fraser, J. and Killen, R. 2003. Factors Influencing Academic Success or Failure of First-year and Senior University Students: Do Education Students and Lecturers Perceive Things Differently? *South African Journal of Higher Education.* 23(4):254–263.

Higher Education Data Analyser (HEDA), 2007. *Qualification Profile Magister in Public Administration.* Bloemfontein: University of the Free State.

Holland, D.G. 2008. Discipline in the Context of Development: A Case of the Social Sciences in Malawi, Southern Africa. *Higher Education.* 55(6):671-681.

Huff, A.S., Floyed, S.W., Sherman, H.D. and Terjensen, S. 2009. *Strategic Management. Logic and Action.* Crawfordsville: John Wiley & Sons.

Lues, L. 2003. *African Women as Managers in the Free State Provincial Administration: Addressing Performance Factors.* Thesis (D.Tech). Bloemfontein: Central University of Technology.

Lues, L. and Lategan, L.O.K. 2006. *Research ABC.* Stellenbosch: Sun Press.

Ministry of Education. 2001. *National Plan for Higher Education.* Pretoria: Government Printer.

Ministry of Education. 2004. *Statement on Higher Education Funding 2004/05-2006/7.* Pretoria: Government Printer.

Mintzberg, H. 2001. Decision Making: It's Not What You Think. *MIT Sloan Management Review.* 42(3):89-94.

Mouton, J. 2001. *How to Succeed in Your Master's and Doctoral Studies.* Pretoria: Van Schaik.

National Department of Education. 2003. *Policy and Procedures for Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions.* Pretoria: Government Printer.

University of the Free State. 2002a. Research Report volume 1. Bloemfontein: UFS.

University of the Free State. 2002b. UFS Research Turn Strategy. Bloemfontein: UFS.

University of the Free State. 2006a. *Policy on Master's and Doctoral Studies (Regulation A.84).* Bloemfontein: Vice-Rector Academic planning.

University of the Free State. 2006b. Institutional Review 2006: Towards Excellence and Equity, parts 1 and 2. Bloemfontein: UFS

University of the Free State. 2007. Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences: Research Report 2006-2007. Bloemfontein: UFS.

Walters, S. and Koetsier, J. 2006. Working Adults Learning in South African Higher Education. *Perspectives in Education.* 24(3):97–108.

AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS

Prof Liezel Lues
Associate Professor
Department of Public Management
University of the Free State
Private Bag X20539
Bloemfontein 9301
SOUTH AFRICA
Cell: 076 8466 828
Tel: 051 507 3279 / 051 401 2886
Fax: 051 5073275
luesl.ekw@ufs.ac.za

Towards a project-based service delivery approach:

Uncovering organisational tensions

Gerrit van der Waldt
Department of Public Management and Governance
North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus)

ABSTRACT

In line with the modernizing, re-inventing and alternative service delivery paradigm, governments increasingly utilise project-based methodologies to improve service delivery. There is general agreement that projects are becoming increasingly important for government institutions to operationalise strategic objectives and policy programmes. This approach is commonly known as 'Management-by-Projects'.

To adopt this approach requires of public institutions to adjust their existing structures to accommodate projects. The challenges associated with this, however, range from cultural, to technological, to organisational. It requires public officials to be both managers and individual role-players on a variety of projects. Establishing a successful project-based or matrix structure requires a formal, planned approach designed to suit the requirements and context of the specific department. In efforts to facilitate interfaces between projects and hierarchical, bureaucratic structures, mechanisms such as Steering Committees, Project Directors, Project Sponsors, and Project Coordinators are utilised. Based on a literature study and empirical investigation by means of focus group interviews and frequency response ratings, it is the contention of this paper, however, that these attempts are superfluous and that the rapid movement towards matrix, project-based, flat hierarchical structures with more delegated authority to Project Managers, is potentially a more permanent solution to fully utilise a project-based service delivery approach in the South African Public Service.

INTRODUCTION

The influence of the New Public Management (NPM) and 'reinventing' movement on public institutions and practices resulted in what some observers view as a shift from bureaucratic ethos of the public service to a managerial regime (Newman 2004:17). It is argued (see Clarke and Newman 1997) that senior public bureaucrats were 'captured' by new business-like ideologies and practices that both brought a measure of freedom (from old hierarchical controls), but also subjected them to new forms of power. They are both empowered (think new) and disciplined (act within the confinements of existing structures, policies and regulations). New conceptual frameworks are necessary that involve a shift from traditional bureaucratic models to contingent and emergent conceptions. The conceptions should translate into changing organisational structures, culture and functional processes.

Since the 1990s attention has shifted to the impact of new forms of governance. Not only did the ethos and practices change, but pressure is increasingly put on traditional organisational structures and hierarchies to adjust to more matrix-like, project-based structures. A shift towards the utilisation of projects as vehicles for service delivery brought about a networked form of governance within public institutions. This shift leads to serious questions: How should public institutions adjust themselves structurally to these changes, and what are the key tensions between traditional structures and more matrix, or project-based structures? This article aims to explore current applications of project management in the South African Public Service, and, based on a literature survey and qualitative research, to uncover current organisational tensions. It should be noted that a multitude of variables could influence successful project-based service delivery such as strategy, governance, maturity, resources, leadership, and so forth. This article, however, only focuses on the structural – broadly referred to as 'organisational' – variables that could impact on project-based delivery.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPLICATIONS IN THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENT

Public institutions operate in multi-project service delivery environments where traditional project management tools and practices, which focus on individual projects, are not adequate. Partington (1996:15) and Crawford *et al.* (2003:2) for example drew attention to the dualism in emerging trends in Public Management. The first top-down view follows a rational, hierarchical model that emphasises control, order and structure. The second emerging (NPM) bottom-up model recognises a non-linear, political and irrational process. Associated organisational

forms are characterised as dynamic, interconnected, and informal systems and are expressed through formal structures and systems. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, public managers may feel threatened by new organisational structures and processes.

Recent reports (2003) by the United Kingdom Government, titled "*Better Policy Making*" and *"Identifying Good Practice in the use of Programme and Project management in Policy-Making: Transforming Public Services; a Civil Service that Delivers*", identified a number of good practice examples in the development and implementation of policy. These reports clearly reflect that Project Management is a proven approach to effective service delivery. Project Management should be the focal point for policy-makers in that they should think through the so-called "end-to-end" process to translate a particular policy into operational plans and desired outcomes. End-to-end policy-making is important to consider implementation, resource allocation and delivery from the outset. There is thus general agreement (*see* Willson-Murray 1997; Nickson and Siddons 1997; Newbold 1998) that projects are becoming increasingly important vehicles for public institutions to reach their reason for existence.

Despite this trend towards project application, it is clear that existing management models focus too much on narrow technical aspects and increasingly there is pressure to develop a more comprehensive paradigm to incorporate especially political dimensions, change and transformation issues in project planning. In this regard Yeo (1993:113) argues for a soft systems approach whilst Crawford *et al.* (2003:2) in response developed a 'Soft Systems Thinking' (SST) model. This model incorporates ideas typified by the epistemology of soft systems in Project Management. Checkland and Howell (1998) further contributed by their development of the systems thinking-like 'Processes for Organisation Meanings' (POM) model for conceptualising the way meanings are created in organisational contexts – in other words, a focus on a broader view instead of a narrow technical ('hard' issues) perspective. In line with exchange theory this perspective is particularly important in public sector context for the development of policy in response to societal issues.

Clarifying 'project-based' service delivery

A project can be regarded as a temporary organisation to achieve a specific purpose. Young (1996) and Kerzner (2003) define a project as any series of activities and tasks that have a specific objective to be completed within specification; have defined start and end dates; have funding limits; consume human and other resources and are multi-functional. A key factor in an organisational context is the time element. A project has a deadline and definable costs and standards within that time frame. Bresnan, Goussevskaia and Swan (2004:1537) emphasise

that since projects are once-off, self-contained, temporary organisations, they do not easily fit into routine organisational processes and require dedicated modes of organisation and specific management practices and techniques. There is thus idiosyncratic aspects of projects as relatively short term and fluid activities set against a more permanent and static organisational setting.

Andersen and Jessen (2002) and Kolltveit, Karlsen and Grønhaug (2005:3) underline the fact that Project Management as discipline grows and matures and that this results in plurality, differentiation and fragmentation in perspectives. Artto (2001:5) states that the future development of Project Management will focus on the wider organisational context, and more specifically to the issue of project interrelations with other organisational structures such as other projects, line management, and a project's role in fulfilling the strategic objectives and appropriate procedures to achieve that.

As stated, public institutions increasingly utilise project methodology to operationalise strategic programmes and implement service delivery initiatives. Projects thus become part of the operations of the institution. DeFillipi and Arthur (1998:125) and Thiry (2002:2) call such organisations 'project-based' and regard them as organisations that manage operational functions within a temporary project setting. In other words, project-based organisations conduct the majority of their functional activities in project mode and privilege project dimensions over functional dimensions in their structures, policies and processes. Gareis and Huemann (2000:709) and Artto (2001:6) refer to 'project-based organisations' as those organisations that adopted project-oriented working methods in their functioning. It uses internal (functions) and external (delivery) projects to operationalise its strategic objectives.

To ensure the optimal utilisation of scarce departmental resources, projects should be aligned with programmes and existing organisational structures and arrangements. It is therefore necessary to establish and improve interfaces between the programme, individual projects and organisational arrangements. These interfaces generally fall into one of three categories:

- *Organisational interfaces* – formal and informal reporting relationships among different organisational units or directorates.
- *Technical interfaces* – formal and informal reporting relationships among different technical disciplines and functional areas. Technical interfaces occur both within project phases and between project phases.
- *Interpersonal interfaces* – formal and informal relationships among different individuals working on programmes and projects.

These interfaces often occur simultaneously and provision should be made to incrementally improve and maintain them. The use of steering committees or other mechanisms of 'governance' may significantly assist to facilitate these interfaces.

A steering committee could, for example, ensure that a particular project obtain relevant resources from various functional directorates (organisational interfaces), get assistance from IT (technical interface), and bring all role-players (i.e. heads of directorates) frequently to the table to establish work practices and to foster relationships (interpersonal interfaces).

Thiry and Deguire (2007) demonstrate that mature project-based organisations need to adopt integrative approaches that will enable consistent structures, delivery of strategy and uniformisation of knowledge. Gareis and Huemann (2000:712) highlight the following characteristics of a project-based organisation:

- It defines management by projects as an organisational strategy
- It adopts temporary organisations for the performance of complex processes
- It manages a project portfolio of different project types
- It has specific permanent organisations to provide integrative functions
- It applies a 'new management paradigm'
- It has an explicit project management culture
- It perceives itself to be project-oriented.

They (Gareis and Huemann) emphasise three key variables that should be incorporated in a project-based organisation, namely structure (temporary and permanent organisations), culture (Project management and new management paradigm), and strategy (management by projects).

THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE ON PROJECT-BASED DELIVERY

In a dynamic Public Service environment, traditional bureaucratic structures are usually not flexible enough to rapidly adjust to changing conditions. The opposite is true for programme and project-based or matrix organisational structures. With faster response to needs and demands, better utilisation of resources, and improved programme and project control and performance, programme and project-based organisations have the flexibility to maximise their efforts.

Creating a project-based structure requires public officials to be both managers and individual role-players and stakeholders on a variety of projects. This reality means that it requires a more informal or infrequent use of project management tools and principles since projects may be run on an *ad hoc* basis.

In the literature, the terms matrix management, project management, matrix organisation and project organisation are frequently used synonymously. These terms involve some type of cross-functional organisation since they invariably involve bringing resources together from different functional areas or units to undertake a task on a temporary or more permanent basis. Ford and

Randolph (1992:268) define matrix simply as any organisation that employs a multiple command system that includes related support mechanisms and an associated organisational culture and behaviour pattern. These authors explain the mixed or overlay organisational form that characterise matrix organisation in which traditional, vertical hierarchy is 'overlayed' by some form of lateral authority. Ford and Randolph (1992:269) further accentuate another common characteristic, namely dual lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability that violate the traditional 'one-boss' principle of management. Typically the project manager reports to a higher level of executive or top manager. Team members report to their functional departments and maintain responsibility for routine work in their functional area (Campbell 2003:244).

An organisation's structure determines the division of power and authority in it. Since projects are traditionally defined within functional units, they are necessarily targeted within the scope and some specific unit, rarely going beyond the boundaries defining that specific unit. According to Combe (In Dietrich, Poskela and Artto 2003:9) this limiting, functional view typically causes the following problems:

- Unclear roles and responsibilities if projects cross departmental units
- Cross-functional projects may create conflicts with functional priorities and confusion over resourcing
- Without a strategic focus projects implemented in various functional units may not contribute to the achievement of strategic priorities.

In spite of the problems highlighted above, Turner and Keegan (1999) underscore the positive side to traditional structures on project delivery. In their research of project-based organisation structures they observe that there is a need to obtain or retain some special functions in organisation structure in addition to the project structure to maintain the career development of individuals and promote learning both the individual and organisational levels. Dietrich, Poskela and Artto (2003:11) support this observation and propose that responsibility should be divided to tie it to organisational structure. Each functional unit then owns a management unit for the coordination and status reporting of various cross-functional projects. They caution, however, that by creating additional structures to support multiple projects may result to unnecessary complexity and conflicts in responsibilities and resource allocation activities.

According to Hill and Hupe (In Newman 2004:25) bureaucratic arrangements in the public service were typically based on the institutionalisation of formal accountability upwards through the departmental hierarchy to ministers and Parliament. However, the dispersal of power and the creation of a network of multiple agencies responsible for service delivery initiatives, result in multiple,

rather than single forms of accountability. Where power is shared, it has the additional challenge of responsibility that becomes fragmented and elusive.

Senior managers in the Public Service simply do not have the authority to unilaterally impose sweeping structural change. They are ultimately accountable to political heads for whom the internal organising of public institutions are rarely a matter of great concern. Furthermore, legislators are typically not concerned about structures because the variations in public institutions have been relatively modest. This concern could dramatically change if public managers suddenly shift to an organic or radical form of structure in which responsibility might be obscured and highly diffuse. Heads of departments are likely to spend most of their time on broad policy-making and policy implementation activities and attempting to please political superiors. Critical questions about organisation structure are therefore not high on the priority list. Bozeman (1981:109) draw attention to the fact that public organisation theory and practice have been much more attentive to the politics of public service restructuring or reorganisation (a much broader form of organisation design) than to conventional structural design.

The author is of the opinion that there is often a mismatch between organisation structure and policy intent. In designing policy policy-makers may have certain outcomes in mind, but the implementation of the policy is often hampered by an inefficient delivery structure. Furthermore, if policy programmes are ill-conceived, delivery structure will not remedy the problem. There could also be conflict or disjuncture between departmental objectives (administrative intent) and policy objectives (political intent). This is important to consider given the redesign and development of the South African Public Service since 1994. There is a focus on a statutory and regulatory framework to improve service delivery and hence the perceived quality of policies. But, the structural design of implementation agencies (government departments) often does not match the objectives of these policies. Departments should be structured in such a way that policy programmes are effectively implemented and scarce resources optimally utilised. A change in structure must be relevant to accomplishing policy programme goals. The scope of departmental redesign should also consider the role of the department and its mission in the broader political, governmental arena of the country.

A literature survey reveals that there is currently no consensus over which factors influence structural choice. This is possibly due to the fact that several interrelated factors are involved such as organisational characteristics (type, size), nature of projects, environmental/political influences, the expertise (maturity levels) of project managers and team members, and so forth. The main school of thought about organisation design is known as "applied structural design" which focuses on choosing the most appropriate mode of formal organisation

structure given the organisation's mission and goals (Bozeman 1981:107). Design of the basic structure involves such central issues as how the work will be divided and assigned among positions, groups, departments, units, etc. and how the coordination necessary to accomplish total organisational objectives will be achieved. Decisions made about these issues are usually published in organisation charts and job descriptions. Ford and Randolph (1992:280) and Gareis and Huemann (2000:718-719) highlight variables for consideration regarding organisational structure which posit that the optimal organisational form is that which best suits the organisational environment, the organisational characteristics (structure, culture, growth, centralisation, technology), the skills and behaviour of people involved, and the task to be accomplished.

TOWARDS MATURITY: EVOLVING FROM TRADITIONAL TO PROJECT-BASED ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

As the title of this article suggests, public institutions cannot change their organisational structures rapidly. An incremental maturity process is recommended where organisational structures gradually evolve to accommodate best practices associated with successful project delivery. Andersen and Jessen (2003:457) warn that a successful project-based structure must be "grown instead of installed". An organisation simply cannot 'plug' a matrix into its existing structure and expect success. Such structures should be uniquely developed for a particular application in a particular organisation, and this development will likely follow an evolutionary path. Bozeman (1981:112) also proposes a conservative approach since a change in structure often produces significant "power shifts". The direction and intensity of shifts are often unpredictable.

Project maturity simply refers to the fact that an institution gradually becomes conditioned to successfully deal with all projects (Andersen and Jessen 2003:457).

The so-called *Project Management Maturity Matrix* is extremely helpful to assist departments to improve the 'maturity' (level of structure and system integration, and support for project practices) of their project management processes, in terms of an evolutionary path from ad-hoc, disorganised processes to mature, disciplined project management processes.

The Maturity Matrix describes four levels of maturity in project management (Gareis and Huemann (2000) and Andersen and Jessen (2002) developed a 5-point scale maturity model, but are similar to the Maturity matrix). The first level involves the introduction of a project management methodology. On this level it is important that all project managers have a framework within which to work and that the organisation has the necessary structures to support them. The

second level of project maturity (or organisational integration) is characterised by an agreed methodology to be followed that helps repeat earlier successes from similar projects. Courses and training can help at this level. The key process area at level 3 focuses on the benefits of the projects for the organisation. These benefits should not only measure whether projects have delivered against cost, time and quality criteria, but should measure the systems value and the long term positive benefits of projects. It is necessary to revisit the project after a period of time to see if the benefits have accrued. If there are no real benefits senior management should seek to identify why not and whether any action is required.

At level four typically portfolios of projects (such as programmes) are managed to ensure that collectively they deliver the organisation's strategies. Portfolio management is about ensuring the right projects are carried, that processes are aligned, and that resource utilisation is optimised. Practices and processes need to be in place so that all new project proposals can be reviewed and decisions made about whether they contribute to the overall strategy of the organisation.

By applying the Maturity Model it is argued that projects will be successful when the right departmental conditions (i.e. supportive structures, systems and processes) exist. Creating a conducive environment – and mindset – that supports programmes and projects success is a major step towards helping project teams succeed. All units and directorates in the department need to work together and support each other. To facilitate this support, it is important that everyone understands the department's strategy, plans, programmes and current priorities. It is also important for everyone to know where their particular unit or department fits into the operationalisation of these plans through programmes and projects.

In line with 'maturity-thinking', Ford and Randolph (1992:271) and Modig (2007:808-809) propose a continuum or sliding scale to analyse organisational structures. On the one end of the continuum is a "pure stationary" (permanent) organisation, and on the other end is a temporary (project) organisation. These writers argue that matrix structures evolve over time and that this evolutionary process typically covers five stages. In the first stage the organisation begins as a traditional or functional type hierarchy (most government departments are currently in this phase). As that structure becomes inadequate to deal with the complex, dynamic conditions associated with projects, the organisation moves into the next phase, 'project-based organisation'. In this phase, the traditional functional hierarchy remains the foundation of the organisation's structure, but project management is added as a secondary, temporary overlay to deal with new demands. If organisations make this overlay permanent, it moves into the third phase labelled 'matrix organisation' or 'permanent overlay'. In this phase,

project management assumes a permanent form in the organisation, although the functional hierarchy is still considered the primary organisational form. The fourth phase of evolution is called, according to Ford and Randolph (1992:272), the "mature matrix" where a balance of authority exists between the functional hierarchy and the project organisation. The last stage, labelled "beyond the matrix", may entail organisational forms that are unique to the functions of the particular organisation. Bozeman (1981:108) refers to such structures as "floating" structures which adjust to changing conditions. Conner (1998) also contributed by explaining how organisations should become "nimble" to adjust to such changing conditions. An organisation may stop evolving at any point in this five–stage process if the appropriate precipitating factors are not present. It could be argued that large scale policy imperatives and service delivery initiatives could be the stimulus for government departments to gradually move towards a more organic organisational form such as a project-based or matrix structure.

One should note that different functional areas in departments and different departments working together on Government projects or in partnership with the private sector, may be at different stages of maturity. This could complicate service delivery because of complex interrelationships, coordination, administrative and managerial systems, and contractual conditions.

METHODOLOGY

To explore the inherent organisational tensions that senior public managers experience to 'juggle' functional and project responsibilities, the author drew on a number of focus group interviews, group discussions, and assessment exercises held during the presentation of the Executive Development Programme (EDP) for the senior management service (SMS) hosted by the South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI). The author was responsible for the facilitation of the module on 'Programme and Project Management' during November and December 2007 to SMS-members in Gauteng (*n*=34), and Mpumalanga (*n*=13), and also to evaluate the assessment exercises completed by groups in the Western Cape (*n*=12), Limpopo (*n*=22) and KwaZulu Natal (*n*=19). These exercises tested, inter alia, the challenges that managers currently experience in the application of project management for service delivery. Senior managers who attended these training sessions had to "…uncover existing challenges in their departments to utilise projects and to make recommendations to improve programme and project interfaces with existing departmental strategies, structures, systems and processes." Based on best practices uncovered during a literature survey, current practices associated with project management in Government were tested.

The 100 respondents whom attended the EDP are typically on Director-level from 27 different national and provincial government departments and other Government agencies. The sample can thus be regarded as representative. The responses included their frustrations with projects, bureaucratic practices, and the growing complexities associated with functional responsibilities. It also echoes their advisory role to politicians, and the challenges associated with partnerships (PPPs) and community participation in projects. This exposed them to greater 'visibility' and 'vulnerability'. They sense more risks in their role as the boundaries between administrative, managerial and political roles weaken.

All respondents had to submit written assignments/projects for assessment purposes. Challenges eminating from these assignments were used for purposes of analysis. The response rating therefore is 100%. The frequency rating of their respective responses in the assignments was used.

A potential limitation of the analysis is the fact that respondents could have been influenced by the facilitator and their colleagues from different departments during contact sessions. In other words, respondents could have indicated challenges that are actually not present in their department, but that were identified during the contact session. A further limitation of the research is the lack of biographical detail of the respondents – notably the number of years of experience in the department in general, and in project settings specifically. It is known, however, that 62 of the 100 respondents were male, and as far as ethnicity is concerned, 68 were Black, 13 White, 10 Coloured, and 9 Indian.

The responses obtained could aid in policy, structural and procedural discourses on this issue. The accounts describe how SMS-members are struggling to negotiate organisational tensions between accountability for project outcomes, functional responsibilities, limited authority, and bureaucratic practices. Added to this is the creation of networks to 'joined-up' government, social inclusion, and legal ramifications. Managers overwhelmingly expressed their willingness to shape the policy agenda and to build a 'critical mass' to alter traditional structures to better accommodate project management practices.

Mechanisms and measures to cope with project applications: Examples in the South African Public Service

From data obtained from the assignments and group sessions, it is evident that most Government departments on national and provincial spheres already on various degrees utilise mechanisms and measures to effectively utilise projects as vehicles for service delivery (output focus) as well as for internal functional re-engineering (process focus). Typical mechanisms and measures include the implementation and appointment of dedicated Programme Management

Offices, Project Management Units, Project Support Offices, Project Executive Committees, Project Steering Committees, Project Review Committees, Project Reference Groups (SAMDI), Project Managers, Project Directors, Project Sponsors, and some other specialised mechanisms to cope with the demand for sound project applications. Below, a snapshot of some examples towards project maturity is provided.

From the review of the responses it is clear that the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has relative mature project management applications in place – arguably the most project-matured department currently in the Public Service. It has established programmes aimed at providing strategic support interventions and partnerships to Government departments and provinces. Some 120 diverse large-scale projects were undertaken during the 2005/2006 financial year. For this purpose a Programme Management Office (PMO) was established in the Office of the Director General to oversee progress in the relevant programmes in the Department. The PMO ties individual projects to a broad business goal, and monitoring their interdependencies. The department also implemented Project Management Units, and appointed Project Directors and Project Sponsors for these units who report to the respective Programme Directors. DPSA also utilises technology to facilitate web-enabled project management to communicate and exchange information within the department. Tools such as templates, tables, diagrams and checklist are in the process of development to ensure uniformity in the department. They are also in the process to develop a Project Management Information System that will be used to support all programmes and projects in the department. In addition, the department is also in the process of establishing the "Public Management Watch", which will serve as an early warning system on management and service delivery failure.

The Departments of Agriculture and Land Affairs are in the process of establishing a National Project Management Unit (NPMU) situated within the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs as well as nine Provincial Project Management Units (PPMU) that will report to the national unit. The National PMU will ensure that adequate budgets, resources, systems and procedures are in place for PPMUs to meet their stated objectives. The NPMU will report directly to the Minister and a Ministerial Committee, consisting of senior managers from both the Departments of Agriculture and Land Affairs.

In Mpumalanga the Department of Local Government and Housing is busy with the establishment of a dedicated Project Management Unit to drive the 'Water for All Flagship' project. The PMU will submit regular progress reports on its implementation to the Cabinet Executive Council through the Cabinet Governance and Criminal Justice Technical Cluster Committee in line with the accountability arrangements pertaining to all flagship projects.

The Office of the Public Service Commission (OPSC) currently is responsible to evaluate the overall performance of "one stop service centres" or multi-purpose community centres (called "Thusong" Centres) in implementing procedures that are intended at providing regular and systematic consultation with clients at local level about their products and services.

The Department of Home Affairs' Civic Service Branch (Gauteng) established a formal governance structure for project coordination within the Transformation Programme. This structure comprises a PMU, and a Provincial Intersectoral Steering Committee.

The Companies and Intellectual Property Registration Office (CIPRO) of the Department of Trade and Industry (dti) makes extensively use of Project Review Committees in conjunction with their Project Management Office which act as steering committees to foster partnerships with businesses. It is also in the process to institutionalise an active awareness programme to instil a project management culture. The dti is also in the process of developing a Programme Management Unit to facilitate integration amongst the different departmental interfaces to install a proper programme management culture and a managing-by-projects approach. One respondent from the dti highlighted the fact that the dti's structure is a combination of hierarchical, matrix and specialisation. He emphasised that one should differentiate between the depth and complexity of the hierarchy to make meaningful judgements about the most appropriate structure of the department.

Probably the main driver on municipal sphere is the Municipal Infrastructure Grant Programme (MIG) which compels municipalities to implement Project Management Units (PMUs) to coordinate infrastructural projects.

Towards project-based service delivery: Key organisational tensions uncovered

Table 1 below indicates the most common tensions or challenges associated with project applications that respondents identified. The percentage indicates the frequency of responses – and therefore, also their relative significance.

Table 1 Key tensions identified

	Frequency rating (%)
Difficult to manage project and functional responsibilities simultaneously	71%
Lack of skills in Project Management (especially technical expertise including impact assessments, feasibility studies, risk analysis, procurement, contract management, legal ramifications, and stakeholder analysis)	70%

	Frequency rating (%)
Conflict between project managers and functional managers (especially over resource and staff allocations)	63%
No clear role and responsibility clarification of project managers, steering committees, functional managers, stakeholders, etc.	62%
No clear interfaces between projects and functional activities (not clear how to successfully align temporary organisations with the existing, permanent departmental structure)	60%
Political interference in large departmental projects and constantly shifting priorities; often 'bad' projects are not stopped, because of political reasons resulting in wastage of resources	55%
Lack of resources, including time to successfully complete projects	53%
Bureaucratic, hierarchical departmental structure is not flexible enough to accommodate project teams	42%
Lack of a project culture (narrow bureaucratic perspectives of senior managers; central control; do not delegate adequate authority and responsibility to project managers – Project managers do not have enough authority to make key decisions)	39%
Lack of a proper governance structure for coordination, strategic linkages, and reporting	35%
Lack of a strategic mechanism such as a Project Management Office that could act as a pool of experts to guide, assist, monitor and facilitate project development and implementation	34%
Lack of administrative arrangements (i.e. templates, format of reporting, etc.)	25%
Lack of stakeholder management (i.e. participation mechanisms and incorporating conflicting perspectives)	22%

From the above, the question could arise: In general, where does the Public Service as a whole feature on the maturity continuum? It is the opinion of the author that although there are pockets of excellence as far as project applications are concerned (i.e. DPSA, dti, and SAMDI), the Service current lies on level 1 (initial). There is thus a long way ahead towards full maturity (level 5).

The tensions emphasised below are based on the literature survey and the data obtained from the 100 respondents. There are numerous other tensions that can not be covered in the limited scope of this article.

'Two-bosses'	Departmental structures are characterised by the fact that every subordinate is assigned to a single supervisor ('boss'). A project structure violates this ingrained principle, creating problems for both the department and its individual members. Officials find themselves working across various projects under different managers. This situation creates multiple reporting relationships, confusing expectations, and excessive demands. Typically an official is still responsible for functional activities whilst acting as a team member on a project.
Authority and responsibility	Newman (2004:19) states that in a project-based structure the boundaries of authority and responsibility are often split or shared between functional and project managers. This characteristic creates ambiguity and conflict over areas such as resources, technical expertise, salaries, promotions, and the assignment of personnel (De Laat 1994:1091). This ambiguity results in power struggles as each side attempts to clarify and define its responsibility and accountability (Ford & Randolph, 1992:276). The most common authority conflicts are those between functional and project managers over project priorities, administrative procedures, technical considerations, performance standards, staff assignments, cost estimates, scheduling, and personalities (Huberman *et al.* 1981:13).
Departmental interfaces	De Laat's (1994:1109) research on the influence of matrix management on organisations indicates that project managers are often frustrated about the assignment of personnel to projects. They would like to see semi-permanent assignment to bigger projects: personnel should be assigned for a fixed period of time. Within this period any redeployment of personnel would be forbidden since it would allow for rescheduling projects in progress whenever necessary. Personnel seconded to projects would report to the project manager alone. Some respondents reported the fact that too many project teams are set up as a semi-permanent branch within the department merely to avoid the personnel management and staff reporting problems created by proper project resourcing. This often means the team then acquires its own self-perpetuating momentum within the department and work which is not appropriate to the project is added merely to keep team members occupied. This in turn results in project work suffering, the project loosing definition and impetus, and progressive disillusionment on the part of project team members.
Working conditions and job satisfaction	Chien (2004:428) illustrated how organisational structure influences employees job satisfaction and coined the so-called "good soldier syndrome" which describes the fact that a flexible, conducive organisational structure will move employees to do things beyond their job description. Chien (2004:431) cautions that a careful balance should be struck between clear, fixed procedures and regulations on the one hand and dynamic reality on the other to establish a conducive working environment for employees. According to Ford and Randolph (1992:277) individuals are expected to take more personal initiative in defining roles, negotiating conflicts, taking responsibilities, and making personal decisions, but the downside of such freedom is stress. The dual authority can negatively influence motivation and job satisfaction. The fragmented nature of multiple roles makes job descriptions, performance agreements, and contract management extremely complex.

Bureaucratic culture	Every organisation has its distinct culture which unites individuals under a set of principles and standards to work by (Cleland 1988:47). Organisational cultures characterised by a rigid bureaucracy, and strong vertical reporting lines (such as government institutions) are typically not receptive to project-based or matrix structures. Ford and Randolph (1992:282), and Andersen and Jessen (2002:458) conclude that unless the culture can be changed, resistance or open hostility to project-based structures may occur. Moore (1992:1052) refers to the "bureaupathology" of public institutions depicting them as "self-defining" and "self-organising" which sustains organisational culture and structure even without managerial intervention. Clarke and Newman (1997:29) argue that public officials are both empowered and disciplined by the inherent tension between traditional and managerial practices. This was echoed by one respondent from Gauteng who remarked that "we have to think outside the box (new paradigm), but act inside the box (confined by existing structures and culture)". They are subject to pressures to conform to rules, regulations and norms implied in the structural forces to which they are subject, but in the same token, they are subject to forces that ask of them to be innovative change agents, transformational leaders, and a 'networker'.
Political influence	Often the most feasible structure (project-based) is not politically feasible due to the inherent culture of the bureaucracy. The amount of change required may be too costly – both politically and monetary. A department with very strong hierarchical structures and highly authoritarian styles, may inhibit the flexibility that project managers require to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. In such a rigid, bureaucratic work environment it would be problematic to obtain approval to secure additional funding and other resources.

This concludes the brief synopsis of typical organisational tensions associated with project applications.

CONCLUSION

Project management practices evolve rapidly, and therefore organisational structures should be adjusted to accommodate the new demands placed on project-based service delivery. It was established that the South African Public Service is rapidly moving towards project maturity through the utilisation of typical governance and coordination structures associated with project applications. There are, however, still significant organisational challenges that need to be addressed to ensure adequate interfaces between temporary project structures and permanent departmental structures. It is proposed that departments should rapidly move towards project-based structures with more delegated authority to project managers, as the only true permanent solution to fully utilise a project-based service delivery approach in the South African Public Service.

REFERENCES

Andersen, E.S. and Jessen, S.A. 2002. Project maturity in organisations. *International Journal of Project Management*. 21:457-461.

Artto, K.A. 2001. Management of Project-Oriented Organization – Conceptual Analysis. In Artto, K.A. and Aalto, M.M. (eds). *Project Portfolio Management: Strategic Management through Projects*. Helsinki: Project Management Association. pp.5-22.

Bozeman, B. 1981. Organisational design in the public bureaucracy. *The American Review of Public Administration*. 15(2):107-118.

Campbell, G.M. 2003. *Project Management*. 3rd ed. New York: Penguin.

Checkland, P. and Howell, S. 1998. *Information, systems and information systems – making sense of the field*. West Sussex: Wiley.

Chien, M.H. 2004. An Investigation of the Relationship of Organisational Structure, Employee's Personality and Organisational Citizenship Behaviours. *The Journal of American Academy of Business*. Cambridge. Sept. pp. 428-431.

Clark, J. and Newman, J. 1997. *The Managerial State: Power, Politics and Ideology in the Remaking of Social Welfare*. London: Sage.

Cleland, D.I. 1988. The cultural ambience of project management – another look. *Project Management Journal*. 19(3):49-56.

Conner, D.R. 1998. *Leading at the Edge of Chaos: How to Create the Nimble Organization*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Crawford, L., Costello, K., Pollack, J. and Bentley, L. 2003. *Managing soft change projects in the public sector*. Sydney: University of Technology.

DeFillippi, R.J. and Arthur, M. 1998. Paradox in project-based enterprise: the case of filmmaking. *California Management Review*. 40(2):125-139.

De Laat, P.B. 1994. Maqtrix Management of Projects and Power Struggles: A Case Study of an R&D Laboratory. *Human Relations*. 47(9):1089-1119.

Dietrich, P., Poskela, J. and Artto, K.A. 2003. Organising for managing multiple projects – a strategic perspective. Paper presented at the 17th Conference on Business Studies in Reykjavik. 14-16th of August. Helsinki.

Ford, R.C. and Randolph, W.A. 1992. Cross-functional structures: A review and integration of matrix organisation and Project Management. *Journal of Management*. 18(2):267-294.

Gareis, R. and Huemann, M. 2000. Project management competences in the project-oriented organization. In Turner, J.R. and Simister, S.J. (eds.). *The Gower Handbook of Project Management*. Gower: Aldershot.

Hobday, M. 2000. The project-based organisation: an ideal form for managing complex products and systems? *Res Policy*. 29:871-893.

Kerzner, H. 2003. *Project Management: A System Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Modig, N. 2007. A continuum of organisations formed to carry out projects: Temporary and stationary organisation forms. *International Journal of Project Management*. 25:807-814.

Newbold, R. 1998. *Project Management in the Fast Lane*. Boca Raton, FL: St. Lucie Press.

Newman, J. 2004. Constructing Accountability: Network Governance and Managerial Agency. *Public Policy and Administration*. 19(4):17-33.

Nickson, D. and Siddons, S. 1997. *Managing Projects*. Oxford: Made Simple Books

Partington, D. 1996. The project management of organisational change. *International Journal of Project Management*. 14(1):13-21.

Thiry, M. 2002. Project Management Pathways: Chapter 11 Programme Management. *Association for Project Management*. UK. pp.1-12.

Thiry, M. and Deguire, M. 2007. Recent developments in project-based organisations. *International Journal of Project Management*. 25(7)Oct 2007:649-658.

Turner, R. and Keegan, A. 1999. The versatile project-based organisation: Governance and Operational Control. *European Management Journal*. 17(3):296-309.

Willson-Murray, R. 1997. *Managing Projects: A New Approach*. Brisbane: John Wiley & Sons.

Yeo, K.T. 1993. Systems think and project management: Time to reunite. *International Journal of Project Management*. 11(2):111-117.

Young, T.L. 1996. *The Handbook of Project Management: A Practical Guide to Effective Policies and Procedures*. London: Kogan Page.

AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS

Prof Gerrit van der Waldt
Dept Public Management & Governance
North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus)
Private Bag X6001
Potchefstroom
2520
Gerrit.vanderwaldt@nwu.ac.za
Tel: 018 299 1633
Fax: 018 299 4254

Theoretical perspectives on understanding ethics:

A challenge for South African senior public service managers

Danny Sing
School of Public Administration
University of Kwazulu-Natal

ABSTRACT

Promoting and maintaining a high degree of ethical behaviour and conduct became a constitutional mandate in terms of the 1996 South African Constitution. This formed the foundation for building into public service activity and practice, an ethics-centric paradigm. Such an inspiring and noble paradigm is necessary for public service activity and practice to secure human well-being and promote common human interests. Senior managers of the South African Public Service as leaders, pace-setters and role-models became guardians of this constitutional mandate. This article is a value-adding endeavour to deepen the theoretical and conceptual insights of senior public service managers in understanding the nature and meaning of ethics. It is the belief of the author that dealing with ethical issues, ethical expectations and ethical priorities can best be managed by a firm grasp and appreciation of the meaning and nature of ethics and ethical theories. Concomitant to this requirement is the understanding of a constellation of ethics- related concepts, including elements of an ethical value system, the notion of ethical relativism, the nature of ethical dilemmas, conflict of interest as an ethical threat, and corruption as a form of unethical behaviour. Indeed promoting and maintaining a high degree of ethical behaviour is currently a major challenge facing the South African Public.

INTRODUCTION

Like any social phenomenon, ethics also needs to be contextualised in order to a systematic description, explanation and analysis. The context here is understanding and promoting ethics within a public service context, based on the belief that it is a challenge for senior managers of the South African Public Service. In the initial part of this article, emphasis is placed on the origins of the Senior Management Service, along with a discussion of public service ideals and expectations. This is followed by defining ethics and a focus on different ethical theories. Thereafter, an exposition is provided of the elements of an ethical value system, the notion of ethical relativism, and the nature of ethical dilemmas. In the latter part of this article, the issues of conflict of interest as an ethical threat and corruption as a form of unethical behaviour are elaborated upon.

ESTABLISHING THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT SERVICE (SMS)

The year 2001 heralded the birth of a new category of public servants in the form of the distinct and deployable Senior Management Service in the South African Public Service. This was enabled through the amendment of Public Service Regulations, 2001 (Van der Vyver 2001:25). The latter aims at ensuring and promoting people-centred public service within a developmental state paradigm. Senior public service managers are regarded as leaders, pace-setters and role-models. They are required to create and sustain collaborative networks and purpose-driven partnerships with various organs of state, civil society formations, the private sector, and international stakeholders (*Public Service Handbook* (Senior Management Service) 2003: Foreword).

In addition to functioning within a constitutionalised public administration paradigm, the performance of senior public service managers is assessed and evaluated within a Performance Management and Development competency framework. In total there are eleven core competencies [1] each with a competency name, competency definition, and four proficiency levels.[2] Each proficiency level has a number of performance criteria. The competency definition describes behaviour and activities that must be demonstrated by senior managers. Proficiency levels indicate the degree to which the different criteria must be mastered (*Public Service Handbook* (Senior Management Service) 2003: Chapter 5). All the competencies and proficiency levels are necessary for enabling, sustaining and promoting effective public service, which all South Africans deserve. Senior managers have to be acutely conscious of the Preamble to the South African

Constitution [3)] which refers to the improvement of the quality of life of all citizens. Senior managers should take inspiration from the following words of Socrates (quoted in Goree 2007:10): "Not life, but a good life is to be chiefly valued".

PUBLIC SERVICE IDEALS AND EXPECTATIONS

Socrates' words serve as a catalyst to reflect on what ideals public service is striving towards as well as what the public expects of it. Public service as a concept, activity and practice has always been recognised and valued as a major feature and component of human civilisation. The rationale for this is the fundamental nature of humankind as a social and political creature, driven by the concern for human well-being and common interests. It is a conscious, co-operative, impact-and-outcome driven activity aimed at promoting and sustaining general public welfare so that the public can be assured of a high quality of life, living and livelihood (Farazmand 2002:127 and Basu 1994:4).

While the 20th century was winding down, ready to approach the cusp of the 21st century, a constitutional revolution took place in South Africa during 1996. The enactment of the South African Constitution became the supreme law of the land. Hence, it enabled a paradigm shift in the form and function of the state. Moreover, public service had to subscribe to democratic values and principles and was bound by a rights-based, benevolent and caring imperative. Public service was constitutionally mandated to realise socio-economic rights such as housing and health. Altruism, equality, human dignity, justice, and humanism became the beacons for public service action and practice (Gildenhuys and Knipe 2000:123-133 and Devenish *et al.* 2001:486-493).

Through this new Constitution, the South African public became empowered to demand certain requirements from this fundamentally changed public service ethos, action and practice. Accountability for actions and inactions, transparency in decision-making, lawful and reasonable administrative action, consultation in determining the needs of the public, access to state-held information, value for money and the ethical behaviour of public servants, emerged as rightful expectations of the public (Chapters 2 and 10 of the South African Constitution).

Whatever the purpose of human destiny and of human civilisation itself, *Homo Sapiens* were always aware of upholding observable prerequisites of behaviour (Stone 1983: v). In the landscape of public service, senior managers in the South African Public Service cannot ignore the words of Staats (1988) (quoted in Pollitt 2003:136): "Public service' is a concept, an attitude, a sense of duty-yes-a sense of public morality".

This assertion by Staats is given expression as a prescription in the South African Constitution as one of the principles that must govern public service namely, Section 195(1) (a) of the South African Constitution. This Section stipulates that: *A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.* This constitutional provision means that senior managers must be conscious of consistent and valid execution of duties in fulfilling this obligation. Inconsistent and invalid action will undermine the integrity of the South African Constitution. To deal with these daunting challenges, it becomes vital for senior managers to enhance their insight by understanding the nature, meaning and purpose of ethics.

DEFINING ETHICS

Public service ethics is of contemporary relevance and interest, world-wide. Recorded discourses vary in the description and explanation of ethics (Brady 2003:525). However, in the context of this article, it is reasoned that ethics is a process and a system of accepted attitudes, beliefs, principles and values that guide and govern the behaviour, conduct, and action of senior public service managers in a changing environment. It is not static but dynamic, based on moral imperatives and moral reasoning (Hilliard and Lynch 1999:85, Chryssides and Kaler 1993:51 and Louw 2003:102).

Moral reasoning is an ingredient of ethics in the form of a moral compass. It is therefore also regarded as an inquiry into morality, moral principles and moral action, emphasising and determining what is right and wrong, good or bad, in particular circumstances (public service), for specific groups (senior public service managers), in a particular public institutional setting (Denhardt and Grubbs 2003: 123 and Mckinney and Howard 1998: 4).

The significance of inquiry into ethics may be best enhanced by six different perspectives as articulated by Rossouw (2002:5-10). In terms of the **social scientific perspective** which emphasises appropriate research strategies and methodologies, senior managers will be able to explain the dynamics of ethical behaviour at an individual and organisational level and therefore would also be able to predict behaviour. Unlike the social scientific perspective, the **managerial perspective** focuses on application: what knowledge can best be used by senior managers to deal with everyday ethical issues. The **organisational interest perspective** focuses on how best ethics can be aligned to the vision and mission of public service. An underlying argument of this perspective is that ethics should not be regarded as a constraint to public service aims and objectives. The emphasis on the **ethical guidance perspective** is establishing precise and understandable standards for measuring and evaluating ethical

behaviour. However, the underlying assumption is that senior managers must not compromise their public office for private gain. In terms of the **ethical guidance perspective**, the study of ethics must provide knowledge that best enables senior managers to correct individual and organisational moral failures as well as enable proactive action to prevent such moral failures from occurring in the first instance. Unlike the ethical guidance perspective, **the ethical development perspective** requires that ethical inquiry must enable and support senior managers to embed a culture of commitment to promoting and supporting moral character and behaviour as a prerequisite for effective public service (Rossouw 2002:5-10).

Whilst these perspectives individually and jointly can assist senior managers in upholding and promoting public service ethics, they need to gain deeper insight in order to determine whether right or wrong, good or bad, depends on the nature of action itself, the consequences of the action or the character of the person committing the act (Clapper 1999:137-139 and Rossouw 2002:42-54). Frames of reference, cause and effect relationships as well as conceptual criteria encapsulated in ethical theories, can enhance the analytical and evaluative competencies of senior managers.

ETHICAL THEORIES

Various authors use different terms when discussing ethical theories, such as schools of thought, principles, criteria, schemes and structures. In this article, a more descriptive discussion of ethical theories, under themes, will be used. The themes are consequence-based, duty-based, social contract-based, and character-based (Tavani 2004:45-58).

Consequence-based ethical theory

The fundamental focus of this theory is on outcomes, effects and impact or end result of a decision (Fritzsche 2005:46). It is argued that even the best intentions are of little significance, if an ethical outcome is not achieved. Right from wrong action is determined by the consequences of the action. Such action is regarded as morally correct and acceptable, if the positive consequences outweigh the negative consequences (Dellaportas *et al.* 2005:30). This approach does not stress the intrinsic characteristics of rightness and wrongness or duty, but stresses goodness and badness, that is, the consequences of the actions arising from that duty (Rollin 2006:57). Senior managers formulating and implementing public policy goals that reduce poverty might be regarded as an example of such a consequence.

The best known principle of ulitarianism underpins the consequence-based theory (Lawton 1999:295). This principle suggests that an ethical decision must ensure the greatest benefit and good for the greatest number of people. The ultimate good that humans really value is happiness (Jones and George 2003:91). It focuses on maximising the balance of pleasure and joy over pain and harm and is therefore conscious of the level of harm and benefit caused by a particular decision, as well as how many people were harmed or benefited (Dellaportas *et al.* 2005:349 and Spitzer 2000:208). An example of a utilitarianism principle statement would be the maximum amount of social security for the greatest number of old people. Therefore, according to the utilitarianism principle, if the effect of a particular action should result in less benefit and more harm, it must be avoided. Moreover, the result of the right action must benefit everyone involved and not just one individual (Spitzer 2000:207 and Goree 2007:221).

Ulitarianism in practical terms is regarded as a form of cost-benefit analysis-decisions, based in their likely benefit or harm (Bradburn 2001:6 and Frederickson 1993:247). The happiness and pain notion underpinning the utilitarianism principle includes a variety of aspects of human well-being and welfare, such as pleasure and pain, health and illness, positive and negative emotions, success and failure and knowledge and ignorance (Dellaportas *et al.* 2005:30). For senior managers to secure meaningful application of the utilitarianism principle, the following checklist of questions could enhance their insight (Hosmer 2006:7-8):

- Whose well-being and welfare will be significantly improved by existing planned actions?
- Is there a description of the nature and quality of the improvement?
- Whose well-being and welfare will be significantly harmed by existing or planned action?
- Is there a description of the harm and damage caused?
- Whose rights will be sustained and expanded by existing or planned action?
- Is there a description of the nature of the rights?
- Whose rights will be substantially denied or made uncertain?
- Is there a description of the nature of the denied, uncertain or reduced rights?

Senior managers must, however, be aware of the calculation-based, cost-benefit analysis which might easily be applicable in a business decision, but may not apply in a public service setting because consequences are not restricted to financial and economic decisions. Human welfare, unlike a profit-seeking purpose, depends greatly and heavily on non-quantifiable results. How, for example, can senior managers measure the benefits and harms to each stakeholder group through quantitative analysis? How can satisfaction and dissatisfaction or negative and positive emotions be measured? Unlike in a business context where actions affect

the decision-maker and only certain stakeholders, public service deliberations have to consider negative and positive consequences on *all* people. Self-interest thinking and action is considered unethical and contrary to the utilitarianism principle (Jones and George 2003:91 and Dellaportas *et al.* 2005:31-32). Other more challenging questions that can confront senior managers, according to Lawton (1999:301, revolve around the following:

- Is it really possible to balance and weigh up all options before taking any action?
- Will we ever be able to render an account for all consequences of an action?
- What is the timescale and timeframe for calculating benefits and harm?
- Are we presupposing that a numerical value can be advanced for each benefit and each harm?

Duty-based ethical theory

The term 'duty' originates from the Greek word, *Deon* which means duty (Spitzer 2000:210). While consequence-based ethics emphasises goodness and badness which is the result of actions, duty-based ethics stresses rightness and wrongness, or duty as in the intrinsic and embedded properties of actions (Rollin 2006:57). Duty-based ethical theory is also referred to as non-consequential theory, which affirms and advocates that duties must be obeyed regardless of the results, outcomes or effects. Therefore, the intrinsic action itself is more important than the results of the action. Duties are performed independent of consequences (Dellaportas *et al.* 2005:32 and Lawton 1999:300). It can thus be reasoned, that the outcome of a duty is not relevant to the determination of whether the outcome is right or wrong. Important to note that in duty-based ethics reasoning is that good or bad qualities of an action are important and embedded in the action itself. Therefore, good exists in a just action and evil in an unjust action. In the context of management, fair and reasonable action in processing a social grant application is a just action, while accepting a bribe to speed the application is an unjust action (Spitzer 2000:210 and Fritzsche 2005:50). In a practical management setting, a dutiful manager will regard sexual harassment as a dismissible offence. In contrast, a consequence-thinking manager would argue that dismissal would bring embarrassment to the offender's family and lead to unemployment.

In a historical context, the concept of duty is embedded in principles, the notion being that one stands one's ground irrespective of consequences. A senior manager in the consequence-based ethics cast of mind would ask: In contrast, *what do I need or desire? What is the cost for doing A? How can I reward my friends and family?*, a senior manager in the duty-based ethics mindset would focus on questions such as, *What is my standpoint? What is my lawful and*

official duty? What is the accepted ethical, moral and, principled action to take?
(Brady 2003:528 and Goree 2007:220). Principle-based thinking in duty-based ethics leads senior managers to reflect on whether an action is in violation of a universal principle, such as not jeopardising the life of others, or whether an action undermines the conviction of public service that all human life has equal worth or whether an action is against, for example, a public service principle that prohibits impairing the dignity of vulnerable and helpless people (Spitzer 2000:210-215, Brady 2003:529 and Shaw 1991:17-19).

Social contract-based ethical theory

From the times of Socrates and Plato and up to the past two centuries, consequence-based and duty based-ethical theories received paramount attention in normative philosophy. Serious attention is now being given to ethical theories that stress social contracts and individual rights (Tavani 2004:52). A compelling reason for this social contract and rights-based thinking is that, unlike the consequence and deontological models, this thinking provides individuals with the motivation to pursue their individual self-interest by creating and sustaining an ethical and moral system with laws and rules (Tavani 2004:51 and Minnaar and Bekker 2005:5). For example, the South African Constitution (law) provides that the state must respect, protect and realise the rights as stipulated in the Bill of Rights (an ethical and moral system). This link between individual rights and benefits with public rights and benefits is best captured in the following statement by Rachels (2003) (quoted in Quinn 2006:83): "Morality consists in the set of rules, governing how people are to treat one another, that national people will agree to accept, for their mutual benefit, on the condition that others follow those rules as well".

Rachel's statement could be regarded as a theory of social contract. This contract is not necessarily a formal written contract. It may be an informal agreement and understanding among senior managers emphasising behavioural norms arising and developed from shared goals, vision, mission, principles, beliefs, convictions and attitudes (Fritzsche 2005:55). A social contract is described as a higher form and manifestation of ethical and moral authority, and represents the strongest conviction and deepest beliefs of senior managers, as they are the servants of the will of the people. It is asserted that by the means of social contract, public service gains legitimacy and confidence in the eyes of the public (Goree 2007:58).

A proposition that social contract-based ethical theory is underpinned by three essential elements is provided by Fritzsche (2005:55-59). The first element consists of higher norms which have universal application and are fundamental to human existence. For senior managers it would be, for example, realising

the human right to health care and equality. In the second element which is regarded as a macro social contract, the notion of moral space is highlighted. Moral space suggests that senior managers may develop norms peculiar to a context or a situation. In South Africa, the African Philosophy of Ubuntu and the Principles of Batho Pele are stressed in public service. However, the micro social contract emphasises that individuals who do not agree with the social contract, should withdraw from it. A conflict may arise, for example, among those social welfare managers who lie about statistics in order to secure subsidies and those who object (Fritzsche 2005:55-57).

Positive and negative arguments for social contract-based theory exist. One positive argument is that it is conceptualised and framed in the language of rights. Another positive argument is that social contract thinking is based on the notion that morality is the result of recognising that agreement and co-operation will prevail to overcome tensions between individual self-interest and the public good. A negative argument could be that individuals could always say that they did not really understand the implications of the contract. Another negative argument could be that social contract may be unjust to those individuals who are not capable of collaborating to promote the social contract, and more importantly, fail to uphold their side of the agreement (Quinn 2006:87-89).

Character-based ethical theory

In the consequence-based ethical theory, the rightness or wrongness of action is judged in terms of the outcomes of the action. The rightness or wrongness of an action in terms of the duty-based ethical theory is inherent in the action itself. Social contract-based ethical theory emphasises that the rightness or wrongness of action is judged in terms of a jointly agreed ethical and moral system. However, in terms of the character-based ethical theory, the rightness or wrongness of an action is dependent on the person committing the act. Emphasis is on the character of the person. The underlying reasoning is that a good person will commit a good action and a bad person will commit a bad action (Reynolds 2003 and Quinn 2004:55-56). Character-based ethics is also referred to as, virtue-based ethics. Individuals possess different habits that enable direct, and incline them to easily choose between what is generally regarded and accepted by society as good or bad. While virtues are habits that promote the tendency to do what is acceptable, vices incline individuals towards unacceptable actions (Reynolds 2003: 339 and Brady 2003:529-530). According to Spitzer (2000:224) virtue is good habit, an attitude that has become *second nature*. He further reasons that this attitude is formed and affirmed by individual choice and enabled by repetition, positive reinforcement and a positive construction and projection of one's self-image. Roussouw (2002:47) highlights the importance of

repetition and reinforcement by asserting Aristotle's belief that the development of virtue is a slow process and is not developed instantaneously, but must be sustained throughout one's lifetime.

An underpinning assertion of virtue ethics is that it is impossible to promote human dignity without the individual being virtuous and moral (Roussouw 2002:45 and Goree 2007:35). However, there are various characteristics of a virtuous person described by several writers. Basing his thoughts on Plato, Spitzer (2000:224-230) cites courage, perseverance, humility and forgiveness. According to Bradburn (2001:16), the characteristics of a virtuous person include wisdom, temperance and generosity. Brady (2003:527) refers to characteristics such as feeling, care and affection. However, Rossouw (2002:48) dwells on vices such as cowardice, boastfulness and shamelessness. For senior managers to be effective in promoting and maintaining a high degree of ethics in public service activity and practice, it is incumbent on them to be acutely aware of their own virtues and vices. Perhaps, the insights of senior managers in applying virtue ethics can be enhanced by formulating questions such as the following (Spitzer 2000: 229-230):

- Do I have the inclination to be courageous and humble in applying my principles in a caring manner?
- Am I persevering and yet generous in applying principles in a sensitive manner?
- Will ego-rewards and ego-rage project my character as being boastful?
- Is my willingness to forgive and be fair really motivated by a deep regard for the intrinsic dignity of the other individual?

While the strengths of virtue-based ethics such as emphasising moral development and education, helping to determine and interpret what is ethical or not as well as encouraging people to aspire, achieve, and promote high levels of moral behaviour, weaknesses also exist. The first weakness is that it depends on a collaboratively determined and homogenous standard of what constitutes virtuous behaviour. Another concern is that, they may be a clash of virtues. One virtue may be promoted while violating another. Conflicts arise when individuals do not agree as to what virtue is more important than the other – for instance, is forgiveness more important than loyalty? It is therefore argued that if virtues alone are used to address ethical concerns, there might be no way to deal with conflicts (Tavani 2004:58 and Goree 2007:37).

Senior managers can best benefit from the four ethical theories, if they are thought of and applied in an integrated and interdependent manner, realising that each of the theories has its strengths and weaknesses. However, generally the theories constitute an effective toolkit for supporting and enabling senior managers to cope with ethical expectations, ethical dispositions, ethical issues, ethical priorities, ethical threats as well as exercising ethical judgment

(Dellaportas *et al.* 2005:343 and Rossouw 2002:60). But, for senior managers to further enhance their insight, an understanding of a constellation of ethics-related concepts, concerns and practices is vital.

ETHICAL VALUE SYSTEM

Determining what is ethically right or wrong is underpinned and influenced by what is worth striving for, as understood by an individual (Goree 2007:26). Brady (2003:528) reasons from an axiological (Axios-Greek for value) perspective, that equates to what is thought to be deserved, preferred, and even considered praiseworthy. Basically, a value system in a management setting is embedded in the means-end relationship between two values, namely, instrumental and terminal (Jones and George 2003:80). An instrumental value is an enduring belief that certain types of behaviour and conduct are relevant in all situations (Kreitner 1995:147). It is a value that enables and supports the terminal value which is the attainment of a preferred and desirable end-state (Bradburn 2001:12 and Jones and George 2003:80). To a senior manager, the end-state for public service could be the achievement of a high quality of life, living, and livelihood for all citizens. In order to achieve this terminal value, a senior manager must engage in behaviour and conduct such as being loyal, obedient, caring, and persevering (Kreitner 1995:149).

Senior managers in the South African Public Service are required to be competent and proficient in understanding and promoting the core instrumental values of honesty and integrity (Public Service Handbook (Senior Management Service) 2003: Chapter 5). An honest person is described as being trustworthy, a person who can be entrusted with sensitive, private, and confidential information. It is reasoned that an honest person will, in whatever circumstances or situations, *tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth* (Goree 2007:191). For example, the notion of truth is embedded in the proficiency requirement that the senior manager must accept full responsibility for his or her actions, even if, it projects negatively on himself/herself or the organisation (*Public Service Handbook* (Senior Management Service) 2003: Chapter 5).

Integrity relates to consistent actions, relationship awareness, and pursuing a worthwhile course of action (Brown 2005:4-9). Consistency requires a senior manager to first act, in accordance with his/her own accepted principles and then to extend to all individuals the sense of respect that the individual himself/herself desires (Reynolds 2003:5). This notion of consistency is embedded in the proficiency requirement that senior managers must develop and apply self-corrective actions (*Public Service Handbook* (Senior Management Service) 2003: Chapter 5). Relationship awareness is manifested in the proficiency requirement

that emphasises collaborative teamwork over the pursuit of individual benefit (*Public Service Handbook* (Senior Management Service) 2003: Chapter 5). A worthwhile course of action to meet the proficiency requirement stresses conduct in accordance with organisation values (*Public Service Handbook* (Senior Management Service) 2003: Chapter 5).

Instrumental values of honesty and integrity are vital in maintaining and sustaining the virtue of public trust. Without honesty and integrity, the public will have no faith in senior managers because fundamental to public service ethics is that public service office is really, a public trust (Dellaportas *et al.* 2005:69 and Hellsten and Larbi 2006:136). Trust is a core component of ethical behaviour, in that it considers another person's interest. Promoting public interest is an imperative for public service ethics. Senior managers are the trustees and the public are the trustors (Roussow 2002:150-151). Trust comprises three elements, namely, predictability, dependability and faith (Fritzsche 2005:24). Predictability requires that public service occurs in a diligent and not, a haphazard manner. This haphazard approach will be a breach of public trust and therefore, unethical. Dependability demands that public service be delivered in terms of expected timeframes and quality. Not doing so will relegate public service to being unreliable and therefore in breach of ethical principles. Faith on the part of the public means that there is a justified true belief that public service will continue to be predictable and dependable and hence, meets its ethical expectations (Fritzsche 2005:24-25).

Gaining insights into the nature and types of values that embed the ethical value system will develop a clear and meaningful conceptual foundation for senior managers to determine what is ultimately desirable and valid in the public interest.

ETHICAL RELATIVISM

Ethical relativism as a concept and a technique of moral reasoning, gained prominence in the *Modern Era* because of an absence of objective criteria to adjudicate the claims and counter claims of the different ethical theories (Roussow 2002:66 and Hosmer 2006:92). The thinking underlying ethical relativism is the belief that because of wide differences in ethical norms and standards, there cannot be a universal ethical principle that can be applied to every individual and every situation (Goree 2007:7 and Rollin 2006:46-47). Dernhardt and Grubbs (2003:149) argue that ethical judgment can only be deliberated upon in the context of the action. What is wrong to one person or in one situation may be right to another person in another situation. The ethical system prevalent in the society in which the action occurs, becomes the only ethical standard to judge an action (Shaw 1991:14 and Tavani 2004:334). Therefore, according to Quinn (2006:60), ethical

relativism advocates that there are no universal ethical norms of right or wrong. He reasons that different individuals or groups of individuals can hold totally opposite views and conceptions of an ethical problem and both can be right.

For senior managers to effectively deal with the challenges presented by ethical relativism, is to be acutely aware of the concept of universalism which advocates that there are absolute ethical truths which everyone has to obey and subscribe to at all times and in all situations, without exception (Dellaportas *et al.* 2005: 327). In the context of a public service ethical system, the absolute truth is that members of the Senior Management Service do bear an obligation, duty and responsibility for the ultimate well- being of the general public (Hosmer 2006:93).

ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Understanding the ethical implications of one's action and inaction and the concomitant dilemmas they pose is regarded as one of, the most difficult challenges in a management setting (Dernardt and Grubbs 2003:123 and Hanekom 1987:151). An ethical dilemma can arise when a manager has to make a choice between two equally balanced alternatives and choosing one alternative results in ignoring the other (Murray 1997:112 and Robson 1999:176-177). It is regarded as being in a quandary that requires an ethically-based solution which must be supported by well reasoned and better ethical principles and values (Murray 1997:112 and Dellaportas et al. 2005:343). In the context of an ethical value system, it is argued that some individuals may experience dilemmas resulting from a conflict between instrumental and terminal values. Subscribing to one may result in transgressing the other (Kreitner 1995:150). Conflict may result within instrumental values, for example, an ambitious manager may ignore the value of obedience. For others, conflict may arise between the terminal values of a sense of accomplishment and inner-harmony (Kreitner 1995:149-150 and Jones and George 2003:80-81).

In trying to resolve ethical dilemmas, a fundamental question for a senior manager will be, am I judging on the rightness and wrongness of the action itself, the results of the rightness and wrongness of the action, the rightness and wrongness of the action based on the character of the person committing the act, or the rightness and wrongness of the action, in terms of an agreed upon value-system? (Murray 1997:114). When confronted by an ethical dilemma, clarity may be obtained by asking the following questions (Spitzer 2000:231):

- What are the principles, values and norms violated on the different sides of the dilemma?
- How are these principles, values and norms ranked?
- What are the levels of benefits and harms on each side of the dilemma?

- What are the quantities of benefit realised, and the harm caused on each side?

The dynamics of ethical dilemmas can be illustrated by this example. An ethical dilemma would arise, if social welfare managers are budgeting to increase the monetary amount of social grant against increasing the number of social grant recipients, with no increase in the amount of the grant. The benefit caused through the monetary approach would be improving the lifestyle of the people and harm being that only a limited number of people will receive this increased amount. In the increased-number approach, the benefit arising will be a large number of people receiving social grants. The harm would be that the quality of life will be comprised because of no increase in the monetary value of the grant. Both the options are equally balanced, although the ethical dilemma is approving one option will result in ignoring the other. Hence, a clash of moral imperatives arises for managers to deal with effectively (Murray 1997:114 and Spitzer 2000:233).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: AN ETHICAL THREAT

Conflict of interest is regarded as a potential for ethical threats (Denhardt and Grubbs 2003:140). The difficulties originate from a situation in which a public servant's private interest clashes with his/her official public duty. In essence, public interest is undermined by private interest (Kanyane 2005:x). The integrity of both terminal and instrumental ethical values is threatened in the process: for example, honesty and benevolence (instrumental values) and human well-being and public welfare (terminal values) are lost (Fritzsche 2005:105 and Denhardt and Grubbs 2003:140). An underlying concern is that the private interests of the public servant could negatively influence and impinge on the performance of the public servant's duties and responsibilities, thus undermining the public interest (Report on Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Service 2006:15). In a practical context, conflict of interest can be manifested in self-dealing, accepting benefits, influence-peddling, seeking secondary employment commitment, and attempting to promote family or private business interests with other staff (Grupe quoted in Kanyane 2005:x).

Another value-adding conceptualisation is the distinction between visible and invisible conflict of interest. An example of invisible conflict would be the public servant declaring a financial interest in a company bidding for government contracts. In contrast, invisible conflict of interest would be the tendency of the public servant to subtly favour certain gender or sex in recruiting staff, contrary to his/her ethical and moral commitment to be egalitarian. This pull towards one set of interests is not taken seriously as a conflict of interest, although it may

be more prevalent and pervasive than a visible conflict of interest (Chugh *et al.* 2005:86-87).

Prompt action in dealing with conflict of interest in the overall interest of the state is a proficiency criterion for senior managers (*Public Service Handbook* (Senior Management Service) 2003: Chapter 5). In order to prevent the negative ethical impacts of conflict of interest, the principle of informing all interested parties, that is financial interest disclosure, is a requirement for senior managers. Chapter nine of the *Public Service Handbook* (Senior Management Service) 2003 sets out a financial disclosure form and a time period for disclosure. This noble effort in promoting ethical values and principles is, however, being hampered. Very recently, the State of the Public Service Report (2007:16) expressed concern that senior managers fail to lead by example, as only 66% of them have disclosed their financial interests for the 2005/2006 financial year.

Senior managers have to realise that well crafted policy and proficiency frameworks as a means of curbing the negative impacts of conflict of interest can be made more effective by exercising transformational ethical leadership. Leadership is vital to secure and sustain public trust and confidence in public service activity and practice. They have to be more mindful of the fact that they constitute the leadership cadre of the South African Public Service.

CORRUPTION: A FORM OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Unethical behaviour and corruption, the most reprehensible form of unethical behaviour, has existed throughout human civilisation. It is the nature of human beings to defy accepted principles, values, and norms, and to put into practice their position of strength and power to ensure maximum self-advantage (Vermeulan 1998:171 and Malan and Smit 2001:31). Corruption is a deliberate and conscious action that violates, disregards and undermines ethical standards, values, principles and norms. Private gain reigns supreme over public interest and public welfare. The noble purpose of holding public office is subordinated and overridden by shameless and selfish actions (Campos and Bhargava 2007:9 and Caiden and Caiden 1978: 479). This abuse and misuse of entrusted power and trust for selfish benefit manifests in accepting bribes, engaging in fraudulent behaviour, misappropriating public resources, and theft: all actions undermining legitimacy and confidence in public service (Van Vuuren 2006:77 and Kanyane 2005:x).

In order to ensure and sustain a culture of public service ethics, senior managers are required in terms of the proficiency criteria to act decisively against corrupt behaviour (*Public Service Handbook* (Senior Management Service) 2003: Chapter 5). To add value to this commitment to maintain a high degree of public service ethics, corruption and corrupt behaviour is criminalised in terms

of the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act, 12 of 2004 (State of the Public Service Report 2007:12). Most importantly, in terms of the Act, senior managers have a mandatory duty to report certain corrupt transactions.

Senior managers as pace-setters and leaders have to be holistically conscious of how their ethical antennae can best create, promote and monitor a vigilant climate for eradicating the unethical cancerous practice that is corruption.

CONCLUSION

It is a constitutional mandate for senior managers of the South African Public Service as leaders, pace-setters and role-models, to promote and maintain a high degree of ethical behaviour. This behaviour is vital to ensure that public service remains focused on maintaining its legitimacy and public confidence. Obtaining a keen grasp of the meaning and nature of ethics, as well as ethical theories, is therefore fundamental. Further conceptual clarity on the elements of an ethical value system and ethical relativism will embed a deeper understanding of ethics. Ethical dilemmas present difficulties in making good ethical judgements. It is clear that conflict of interest as an ethical threat, as well as corruption as a form of unethical behaviour, also requires a keen conceptual understanding to enhance public service ethics. Theoretical and conceptual insights will certainly strengthen the competency of senior public service managers in promoting and maintaining a high degree of ethical behaviour. This is currently a major challenge facing the South African Public Service.

NOTES

1   The eleven competencies are (Public Service Handbook (Senior Management Service) 2003: Chapter 5):
    i.   Strategic Capability and Leadership
    ii.   Programme and Project Management
    iii. Financial Management
    iv.   Change Management
    v.   Knowledge Management
    vi.   Service Delivery Innovation
    vii. Problem Solving and Analysis
    viii. People Management and Empowerment
    ix.   Client Orientation and Customer Focus
    x.   Communication
    xi.   Honesty and Integrity

2   The proficiency levels are basic, competent, advanced and expert. The description of the levels
     are as follows (*Public Service Handbook* (Senior Management Service) 2003: Chapter 5):
     • **BASIC:** Applies basic concepts and methods but requires supervision and coaching.
     • **COMPETENT:** Independently develops and applies more advanced concepts and methods.
       Plans and guides the work of others. Performs analysis.
     • **ADVANCED:** Understands and applies more complex concepts and methods. Leads and
       directs people or groups of recognised specialists. Able to perform in-depth analysis.
     • **EXPERT:** Sought out for deep specialised expertise. Leads the direction of the organisation.
       Defines model/theory.

3   Officially referred to as *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* Act, 108 of 1996.

REFERENCES

Basu, R.S. 1994. *Public Administration: Concepts and Theories.* New Delhi:Sterling Publishers Private
     Limited.

Bradburn, R. 2001. *Understanding Business Ethics*. London: Continuum.

Brady, F.N. 2003. "Publics" Administration and the Ethics of Particularity. *Public Administration
     Review.* 63(5):525-534.

Brown, M.J. 2005. *Corporate Integrity: Rethinking Organizational Ethics and Leadership.* New York:
     Cambridge University Press.

Caiden, G.E. and Caiden, N.J. 1978. Coping with Administrative Corruption-An Academic
     Perspective. In Sharma, S.K. (ed). *Dynamics of Development-An International Perspective.*1.
     Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

Campos, J.E. and Bhargava, V. 2007. Introduction: Tackling a Social Pandemic, In Campos, J.E.
     Pradhan, S. (eds.). *The Many Faces of Corruption: Tackling Vulnerabilities at the Sector Level.*
     Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Chryssides, G.D. and Kaler, J.H. 1993. *Business Ethics: An Introduction.* Australia: Thomson.

Chugh, D., Baserman, M.H. and Banagi, R. 2005. Bounded Ethicality as a Psychological Barrier to
     Recognizing Conflicts of Interest. In Moore, D.A., Cain, D.M., Lowenstein, G. and Baserman,
     M.H. (eds.). *Conflicts of Interest: Challenges and Solutions, Business, Law, Medicine, and Public
     Policy.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Clapper, V. 1999. Ethics for public administration and management. In Wessels, J.S. and Pauw, J.C.
     (eds.). *Reflective Public Administration: Views from the South.* Cape Town: Oxford University
     Press.

Dellaportas, S., Gibson, K., Alagiah, R., Hutchinson, M., Leung, P. and Van Homrigh, D.V. 2005. *Ethics,
     governance and accountability: A professional perspective.* Australia: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

Denhardt, R.B. and Grubbs, J.W. 2003. *Public Administration: An Action Orientation.* USA*:*
     Wadsworth/Thomson.

Devenish, G.E., Govender, K. and Hulme, D. 2001. *Administrative Law and Justice in South Africa.*
     Durban: Butterworths.

Farazmand, A. 2002. Administrative ethics and professional competence: accountability and performance under globalization. *International Review of Administrative Science.* 68(1):127-143.

Frederickson, H.G. 1993. Ethics and Public Administration: Some Assertions. In Frederickson, H.G. (ed.). *Ethics and Public Administration.* New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

Fritzsche, D.J. 2005. *Business Ethics: A Global and Managerial Perspective.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Gildenhuys, J.S.H. and Knipe, A. 2000. *The Organisation of Government: An Introduction.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Goree, K. 2007. *Ethics in the Workplace.* Australia: Thompson South Western.

Hanekom, S.X. 1987. Ethical dilemmas. In Hanekom, S.X., Rowland, R.W. and Bain, E.G. (eds.). *Key Aspects of Public Administration.* Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers (Pty) Ltd.

Hellsten, S. and Larbi, G.A. 2006. Public good or private good? The paradox of public and private ethics in the context of developing countries. *Public Administration and Management: The International Journal of Management Research and Practice.* 26(2):135-145.

Hilliard, V.G. and Lynch, T.D. 1999. Entrenching Ethical and Moral Behaviour in the South African Public Sector. *Administratio Publica.* 9(1):83-102.

Hosmer, L.J. 2006. *The Ethics of Management.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Jones, G.R. and George, J.M. 2003. *Contemporary Management.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Kanyane, M.H. 2005. Conflict of Interest in South Africa: A Comparative Case Study. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pretoria.

Kreitner, R. 1995. *Management.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Lawton, A. 1999. Ethics and Management. In Rose, A. and Lawton, *A. Public Services Management.* London: Financial Times, Prentice Hall.

Louw, M. 2003. Ethics in the workplace: moving to higher ground. In Verwey, S. and Du Plooy-Cilliers, J. (eds.). Strategic Organisational Communication: Perceptions and Paradoxes. Lansdowne: Heinemann, Publishers (Pty) Ltd.

Malan, F. and Smit, B. 2001. *Ethics and Leadership in Business and Politics.* Lansdowne: Juta and Co.

McKinney, J.B. and Howard, L.C. 1998. *Public Administration: Balancing Power and Accountability.* Westport: Connecticut, Praeger.

Minnaar, F. and Bekker, K. 2005. *Public Management in the Information Age.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Murray, D. 1997. *Ethics in Organization's Values-Codes-Vision-Strategies-Action.* London: Kogan Page in association with Coopers and Lybrand.

Pollit, C. 2003. *The Essential Public Manager.* New York: Open University Press.

Public Service Handbook (Senior Management Service) 2003. Department of Public Service and Administration, Pretoria.

Public Service Commission. 2006. Report on Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Service. Pretoria, Directorate: Communication and Information Services.

Public Service Communication. 2007. State of the Public Service Report. Pretoria, Directorate: Communication and Information Services.

Quinn, M.J. 2006. *Ethics for the Information Age.* Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Republic of South Africa. 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act*, 108 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa. 2004. *Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act*, 12 of 2004. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Reynolds, G.R. 2003. *Ethics in Information Technology.* Boston: Thompson Course Technology.

Robson, J.H. 1999. Professional ethics from day to day: a practitioner's reflection, In Wessels, J.S. and Pauw, J.C. (eds.) *Reflective Public Administration: Views from the South.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Rollin, B.E. 2006. *Science and Ethics.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rossouw, D. 2002. *Business Ethics in Africa.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa..

Shaw, W.H. 1991. *Business Ethics.* Califonia: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Spitzer, R.J. 2000. *The Spirit of Leadership: Optimizing Creativity and Change in Organizations.* USA, Executive Excellence Publishing.

Stone, D.C. 1983. *Foreword.* In Kernaghan, K, and Dwivedi, O.P. (eds.). *Ethics in the Public Service: Comparative Perspectives.* Brussels: International Institute of Administrative Sciences.

Tavani, H. T. 2004. *Ethics Technology: Ethical Issues, in an Age of Information and Communication Technology.* Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Van der Vyver, C. 2001. SMS: Taking service delivery to new heights. *Service Delivery Review.* Launch Edition.

Van Vuuren, H. 2006. A culture of transparency in South Africa: Negotiating the obstacles, Political Culture in the New South Africa. Seminar Report, Johannesburg.

Vermeulan, 1998. The Civil Servant and the Citizen in Quest of Good Ethical Behaviour. In Hondeghem, A. (ed.). *Ethics and Accountability in a Context of Governance and New Public Management.* EGPA Yearbook, Belgium.

AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS

Prof Danny Sing
School of Public Administration
Unversity of Kwazulu-Natal,
Private bag x54001,
Durban,
4000
Tel: 031 2607086 or 031 2607763
Fax: 031 2607751
Govendervi@ukzn.ac.za

A normative model for the employment of people with disabilities within the Provincial Government of the Western Cape

Derrick Morton-Achmad
Manager, Special Programmes for the Department of Transport and Public
Works in the Provincial Government of the Western Cape

Professor Harry H Ballard
Head of Department, Department of Public Management, Faculty
of Business, Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Professor MS Bayat
Dean, Faculty of Business, Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

Dr Elmien Steyn
Deputy Director for Mitigation at the Provincial Disaster Management Centre at the Department
of Local Government and Housing in the Provincial Government of the Western Cape

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the trends in the employment of people with disabilities within the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC) and proposes a normative model to address the matter of low employment and progression rates of people with disabilities within the PGWC. The proposed normative model presented in this article incorporates eight sets of criteria, identified and defined from the literature and the empirical survey. The advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 witnessed the enshrinement of the fundamental human rights of all citizens with Government's target for disability employment legislated at 2%, in 1995. Yet, in spite of employment targets and disability rights being legislated for people with disabilities since 1995, such people within the public service represented only 0.15% of the total staff complement of the public service nationwide, as at December 2004. Hence, a compelling need arises for a structured approach to disability employment. The article accordingly refers to the subject matter relating to disability employment

within the PGWC. The research problem relates to a perceived need to review current workplace procedures and practices within the PGWC, against the legislative requirements for employment levels of people with disabilities. A major government objective within the above context is to increase the number of people with disabilities without impairing the quality of services that are offered to the general public and other stakeholders. The article proposes that the identified criteria in the model be adhered to in order to ensure a sustained increase in the employment and progression of people with disabilities.

INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The research investigates the rates of employment of people with disabilities within the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC) and aims to develop a normative model for the employment and progression of people with disabilities within the PGWC. The article accordingly refers to the subject matter relating to disability employment within the PGWC. The theme is conceptualised with the recording of the historical workplace and societal marginalisation of blacks, women and people with disabilities. Against this context, the post-1994 government has embarked on various legislative and other initiatives to redress past inequalities such as gender, race and disability discrimination.

The research problem relates to a perceived need to review current workplace procedures and practices within the PGWC, against the legislative requirements for employment levels of people with disabilities. A major government objective within the above context is to increase the number of people with disabilities without impairing the quality of services that are offered to the general public and other stakeholders.

The research problem has devolved into three sub-problems, which translate into the key questions for the research.

- What knowledge, skills and attitudes are necessary for human resource managers to willingly recruit people with disabilities?
- What are the principal internal and external barriers for the PGWC that limit access and career progression for people with disabilities?
- How willing are human resource managers to incur additional costs related to reasonable accommodation measures necessary for the employment and retention of people with disabilities?

The scope of the research is limited to the provincial departments within the PGWC. Recruitment, selection and other policies and procedures are standardised and homogenous, in terms of both design and practice, within all provincial and national departments.

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Disability in people manifests itself in various forms such as mental or physical disability, or combinations thereof. People with disabilities in South Africa are confronted daily by difficulties in accessing opportunities for entry and progression within the workplace of the PGWC. Blind or partially sighted people, for example, constitute one third of the disabled population in South Africa (Central Statistical Service 2001: Prevalence of Disability, 2005:5). Such a group faces strong challenges to overcome the myths and stereotyping which surround blind, partially sighted people, or people with other types of disability. However, The Bill of Rights contained within Chapter 2 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, *1996* (Act No. 108 of 1996) prohibits unfair discrimination against any citizen based on disability. Section 2 of the Constitution (108 of 1996) may therefore be interpreted as indicating that people with disabilities have claim to unalienable rights of access to employment opportunities.

Legislated definition of disability

An ethical and contemporary debate has emerged regarding the current definition of disability, arising from the lack of a country-specific or international definition for disability (Public Service Commission Report on Disability Equity in the South African Public Service, 2002:5) (PSC). Criticism that the legislated disability definition is fragmented, enjoys support from the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET 2001:52). The results of a survey conducted into equity and diversity management have indicated that the current legislated South African definition of disability is "…extremely vague…" (CHET, 2001:52), thus creating problems in identifying disabled members of the designated group.

The current legislated definition of disability in South Africa recognises people as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which is long-term or recurring, and which "…substantially limits prospects of entry into, or advancement, in employment" (*Employment Equity Act*, No. 55 of 1998). Varying degrees of disability translate into a practice where people with severe and obvious disabilities do not receive employment, in preference to people with a limited disability, or one that is not easily perceived (PSC: Report on Disability Equity in the South African Public Service dated February 2002:5).

Target for disability employment

The Government has expressed its intention of transforming the public service, as espoused in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service dated 15 November 1995. A 2% disability target forms part of the affirmative action goals specified in Section 10.6 of the above White Paper, which reveals that people with disability constituted 10% of the national population in 1995 and stipulates that "…within ten years, people with disabilities should comprise 2% of public service personnel".

According to the PSC: State of the Public Service Report (2006; 59), the PSC has been monitoring and evaluating the attainment of race, gender and disability representivity within the public service since 1999. As far back as the year 2000, the PSC published the first of a series of reports, indicating minimal progress with disability representation within the public service, in terms of the targets prescribed for national departments and provincial administrations. At that stage in 2000, women represented at management level comprised only 18%, instead of the 30% target set for that level. Similarly, the target for people with disability was not achieved, "… with a negligible 0.09% of persons with disability appointed at the time" (The PSC: State of Representativeness in the Public Service dated July 2000, as cited in the PSC: State of the Public Service Report dated 2006). By 2006, the status on disability employment had remained inadequate (PSC, 2006:9).

Target not met

In the PSC: State of Representativeness in the Public Service Report dated July 2000, the PSC concluded that the target of 2% representation "…set for 2005 will not be met". Progress in this regard has remained slow. The 2% target date, initially set for 31 March 2005, has been extended for five years to 31 March 2010. The PGWC has expressed concern that the "…established recruitment processes have not produced the desired goal" (PGWC Draft Affirmative Action Framework for the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (2007:3). According to the PSC: State of the Public Service Report (2006:9), the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has deemed the current representation of people with disabilities within the public service to be unsatisfactory. The roles of both the PSC and the DPSA include leading and monitoring the transformation processes within the public service.

Hendricks, Deputy Director in the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons within the Department of the Premier in the Western Cape, contended in an interview held on 04 May 2007 that a collective 2% level of representativity within the PGWC for people with disabilities, is an achievable task.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research approach is located within the parameters of a participative action research paradigm utilising the case-study methodology, towards the development of a normative model for the employment of people with disabilities within the PGWC. The research goal has been descriptive, using a narrative style of description, thus focussing on "…describing some phenomenon, event or situation" (Christensen 2001:32). Accordingly, the research examines the situation of slow progress concerning disability, in terms of the three research questions posed earlier and presents findings and recommendations in this regard.

Description of the research populations

Two separate research populations were identified as follows:
- Population One: All human resource managers employed by the PGWC within the twelve provincial departments, as well as all officials located within the corresponding components responsible for the recruitment and selection of employees; and
- Population Two: The Western Cape Network on Disability (Disability Network) and its members who interact with the PGWC on matters relating to disability. The responses from the Disability Network have been analysed for purposes of cross-tabulation analysis and for validation of the PGWC-related research findings.

This article progressively examines a philosophical and theoretical approach to managing the employment and retention of people with disabilities within the public service, before providing a synopsis of the constitutional and legislative framework that supports access to employment for people with disabilities. The recruitment and selection practices within the PGWC are examined in order to determine whether or not, specific disability actions have been incorporated into the documentation. A description of the research design and methodology is followed by a qualitative and statistical analysis of the data collected. Finally, key recommendations and guidelines for implementation are provided.

RESEARCH DESIGN

As stated earlier in the article, the research design utilises a case-study methodology for the purposes of the development of a normative model, towards achieving increased levels of employment with regard to people with

disabilities within the PGWC. The current representation of disabled people in the public service is not satisfactory. No significant growth has occurred beyond 0,2 percent overall, compared with the 2% employment target demanded by the Government (DPSA Medium-term Strategic Plan*: 2005 / 2008) (2005:11).

The utilisation of the case-study methodology in the research is justified. Case studies are those that "…examine in some depth, persons, decisions, programs, or other entities that have a unique characteristic" (O'Sullivan, Rassel & Berner, 2003:39). The research is descriptive in character, employing a narrative style of description, thus focusing on describing the phenomenon of disability employment practices within the PGWC. The study is contemporary, with the researcher enjoying direct access to the people involved in the study.

A PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The following paragraphs provide an explanation of the social sciences and the article continues by examining the subject of *philosophy,* as well as its relationship to disability employment.

The research on disability and employment involves scholarly enquiry which includes searching the related literature, conducting an empirical survey and extracting normative criteria relevant to the research topic. Sogolo (1993:7 as cited in van den Berg, 2005:5) states that the question "What is philosophy?" is in itself, a philosophical question, for which a universally acceptable answer is not easy to find. Sogolo (1993:7) adds: "It is easier to do philosophy than to talk about philosophy, easier still to talk about it in some other ways than to produce a definition."

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy (1999:240) reveals that the term *philosophy* has acquired many related meanings, some of which are:
- A particular system of philosophical doctrine;
- The critical evaluation of such fundamental doctrines;
- A system of principles for guidance in practical affairs; and
- A philosophical spirit or attitude.

The word *philosophy* conveys no single meaning to scholars, but is generally construed as either the love of wisdom, or the wisdom of love (Parkinson, 1998:1). According to Starling (1993:168), those entrusted with public service responsibility have a duty to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour.

New public service behaviours tend to manifest after general elections, whenever a new political party assumes power in the public service environment. Accordingly, the nature of public management provided to citizens is shaped by the political ideology that is exhibited by the government of the day. The current African National Congress (ANC) government has introduced legislation which promotes the employment of people with disabilities. Hence, the PGWC as a public service identity should, in practice, be expected to react positively to the DPSA directives that relate to an increase in the rates of disability employment.

A CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This section provides reference to legislative support to the notion of a discrimination-free workplace environment for the employment and progression of people with disabilities within the PGWC. The added dimension of the absence of disability-specific legislation in the country is introduced.

NATIONAL LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

According to the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997:57), South Africa lacks a single, coherent or comprehensive national piece of legislation that pertains exclusively to people with disabilities, as well as addresses their social and workplace rights. The White Paper (1997) states [in Chapter 2] that the rights of people with disabilities are protected by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, (Act No. 108 of 1996). As yet, there exists no disability-specific legislation" (1997:v). The view regarding fragmentation within legislation is shared by Tire (2003:83), who asserts that "…what is found in South Africa regarding the regulation of disability … are phrases in the Constitution, pieces of policies and comments from the experts, scholars, institutions, government officials…".

The equal rights of people with disabilities who access employment and related opportunities are protected and guaranteed against the background of the provisions of the Constitution (108 of 1996) with regard to the related values enshrined within the Bill of Rights. The human rights that are found in the Bill of Rights may be limited "…only in terms of law of general application to the extent that the limitation is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom taking into account all relevant factors" (Constitution, 108 of 1996).

Other relevant legislation

Additional South African legislation exists, either explicitly or implicitly, which supports the promotion of employment and workplace rights for people with disability. This legislation is noted below without detailed discussion.

The Public Service Act, 1994 (103 of 1994) "…provides for the organisation and administration of the public service…" as well as for the regulation of conditions of employment, terms of office, matters of discipline and for related matters for employees within the public service in South Africa. .

The Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No.66 of 1995) as amended, gives effect to Section 27 of the Constitution (108 of 1996) which, in turn, relates to the rights of all citizens with regard to basic access to facilities at the workplace.

According to the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997:1), public services are not a privilege in a civilised and democratic society; they are a right and a legitimate expectation that is held by all citizens, including people with disabilities.

The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000 (Act No. 4 of 2000) binds the Government and all persons. In meeting its main purpose, the Act (4 of 2000) gives effect to the Constitution (108 of 1996), with reference to the prohibition of unfair discrimination.

The Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) mandates equity in employment practices by requiring employers to set numerical targets for the employment of staff with regards to race, gender and disability. Section 2 of the Act (55 of 1998), provide for measures of affirmative action that favour *black people* and *women* of all *colours* and provides for a situation of employment equity that should correct historical imbalances within society and in the workplace, in particular. The term, *black people,* which is defined in Section 1 of the Act (55 of 1998), is a legislated generic term which refers to Africans, Coloureds and Indians. These three population groups, together with women of all race groups, and people with disabilities, constitute the so-called d*esignated group* favoured by the Act (55 of 1998) for workplace employment and progression.

People with disabilities are those people who suffer from some "…long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment that substantially limits their prospects of entry or advancement in employment" (Section 1 of the Act, 55 of 1998). The Act (55 of 1998) refers to the elimination of unfair discrimination by any employer, namely any discrimination against an employee in any employment policy or practice, on a number of grounds, namely disability, race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language or birth or citizenship.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES WITHIN THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WESTERN CAPE

This section examines the recruitment and selection practices within the PGWC. The overriding objective of the section is to determine whether or not, a *disability perspective* has been incorporated into the documentation. A *disability perspective* refers to the existence of specific actions and directives within the documentation aimed at promoting the employment rate of people with disabilities. In the case of such a *disability perspective* toward a successful interview process, the PGWC should, for example, ensure that the interview room is located in an area that is accessible to a candidate who uses a wheelchair. Similarly, in the case of a deaf applicant, the need for a sign language interpreter to accommodate a deaf applicant should be incorporated into the recruitment policies and procedures.

Several sets of provincial and departmental documentation, which specifically address the recruitment and selection of persons for employment, exist within the public service. Such documents have mostly emanated from DPSA and the PSC. External partners, such as consultants, have prepared additional documentation. Many earlier public service policy frameworks and directives have been superseded by the work of consultants who possess expertise in the field of recruitment and selection. One such organisation is PMA Consulting 2000, which compiled a comprehensive report after being commissioned by the DPSA (PMA Research on Recruitment and Selection Best Practices, 2000) (PMA 2000).

One finding of the PMA (2000) research commissioned by the DPSA indicates that recruitment and selection methods are "…weak and limited" (PMA 2000:36). Recruitment and selection processes within the public service have, historically, been highly standardised. In practice, little or no flexibility is permitted in the structure of selection interviews or the posing of follow-up questions to candidates in these interviews. Standardisation is taken to inappropriate levels during interviews when probing questions are disallowed where candidates appear to be liberal with the truth. There is little or no scope for intuition or "gut-feel". Generally, recognition is not awarded for previous job achievements obtained in the face of adversity.

New interview panels are formed for each vacant position and are disbanded at the conclusion of interviews with short-listed candidates. Panel members are drawn from line management and receive no training in interview techniques. The DPSA agreed with the above findings and reiterated that the current recruitment and selection processes within the public service are flawed (DPSA: Managing Staff Retention, 2006:3).

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The qualitative analysis in the study focuses on the research problem and the three research questions that relate to the employment and progression of people with disabilities. The research questions have been answered in the process of the literature review (first data stream). The third of the research questions, namely that relating to the costs of reasonable accommodation measures, has been further addressed within the empirical survey.

The findings noted in the following paragraphs relate to the normative criteria which emerged from the literature review.

Managers' characteristics

The required knowledge, skills and attitudes for human resource managers to willingly recruit people with disabilities are found to be lacking within the PGWC. The literature research indicates that such managers should possess certain traits or attributes, for the successful implementation of a normative model for the employment and retention of people with disabilities. The desired manager -characteristics are listed in the section on the guidelines for implementation of the model.

Disability perspective

The PGWC recruitment policies and procedures lack a disability perspective. No meaningful disability-specific actions are incorporated within the relevant documents.

Barriers

Previous paragraphs implicitly incorporate some of the key barriers to access and career progression for people with disabilities. The barriers are discussed in more detail in the later section on the qualitative and empirical findings of the research.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The statistical analysis comprises four main elements, namely: internal (within the PGWC), external (within the Disability Network) and selected cross-tabulation of findings within the PGWC and findings between the PGWC and the Disability Network.

Internal statistical analysis

The first population, comprising the human resource managers and recruitment personnel, furnished the data for the internal statistical analysis. (The 11 tables reflecting the PGWC, internal analysis of the findings are not reflected in this article, due to space limitations).

The 12 participating departments in the PGWC study are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1 PGWC – Responses categorised by Department

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agriculture	7	8.2	8.2
Community Safety	4	4.7	12.9
Cultural Affairs and Sport	5	5.9	18.8
Economic Development and Tourism	11	12.9	31.8
Education	8	9.4	41.2
Environmental Affairs and Development Planning	4	4.7	45.9
Health	11	12.9	58.8
Local Government and Housing	6	7.1	65.9
Premier	7	8.2	74.1
Provincial Treasury	5	5.9	80.0
Social Development	4	4.7	84.7
Transport and Public Works	13	15.3	100.0
Total	85	100.0	

The results reflected in Table 1 above indicate that all the existing PGWC departments are represented in the study.

Selected cross-tabulation of responses within the Provincial Government of the Western Cape

The cross-tabulation of responses within the PGWC has been limited in this article, to the groupings of manager and not-a-manager. In each of the tables below, the words: "PGWC Cross-tabulation" are utilised as the prefix descriptor in order to indicate the relationships to the findings of the PGWC internal statistical findings (not shown in this article).

Chi-Square test results are shown here in only two of the tables where significant statistical differences were found to exist (Tables 2 to 15 below).

Table 2 PGWC Cross-tabulation – Managers should not focus on the disability

	Managers should not focus on the disability, but on the ability of the person			Total
	Agree	**Unsure**	**Disagree**	
Manager	24	1	7	32
Not a manager	48	3	2	53
Total	72	4	9	85

The results reflected in Table 2 above indicate high levels of agreement with the statement, but also a high disparity between manager and non-manager with regards to levels of support (75% versus 90,56% respectively).

Table 3 PGWC Cross-tabulation – Chi-Square Test: Managers should not focus on the disability

	Value	Degrees of freedom	P- value
Pearson Chi-Square	14.746(a)	6	.022
N of Valid Cases	85		
(a) 6 cells (50.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.04.			

The results reflected in Table 3 above indicate that there is a statistically significant difference, in the percentage of respondents <u>who agree</u> with the statement: "*Managers should not focus on the disability, but on the ability of the person",* between the two groups of managers (75,0%) and non-managers (90,56%).

Table 4 PGWC Cross-tabulation – Certain jobs are suitable for people with a disability

	There are only certain jobs that are suited for people with disabilities			Total
	Agree	**Unsure**	**Disagree**	
Manager	14	7	11	32
Not a manager	28	8	17	53
Total	42	15	28	85

The results reflected in Table 4 above indicate that non-managers provide greater support for the statement (52,83%), compared to managers (43,75%).

Table 5 PGWC Cross-tabulation – Organisational culture should be supportive

| | The organisational culture should support the employment of people with disabilities | | | Total |
	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	
Manager	31	0	1	32
Not a manager	49	4	0	53
Total	80	4	1	85

The results reflected in Table 5 above indicate overwhelming support for an appropriate organisational culture from both managers (96,87%) and non-managers (92,45%).

Table 6 PGWC Cross-tabulation – Not every type of disability can be catered for

| | Not every type of disability can be catered for in the workplace | | | Total |
	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	
Manager	28	2	2	32
Not a manager	29	10	14	53
Total	57	12	16	85

The results reflected in Table 6 above indicate significant disagreement between the two groups. More than one-quarter of non-managers disagree (26,4%) with the statement, while only 6,35% of the managers disagree. Nevertheless, 93,75% of managers either agree or are undecided, compared to 73,58% of non-managers.

Table 7 PGWC Cross-tabulation – Chi-Square Test – Not every type of disability can be catered for

	Value	Degrees of freedom	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square	9.758(a)	2	.008
N of Valid Cases	85		
(a) 1 cell (16.7%) has an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.52.			

The results reflected in Table 7 above indicate that there is a statistically significant difference, in the percentage of respondents <u>who disagree</u> with the statement: "*Not every type of disability can be catered for in the workplace*", between the two groups of managers (6,25%) and non-managers (26,41%).

External statistical analysis

A sample from the population of the Disability Network provided the data for the external statistical analysis. Selected analysis with respect to the Disability Network is indicated in the cross-tabulation between the PGWC responses. Selected data extracted from the biographical section of the questionnaire is indicated below. The item descriptions in each cross-tabulation table and the figure below have been prefixed by the words 'Disability Network' to clarify that the findings reflect cross-tabulation between the PGWC and the DN (and not internally within the PGWC).

Figure 1 Disability network, by disability
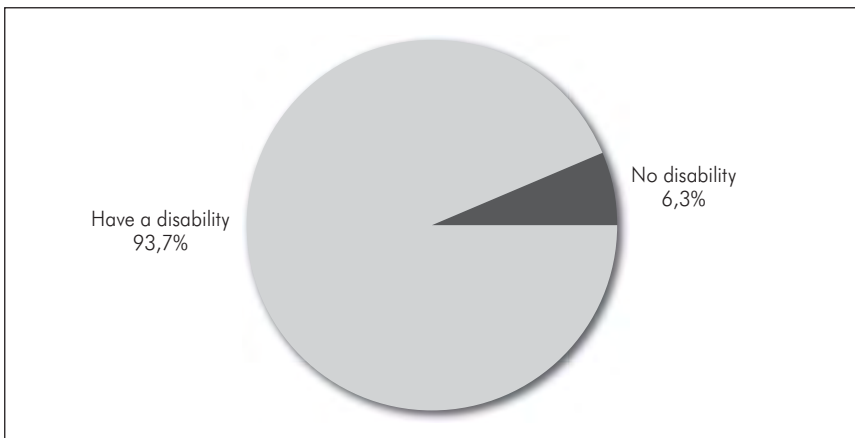
Figure 1 above: Disability Network, categorised by disability / no disability

The results reflected in Figure 1 above indicate that the overwhelming majority of the Disability Network respondents (93,7%) have a disability.

Selected cross-tabulation between internal and external responses

The cross-tabulation between the PGWC and the Disability Network has been applied to a selection of ten questionnaire items, in the research study. [Only six of the ten questionnaire items are discussed in this article].

Chi-Square tests were conducted within four of the six tables where significant statistical differences were found to exist. (Only two of the tables are shown in this article).

The item descriptors in each table below have been prefixed by the words 'Cross-tabulation PGWC-DN' to indicate that the findings relate to the PGWC and Disability Network response cross-tabulation. Note that the tables and findings below differ from the tables provided earlier in the PGWC analysis, although the item descriptors may be the same.

Table 8 Cross-tabulation PGWC-DN: Line managers require certain skills

	Line managers require special skills and knowledge to employ and manage people with disabilities			Total
	Agree	**Unsure**	**Disagree**	
Disability Network WC Employee	58	4	1	63
	52	7	26	85
Total	110	11	27	148

The results reflected in Table 8 above indicate overwhelming support for the statement from both groups. The Disability Network agrees at 92,06%; the PGWC records high support with a result of 61,17%.

Table 9 Cross-tabulation PGWC – DN Chi-Square Test – Line managers require certain skills

	Value	**Degrees of freedom**	**P-value**
Pearson Chi-Square	21.498(a)	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	148		
(a) 1 cell (16.7%) has an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.68.			

The results reflected in Table 9 above indicate that there is a statistically significant difference, in the percentage of respondents who disagree with the statement: "Line managers require special skills and knowledge to employ and manage people with disabilities", between the two groups of the Disability Network (1,58%) and the PGWC (30,58%).

Table 10 Cross-tabulation PGWC-DN: Certain jobs are suitable for people with a disability

	There are only certain jobs that are suited for people with disabilities			Total
	Agree	**Unsure**	**Disagree**	
Disability Network	37	16	10	63
PGWC Employee	42	15	28	85
Total	79	31	38	148

The results reflected in Table 10 above indicate that 15.87% of respondents from the Disability Network disagree that only certain jobs are suitable for people with disabilities, compared with one-third for PGWC employees (32,94%). The finding may reflect a pessimistic view of reality (false or not), internalised by people with a disability, that there may be limits to what could be achieved in the workplace.

Table 11 Cross-tabulation PGWC-DN: Blindness disability and performance

	A person with a <u>blindness</u> disability can perform competently at senior manager level, even if he / she has one of the following categories of disability: Blindness			Total
	Agree	**Unsure**	**Disagree**	
Disability Network	40	20	3	63
PGWC Employee	35	30	19	84
Total	75	50	22	147

The results reflected in Table 11 above indicate that a large proportion of both groups of respondents are unsure. However, a marked disparity is evident regarding disagreement with the statement from both groups. The Disability Network indicates only 4,76% disagreement compared to that of the PGWC with 22,6%. The finding may be viewed as reinforcing the earlier conclusion with regard to the high level of pessimism held by the Disability Network.

Table 12 Cross-tabulation PGWC-DN: Physical disability and performance

	A person with a <u>physical</u> disability can perform competently at senior manager level			Total
	Agree	**Unsure**	**Disagree**	
Disability Network	63	0	0	63
PGWC Employee	62	16	7	85
Total	**125**	**16**	**7**	**148**

The results reflected in Table 12 above indicate unanimous agreement among the responses from the Disability Network (100%), with 72,94% of the PGWC participants agreeing with the statement.

Table 13 Cross-tabulation PGWC-DN: Deafness disability and performance

	A person who has a <u>deafness</u> disability can perform competently at senior manager level			Total
	Agree	**Unsure**	**Disagree**	
Disability Network	36	23	4	63
PGWC Employee	36	31	18	85
Total	**72**	**54**	**22**	**148**

The results reflected in Table 13 above indicate that 57,14% of the Disability Network and 42,35% of the PGWC support the statement, with a large proportion in both groups being unsure.

Table 14 Cross-tabulation PGWC-DN – Chi-Square Test – Deafness disability and performance

	Value	Degrees of freedom	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square	6.978(a)	2	.031
N of Valid Cases	148		
(a) 0 cells (.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.36.			

The results reflected in Table 14 above indicate that there is a statistically significant difference, in the percentage of respondents who disagree with the statement: "A person who has a deafness disability can perform competently at senior manager level", between the two groups of the Disability Network (6,34%) and the PGWC (21,17%).

Table 15 Cross-tabulation PGWC-DN: Current legislation is adequate

	Current legislation is adequate to facilitate an increase in the employment numbers of people with disabilities			Total
	Agree	**Unsure**	**Disagree**	
Disability Network	31	14	18	63
PGWC Employee	48	22	15	85
Total	79	36	33	148

The results in Table 15 above indicate that the groups are divided on the question of legislation. Only 49,20% of the Disability Network agree, with 22,22% being unsure. The PGWC indicates more support at 56,47% with 25,88% being unsure.

FINDINGS

This section presents a selection of the most salient findings and analyses of the qualitative (first data stream) and empirical (second data stream) surveys, with regard to both Population One and Population Two of the research.

Knowledge, skills and attitudes

The research indicates that the workplace behaviour of managers should reflect the following attributes, in order to willingly recruit and successfully manage people with disabilities:

- Appropriate leadership skills (as opposed to management skills) as precondition for the successful employment of people with disabilities. Robbins (1986:532) defines leadership as "the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of goals". Management, by contrast, is described as determining how to best attain goals in an organisation (Robbins (1986:532).
- A genuine concern for subordinates in order to achieve higher levels of outputs;

- An understanding of the motivational needs of employees, which evidences a   clear link to the employment and progression of people with disabilities; and
- The ability to connect disabled employees to themselves as managers, through shared organisational values which encourage employees to believe that they are part of a greater vision and goal.

Barriers to employment

The research indicates that the principal barriers, internally and externally, for the PGWC that limit access and career progression for people with disabilities, include the following:
- Internal barriers:
  - The failure of the PGWC to exploit the provisions of current legislation to fund Learnership programmes to a greater extent, in order to increase the levels of disability employment;
  - The tendency of departments to meet disability employment targets by restricting employment to people with minimal disability;
  - The propensity of departments to locate people with disabilities at the lower   post levels where there is little scope for advancement;
  - Inappropriate communication and language terminology, as well as the display of negative attitudes by managers, towards disability;
  - Inappropriate technology and poor workplace ergonomics;
  - The lack of decentralisation and flexible processes within the PGWC is maintained by a focus on formalised rules and procedures; and
  - The reluctance or failure by people with disabilities to espouse high levels of   assertiveness when interfacing with barriers to the access of employment opportunities.
- External barriers:
  - Public transport systems are inaccessible and inappropriate for the conveyance of people with disabilities. Hence, the access to employment opportunities is negated by the lack of effective transport systems; and
  - The current legislated definition of disability is restricted to the confines of the workplace and thus lacks an impact on relevant societal issues (such as accessible public transport systems) which facilitate the access to job opportunities.

Costs for reasonable accommodation

The research indicates that the costs for reasonable accommodation varies from situation to situation and is dependent on the nature and complexity,

or otherwise, of the job and the individual disability. The costs of adjusting the individual workplaces for people with disabilities will not, in general, be significant amounts of expenditure, provided the building infrastructure is universally accessible.

Disability legislation

In South Africa no single, coherent or comprehensive piece of legislation exists pertaining to people with disabilities and their social and workplace rights. Even common law does not adequately cover the rights of disabled people; however, existing legislation offers an important point for redress and furnishes enforceable support.

Disability perspective

Provincial and departmental documents relating to selection and recruitment processes within the PGWC fail to incorporate any degree of the *disability perspective*. They are silent regarding matters of disability employment.

Qualitative responses

The qualitative responses gathered from the empirical survey serve to reinforce findings emerging from the literature survey:
- The public transport systems fail to provide a safe and accessible means of transport to and from the workplace;
- The inappropriate attitudes held by PGWC managers militate against the employment and retention of people with disabilities;
- Budget allocations for disability-related matters are inadequate;
- The available supply in the labour market of competent people with disabilities is perceived as being inadequate to meet current demand; and
- Current legislation needs to be reviewed, addressing the challenges faced by people with disabilities, both in the workplace and the social environment.

PROPOSED NORMATIVE MODEL

The proposal of a normative model for the recruitment of people with disabilities is presented in narrative style, incorporating eight sets of key criteria extracted from the literature and empirical searches. This section also investigates theories of models and various types of models.

Theory and use of models

Models are meant to represent the reality perceived by their developers. "All of us design models as we try to make sense of the everyday world" (Nadler & Nadler 1994:6). In a similar vein Ferreira (2007) remarked, in an interview with the researcher, that an effective model simplifies the understanding of an essentially complicated process. A model is just a representation of reality, employing either a schematic or narrative method, or using a combination of both. Parker (1984:1032) provides a scientific explanation for a model which he describes as "a mathematical or physical system, obeying certain conditions, whose behavior is used to understand a physical, biological or social system to which it is analogous in some way".

The proposed model is based on the model developed by Rogers (1995) as cited in Tiffany & Lutjens (1998:219). The so-called diffusion model "… is a time oriented, linear mental formulation that describes the spread of an innovation …through communication channels over time in a social system" (Tiffany & Lutjens 1998:233). As a diffusion model, it is designed to cause social [or workplace] change to occur. The model reflects a planned process through which an organisation progresses from first knowledge of an innovation, to forming an attitude towards the innovation, to a decision to adopt, followed by confirmation of the adoption.

The normative model, which is being proposed, is an *open model* in type. It acknowledges that organisations and individuals are complex; thus it recognises that the incorporation of every single variable into the design is not possible. Consequently, the proposed model will be subject to ongoing amendment during implementation.

The proposed normative model for increasing levels of employment for people with disabilities within the PGWC is illustrated in Figure 1.

An ongoing monitoring and evaluation process supports and complements the abovementioned five phases, especially to ensure that variables not known in the design phase of the model are incorporated into the implementation processes. Thus, all elements throughout the diffusion of planned change are subject to constant refinement.

An overarching communication strategy creates channels of communication to all phases of the model in order to provide the appropriate information to move potential adopters progressively through the five phases of the proposed model.

The knowledge phase

The knowledge phase is preceded by an analysis of the variables which impact on the employment of people with disabilities within the Western Cape and

Figure 1 A normative model for the employment of people with disabilities within the PGWC

Communication throughout the five phases of innovation

Situational demands within the PGWC:
- Human rights mainstreaming
- Gender demands
- Employment equity strategies
- Affirmative actions
- Scarce skills
- Effects on non-designated groups
- Poor public transport systems
- Organisational restructuring
- Poor physical infrastructure

Characteristics of the knowledge phase:
- Awareness knowledge
- How-to-use-knowledge
- Principles knowledge

1. Knowledge

2. Persuasion

3. Decision

4 – Implementation

5. Sanction / Reward

Perceived characteristics of the process:
- Relative advantage
- Relative disadvantage
- Compatibility with own needs
- Complexity
- Experimental-ability (the term is explained in the text
- Observability of the results

Adoption

Continued adoption followed by conditioned behavior

Eight sets of normative criteria, which must be in place for the employment of people with disabilities [Monitoring and evaluation occurs throughout the process]

1 – Legislated framework

4 – Ethics and philosophy

6 – Managers' attitude, skill and knowledge

2 – Funding for disability employment

5 – Organisational structure

7 – Barriers: Internal-External

3 – Reasonable accommodation

8 – Disability perspective

"…determines the degree of innovativeness present …" (Tiffany & Lutjens 1998:218). The poor public transport system in the Western Cape as indicated in the proposed model remains outside of the scope of the study and may represent a topic for future research.

The knowledge phase in the proposed normative model comprises the time period for managers (adopters) to develop an awareness of the need to increase the rate of employment for people with disabilities. They acquire some understanding of the meaning and function of the proposed innovation.

The need to employ greater numbers of people with disabilities is communicated by the relevant public service bodies such as the DPSA and the PSC. This phase incorporates three elements of knowledge which must be imparted or acquired by managers:

- **Awareness:** Information, which brings about awareness of the innovation, namely the need to employ greater numbers of people with disabilities.
- **How-to-use:** Information on how to use the innovation properly and to contribute to the successful employment and retention of people with disabilities; and
- **Principles:** Information that explains the reasons for the innovation to work as it does (explaining the recruitment and selection and other related processes).

The persuasion phase

The persuasion phase in the proposed model is the phase in which potential adopters form enduring attitudes towards the innovation, thus producing a strong predisposition to accept the innovation. Persuasion, in the proposed model, relates to the mental and emotional processes that are created within adopters; it does not aim to secure adoption at this early stage. Once potential adopters gain cognitive knowledge about an innovation from the knowledge phase, they develop attitudes and beliefs in the persuasion phase and actively seek additional related knowledge.

The main desired outcome of the persuasion phase is the creation of a favourable attitude towards the innovation. Adoption relates to the decision to use an innovation, for example, to employ people with disabilities at a more rapid rate than before. Rogers (1995:205-208), as cited in Tiffany & Lutjens (1998:218), linked a series of variables to the rate of adoption of innovations. These include the nature of the communication channels present, as well as the characteristics of the innovation, as perceived by the potential adopter. Characteristics possessed by innovations include:

- **Relative advantage:** The degree of perceived superiority of a new innovation or idea over an existing one;

- **Relative disadvantage:** The converse of relative advantage, thus referring to the perceived inferiority of a new innovation over an existing one. The characteristic refers to the perceived inferiority of a person with a disability compared to an able-bodied employee;
- **Compatibility:** The extent to which the innovation is perceived as consistent with current needs, practices, as well as past experiences within the organisation;
- **Complexity:** The extent to which the innovation is perceived as relatively easy or difficult to understand and implement;
- **Experimental-ability:** The extent to which the potential adopter may experiment with the innovation for a limited period. It may follow that the employment of people with disabilities within a pilot project may present less risk. Such a project may solicit greater early adoption than would case with an innovation offering no opportunity for a test run; and
- **Observability:** The extent to which the potential adopter can visibly discern the results of an innovation. The employment of people with disabilities will create high levels of observability. However, high visibility may not necessarily increase the rate of adoption if, say, the nature of the disability is not compatible with the nature of the job, or for example, the person with the disability lacks appropriate skills and competencies to perform successfully in the post.

Decision phase

During the decision phase the potential adopter accepts (or rejects) the innovation. The adoption may occur incrementally with small-scale trials preceding full adoption. The proposed normative model to increase the rate of employment of people within the PGWC does not disregard the possibility of ultimate rejection, or extensively delayed adoption. Such possibilities are expected to be minimal in number and are catered for in the reward and sanction phase of the proposed normative model. The alternative of *forced adoption* is a consideration only in extreme situations. The role of the concurrent communication strategy, which pervades all phases of the normative model, is therefore viewed as a critical element in the diffusion process, to reduce the likelihood of rejection.

The implementation phase

The implementation phase of the normative model is the period of time within which "adopters end mental rehearsals and start behavioral use of an innovation" (Tiffany & Lutjens 1998:223). During this phase, the employment of people with disabilities will occur and they will be deployed to the various line managers within the PGWC. Line managers, as adopters, will actively seek information on matters

such as reasonable accommodation, appropriate language terminology and policy decisions on such issues as transport arrangements for employees with disabilities. Nevertheless, uncertainty and apprehension will still exist in the minds of adopters and probably in the minds of Human resource managers within the PGWC.

The phase of implementation ends when the use of the innovation becomes accepted as standard practice within the organisation. However, before the point of standardisation is reached, variables that were not catered for in the model design may emerge. Reinvention occurs and users modify the processes or the manner in which elements of the innovation are executed.

The proposed normative model depicts the existence of potential reward and / or sanction measures following positive adoption. If one views the employment and management of people with disabilities as a function of line and other management levels, the matter of choice / rejection is not a consideration.

Sanctions may be imposed on Senior Managers for misconduct in terms of the DPSA Code of Conduct located within the *Senior Management Service Handbook* (DPSA: 2003).

Continued adoption

During this phase in the process of planned change, line managers generally accept the reviewed recruitment and selection practices. The progress towards the achievement of the DPSA employment target is monitored and advertised within the individual departments and within the PGWC at large. Systems become routine, subject to refinements to the normative model where new variables emerge.

Monitoring and evaluation of the normative criteria

The eight sets of normative criteria indicated in the proposed model require intensive monitoring and evaluation throughout the five phases. The situational demands illustrated in the pre-knowledge phase will continually impact on progress, as will the perceived characteristics in the persuasion phase. The eight sets of normative criteria in the proposed normative model (Figure 1) are both sequential and concurrent. The criteria are indicated in the model as linear and unidirectional but interact within all phases of the proposed model.

SUMMARY

The proposed normative model is based on a diffusion model which achieves planned change within an organisation such as the PGWC. The change is

communicated as an innovation and progresses over time, through the five phases of *knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation* and either *reward* or *sanction*.

The introduction of the proposed normative model within the PGWC implies that confutation of current related processes is a necessary prerequisite in order to progress towards increased rates of employment for people with disabilities. As the chief motivators of planned change, human resource managers in the PGWC should use various strategies to create the appropriate environment which is supportive of change. Managers should take into consideration the perceived characteristics noted in the persuasion phase of the proposed model and construct appropriate communication networks for potential and confirmed adopters.

The proposed model accepts that individuals are complex and will respond differently to the introduction of change processes. Hence, it is an open type of model such that external factors do exist, that cannot be identified at the outset. Consequently, the proposed model will be subject to ongoing amendment during implementation.

PROBABLE LIMITATIONS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED MODEL

There are likely limitations that may militate against the seamless implementation of the normative model for disability employment, within the context of PGWC operations. These possible limitations have emerged from factors which characterise the PGWC as a public service entity currently in the throes of political, demographic and organisational transformation.

- High work demands on senior managers, compounded by a lack of supporting skilled human resources;
- Managers who demonstrate little regard for so-called soft issues, such as disability employment;
- Competing demands for managers' attention from other perceived soft issues such as gender equality, human rights issues, occupational health and safety in the workplace, youth and children's rights, mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in the workplace, employment equity and affirmative action programmes;
- Low levels of morale and job satisfaction among managers in many departments, as found in separate scientific surveys conducted within the PGWC;
- The PGWC, as a bureaucratic form of management, which militates against the quick implementation of any new programme, or one requiring a change in manager mindset and behaviours;

- The tendency of managers to focus on people's disability and not on their abilities;
- Uncertainty at senior management levels, around the possible outcomes from a changing political dispensation in the Western Cape and forced changes in the administration of the PGWC.

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR MODEL IMPLEMENTATION

The following guidelines, which are framed as recommendations, are intended to facilitate the implementation of the proposed normative model in the workplace and thus increase the rate of employment of people with disabilities.

Adoption of the proposed normative model

It is recommended that the proposed normative model, as illustrated in Figure 1 in this article be adopted by the PGWC. The model incorporates eight sets of normative criteria, which were derived from the literature and the empirical survey. These sets of criteria should be put in place in order to achieve a sustained increase in the employment of people with disabilities.

Review the recruitment and selection procedures

The provincial and departmental documentation relating to the selection and recruitment of all employees should be reviewed to incorporate a highly developed *disability perspective* into the relevant documentation. A *disability perspective* refers to the existence of specific disability-related actions and directives within the relevant documentation, which aim at promoting the employment rate of people with disabilities.

Training: Knowledge, skills and attitudes for managers

The Department of the Premier should provide appropriate workshops for managers to instil the following attributes, in order for managers to willingly recruit and to successfully manage people with disabilities:
- Appropriate leadership skills (as opposed to management skills);
- An understanding of the motivational needs of employees, especially those with disabilities; and

- The ability to connect employees with disabilities, to themselves as managers, through shared organisational values.

Address barriers to employment

The PGWC should address the principal barriers that limit the access and career progression for people with disabilities (covered previously in greater detail):
- Exploit the provisions of current legislation to a greater extent, to secure funding for Learnership programmes, in order to increase the levels of disability employment;
- Reduce the tendency of departments to meet disability employment targets by restricting employment to people with minimal disability;
- Address the propensity of departments to locate people with disabilities at the lower post levels where there is little scope for advancement; and
- Promote appropriate communication and language terminology, as well as the display of positive attitudes towards disability.

Costs for reasonable accommodation

The research indicates that the costs for reasonable accommodation vary from situation to situation and is dependent on the nature and complexity, or otherwise, of the job and the individual disability.

Human resource managers have expressed willingness to incur additional costs related to measures of reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities. In general, such costs are not deemed significant, where the building infrastructure is universally accessible. There is general agreement among managers that disability budgets may be allocated appropriately within the PGWC budgeting cycles.

Legislation

It is recommended that legislation be drafted by the PGWC, which is dedicated to disability and employment, with the adoption of an unambiguous definition of disability constructed within the context of the employment setting.

Name changes for state institutions

It is recommended that the names of certain disability bodies which have been established by the Government, be reviewed and changed to remove inappropriate language terminology within its published documents. Bodies such as the DPSA, DPSA (Disabled People South Africa) and the PSC, have

a legal and moral responsibility to practise and promote appropriate language terminology.

SUMMARY

This article investigated the trends in the employment of people with disabilities within the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC) and proposed a normative model to address the matter of low employment and progression rates of people with disabilities within the PGWC.

This proposal of a normative model for the employment of people with disabilities was presented in narrative style. The key normative criteria have been extracted from the literature and the empirical searches. In the exploration of a model that is appropriate for the current undertaking, the research study investigated theories of models and various types of models. The proposed normative model presented in this article incorporates eight sets of criteria, identified and defined from the literature and the empirical survey. The article proposes that the identified criteria be adhered to in order to ensure a sustained increase in the employment and progression of people with disabilities.

REFERENCES

Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy. 2nd ed. 1999. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Central Statistical Service. 2005. Statistics South Africa. *Prevalence of disability.* Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Centre for Higher Education Transformation. 2001. *The Employment Equity Act – implications and challenges for higher education.* Tshwane: Centre for Higher Education Transformation.

Christensen, Larry. B. 2001. *Experimental methodology.* 8th ed. Boston, Mass: Allyn & Bacon.

Ferreira, I.W. Interview held with researcher on 26 April 2007, Cape Town.

Hendricks, Marie. 2007. Telephone interview with researcher on 04 May 2007, Cape Town.

O'Sullivan, Elizabethann, Rassel, Gary R., and Berner, Maureen. 2003. *Research methods for public administrators.* 4th ed. New York: Longman.

Parker, Sybil. P. (ed).1984. *McGraw-Hill dictionary of scientific and technical terms.* 3rd ed. Mc Graw-Hill: New York.

Parkinson, G.H.R. 1998. *An encyclopaedia of philosophy*. London: Routledge**.**

PMA Consulting. 2000. *Research on recruitment and selection best practices.* Pretoria: PMA.

Robbins, Stephen. P. 1986. *Organizational behavior: concepts, controversies and applications.* 3rd ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Rogers, E.M. 1995. *Diffusion of innovations*. 4th ed. New York: Free Press.

Sogolo, Godwin. 1993. *Foundation of African philosophy.* Nigeria: Ibadan University.

South Africa. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,* 1996. Act No. 108 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer. (As adopted on 08 May 1996 and amended on 11 October 1996 by the Constitutional Assembly).

South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. 2003. *Code of conduct for senior management service located within the senior management service handbook* (2003 edition). Pretoria: Department of Public Service and Administration.

South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. 2005. *Medium-term strategic plan: 2005 / 2008.* Pretoria: Department of Public Service and Administration.

South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration. 2006. *Managing staff retention: an Information guide for government departments.* Pretoria: Department of Public Service and Administration.

South Africa. *Employment Equity Act,* 1998. Act No. 55 of 1998. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. *Labour Relations Act,* 1995*, as amended.* Act No. 66 of 1995. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. *Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination, 2000.* Act No. 4 of 2000. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. *Public Service Act,* 1994. Act No.103 of 1994. Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. *Public Service Regulations,* 2001*,* as amended. 2001: Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. Public Service Commission. 2000. *The State of Representativeness in the Public Service.* Pretoria: Public Service Commission.

South Africa. Public Service Commission. 2002. *Report on disability equity in the South African public service.* Pretoria: Public Service Commission.

South Africa. Public Service Commission. 2006. *State of the public service report*, 2006. Pretoria: Public Service Commission.

South Africa. *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy.* 1997. Pretoria: Office of the Deputy President.

South Africa. *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service.* 1995. Pretoria: Department of Public Service and Administration.

South Africa. W*hite Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery,* 1997 *(Batho Pele).* Pretoria: Department of Public Service and Administration.

Starling, Grover. 1993. *Managing the public sector. 4th ed.* Belmont: Wadsworth.

Tiffany, Constance and Lutjens, Louette. 1998. *Planned change theories for nursing: review, analysis and implications.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Tire, Dennis. 2003. Lobbying disability in South Africa, 1994-2001: A description of the activities of the Disabled People South Africa in the policy-making process. Unpublished M. Phil thesis, Stellenbosch University: Cape Town.

Van den Berg, M.E.S. 2005. *Critical reasoning and the art of argumentation.* Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Western Cape. Draft affirmative action framework for the Provincial Government of the Western Cape. 2007. Cape Town: Provincial Government Western Cape.

AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS

Prof Harry H. Ballard
Head of Department
Department of Public Management
Cape Peninsula University of Technology
PO Box 1906
Bellville, 7535
ballardh@cput.ac.za
Tel: 021 959 6184/6294
Fax: 021 959 6097

Valuing and retaining employees in South African public sector organisations

Dr Vasi Govender
Career Counselling and Student Employment Centre
University of KwaZulu-Natal

ABSTRACT

South African public sector organisations have undergone a transformational shift in the post-apartheid era with the employment and recruitment of employees from diverse backgrounds. The government's efforts since 1994 in the transformation of human resource and labour legislation policies and strategies, have shifted from a process-driven public service approach to a people-centred approach. To meet the challenges of the 21st century and to retain employees for effective service delivery, it is critical for public sector managers to understand the retention paradigm and implement meaningful measures and processes.

This article seeks to address how managers can understand better why employees leave organisations and the significance of conducting exit interviews. The discussion focuses on the importance of understanding the critical determinants and components of the retention paradigm. Public sector managers must recognise the value of human capital. By providing supportive interventions, they can increase numbers and retain employees in the workplace.

INTRODUCTION

The challenge of managing and retaining a diversified public sector workforce is a complex phenomenon and involves a systematic and integrated approach from all relevant stakeholders in public sector organisations. The challenge for public sector managers is the recruitment, retention, empowerment and development of employees. It is important that the service delivery challenges are not compromised as a result of employees leaving the South African public

sector organisations. This article provides an overview of why employees leave organisations, and the purpose and value of conducting exit interviews and research surveys. Some American research findings are presented on why "people of colour" leave organisations. A discussion of the retention determinants such as organisational culture and values, career development and planning, employee benefits and rewards, job design and work, and valuing employees, is provided. To promote a healthy, productive and conducive working environment, the value and benefit of the emotional intelligence competencies to assist managers to manage their emotions, as well the emotions of the employees, is highlighted.

The article concludes by indicating the integrative role and responsibilities of management, human resource practitioners and employees in recruiting and retaining employees. A model is presented to reflect and highlight the management retention process which requires effective implementation by all stakeholders as they are interdependent and fundamental in ensuring best practice for retention of employees in organisations.

RETENTION IN CONTEXT

The concept of retention is a complex phenomenon. For conceptual clarification and application, various aspects of the concept of retention will be discussed. Retention activities refer to *everything an employer does to encourage qualified and productive employees to continue working for the organisation* (Jackson and Schuler 2003:253). Jackson and Schuler (2003) state that the objective of retention is to *reduce unwanted voluntary turnover by people* the organisation would like to keep in its workforce. They argue that effective recruitment and retention attracts employees to the organisation and increases the chances of retaining employees once recruited. According to (Mathis and Jackson, 2003:79), a lower turnover in the organisation means one less person to recruit, select and train, as continuity of employees gives the organisation an "employee image" for attracting and retaining other individuals. To clarify the concept of retention, it is necessary to understand the reasons why employees leave organisations and the factors that impact on employee retention in organisations. Therefore this activity is viewed as a two-pronged process where the needs of the newly-appointed employee as well as those of the managers, are met.

To contextualise the concept of retention in the South African public service, there are various policies and Acts which allow public service departments to retain employees. According to Hendricks at a Senior Management Conference in the Free State in August 2006, the Public Service Act, 1994, Sections 3(5) and 7(3) allow the heads of departments the responsibility of ensuring that human resources are managed effectively, and departments are allowed flexibility to

deploy employees to retain them in the organisation. Section 37(2) of the Public Service Act and the Public Service Regulations, 2001, allow for employees to be rewarded financially for good performance or value suggestions in the interests of the employee. The Public Service Regulation, 2001, also makes provision for the salary level for a post to be at a higher notch or level than usual to recruit or retain the employee. The Public Service Regulation, 2001, Chapter 1, allows departments to deploy employees to other posts horizontally and to provide employees with training opportunities and bursaries to increase their levels of education and development. The Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council of 2000 also allows employees to be granted special leave for developmental purposes (Hendricks 2006: Senior Management Conference, Free State).
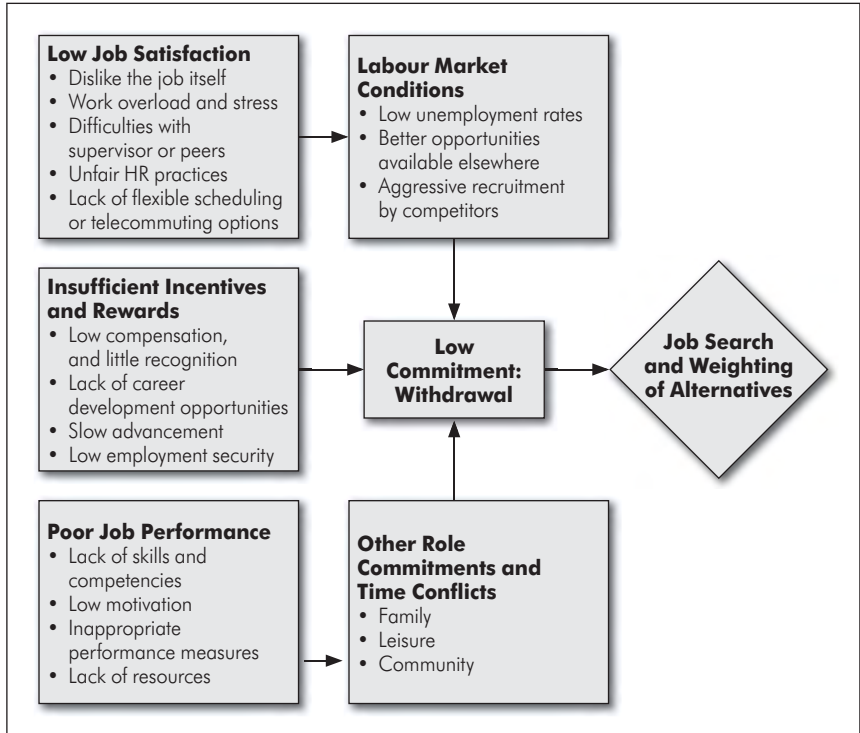
WHY EMPLOYEES LEAVE ORGANISATIONS

It is imperative for South African public sector managers to understand employees' needs and expectations at the workplace if they want to succeed in attracting and retaining the most talented and skilled employees. The benefit for organisations of conducting exit surveys or exit interviews, is to understand the underlying reason/s for leaving. Employees may be asked several questions which focus on *assessing satisfaction with things such as benefits, work conditions, career advancement and development, supervision and pay* (Jackson and Schuler 2003:287). Various authors (see Griffeth and Hom 2001:205-206) have made invaluable contributions to the debate on the purpose of conducting exit interviews. Firstly, exit interviews may be used as a final straw in an attempt to save the employee from leaving the organisation; secondly, exit interviews serve as a public relations exercise to make certain that the employee is leaving on a favourable note; thirdly, the employee who is leaving can be informed of all the rights, obligations and benefit packages; fourthly, exit interviews can be used to make employees aware of the intellectual property of the organisation and return the organisation's property before leaving and finally, they can protect both the organisation and employees' rights.

Scholars and practitioners (Griffeth and Hom 2001:212) offer suggestions on six areas for improving exit interviews to gain more validity and accuracy. These areas include the structure of the interview process, the training of the interviewers, confidentiality, protecting the exit interviewees, accuracy checks and making sure that the information provided in the exit interview is actually used. Figure 1 below depicts the process of employee turnover and illustrates some of the constraints and challenges that cause employees to leave organisations.

Some of the factors illustrated in Figure 1 that cause employee turnover, are low job satisfaction, insufficient incentives, rewards and compensation benefits, poor performance, low motivation and morale of employees, family

Figure 1 The Process of Employee Turnover

Low Job Satisfaction
- Dislike the job itself
- Work overload and stress
- Difficulties with supervisor or peers
- Unfair HR practices
- Lack of flexible scheduling or telecommuting options

Labour Market Conditions
- Low unemployment rates
- Better opportunities available elsewhere
- Aggressive recruitment by competitors

Insufficient Incentives and Rewards
- Low compensation, and little recognition
- Lack of career development opportunities
- Slow advancement
- Low employment security

Low Commitment: Withdrawal

Job Search and Weighting of Alternatives

Poor Job Performance
- Lack of skills and competencies
- Low motivation
- Inappropriate performance measures
- Lack of resources

Other Role Commitments and Time Conflicts
- Family
- Leisure
- Community

commitments, labour market conditions, employee weighting and alternative job offers. The conditions that cause people to leave also make it difficult for the organisation to replace employees. For example, if employees are leaving because they have ineffective relationships with their managers, then they are likely to discourage their friends from working at that organisation (Jackson and Schuler 2003:287). The authors also state that some of these conditions can be partially addressed by the efforts of the employer while others may promote and encourage the employee to seek opportunities elsewhere.

According to Jackson and Schuler (2003:287), a study was conducted in America, of *people of colour* aged between 21 and 30 years, who left their jobs, the most common reason being poor working relationships with supervisors and peers. However, another study with over a million employees, found that the employee's relationship with their supervisors was a major determinant of whether or not they stayed in the job (Jackson and Schuler 2003:287). Fenn and Irvin (2005:10) state that organisations consider the issue of retention of

all employees seriously because of the turnover costs; however, they argue that the ability to retain *people of colour* is a greater issue for organisations as the attrition rate is often higher. The authors (2005:37) gathered data from focus group and exit interviews during consulting assignments and identified the following issues that made *people of colour* leave organisations: how the employees were treated; if employees felt valued; if they were guided, coached or mentored; if employees' skills were utilised; if they were acknowledged, rewarded, or promoted; if they had the support of the organisation; if there were advancement opportunities, and the opinions of fellow workers. The responses from employees indicated the importance of managers having full and accurate information and understanding the reasons why employees leave organisations.

Taking into consideration the diverse South African employee workforce in the public sector organisations, it is argued that organisations must recognise the necessity of a diverse workforce and tap the potential of that workforce in managing diversity, which is a long-term process that requires *top management identification and commitment* (Grobler *et al.* 2002:50). Grobler *et al.* (2002:50) mention that there are considerable benefits to be gained by managing diversity; if organisations cannot change, the impact would be *higher employee turnover and higher recruitment and training costs.* For managers to be effective in retaining employees, they are required to take the time to understand employees' interests and concerns, provide regular and honest feedback, discuss employees' career plans, and provide suggestions for career development (Jackson and Schuler 2003: 287).

In contrast, some of the challenges of exit interviews are that they do not provide the necessary information to the employer as the employee is reluctant to give the exact reasons for leaving: this may affect the organisation's decision to provide the employee with adequate reference for future employment (Sutherland and Canwell 2004:96). Overall, the purpose and value of conducting exit interviews will provide public sector managers with a knowledge base for understanding why employees leave organisations and to use valid and accurate procedures to conduct exit interviews. According to the Provincial Human Resources Maintenance and Retention Guide of the North West Province (2008:12), the predominant reasons offered by employees who resigned in the North West Provincial Administration during the 2003 and 2004 period are as follows:

- Acceptance of an offer for better remuneration;
- Working conditions;
- Change of occupation;
- Further studies;
- Domestic problems;
- Personal grievances, and
- Venturing into own business.

The major reasons for employee resignation indicated that 38% left because of the nature of work; 18.9% left because for better remuneration and 18.6% changed their occupation. These reasons were similar to the ones identified by the South African Public Service, which included financial considerations, the work environment and career development opportunities; affirmative action and employment equity; internal mobility and job-hopping; the leadership and management style, and poor or ineffective communication and grievance procedures (Provincial Human Resources Maintenance and Retention Guide, North West Provincial Administration: 2008).

The Public Service Commission Report 2004, reflected quantifiable data on the turnover rate of Heads of Department (HOD) in national and provincial departments in the South African public service. The PSC Report (2004) turnover statistics for Heads of Department across national and provincial departments for the 2003/04 to 2006/07 financial years indicated that 59% comprised termination of contracts, 30% comprised transfers and 11% the splitting of functions. It was noted that the turnover and implications for the public service were costly and should be prevented. An analysis on the literature also indicated that while turnover can be negative for the Public Service organisational performance, too little leadership can also be problematic. On the one hand, some level of turnover in the administrative leadership of the organisation could have positive consequences for the organisation, as this could lead to *change and innovation and facilitate the replacement of poor performers.* On the other hand, a high rate of turnover may impact negatively on *productivity, service delivery and institutional memory and organisational knowledge.*

The Public Service Commission Report (2004) listed various challenges of turnover and retention that confronted the Heads of Department (HOD) in the South African public service. Some of the factors listed were:

- Contracts of the HODs coming to an end, which resulted in uncertainty as to whether the contract would be renewed;
- Transfers between the departments;
- HODs leaving the departments before the expiry of employment contract;
- A push factor that was most frequently noted by the respondents was the relationship between the HOD and the Executive Authority (EA);
- A pull factor occurred when the HOD, before the contract expired, was offered a lucrative position elsewhere;
- The three to five year contract tenure in South Africa contributed towards the high level of turnover;
- It was indicated that during the time of political change in government, there is normally a high level of movement;
- Market opportunities and incentives;
- Attracting and building required capacities, and
- Commitment to the public service.

The discussion around these factors provides some understanding of the realities of turnover and retention of Heads of Department in the South African public service.

## RETENTION DETERMINANTS THAT IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION

It is integral for public sector managers to understand and recognise the factors that impact on the retention of employees in organisations. Employee retention is influenced by a number of factors. If employee retention is managed effectively, it is more likely that the employee will remain in the organisation. According to the Provincial Human Resource Maintenance and Retention Guide, North West Provincial Administration (2008:11), staff retention is influenced by human resource planning, recruitment and selection; human resource development; compensation and benefits; employee relations, and safety and wellness. Employers must add value to employees' work; employees must see themselves as personally accountable for performance outcomes and must be given feedback regarding their performance. Hendricks (2006) also highlighted research findings which contribute to and impact on employee retention. These include the availability of resources to meet the demands of the job; employee empowerment through training and skills; employees who feel part of the organisation (culture of ownership); provision of challenging work opportunities for individual and team work; rewarding good work; efficient communication with constructive feedback from employees, and sufficient opportunities for growth and development of employees.

Figure 2 provides the determinants that impact on employee retention and how managers can retain and add value to employees in the organisation. Mathis and Jackson (2005:25) outline the determinants as organisational culture and values, career opportunities, employee benefits and rewards components, job design and work, and employee relationships.

Organisation Culture and Values

An organisational culture that positively impacts on employees adds value to the employees' lives and retains employees, whereas a culture that devalues people and creates barriers to the use of individual capabilities will not successfully attract and retain employees (Mathis and Jackson, 2005:26). Mathis and Jackson (2003:83) mention that organisational components that affect employee retention are related to the strategies, opportunities and management of the organisation. Job continuity and security are organisational

Figure 2 Retention Determinants
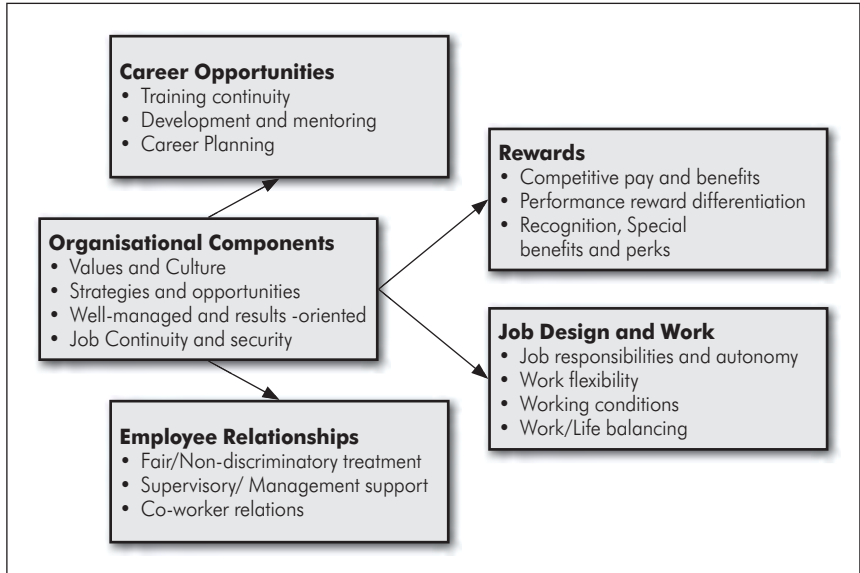
components that impact on retention rates in an organisation. These include organisational restructuring, mergers, down-sizing, and job reductions (Mathis and Jackson, 2003:83). In one study of more than 600 employees, it was found that *trust and organisational values* were factors that most influenced employees to remain with the current employer (Mathis and Jackson, 2003:82). Employees who trusted their employers, co-workers and the organisational justice system, were found to be less willing to leave their employers. It can be concluded that a fundamental organisational value that affects employee retention is trust (Mathis and Jackson, 2003:82-83).

Career Development and Planning

The value of training in inculcating learning and developing and empowering employees in the workplace, is evident. South African public service organisations have faced daunting challenges especially with the recruitment of employees from diverse cultures. Serious consideration should be given to training, learning, development and empowerment to successfully attract and retain employees. The challenge for managers is to harness employees' initiative and commitment through appropriate support and direction if they want to retain them in the organisation (Johnson, 2001:26).

Nadler and Wiggs (1986) in (Swart *et al.* 2005:97) state that training an employee would produce measurable improvements in their skills, knowledge or attitudes and that the training can be used in the individual's current job. In contrast, training or educating the employee will enhance skills, knowledge or attitudes applicable to a future job and is a higher risk for the employer, as the employee might seek employment elsewhere. According to Grobler *et al.* (2002:315), there are seven major objectives of training and development for managerial and front-line employees. These are: improving employees performance; updating employees' skills; avoiding managerial obsolescence; solving organisational problems; orientating new employees; preparing employees for promotion and satisfying employees' personal growth needs.

Developmental learning is described as preparing employees for an unforeseen future and is also linked to the organisation's retention strategy, since it involves employees in their career planning. Moreover, matching learning opportunities to career preferences is considered a high risk investment for the organisation (Nadler and Wiggs in Swart *et al.* 2005: 97). Jackson and Schuler (2003:350) assert that the main objective of training is *to improve performance in a specific job by increasing employees' skills and knowledge,* whereas development refers to activities *intended to improve competencies over a longer period of time.* The authors emphasise that *valuable learning* occurs and will prove useful; *development activities* are therefore often referred to as *career development* or *leadership development.*

Empowerment of Employees

Empowerment of employees is viewed as a means of enhancing *organisational performance and employee satisfaction simultaneously* (Swart *et al.* 2005:97). Empowering employees is a contributing factor in adding value to employee performance in public sector organisations. The process of empowerment is described as transferring direction from an external source (normally the supervisor) to the internal source (employee) at his/her own desire. In essence this means giving the authority and skills to employees to make decisions that would have been made by the manager (Gómez-Mejía *et al.* 2004:19). If employees are empowered, there is a great deal of trust placed on their ability to make the right decisions, based on the training that is given to the employee (Stone 2007:40-41). Stone (2007) states that if mistakes or misunderstandings occur, they must be accompanied by open communication and supportive interaction as many efforts at empowerment fail because employees are not given adequate *skills, abilities, and knowledge that they need to succeed.* To encourage employee empowerment and ensure it is successful, managers are required to train them for the opportunity, believe in them, be clear about their

expectations, develop their strengths, share information, encourage them to believe in themselves and recognise their achievements (Stone 2007:41-42).

According to Edwards and Collinson (in Grugulis, 2007:126), a four-fold typology of empowerment must be generated: firstly, employees should be give broad objectives rather than pre-defined tasks; secondly, they should have the right of access to the means of achieving the tasks; thirdly, they should display initiative independently and have control in decision-making, and fourthly, they should be able to challenge and debate the desired goals and objectives that are set. This four-fold typology is very pragmatic and realistic for public service managers to implement in organisations to enhance performance and job-satisfaction. In short, to empower and value employees successfully, public sector managers must provide the necessary training, skills, abilities and knowledge to the employees.

Mentoring and Coaching employees in public service organisations

The concepts of coaching and mentoring are new and emerging disciplines in South Africa. Integrating a coaching and mentoring culture into the South African public service can add value, maximise performance, encourage dialogue and create a more trusting work relationship among employers and employees. Coaching and mentoring at the workplace provide an active learning approach and transfer learning to employees in organisations (Swart, *et al.* 2005:281). Zachary (2005:3) defines mentoring as a *reciprocal and collaborative learning relationship between two or more individuals who share mutual responsibility and accountability for helping a mentee work towards the achievement of clear and mutually defined learning goals*. The author notes that mentoring entails self-directed learning and can evolve over time; further, the number of people involved in a mentoring relationship can vary from formal mentoring to informal group mentoring or peer mentoring. Thomson and Mabey (1994:60, in Swart *et al.* 2005:281), state that successful mentors should ideally be 7-10 years older than the mentor and that the mentor should meet with the mentees on a monthly basis to discuss their progress, career development and set learning objectives. In a more structured mentoring relationship, the mentors and mentees can monitor progress by recording the goals and achievement of goals (Stone 2007:157). A mentoring relationship involves more than training the employees to perform in their job; it involves the mentor to share their *experience, wisdom, and political savvy* to take the employee beyond tasks indicated in their job descriptions (Stone 2007:158). Research findings have supported that effective mentoring in organisations have contributed to performance levels, job promotion, upward mobility, better incomes and more job satisfaction (Gómez-Mejía *et al.* 2004:314).

Sutherland and Canwell (2004:38) define coaching as partnership between a motivator and another individual within the organisation, where the purpose of coaching is to help to build the individual's confidence to be clear about the goals, assist him with difficult problems and generally improve performance. The coaching process results in individuals gaining the *skills, abilities and knowledge they need to develop themselves professionally and become more effective in their jobs* (Stone, 2007:11). The author further adds that when people are coached, it increases their performance level in the present job as well as their potential to perform better in the future. Effective coaching techniques involve creating a coaching context (identifying purpose and supporting the employee's overall development); actively listening to the employee; asking questions and giving useful feedback (Gómez-Mejía *et al.* 2004:315-316). Coaching and mentoring can transfer the necessary skills, remove workplace barriers, enhance performance and enable individuals to achieve their full potential in their careers. A structured coaching and mentoring programme needs to be fully integrated and aligned into the public service human resources development strategy for effective service delivery.

Figure 3 The Develop-Deploy-Connect Model
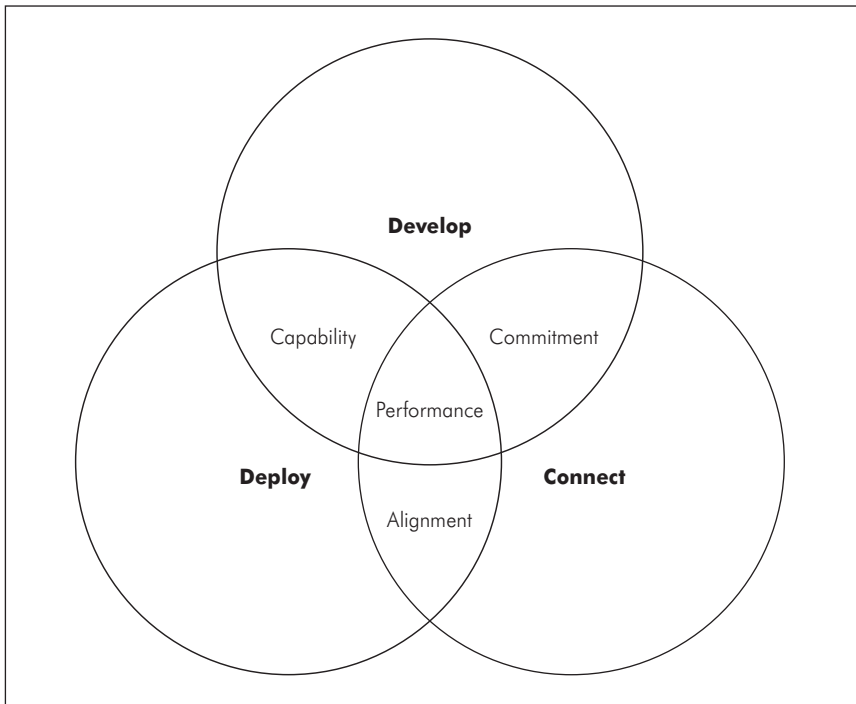
The Deloitte Report (2004) provides a Develop, Deploy and Connect Model as a framework that should be at the core of the organisation's talent strategy. This balanced strategy, depicted in Figure 3, will assist public sector managers on how to attract and retain talented employees.

This model is an interconnected model that integrates all three of the dimensions (Develop, Deploy and Connect), which contribute to increased capability of employees in the workplace. The model indicates that an improvement in one area would lead to an improvement in another area (Deloitte Report 2004).

The Deloitte Report (2004) states that to **develop** employees in organisations, one need to provide real-life learning and develop capabilities from peers, mentors, employers and other members, both from within and outside the organisation. An example in the public sector organisation is the role of the front-line person who must know who the customers are and how they should be treated in terms of customer service and delivery. The emphasis is on solving complex problems: this requires critical talent. The research on *Critical Talent* refers to it as development through collaborative working relationships with others, which contributes to *action learning*. In other words, employees learn by handling real issues. The Deloitte Research Report (2004) sought to elicit the situations in which employees learnt most. The results indicated that 67% learnt most when working together with a colleague on a task; 22% learnt most when doing their own research; 10% learnt most when a colleague explained something personally and 2% learnt most through a manual textbook. Overall, employees learn most from fellow employees at the workplace. It was also found that coaching and mentoring was a contributing factor to the development of employees in the workplace.

Deployment is about matching the correct candidate to the job and deployment talent is referred to as assisting those employees who are mismatched in their jobs. The employer's role therefore is to identify the skills, capabilities, knowledge and interests of the employee so that they can unleash their full potential at the workplace. The **Connect** dimension highlights the role of managers and organisations to encourage, foster and support employees in building diverse networks within the organisation, which would increase the performance levels of the employees (Deloitte Report 2004). Hence, the Develop, Deploy and Connect model is an interconnected three dimensional strategy that focuses on developing better skills and competencies for employees, and encourages employees with competent skills and competencies to be placed correctly in challenging jobs or projects. The employee connection within the organisation and with fellow employees and employer, enhances healthy working relationships and provides a supportive working environment. The strategic importance of training, learning, developing and empowering

employees in public sector organisation is that it would add value to the employees, and is likely to indicate their commitment and to contribute to retention in the organisation.

Employee benefits and rewards

One of the key determinants of retention is competitive compensation and benefits. One survey indicated that 89% of employees listed *better pay or higher compensation* as a reason for pursuing better jobs prospects (Mathis and Jackson 2003:84). The authors also state that the *pay benefits* must be competitive to what other employers are offering and must be consistent with the individual's *capabilities, experience and performance*. Benefits are considered a powerful recruiting tool and help in retaining employees and reducing turnover in organisations (Gómez-Mejía *et al.* 2004:398). Other competitive benefits include health insurance/benefits, retirement benefits and tuition assistance or fee remission. Employees also seek flexibility in the workplace and want to be recognised and rewarded for their performance/ service level in the organisation. A number of special benefits are used to attract and retain employees. These include on-site recreation clubs, discount on travel programs, day-care centres and employee assistance. Performance and compensation rewards based on employee's performance also impact on the retention of employees in the organisation, as employees feel valued when there are tangible and intangible rewards. Employees want to feel recognised for their efforts and performance (Mathis and Jackson 2003:85). Those who achieve the desired levels of performance expect a certain level of compensation, including merit increases, promotions and intrinsic rewards (Grobler *et al.* 2002:385). If employees feel that they are treated inequitably in terms of their compensation, tension and emotional dissatisfaction would result, which may cause employees to leave the organisation. It is therefore important that employees are aware of compensation benefits as well as the organisation's job classification system (Grobler *et al.* 2002:384-385). Employee benefits can be used as an advantage to attract and retain quality employees.

Job Design and Work

An important consideration for job retention is the nature of the job and the job design. Employees spend a significant amount of their time at the workplace; hence the environment should be conducive in terms of space, lighting, temperature, noise level and layout. These factors impact on the retention of the employees, according to Mathis and Jackson (2005:27). Other factors that affect retention in the workplace are that employees require modern

equipment, technology, and a safe working environment. Work flexibility is also a contributing factor to aid retention, as a two year study on workplace flexibility has indicated that 76% of managers and 80% of employees reported that flexibility in working relationships impacted positively on retention (Mathis and Jackson 2003:86-87). It is also indicated that one of the benefits of work flexibility is balancing work responsibilities, family needs and personal life demands. Other work/life benefits that contribute to retention are on site-fitness centres, child care, elder care and sick leave policies (Mathis and Jackson, 2003:87). Job design is important to the employee as well as the organisation as it involves the *manipulation of the content, function and relationships of jobs* in a way that succeeds in realising the organisational goals as well as satisfying the needs of the employees (Grobler *et al.* 2002:109).

Employees must have a clear understanding of the content of the job, the functions of the job and the key role-players with whom the employee will be interacting to perform the job. This overall understanding will contribute significantly to job satisfaction and reduce retention.

THE VALUE OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS

Valuing and appreciating employees in the organisation is fundamental to sustaining a healthy working relationship between the employer and the employee. According to the Provincial Human Resources Maintenance and Retention Guide (2008), best practice studies reflect that the first few weeks of employment are important in establishing employee commitment to employment. It is essential for managers and the human resource managers to be part of the induction process. In addition, the on-the-job training allows employees to increase confidence and build trust in the employer. According to Gómez-Mejía *et al.* 2001:430), good employee relations involves providing fair and consistent treatment of all employees; treating employees with dignity and respect, and managers listening and understanding what employees saying and experiencing. Employers must understand the emotions and feelings of the employees. According to Goleman *et al.* (2003:46-48) the four dimensions of emotional intelligence are *self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship-management.* Eighteen competencies are referred to as the building blocks for leaders to lead more effectively and achieve *prime resonance in a group.* Self-awareness means having an understanding of one's own emotions, strengths, limitations, values and motives. Self-aware people take time to think rather than react impulsively to situations and people (Goleman *et al.* 2003:50). Goleman *et al.* (2003) state that self-management enables *transparency,* which is an open-ness to others about one's feelings, beliefs, and

actions. This creates a sense that a leader has integrity and can be trusted. Social awareness in particular is the ability to empathise, leaders must be able to take the employee's emotions and feelings into consideration and make intelligent decisions. In addition, Goleman *et al.* (2003:60-63) note that showing *empathy* is indeed *the key to retaining talent* in organisations. Relationship management is about handling other people's emotions, building rapport and inspiring people in organisations about the *common mission.* Reflecting on these four dimensions of emotional intelligence would enable public sector managers to have a deeper understanding of their own emotions and in turn, understand and value employees in the organisation.

CARE Model:
Understanding what motivates and retains employees

The CARE Model for motivating and retaining employees in organisations is illustrated by Glanz (2002:30), as a model where managers are in touch with the human element between the employer and the employee. The acronym **CARE** is depicted as follows:
- C = Creative Communication
- A = Atmosphere and Appreciation for All
- R = Respect and Reason for Being
- E = Empathy and Enthusiasm

Glanz's (2002:31-44) explanation of the model is as follows. Managers who communicate openly and honestly with their employees contribute to a healthy, cooperative work environment. The information that is communicated must be clear and accurate. The tone and choice of words has to be effective and the communication must be done in a creative and clear manner so that the employee gets the message correctly. Creating a positive atmosphere in the workplace involves promoting positive relations, generating a good physical work environment, fostering teamwork, building an atmosphere of trust and fairness, and making employees feel a part of the organisation's community. Glanz (2002:35) argues that supervisors and managers who appreciate and value their employees have the lowest turnover and the highest commitment from their employees. The findings also indicate that to appreciate employees is to personally reward and recognise their efforts and make appreciation a part of the management culture. Treating employees with respect, learning about the employees, and encouraging and valuing their positive contributions would enhance employer-employee relations. Employers are encouraged to give meaning to work accomplished and being accomplished, and to make employees worthy of their purpose in the organisation. Therefore, for a

supportive climate to prevail in the workplace, employers are encouraged to assist employees understand the organisation's mission statement, vision and values and how these impact on their day-to-day working life. It is integral for organisations to show empathy to employees, be supportive of their work/life programmes, understand their needs and concerns, encourage job shadowing and community involvement opportunities outside the organisation. Through the CARE model, employers are encouraged to show enthusiasm, to develop positive work relations thorough team building exercises and to celebrate the achievements and successes of employees (Glanz 2002:30-46).

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND INTERVENTION IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING EMPLOYEES

Human resource practitioners in an organisation usually play a leading role in designing an integrated and systematic approach to the recruitment and retention of employees. However, the approach highlighted in Table 1 indicates the involvement of line managers, human resource practitioners and the employees in recruitment and retention (Jackson and Schuler, 2003: 258).

Table 1 illustrates the fundamental role and responsibilities of line managers, human resource practitioners and employees working collaboratively in facilitating retention efforts. It reflects an integrated and systematic approach to the roles and responsibilities of the line managers, human resource practitioners and employees, for recruiting and retaining employees in the organisation (Jackson and Schuler, 2003:260). According to Wheeler *et al.* (2006:98), organisations with attractive brand identities do not only attract greater numbers of applicants but also a better quality of applicants. The authors (Wheeler *et.al.* 2006:98) state that research findings indicate that "firms with lower employer turnover rates receive higher service quality and customer satisfaction because of their employee's level of experience and knowledge in helping customers". To enhance employee retention and reduce turnover, organisations need to consider both *firm and employee specific factors*. Wheeler *et al* (2006:98) argue that during the organisation's recruitment process, it transmits information to prospective applicants about the organisational culture (which includes values, goals and norms), and the prospective applicants then match their values and goals to that of the organisation's values, which is referred to as *value-goal congruence or culture congruence*. Thus the more the organisation increases the *value-goal or culture congruence* during the recruitment process, the more the prospective employees would ascribe to the organisation's culture, and the more satisfied the employees would be. This would lead to greater commitment to the job, better performance and a greater likelihood to remain in the organisation.

Table 1 Role and Responsibilities for Recruiting and Retaining Employees in the organisation

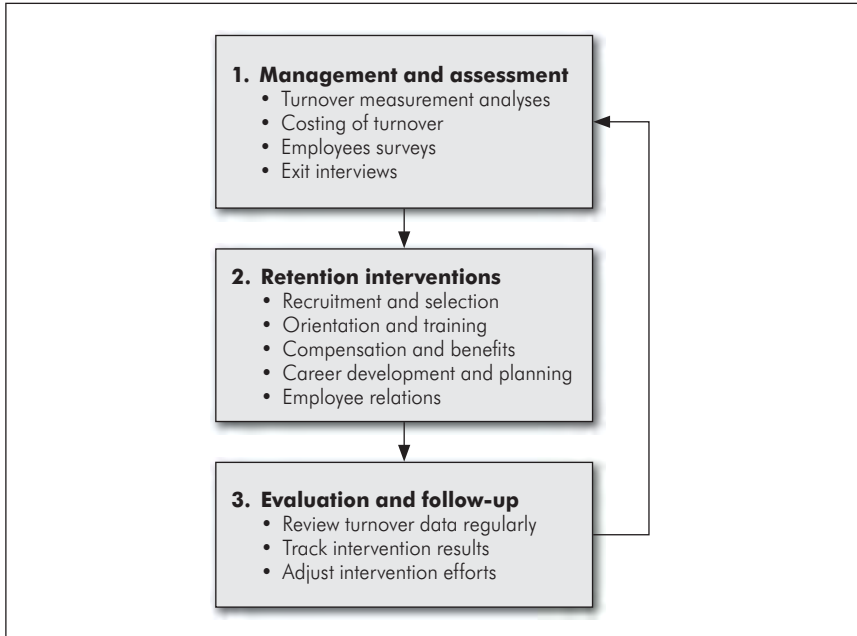| Line managers	Human resource Practitioners	Employees
• Work with HR staff to develop recruitment objectives and plans that meet the organisation's strategic objectives and address employee's concerns. • Develop an understanding of the linkages that exist between recruitment and retention activities and other aspects of the HR system. • Help disseminate information about open positions to all potentially qualified internal candidates. • Stay informed of labour market trends in order to anticipate their implications for recruitment. • Facilitate retention efforts through effective management and employee development.	• Work with line managers to develop recruitment objectives and plans that meet the organisation's strategic objectives and address employee's concerns. • Design recruitment and retention activities that contribute to the development and an integrated, internally consistent HR system. • Develop recruitment plans that meet legal guidelines and generate a diverse pool of qualified internal/or external candidates. • Evaluate recruitment outcomes and be innovative in developing practices to ensure a sufficient number of qualified applicants. • Provide training as needed to line managers and employees involved in recruitment activities. • Monitor retention patterns to diagnose potential problems. • Use exit interviews, employee survey etc., to identify needed improvements.	• Openly discuss short-term objectives in order to facilitate the development of recruitment plans that address your concerns. • When applying for jobs, consider all aspects of the HR system when making a decision about whether to change jobs and employers. • Participate in recruitment efforts such as referring others to the organisation. • Use knowledge of competitors' recruitment approaches to help the organisation develop innovative and more effective practices. • Work with HR professionals and line managers in the organisation's efforts to effectively manage workforce diversity. • Seek out information about openings within the organisation and actively pursue those that fit your personal career objectives.

Source: Jackson and Schuler 2003:260

For best practices in recruiting and retaining employees in organisations, a systematic and integrated approach is necessary. Managers in the public sector organisations must understand that the role and responsibilities of human resource practitioners, line managers and the employees, are interdependent.

The Retention Management Process

It is imperative for organisations to have effective processes in place to manage the retention of employees. Figure 4 illustrates the three phases of the Retention Management Process (Mathis and Jackson 2003:88-94).

Figure 4: The Retention Management Process

1. Management and assessment
- Turnover measurement analyses
- Costing of turnover
- Employees surveys
- Exit interviews

2. Retention interventions
- Recruitment and selection
- Orientation and training
- Compensation and benefits
- Career development and planning
- Employee relations

3. Evaluation and follow-up
- Review turnover data regularly
- Track intervention results
- Adjust intervention efforts

Source Mathis and Jackson 2003:89

The first phase in the retention management process seeks measurable data and analysis rather than subjective information, to ensure effective and appropriate actions are implemented. Turnover data are gathered and analysed in a number of ways. A simplified costing model can be used to calculate the cost of turnover for an employee. Surveys and exit interviews are conducted with employees to provide the employer with valuable information about the *retention climate* of the organisation and action is taken to address the concerns of the employees. In the second phase of the retention management process, successful retention intervention involves improving the selection process, orientating and training employees, offering competitive and equitable benefits, investing in career development and planning for employees, and fostering good employee relations. All these factors impact on the retention of employees in the organisation. The third phase in the management retention process involves conducting, evaluating and assessing *regular review of turnover data and tracking intervention results.* This information is useful as it can indicate when the turnover increases or decreases among employees and can be classified by the length of service, education levels, department, gender and other factors. Tracking intervention results by conducting a pilot project in one specific department on turnover rate

of employees and comparing it with the rate of other departments, may prove useful (Mathis and Jackson 2003:88-94).

Each of the above phases requires effective implementation for managing the retention of employees in organisations. It requires the combined effort of the human resource practitioners and managers to implement the processes of retention for obtaining the desired outcomes. Mathis and Jackson (2003:80) suggest the importance of organisations and managers in recognising that retention is a continuous process. The authors reflect on the results of a survey conducted by McKinsey and Company, which indicated that 90% of the organisations surveyed had difficulty retaining talented individuals compared to several years ago and concluded that it was therefore imperative that organisations evaluate managers and supervisors as *a part of their performance review* (Mathis and Jackson 2003:80).

CONCLUSION

This article concludes that public sector managers must ensure best practice in recruiting and retaining employees in public sector organisations. Recruiting and retaining employees is much more than just meeting the financial costs for the organisation; it involves managers building commitment, engaging with employees, and trusting and adding value to employees' lives. Reflecting on the emotional intelligence competencies will assist managers in managing their emotions and those of others effectively, to promote a healthy, productive and conducive working environment. Understanding the reasons employees leave organisations and the determinants that impact on retention are invaluable in rewarding and sustaining employees. This article argues that the retention of employees makes imperative effective training programmes, continuous learning, developmental opportunities and the empowerment of employees. An integrated and systematic approach to the roles and responsibilities of the managers, human resource practitioners and employees, is necessary to support retention efforts within the organisation. Finally, a clear and defined management process provides measurable tools for assessing employment retention, and a structured intervention strategy for managing employees and evaluating turnover in the organisation.

REFERENCES

Deloitte Research, 2004. *It's 2008: Do you know where your talent is? Why acquisition and retention strategies don't work*. Deloitte Development LLC.

Fenn, J and Irvin, C.G. 2005. *Do you see what I see: A diversity tale for retaining people of colour.* San Francisco, United States: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Glanz, B.A. 2002. *Handle with care: Motivating and retaining employees,*. United States: McGraw-Hill.

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. and McKee, A. 2003. *The new leaders: Transforming the art of leadership into the science of results.* Great Britain: Time Warner Paperbacks.

Gomez-Mejia, L.R., Balkin, D.B. and Cardy, R.L. 2001. *Managing Human Resources.* 3rd Edition. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Gomez-Mejia, L.R., Balkin, D.B. and Cardy, R.L. 2004. *Managing Human Resources.* 4th Edition. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Griffeth, R.W. and Hom, P.W. 2001. *Retaining valued employees.* United States of America: Sage Publications, Inc.

Grobler, P.A., Wärnich, S., Carrell, M.R., Elbert, N.F. and Hatfield, R.D. 2002. *Human Resource Management in South Africa.* 2nd Edition. United Kingdom: Thomson Learning.

Grugulis, I. 2007. *Management, work and organisations: Skills training and human resource development.* A critical text. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hendricks, S. 2006. *Recruitment and retention of appropriately skilled people for the Public Service to meet the challenges of a developmental state.* Conference of Senior Managers of the Free State Provincial Government, Local Authorities, State Agencies and the Business Sector.

Jackson, E.J., and Schuler, R.S. 2003. *Managing Human Resource: Through strategic partnerships.* 8th Edition. Canada: Thomson, South-Western.

Mathis, R.L. and Jackson, J.H. 2005. *Human Resource Management: Essential perspectives.* 3rd Edition. Canada: South-Western: Thomson Corporation.

Mathis, R.L. and Jackson, J.H. 2003. *Human Resource Management.* 10th Edition. United States of America: Thomson South-Western.

South Africa (Republic). 2008. *Provincial Human Resources Maintenance and Retention Guide: North West Provincial Administration.* Office of the Premier: North West Provincial Administration.

South Africa (Republic). 2004. *The Public Service Commission Report: The turnover rates of heads of department and it's implications for the Public Service,* Pretoria: Government Printer.

Stone, F.M. 2007. *Coaching, counselling and mentoring. How to choose and use the right technique to boost employee performance.* 2nd Edition. New York: American Management Association.

Sutherland, J. and Cranwell, D. 2004. *Key concepts in Human Resource Management.* England: Macmillan Distribution, Ltd.

Swart, J., Mann, C., Brown, S., and Price, A. 2005. *Human Resource Development: Strategy and tactics.* Great Britain: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

Wheeler, A.R., Richey, R.G., Tokkman, M., and Sablynski. 2006. Retaining employees for service competency: The role of corporate brand identity. *Journal of Brand Managemen.* 4(1-2)96-113.

Zachary, L.J. 2005. *Creating a mentoring culture: The Organisations Guide.* San Francisco: CA, Jossey Bass, A Wiley Imprint.

AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS

Dr V Govender
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Career Counselling and Student Employment Centre
Westville Campus Private Bag X54001
Durban 4000
Tel: 031 260 7086/ 031 260 7337
govendervi@ukzn.ac.za

Total quality management (TQM) in the public sector:

A case of local government in South Africa

Jesse Lutabingwa
Sanlam Centre for Public Management and Governance
University of Johannesburg

Christelle Auriacombe
Department of Public Governance
University of Johannesburg

ABSTRACT

While Total Quality Management (TQM) has been used successfully in the private sector, its successful application in the local government sector is still debatable. There are world-wide cases where TQM has been used in the public sector, but its application in the South African local government sector is relatively new. The purpose of this article is to examine the extent to which TQM can be applied at the local government level in South Africa. TQM can assist institutions to improve better service to their communities and their own employees. The article argues that TQM has relevance in the local government sector in South Africa, after an assessment of two case studies, one drawn from a local government and another from an organised local government association.

INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

For an institution to realise the value of TQM and to be capable of fully supporting it, the institution must have an internal conceptual understanding of quality and TQM. The concept of quality has two dimensions (Hoyer & Hoyer in Oschman *et al.* 2006:192), namely level one where quality means "conformance to specification" and level two where it means "satisfying the customer". Goodman, O'Brein and Segal (in Oschman *et al.* 2006:193) define quality as

consistently producing what the customer wants, while reducing errors before and after delivery to the customer. The quality definition of fulfilling or exceeding customers' needs as a never-ending process of continually improving the quality of what an institution produces has become an ideological paradigm driving the pursuit of customer satisfaction (Oschman *et al.* 2006:193). Hence, Steenkamp (2001:vi) argues that TQM is not a technique that can be applied artificially to improve the efficiency of an institution, but it is a way of organisational life; it is a culture, which should be lived by everybody in an institution and should be modelled by those in positions of leadership. According to Oakland (in Oschman *et al.,* 2006:197) TQM is a philosophy; a way of thinking and working that is concerned with meeting the needs and expectations of customers and it applies to all parts, departments and sections of the institution and, further, it is the responsibility of all people in an institution.

TQM, a business management approach that gained prominence in the 1980s, has been used in the public sector in various countries around the world (Prior, Stewart, and Walsh 1995; West, Berman, Milakovich 1995; Morrison 1997; Hirschfelder 1997; Robertson and Ball 2002). The application of the TQM approach is, however, relatively new in South Africa, especially within the public sector. Many articles on TQM have been published in South Africa; however, the focus has been mainly on the importance of TQM techniques and the success thereof and little attention has been paid to the nature and scope of TQM implementation in local government institutions. Although the majority of articles emphasises the specifics of TQM, Yoo (2003), Sureshchandar, Rajendran and Anantharaman (2001) (in Oschman *et al.* 2006:133) state that little empirical research has been done on the effect of the implementation of TQM in the public sector and public service institutions (Oschman *et al.* 2006:133). Djerdjour and Patel (2005) state clearly that while TQM ideas are not new in developed nations, there is little literature and empirical studies available on TQM implementation in developing countries (Oschman *et al.* 2006:133). Taking this into account, this article is an attempt to explore to what extent can this private sector approach be used to increase efficiency and effectiveness in local governments in South Africa. Does TQM have any relevance in developmental local government in South Africa?

In this research a case strategy was employed. Merriam (1998) argues that the case study is designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning which are involved. The interest is in the process rather than the outcomes, in context rather than specific variables and, in discovery rather than confirmation. Yin (1994) describes that the three major rationales for a single case study are: a critical case; an extreme or unique case; and a revelatory case. The next step is to choose a holistic versus an embedded approach. Yin (1994) argues that the difference between these two approaches depends upon the type of phenomenon being studied. Embedded analysis pays its attention to sub-units as

embedded units. In contrast, a holistic method is conducted when the case study solely investigates the holistic nature of a programme or organisation. The two case studies represent best practices in the application of TQM principles in the South African context. Each of the entities presented in the case has received an award for excellent services to customers and organisational change.

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON TQM'S APPLICATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Scholars and practitioners have debated the applicability of TQM techniques and approaches in the public sector. Two main views are found in the literature on this debate. On the one hand, there are scholars who argue that applying TQM in the public sector present serious challenges of (Swiss 1992; Rago 1994 and 1996; Connor 1997 Klagge 1997). On the other hand, other scholars maintain that TQM is what is needed in the public sector, especially at the time of increased citizen demand for more and better services and decreased revenues (Cohen and Eimike 1994; Scharitzer and Korinka 2000). It is proper to briefly discuss these two views.

Bowman and Hellein (1998) argue that many state and federal agencies globally adopted TQM principles in the mid-1990 in some of their functions. However, through the implementation of the TQM approach, they were confronted with so many challenges that they began to question the suitability of TQM in the public sector (White and Wolf 1995). One of the criticisms of the TQM is that scholars who are proponents of this approach in the public sector frequently describe a system that promises too much and ultimately delivers too little (Stringham 2004).

Pasha (2003) maintains that while TQM is implementable in the public sector in the resource-rich countries, it is not practical for resource-starved, both human and capital, localities. Pasha further argues that cash and capacity strapped local governments seeking greater levels of citizen input, face a dilemma because of having little resources to satisfy the demands made through such feedback mechanisms.

There are scholars who recognise the value of applying TQM in the public sector, but are also aware of the challenges that the approach poses. Consequently these scholars argue that instead of adopting TQM principles wholesale, some modifications are necessary prior to their application in the public sector (Swiss 1992; Rago 1994). Swiss (1992) maintains that TQM can be applied to the public sector, but only after it has been substantially modified to fit the public sector's unique characteristics. His criticism of TQM in the public sector is based on the limiting factors, including: (1) emphasis on products rather than service, (2) difficulties in defining government customer, (3) an inappropriate emphasis on

inputs and process rather than results, and (4) demands for top-level leadership that can rarely be met by culture in the public sector (Swiss, 1992). Additionally, Swiss points out that tax-payer's evaluate public services not only in terms of the result, but also in terms of the behaviour and even the appearance of the individual delivering the service.

For Rago (1994), the limiting factor for the application of TQM in the public sector is the government environment. He argues that the political culture and the unmet needs of virtually unlimited supply of customers create real challenges for implementing TQM in the public sector. What is interesting in Rago's reasoning is that the very success of TQM is its worst enemy. Rago's argument is succinctly summarised by Stringham as follows: "As a government service agency implements TQM and improves performance in the delivery of services, it expands its customer base to those citizens who needed services but who were too far down on the waiting list to obtain them….this is frequently accompanied by a sustained or diminishing funding level. As a consequence, successful implementation of a TQM initiative frequently results in reduced overall public funding to support increased public service" (Stringham 2004:186).

In responding to detractors, TQM advocates note that there are benefits of adopting a TQM approach in the public sector. These benefits include, but are not limited to: producing better and more goods and services with the same or fewer resources; meeting and exceeding customer expectations (Carr and Littman 1993); motivating and empowering employees (Rago 1996); and developing strong leadership among the senior management (Rago, 1996). Scharitzer and Korinka (2000) maintain that the adoption of TQM in the public sector is entirely consistent with government's move to make the provision of public services more efficient and citizen-oriented.

Over the last decade, all levels of governments around the world have embraced TQM principles and techniques. In the United States (US), the National Performance Review (NPR) spearheaded by the former Vice President Al Gore, was grounded in the TQM principles (Kamarck 2003). According to the NPR, "effective entrepreneurial governments insist on customer satisfaction. They listen carefully to their customers – using surveys and focus groups – and restructure their basic operations to meet customer needs. They use market dynamics such as competition and customer service choice to create incentives that drive their employees to put the customer first (Gore 1996:6).

In the United Kingdom (UK), formal programs to improve the delivery of public services were put in place in 1991 through the introduction of the Citizen Charter. The Charter was designed to help those who provide public services to view those services through the eyes of those who used them (Prior, Stewart, and Walsh 1995; Kamarck 2003). The establishment of Quality Networks was one of the mechanisms used to facilitate the implementation of the principles of

the Citizen Charter. These networks have been useful in documenting successful quality techniques and sharing the information on the best practices with other public sector agencies (Morrison 1997).

In Germany, the City of Saarbrucken initiated a TQM program in 1993 in order to deal with cross-border competition in the region between France and Luxemburg (Hirschfelder 1997). This was at the time when the city was also facing a worsening financial situation. Saarbrucken's quality efforts were recognised in 1997 when the city was presented the Speyer German Quality Award. Saarbrucken was recognised as the first city in Germany to succeed in installing a TQM system, setting up municipal works of a private character, reorganising the department structures, and modernising services based on customers (Hirschfelder 1997).

The TQM movement is now increasingly being promoted in the Asia-Pacific region (Pasha 2003). In the Philippines, recent strides have been made to develop and institutionalise performance-based measurement systems for local governments. Certifications of confirmation with ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 standards are being pursued in this regard by local governments. Similarly in Malaysia, compliance with ISO 9000 is being used to evaluate the performance of the Malaysian Civil Service. In Indonesia, performance budgeting is being carefully considered as well (Khoza 2005).

In 1993, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) conducted a survey of local governments in the United States to ascertain the strategies used by local governments in implementing TQM (West, Berman, Milakovich, 1995). The results of this survey showed that 11 percent of local governments surveyed had a formal TQM program while 22 percent had a less formal program. On the whole, most of the survey respondents indicated that their programs were successful in the following key areas: quality of service – 98 percent; productivity – 85 percent; increased communication – 84 percent; and customer satisfaction – 83 percent (West, Berman, and Milakovich 1995:15).

In 1996, the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) conducted a survey of municipal managers to assess the level of understanding, degree of use, and key elements of TQM at the local government level (Robertson and Ball 2002). The survey results indicated that 24 percent of local governments in Canada used a formal, documented TQM program while 56 percent indicated that they had a less formal program.

A CALL FOR QUALITY PROGRAMS IN SOUTH AFRICA'S PUBLIC SECTOR

The quality movement in the public sector in South Africa has gained ground since the dismantlement of apartheid in 1994. The vision of the White Paper on

Human Resource Management in the Public Service that was published during 1997 by the DPSA is aimed to promote competent and well-managed employees, capable of and committed to delivering high-quality services. The human resource management mission entails that "Human resource management in the public service should become a model of excellence, in which service to society stems from individual commitment instead of compulsion. The management of people should be regarded as a significant task for those who have been charged with the responsibility and should be conducted in a professional manner" (*White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service*, 1997). The 1997 the DPSA *Batho Pele* – "People First" White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery made a scathing indictment on the public sector. It noted that the public service in South Africa is still operating within over-centralised, hierarchical, and rule-bound systems that make it difficult to hold individuals accountable. The White Paper further noted that this is a result of bureaucrats who are focused on inputs rather than outcomes. The bureaucrats do not encourage value for money, they do not reward innovation and creativity, and they encourage inward-looking, inflexible attitudes which are at odds with the vision of a public service focused on serving citizens (Government of South Africa, 1997).

According to Oschman *et al.* (2006:134) the six primary dimensions that drive the TQM transformation are:

(1) leadership and top management commitment,
(2) strategic planning,
(3) empowerment,
(4) teamwork,
(5) continuous improvement, and
(6) customer and employee satisfaction.

The White Paper, commonly known as *Batho Pele*, recommended policies and laws that would promote service excellence in the public sector. *Batho Pele* could also be viewed as a South Africa version of TQM because its principles correlate to those of TQM. It is a very specific approach to public service delivery based on the following principles: consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress, value for money, innovation and reward, customer impact, and leadership and strategic direction (Auriacombe, 2007:45-46). *Batho Pele* is part of the indigenous knowledge system, which was unfortunately ignored or not promoted as part of the cultural value system of the old South African society. Its roots could be traced back to the African (Zulu) saying, '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*,' which means you are who you are because of others. *Batho Pele* literary means "people first" in SeSotho.

The principles of *Batho Pele* are summarised here to provide an idea of how closely they are related to TQM. According to these principles, consultation with

citizens on the level and quality of services is no longer a privilege but a citizen's right and they should wherever possible be given a choice in terms of the services that are offered. Public employees must ensure that citizens are made aware of the service standards they will receive and can expect, and they must ensure that citizens have equal access to the services to which they are entitled. Additionally, public employees must treat citizens with courtesy and consideration and give them full access to complete and accurate information about these public services to which they are entitled. Furthermore, citizens should be informed how national and provincial departments are managed, how much they cost, and who is in charge. If the promised standard of service not be delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy and all complainants should receive a sympathetic, positive response. Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for their money. New ways of delivering better services, cutting costs, improving conditions, streamlining and generally making changes that tie in with the spirit of *Batho Pele* should be developed. The purpose is to reward staff who "go the extra mile" to achieve results. Finally, good leaders who lead by example, who set the vision, and who ensure that every individual in the organisation takes ownership of the strategy for achieving that vision and for properly deploying it throughout the organisation are required (*cf.* Khoza 2005 and Auriacombe 2007:46).

At the local government level, the Local Government: *Municipal Systems Act of 2000* (Act 32 of 2000) compels municipalities to care for their customers and measure their performance. This legislation was based on the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, which emphasised the effectiveness and efficiency, community participation in the governance process, and the delivery of affordable and sustainable services (Government of South Africa, 1998). The preamble of the 2000 Municipal Systems Act captures the essence of TQM principles. It acknowledges that the new system of local government in South Africa requires an efficient, effective, and transparent local public administration that conforms to Constitutional principles. This Act provides a framework for municipalities to measure their performance (Government of South Africa 2000). It makes it obligatory for both municipal officials and councillors to benchmark their performance. It can, therefore, be argued that TQM is almost a law of the land in South Africa.

CASE STUDIES ON THE APPLICATION OF TQM IN SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The challenges confronting post-1994 South African local governments require innovative and new approaches that are capable of building on the strengths of the current system while at the same time addressing its weaknesses. The

developmental challenges confronting municipalities have caused scholars and practitioners to debate whether South Africa is a developed or developing country (Khoza, 2005). This debate has been fuelled by skewed settlement patterns, which are poor, functionally inefficient and costly, on the one hand and extreme concentration of taxable economic resources in formerly white areas, on the other hand (Government of South Africa 1998).

Most South African municipalities are confronted with problems of inefficiency and ineffectiveness. These problems include the inability of municipalities to collect payment for public services; poor delivery of public services by municipalities; lack of customer-focused approach to both internal and external customers; and failure of municipalities to make critical decisions and ineffective performance appraisal system.

The above-mentioned questionable quality of services calls for an organisational cultural change in the public sector. This is what TQM is all about. TQM is fundamentally about organisational change where quality and customer satisfaction are the primary driving motivations. TQM, therefore, holds some promise to South African municipalities in addressing some of the problems that confront them.

Mandating local governments to implement quality programs is one thing, but the actual implementation of these programs successfully is quite another. The question is how successful have local governments in South Africa been in translating the legislative Acts and White Papers pronouncements into action? While it is acknowledged that many of the local governments still have a long way to go to ensure that developmental goals are achieved, there are some that have successfully implemented the principles of TQM and *Batho Pele*. The two case studies presented here show that TQM can be used effectively to increase efficiency and effectiveness at the local government level in South Africa.

Debt recovery in the Polokwane Municipality

The Polokwane Municipality, formerly Pietersburg, is located in Limpopo Province. This municipality has been hailed as successful in its implementation of the White Paper on Local Government and the strategies it has employed in increasing its collection of debts and payment for various municipal services. Polokwane has demonstrated that the TQM principles are relevant in the South African local government context. The municipality has embraced the principles of TQM without compromising its legislative obligations.

Background and the problem: Polokwane is the capital and the economic hub of the Limpopo Province. The municipality has a population of 424,976. The racial breakdown of this population is as follows: 393,450 blacks; 23,509 whites; 3,113 coloureds; and 2,380 Indians. In 2002/2003, the municipality had an operating budget of R63.6 million and a capital budget of R40.44 million (Gaffney 2003).

In December 2000, the Polokwane service area increased substantially in size when a new demarcation was implemented. Prior to December 2000, the municipality area of service included only the City of Pietersburg (the name was later changed to Polokwane). After the new demarcation, 50 towns, townships, and settlements were added to Polokwane. These new areas, which were predominantly black and densely populated, had very little to no economic base (*cf*. Khoza 2005).

As was the case with most other municipalities in South Africa, in 1995 when the new transitional local councils were established, there were many problems associated with the transitional phase. These problems included non-payment of services by citizens, dissatisfaction of black communities with high costs of public services provided by municipalities, limited tax base, bulk tariff increases, population increases, reallocation of municipal income from service provision to administrative expenses, and marginalisation of citizens from participating in the governance process (Reddy 1999). Polokwane was no exception.

The new council in Polokwane was formed as a result of a merger of Seshego, a densely black township under the homeland government of Lebowa and Pietersburg, which was a white local authority. When the council was formed, there was an agreed '50:50' arrangement which meant that 50 percent of the new council members would be whites and 50 percent would be black (Rampedi 2003). Polokwane was faced with the enormous challenge of introducing the concept of equality to the citizens who had lived separately along colour lines for a very long time. The municipality has to grapple with the legacy of apartheid which undermined its ability to raise revenue to fund municipal operations.

During apartheid, white local authorities had stable sources of revenues in the form of property tax and service tariffs. Black townships, however, had a very little, if any, tax base because few blacks owned property. The land in the homelands was under various tribal authorities and was not privately owned. This made it difficult for black local authorities to raise revenues from property tax. In the black townships that were under the provincial administration, citizens refused to pay for services because they did not own the houses. With the privatisation of liquor and sorghum beer outlets in the 1980s, the black local authorities lost their main sources of revenues and their financial base was severely strained (Reddy 1999).

How Polokwane addressed the problem: Instead of being consumed with the past, the councillors of the new transitional council resolved to address the financial problems that confronted the municipality. An assessment and analysis of the problem were conducted by the council. The council asked why citizens in Seshego were not paying for public services. Through the assessment process, it was discovered that public services in the township were poor. There was also a problem with billing because the bills were often inaccurate. The council realised that if it was going to encourage black citizens to pay for public

services, it needed to address the issue of poor service provision in Seshego, the largest and most densely populated township of the municipality.

Based on the assessment results, the council committed itself to improving the provision of public services in Seshego. Between 1995 and 1998, the council committed R9.71 million in capital improvement projects for infrastructure in Seshego (Rampedi 2003). The council also resolved to take over all of Seshego's past debt. Additionally, a further 50 percent rebate was extended to Seshego's debtors who were phased out over a 12-month period from July 1996 (Rampedi 2003).

The process of encouraging Seshego's citizens to pay for public services was not an easy one. Different strategies had to be employed. By September 1996, the payment for public services at 15 percent was still very low despite the efforts to improve the infrastructure and provide rebates. Consequently, the council resolved to use punitive measures by disconnecting electricity for all defaulting debtors. In November 1996, the payment rate increased to only 41.23 percent. The council continued to use punitive measures and decided to limit water supply to all defaulting debtors from January 1997. These punitive measures did not result in significant improvement in the payment rate of debtors. At that point, the council realised that it had been pursuing a wrong approach. It was decided that the punitive approach was not a sustainable solution to the problem of non-payment of public services by citizens.

Polokwane's council decided to use an education and communication approach to address the problem. It recognised that its first approaches were not customer-focused or customer-friendly. The council realised that in order to meet its goal of 80 percent payment rate, it needed to begin by valuing the citizens and treating them as customers. It was decided that the councillors themselves needed to be involved in the debt collection process. This new approach moved from punitive to participatory where citizens in Seshego were to be involved in the discussion of their problems and offer solutions to council members on how to overcome those problems.

Town hall meetings were conducted by councillors where they shared with the citizens of Seshego the importance of paying for public services. Citizens in return shared with councillors the problems they were experiencing with paying for services. They indicated that they were not satisfied with the manner in which the council communicated its decisions to them. It was during these town hall meetings when councillors realised that they had missed an important element in their debt collection process, that of educating the public. Through this process, citizens in Seshego, started feeling that their ideas and views were important and valued by the municipal council. At the end of June 1999, the payment rate had increased to 76.11 percent and by June 2000, it had shot up to 90.5 percent. In 2003, the Polokwane council recorded a stunning 97 percent payment rate by the Seshego community (Polokwane Municipal Report 2003).

The council has since committed itself to a continuous improvement and customer satisfaction program. The council has thus adopted the following policy: The signing of a valid consumer agreement and payment of service deposit; accurate metering at fixed intervals and minimum delay between service connection and first billing; accurate customer information and professional communication; adequate tariff policy; support to the indigent policy; accurate and regular billing and uniform approach to tariffs and service levels; affordable service levels; appropriate payment options and efficienct enquiry facilities; and no collection, no payment principle regarding debt collection by debtors (Polokwane Municipal Report 2003).

The South African Institute for Local Government Managers (ILGM), the South Africa SALGA, and the Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs (DPLGA) have all recognised Polokwane as the best practice case in local government. The municipality has been praised for turning around its ailing financial condition. Given Polokwane's demographics and the fact that over 90 percent of the population is black who were at the bottom of the economic and political ladder prior to 1994, the challenges faced by the municipality were enormous. However, the municipality has overcome them by valuing the citizens and letting them participate in the decision-making process.

Enhancing Productivity at the KwaZulu-Natal Local Government Association

Established in 1996, the KwaZulu-Natal Local Government Association (KWANALOGA) is one of the provincial local government associations that brought about an end to the different local government associations that existed prior to 1994, which had been formed based on racial lines. The association represents 61 municipalities in the Kwa-Zulu Natal Province. These municipalities comprise 21 percent of all local governments in South Africa. It is by far the largest provincial organised local government association in South Africa. KWANALOGA is a member of SALGA. SALGA is a registered employer body and by extension KWANALOGA is also an employer body of municipal sector in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. Its main function is to promote and protect the interests of all municipalities in the province. This is achieved through policy development, policy advocacy, and capacity building. Its members pay an annual membership fee that entitles them to the various services provided by the association. In 2004, KWANALOGA was selected as the first organised local government body to receive a prestigious Service Excellence Award from the ILGM.

Background and the Problem: While the concept of organised local government is not new in South Africa, during the apartheid era, organised local government was reflective of the political order of the day. There were four provincial municipal

associates, which together with the Association of Divisional Councils of the Cape Provinces, constituted the United Municipal Executive of South Africa (UME). All of these bodies represented the interests of white local governments. The interests of the coloured and Indian local governments were vested in the National Ad Hoc Committee while those of blacks were represented by the United Councils Associations of South Africa (UCASA). The 1996 South African Constitution recognised the critical role of organised local government. Additionally, the Constitution acknowledged the fact that organised local government could no longer be divided along racial and rural/urban lines. This led to the launching of SALGA and its provincial associations, including KWANALOGA.

By the end of 2000, KWANALOGA was still grappling with a lot of problems. The administration of the association largely still reflected the apartheid era. Additionally, the administrative systems were not in place to allow for effective and efficient functioning of the association. There were only a few programs to serve the municipalities. For example, while many of the local governments in the province needed capacity building, there was only one training program that was being managed by the Training Department.

The issue of inclusion was one that was fundamental to the transformation of the association into a truly instrument of local government in KwaZulu-Natal. At the top of the association leadership, there were only white males and a few Indians. The middle-level managers were also all while males with a few Indians. The secretarial staff included one coloured and two white females. The black employees were all relegated to unskilled positions such as clerical, janitorial, and messenger. It is hard to believe that qualified black employees could not be found in a province that is 80 percent black. Additionally, after 1996's first democratic local government elections in KwaZulu-Natal, the composition of KWANALOGA's Executive Committee was 90 percent black. There were also no women in upper and mid-level managerial positions.

Furthermore, there was no proper management of the association, both administratively and politically. There were many inefficiencies in the way staff persons were performing their duties. In December 2000, the Executive Committee of the association had not met for more than six months, although constitutionally it is required to meet monthly. There were no records of the minutes of councillor's committee meetings. The political leadership was lacking administrative support. The political leadership was never apprised of what was going on in the office. It simply responded to the agendas that were presented to it by the staff.

In December 2000, the association's financial records had not been audited for the past two years. There were no financial systems in place. The executive secretary was the main and only signatory of the cheques. Some staff members were being paid cash cheques as salaries. There were no pay slips. Simply, there were no policies or financial controls. It did not have a balance sheet. Some senior

staff members were not paying taxes. The association was not growing. At the end of 2000, the association's annual budget of R340 000 had not been increased for the past two years in spite of inflation and staff salary increases. The middle-level managers, as well as other staff were poorly remunerated. Consequently, the managers were using travel allowances to make up for their low salaries. Travelling had become a core function of the managers because their monthly personal incomes were probably based on both the travel allowance and their salaries.

At the end of 2000, the association did not have assets except three computers and several office desks. Only three people in the organisation knew how to use the computers that were there. The office was located in a very unsafe part of the city, which made municipal councillors, mayors, and other association's guests feel uncomfortable visiting KWANALOGA.

Systems-related problems such as absence of proper record of accumulated staff leave were rampant. There was no communication system with municipalities except using circulars. All managers were computer illiterate. There were no organisational goals and no performance management system. Lastly, there was no action plan to benchmark the association's performance.

How KWANALOGA Addressed the Problem: In December 2000, a black female was appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the association. The new CEO started the transformation process that sought to address the issue of inclusion and administrative inefficiencies within the organisation while trying to enhance the financial condition of the association. For the first time in their lives, the association's staff was under the direct leadership of a black female supervisor. This was something that many of the staff had difficulties adjusting to, especially the white males.

The first task of the new CEO was to conduct an organisational audit to determine the state of the association. This audit provided facts and figures which were used to rally political support from the Executive Committee and others. Decisions were made quickly to put in place systems and procedures that were lacking. Key staff positions that were necessary for the proper functioning of the association were filled within two weeks of the arrival of the new CEO. The new CEO also made an executive decision to move the office to another location that was secure and safe.

In March 2001, all of the association's Executive Committee members, together with members of the senior management team, started the process of developing the strategic plan. The organisational audit report was a very useful input in this process. Through the strategic planning process, the association was able to develop an organisational vision and action plan.

Administratively, a decision was made to end employment contracts for individuals who were identified as being incapable of changing quickly or those who resisted change. Many of these individuals were white males who

could not accept the idea of being under the leadership of a black and female. Additionally, a decision was made to get the family buy-in of all staff members. This was achieved by inviting family members to the team building exercise which was conducted at a very nice hotel in the Drakensberg Mountain. The direction that KWANALOGA was moving was explained to family members. Family members were also requested permission to allow the staff to work long hours in order to turn the organisation around. While this was a costly exercise, its long-term benefits far exceeded the cost. The staff and their families expressed satisfaction with how they were being treated.

Employees were empowered to enable them to do their work more effectively and efficiently. As discussed earlier, at the end of 2000, blacks only occupied unskilled positions within the association. At the end of 2004, many of the black employees had increased their educational levels and assumed positions with significant responsibilities. Additionally, by October 2003 the racial and gender composition of the staff had changed completely. New positions were filled with qualified black men/women and white female employees. Incentives were provided, including salary increases. Consequently, productivity increased tremendously. Generally, every staff member in the association expressed a sense of belonging. Employees who still demonstrated lack of commitment to the new direction and innovation after being capacitated, had their employment terminated.

The focus on customers, both internal and external, enabled the association to significantly improve the financial condition of the association. Happy, satisfied, and capacitated internal customers (staff) provided best services to the external customers (municipalities). For example, at the end of 2000, KWANALOGA had only one training program. In 2003, there were 24 training programs being conducted by the association for its members. Municipalities pay membership fees to the association. Because municipalities saw the quantity and quality of services they were receiving from KWANALOGA, they were able to support the association with increased membership fees. Since membership to the association is voluntary, dissatisfied municipalities could choose to withdraw their membership and stop paying membership fees.

Necessary financial management systems and financial controls were put in place to ensure that the association's finances were managed properly. Policies and procedures were developed on various aspects of the association's management. Financial audits are now conducted annually. A newsletter, *KWANALOGA News*, has been established to communicate with the members. The CEO and the association chairperson visited all 61 municipalities making presentations and soliciting feedback on KWANALOGA's performance. All concerns raised by members were addressed.

As a result of the various efforts, the association's assets have increased. At the end of 2000, KWANALOGA's assets were estimated at R2,950. In 2003, the

association's assets had increased to an estimated R1.5 million. This increase can be attributed to loyal customers who continuously pay their membership fees and the visionary leadership of the association. KWANALOGA is the only association out of nine provincial associations that has received the Service Excellence Award from the ILGM. This is a testament and recognition of the quality efforts that the association had undertaken.

CONCLUSION

The case of Polokwane shows that although the municipality may not have consciously embarked on TQM, it has nevertheless embraced some of TQM principles. It can be argued that Polokwane went beyond *Batho-Pele* principles. It embraced TQM's main principle of continuous improvement and going beyond customers' expectations. The municipality even surprised itself by going beyond its own goal of achieving an 80 percent public service payment rate and instead reached 97 percent for the Seshego community. Polokwane has adopted a system and factual approach to improve its service delivery. The fact that municipal councillors went to the community to conduct town hall meetings with citizens to provide information and receive their input shows that the customers are valued. The fact that customers had withdrawn their funding of the municipality because of poor services indicates that receiving quality public service is not a privilege but a right that customers should demand and expect to receive.

This is also the case with KWANALOGA. Municipalities were not willing to do much by way of paying high membership fees because they did not view the association as providing them with quality services. However, when the quality and quantity of services were improved, they did not complain when asked to pay higher membership fees. This also demonstrates that serving customers well is a survival issue for municipalities for they stand to lose valuable revenues should customers decide to withhold payment for services.

The case of KWANALOGA also demonstrates the importance of valuing internal customers. The efforts made by the association leadership to get family buy-in, to empower the staff, to increase their remunerations, to provide them with training opportunities, to give them flexibility to work while holding them accountable, all had a positive effect of increasing productivity and making them happy employees. Internal customers who are happy and satisfied are able to serve external customers better.

The current challenges that face local governments in South African demand a new way of thinking, a new way of managing, a new philosophy of managing, a *Batho Pele* and TQM philosophy, in order to overcome those challenges. Citizens are demanding more and better services, employees are demanding

better working conditions, and legislators, as well as central government officials are demanding results and accountability. Old ways of doing business would not help local governments in South Africa to overcome these challenges and move forward. The philosophy and principles of TQM and the *Batho Pele* principles provide a valuable tool in the quest for excellence in service delivery and are offered as one of the ways to move forward.

REFERENCES

Auriacombe, C.J. 2007. Deconstructing the public interest for application in South Africa. *Administratio Publica.* 15(1):28-52.

Bowman, James S. and Hellein, Russell. 1998. Total Quality Management in Florida: Implementation in the State Agencies. *Public Administration Quarterly.* Spring 22:114-130.

Carr, David K. and Littman, Ian D. 1993. *Excellence in Government: Total Quality Management in the 1990s.* 2nd Ed. Arlington, VA: Coopers & Lybrand.

Cohen, Steven and Eimicke, William. 1994. Project-Focused Total Quality Management in the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. *Public Administration Review.* September/October 54:450-456.

Connor, Patrick E. 1997. Total Quality Management: A Selective Commentary on its Human Dimensions, with Special Reference to Its Downside. *Public Administration Review.* November/December 57:501-509.

Gaffney. 2003. *Local Government in South Africa: 2002-2004.* Johannesburg, South Africa: The Gaffney Group.

Gore, Al. 1996. *Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less: Report of the National Performance Review.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Government of South Africa. 2002. *Local Government Portfolio Committee Report.* Cape Town, South Africa: South African Government Printers.

Government of South Africa. 2000. Local Government: *Municipal Systems Act of 2000* (Act 32 of 2000). Cape Town, South Africa: South African Government Printers.

Government of South Africa. 1998. *White Paper on Local Government.* Cape Town, South Africa: South African Government Printers.

Government of South Africa. DPSA. 1997. *Batho Pele – "People First": White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery.* Cape Town, South Africa: South African Government Printers.

Hirschfelder, R. 1997. The Driving Force was Quality for this Award Winning City. *Journal of Quality and Participation.* September:48-52.

Kamarck, Elaine C. 2003. Global Government Innovation. Paper presented at the Fifth Global Forum on Reinventing Government under the auspices of the Centre for Global Innovation at Harvard University, Mexico City, Mexico, November.

Khoza, Makhosi, B. 2005. An Analysis of the Relevance of Total Quality Management (TQM) Principles in the Context of Developmental Local Government in South Africa. A doctoral dissertation

submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law at the University of Zululand, South Africa.

Klagge, Jay. 1997. The Reinvention Trail: An Account of One State Agency's Journey. *Public Administration Review.* Winter 20:433-448.

Manuel, Trevor. 2003. Minister of Finance Budget Speech to the Parliament. Cape Town, South Africa: Government Printers.

Merriam, S.B. 1998. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco CA: Jossey Bass.

Morrison, I. 1997. *Introduction to Citizen's Charter Quarterly Networks*. London, UK. Cabinet Office HMSO.

Oschman, J.J., Ströh, E.C. and Auriacombe, C.J. 2005. In search of excellence in public service delivery: Primary and supportive dimensions of Total Quality Management. *Politeia*. 24(2):161-175.

Oschman, J.J., Ströh, E.C. and Auriacombe, C.J. 2006. Attitude of personnel at South African Air Force bases towards a framework for the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the South African Air Force: An empirical view. *Politeia*. 25(2):116-130.

Oschman, J.J., Ströh, E.C. & Auriacombe, C.J. 2006. A conceptual analysis of Total Quality Management (TQM). *Journal of Public Administration*. 41(2.1):191-205.

Pasha, Hafiz. 2003. Bringing Total Quality Concept to Government: Prospects and Possibilities. Paper presented at the Fifth Global Forum on Reinventing Government under the auspices of the Centre for Global Innovation at Harvard University, Mexico City, Mexico, November.

Polokwane Municipality. 2003. Polokwane Municipal Report: 1999 – 2002. Polokwane, South Africa: Polokwane Municipality.

Prior, D., Stewart, J., and Walsh, K. 1995. *Citizenship: Rights, Community and Participation*. London, UK: Pitman Publications.

Rago, William V. 1994. Adapting Total Quality Management (TQM) to Government: Another Point of View. *Public Administration Review*. January/February 54:61-64.

Rago, William V. 1996. Struggles in Transformation: A Study in TQM, Leadership, and Organisational Culture in a Government Agency. *Public Administration Review*. May/June 56:227-234.

Rampedi, Leshabi. 2003. Turning Ailing Municipality Around: A Case of Polokwane Municipality. An unpublished paper.

Reddy, P.S. 1999. *Local Government Democratisation and Decentralisation: A Review of the Southern African Region*. Pretoria: Juta & Co., Ltd.

Robertson, Robert and Ball, Rob. 2002. Innovations and Improvement in the Delivery of Public Service: The Use of Quality Management within the Local Government in Canada. *Public Organisation Review: A Global Journal*. 2(4):87-405.

Scharitzer, Dieter and Korinka, Christian. 2000. New Public Management: Evaluating the Success of Total Quality Management and Change Management Interventions in Public Services from the Employees' and Customers' Perspective. *Total Quality Management*. September 11:S941-S953.

South African Local Government Association. 2003. Executive Committee Report: 2001 – 2003. Pretoria: SALGA.

South African Local Government Association. 2003. Salary Negotiations: 2002 – 2003. Pretoria: SALGA.

South African Local Government Association. 2002. SALGA Annual Report: 2001. Pretoria: SALGA.

South African Local Government Association. 2002. Municipal Intervention Strategy. Pretoria: SALGA.

Stringham, Shand H. 2004. Does Quality Management Work in the Public Sector? *Public Administration and Management: An Interactive Journal.* 9(3):182-211.

Swiss, James E. 1992. Adapting Total Quality Management (TQM) to Government. *Public Administration Review.* July/August 54:356-362.

West, J., Berman, E., and Milakovich, M. 1995. Implementing TQM in Local Government: The Leadership Challenge. *Quality Management Today: What Local Governments Need to Know.* Washington, DC: ICMA.

White, Orin F., Jr. and Wolf, James F. 1995. Deming's Total Quality Management Movement and the Baskin Robbins Problem: Part 1: Is It Time To Go Back to Vanilla? *Administration and Society.* August 27:203-225.

Yin, R.K. 1994. *Case Study Research – Design and Methods.* London: Sage.

AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS

All inquiries should be sent to:

Prof C J Auriacombe
Department of Public Governance
University of Johannesburg
PO Box 524
Auckland Park
2006
Johannesburg
Tel.: 011 559 2385
Fax: 011 559 3225
christellea@uj.ac.za

Prof Jesse L. Lutabingwa is a researcher in the Sanlam Centre for Public Management and Governance at the University of Johannesburg and also Professor of Public Administration and Vice Chancellor for International Programs at the Appalachian State University in North Carolina, US.

Think globally, act locally:

Policy implications of the climate change regime[1]

Richard White[2]
Rockjumper Birding Tours
Pietermaritzburg

Kobus Müller
School of Public Management and Planning
Stellenbosch University

ABSTRACT

Climate change with its potential to disrupt all facets of life on earth is arguably the greatest environmental threat that humankind has faced to date. The debates on the best methods and means of dealing with the threat are occupying the agendas of diverse actors in the international, national and local arenas. In an effort to address the effects of climate change, governments and policy-makers attempt to translate the results of this vibrant debate into meaningful policy at home. This article attempts to describe this journey from debate through policy into action, taking the complexities of policy environment into account. At the outset the largely divided international climate change regime endorses the contradictory stance of energy-intensive developing nations such as South Africa and inhibits the fostering of a meaningful climate change policy environment at a national level. The policy context with regard to climate change in South Africa is analysed and the salient causes of the troubled policy environment, aside from those commonly associated with developing nations, are identified as largely administrative. Finally, the policy environment in South Africa is examined at local level and, while local governments enjoy more autonomy under the new dispensation, the administrative fragmentation experienced at a national level permeates down to the local sphere, with the EThekwini Municipality serving as a case in point.

INTRODUCTION

That climate change is a real and tangible threat to biodiversity is not debatable; a broad range of scientists has concurred with 'very high confidence' that recent and accelerated warming of the planet is observable and is a direct result of human activity (IPCC 2007). We are, in fact, past the point where the warming of the earth can be avoided and global 'distress' is already in evidence with changes in rainfall patterns and a frequency of extreme weather events already occurring. To a large extent there is international consensus that climate change is a real problem which faces all nations and that action to temper its effects is required. The international debate informs, and to some extent dictates, national and even local climate change policy.

Despite the need for technical and scientific solutions to solve environmental problems, the environmental movement is unavoidably political (Van Reenen, 1994:36). In the current context, while the problems associated with the effects of climate change are measured in scientific, economic and social terms, the implementation of solutions to these challenges is primarily political. Within the political arena the policy process can be identified as the salient political vehicle that transports these solutions into society. The policy process includes, firstly, the identification of a broad goal, or agenda setting; secondly, selecting the right strategy through which to achieve this goal; thirdly, identifying the appropriate means to ensure that the strategy works; and lastly, to set up a process of evaluation and monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of both the strategy and the means to implement it (Clark *et al.* 2000:1).

For the purposes of this overview it is prudent to focus on the context in which the policy process takes place, i.e. the policy environment, which affects all three of the policy steps. The policy environment includes, *inter alia*, the political complexion of government and the dominant political ideologies of the day (Roberts 2004:140). A look at the current state of the international climate change regime will assist in setting the stage for a more focused look at national and local policy environments with regard to climate change.

THE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE REGIME

The international policy arena, within which attempts are made to reach consensus on mitigating and adapting to climate change, is fraught with complexity. Issues of sovereignty, equity, free trade and political ideology make reaching a consensus very difficult and, arguably, in some cases impossible. A plethora of agendas, both political and commercial, external to the immediate environmental concerns associated with climate change plague the international climate change regime.

While some progress has been made, there is an omnipresent state of ossification affecting the climate change regime.

Ossification of the International Climate Change Regime

The proliferation of stalemates and the recycling of already agreed upon issues that typically disrupt international forums on climate change serve as good examples of ossification – the regime has stopped learning and fails to table, adequately absorb or act upon new information. This 'pathology' prevents the regime from furthering new debates and forces the regime to remain entrenched in 'outdated' paradigms that stunt progress. A further indicator is the entrenchment of coalitions and political alliances and the continuation of negative dialogue and mistrust between them; the developing country Group of 77 (G-77), the European Union (EU) and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are notable examples. One of the most salient fissures in the climate change regime is the long-standing North/South divide, where ideological and historical differences continue to dominate (Depledge, 2006:2-4).

There are several causes or reasons why this impasse has been reached and why it is so difficult to overcome. *Firstly,* the inherent complexity of the climate change debate with its myriad of subjects and concerns coupled with the great diversity of interests and opinions can in large part be seen as contributing to the problem. *Secondly*, the institutional classification of annex 1 (industrialised) and non-annex 1 (mostly developing) countries is itself problematic and exacerbates the North/South divide. Countries are not arranged according to any identified objective criteria and each category has its own rights and responsibilities further widening the political fissure that exists between these two groups. *Thirdly*, the 'consensus' approach to decision making, as is prevalent in the UN system, where a decision can be passed as long as there is no stated objection to it, has made the decision-making process terribly slow. *Fourthly*, the negative and derailing effect of obstructionist states such as Saudi Arabia, which block discussion and raise as many objections as possible, slow down the decision-making process. *Lastly*, the decision by the US, arguably the single most important actor in the global climate change regime, not to ratify the Kyoto Protocol has been a big stumbling block. One of the most significant contributors to climate change-inducing emissions and a country with advanced technological and intellectual capacity is now outside the regime (Depledge 2006:4-16).

South Africa is morally bound to make informed and responsible decisions regarding climate change as the nation makes a significant contribution to global climate change; it is ranked 14th for national CO_2 emissions worldwide (WRI

2006). Despite this, South Africa, as a non-annex I nation, is not required to set emissions reduction targets and may continue to burn fossil fuels without compromise until 2012, when the emissions reduction targets for developing countries will be reviewed (UNFCCC 2006). The international climate change regime allows for the existence of this apparent contradiction and, until such time as the impasse between North and South can be resolved and a decision reached on emissions targets for developing nations, it will continue. A further concern, and a consequence of the ossification of the climate change regime, is the atmosphere of relative lawlessness in which transnational corporations (TNCs) are permitted to operate.

Business and Industry in the International Climate Change Regime

In the last 35 years the global economy has seen a dramatic increase in the magnitude of foreign direct investment (FDI) and the number of associated TNCs. As TNCs often invest in environmentally sensitive sectors, they play a significant role in environmental politics and policy. This is an especially important consideration in developing countries, where FDI has the ability to have significant impacts on both the economy and the environment. In developing countries they have tremendous capacity, by threatening relocation and disinvestment, to persuade governments to promote the relaxing of environmental regulations in order to step up investment and development opportunities. Furthermore, the voice of industrial lobby groups at notable international environmental summits is clearly and unanimously opposed to legally binding treaties on corporate accountability, especially with regard to corporate liability for environmental damages as a result of their operations (Clapp 2005:23-31). To date no legally binding treaty exists and, although the effectiveness of 'hard' or legally binding constraints is debatable (see Birger *et al.* 2006:104-119), it remains a concern that TNCs remain largely unaccountable for their actions.

Policy at a national, and even local, level is thus affected and shaped by the position of the state within the climate change debate and by its susceptibility to influence from business and industry.

THE STATE AND THE CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY PROCESS

In broad terms global environmental change challenges the state, and ultimately the policy process, in two fundamental ways. *Firstly*, the urgency of the problem necessitates mitigation and adaptive responses that stress the administrative, technological and financial capacities of the state. *Secondly*, climate such change

increases the mutual dependence of states, thereby undermining the strength of state sovereignty. The combination of these additional stresses challenges the state in its ability to conduct effective government and provide internal security (Biermann and Dingwerth 2004:2, 3). The former stress in particular makes the delivery of effective and meaningful policy challenging, especially in developing nations, where the aforementioned capacities are strained even under normal circumstances.

In the policy process there is a transformation of the policy discourse as it is absorbed into the institutional framework; there is a bridging of the gap between the rhetoric of the policy discourse and the embracing of this discourse by institutions and its actors. In this vein, policies cannot be seen as objective or neutral tools, but instead as products of discursive struggles (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand 2006:52). The policy environment, although fundamentally defined by the state, is therefore open to influence from a number of national and international non-state actors, including industry, commerce/business, NGOs and civil society.

The role of the state in environmental management can be summed up as *unique, necessary* and *indispensable*. Unique in that the logic of the state goes beyond market forces to include dimensions such as ethics and social justice; necessary because market forces cannot regulate 'public goods'; and indispensable because it addresses issues such as climate change and biodiversity, which cannot be dealt with adequately in exclusively economic discourse (Guimaraes 2004:205-206). In this regard the electorate entrusts the state, as custodian of the natural environment within its boundaries, to prevent environmental degradation to the detriment of the wellbeing of its population. In many states, including South Africa, the right to 'an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being' is constitutionally enshrined (Republic of South Africa 1996).

South Africa and the Policy Process

There are many challenging hindrances to the delivery of a meaningful climate change policy process in South Africa. The crosscutting nature of climate change necessitates a holistic examination of the policy process, because of its implications not only for biodiversity and the quality of essential environmental services, but for all sectors of society.

Environmental Rights and the South African Electorate

Examining the importance of constitutional environmental obligations, in the form of rights, in South Africa will serve as a precursor to a more detailed discussion

on the difficulties of the policy process. Although outside the immediate parameters of the policy process, popular knowledge of environmental rights has great potential to stimulate public debate and lend credence to environmental policies. A popular knowledge of environmental rights, in conjunction with other rights such as a right to freedom of speech, creates the necessary space for the electorate to act, if government is not performing on environmental obligations. In Van Reenan's words: "[there] is no more effective watchdog than an informed electorate" (1994:39).

The South African electorate is not sufficiently aware of the issues to play the role of watchdog in this regard. Research on this subject revealed that a large number of South Africans were uncertain as to the exact meaning of the term 'rights of the people' (Deegan 2002:50). An alert and aware populace, backed by environmental rights, is able to check, or popularise concern about, state environmental policy if such policy works contrary to the role of the state as custodian of the natural environment. Furthermore an informed electorate may, through public comment, lend credence and value to the agenda-setting stage of the policy process. Regrettably, however, and not surprisingly given the inequitable access to education in the apartheid era, there is a popular ignorance of, and indeed a lack of interest in the significance of, the major tenets of democracy in favour of, again not surprisingly, job creation, housing and education (Deegan 2002:49). The reality of the South African policy environment with regards to the electorate is that there is a dire need for awareness and education. In addition poverty, crime, inadequate state performance and undeveloped civic responsibility are salient challenges that must be addressed, if South Africa is to achieve a measure of success with regards to sustainable development (Rossouw and Wiseman 2004:134), of which climate change policy is a fundamental an arguably inseparable part.

The Institutional and Administrative Context of Environmental Management

Under the apartheid-era government environmental policy making was centralised and technocratically driven and environmental interests were often trumped by industrial and business concerns. In addition, the opinions of civil society were largely ignored (Peart & Wilson 1998:239-240). Law making was centralised and implementation, enforcement and administration of these environmental laws and policies were divided between government departments and agencies. In short, then, law and policy formation were centralised, while enforcement and regulation were dispersed.

Currently one finds a decentralised approach to both the formation and the implementation of environmental policy. This division of responsibility

between the national and provincial departments in environmental law making and administration has resulted in a fragmentation of environmental law and a lack of co-ordination with regard to administration and enforcement. Human resources have been diluted across too broad a spectrum and it is too costly to maintain a large number of departments at national, provincial and local level that deal with environmental affairs (Loots 1996:81-86). Furthermore, despite the national presence of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, the administration of the environment is handled by the following departments: Mineral Affairs and Energy, Land Affairs, Water Affairs and Forestry, Agriculture, South African National Parks and others. This situation is further exacerbated by the lack of synergy between the environmental departments at provincial level; in the Western Cape, for example, one finds the Department of Environment Affairs and Development Planning, while the Northern Province has the Department of Agriculture, Land and Environment (Glazewski 2005:130-131).

In addition, as far as environmental matters are concerned, the state has detailed areas of exclusive and concurrent competencies with respect to the three spheres of government (national, provincial and local) in Schedules 4 and 5 of the *National Environmental Management Act No. 107* (Republic of South Africa, 1998). The former relates to items where provinces exercise concurrent competencies with national government, while in the latter items of exclusive provincial competence are set out. Part B in both schedules lists items of local authority competence, where local government has been afforded executive authority. Part B matters relating to the environment include 'Air Pollution', for example, while the more generic 'pollution control' is listed as a concurrent national and provincial item. There are indeed some areas such as water, minerals and energy, for example, that are not listed in Schedules 4 or 5, as these are areas of exclusive national competence (Glazewski 2005:132-138).

The delegation of concurrent responsibilities creates a climate of confusion and uncertainty, and further strains the administrative capacities of all spheres of government. This fragmentation has made co-ordination between policies and departments difficult and the complexity of the current arrangement challenges the national objectives of co-operative governance and integrated environmental management. Furthermore, duplication is common and this has resulted in a broad range of overlapping mandates and interests, and has highlighted the need for a clearer separation of implementation and monitoring functions. The latter is clearly evident in the Department of Minerals and Energy (DEM), which is responsible both for promoting resource extraction and the monitoring and managing the impacts of extraction (Rossouw & Wiseman 2004:132). Aggravating this, the fragmentation of government into departments encourages a 'special interest' approach to public policy that results in each ministry tending to focus most heavily on the interests of the key producers

and professionals in that policy sphere. For example, energy ministers tend to view their primary role as protecting the interests of the major energy producers (such as coal and nuclear power) and as a result may downplay environmental damage associated with the energy sector (Carter 2001:174).

A further result of this fragmented policy landscape is the fact that environmental policies are often developed in isolation from otherwise related policies. Land use policies, such as the *Development Facilitation Act 67 of 1995*, which have huge potential to impact on the environment, have been developed independently of environmental policy initiatives (Peart & Wilson 1998:264). The end result of this fragmented policy landscape has been what can be referred to as a 'policy mess', where different policies that cover the same areas pursue different or even conflicting objectives (Peart & Wilson 1998:243). The deluge of policies since 1994 has made integration and co-ordination of policies difficult and encouraged overlap and – despite their good intentions – they have been very difficult to implement, indicating a somewhat idealised approach in the policy development stage. In sum, the general weaknesses in the policy process include the following: key issues are not identified or prioritised; a lack of institutional capacity; strong opposition to policy from within departments; tight time frames that don't allow for a thorough public participation process; confusion as a result of a lack of consistency in the policy process; a lack of clearly defined responsibilities and roles; duplication of effort; a lack of social and economic information and, when it is available, it is poorly integrated with environmental issues; a lack of technical environmental information in the development and monitoring of policy; bias in favour of dominant interest groups and the exclusion or misrepresentation of certain groups; and finally, a lack of monitoring and evaluation, partly because the technology to do so has not been developed and there are insufficient sustainability indicators to aid monitoring (Clark *et al.* 2000:11-13). In large part this long list of weaknesses can be attributed to the complex administrative landscape and policy environment in which environmental management is situated.

It is beyond the ambit of this discussion to seek solutions to the administrative and institutional arrangements in environmental matters, but it is important to note that the current national policy environment does not encourage the incubation of effective and meaningful policy that is required if climate change and its effects are to be dealt with effectively.

The Status of the Environment in the Policy Environment

According to Saward (1998:352), the scope within the administrative hierarchy to allow for the upward mobility of the environmental ministry is a core consideration in environmental policy processes. This consideration is clearly lacking in the

South African context and this mobility deficit will exacerbate the current low-priority status of climate change and related environmental issues at national level. Indeed officials in many departments, at all levels of government, simply do not see climate change as a priority and, in fact, some even view it as working contrary to national development priorities. This is hardly surprising, given that there is a limited awareness within government departments as to the likely consequences of climate change (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 2004:v). Furthermore, from a policy implementation perspective, government is trying to do too much with too few resources and prioritising policies and their outcomes is clearly lacking (Peart & Wilson 1998:263). Prioritisation is sorely needed, given the inability of authorities to deliver in many areas of environmental policy. For environmental policy to be effective it needs to be able to fit into a clearly defined policy hierarchy, and for the more urgent environmental issues, such as climate change, to be awarded priority status. Some attempt was made to address this by placing DEAT as the lead agent in the policy-making arena to ensure that government policies in all areas do not conflict with national environmental objectives. The subsequent *National Environmental Management Act of 1998*, however, severely diluted the potency of DEAT's governing role in this regard by stipulating that such environmental principles must be considered alongside other relevant considerations, such as the social and economic rights detailed in Chapter 2 of the Constitution. Furthermore, the cooperative governance approach, where government departments are persuaded to work more closely together, has been adopted and this further dampens hope of DEAT playing a lead role, with the likely outcome that the department's views will regularly be outweighed by those of other departments (Peart & Wilson 1998:244-245).

Economic Challenges

Environmental matters in general have perhaps not featured to the extent they should have on the national economic agenda, but what of climate change in particular? The 'National Climate Change Response Strategy for South Africa' is a formalised expression of mitigation/adaptive options available to the climate change policy process as well as an expression of the policy boundaries and challenges. While there is recognition of the urgent attention needed to address climate change and the very real threats it poses to national goals of, *inter alia*, sustainable development and poverty alleviation, great concern is expressed about the nation's two vital industries, mining and energy. In short, if annex 1 nations respond negatively to the exporting of coal, the vitality of the South African economy, which is heavily dependent on income generated from the production, processing, export and consumption of coal, will be compromised (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 2004:iv).

This very real concern can be seen as an economically orientated policy boundary or constraint, and it highlights an apparent contradiction in efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change; a large proportion of the country's emissions are a direct result of this heavy dependence on coal, yet South Africa will continue to rely on coal for decades to come. Indeed the major parastatal energy producer, ESKOM, does not internalise the external social or environmental costs, which can amount to as much as 126% of the private cost of producing energy from coal (Blignaut & Zunckel 2004; 300). Including these external costs would raise the cost of energy for the consumer and thereby potentially reduce the competitiveness of energy-intensive industries. It is not atypical of governments to fail to take measures to improve environmental performance and internalise environmental costs, if it is economically burdensome on a domestic level to do so and thereby reduce that country's ability to compete financially on a global level (Guimaraes 2004:209). Furthermore, this highlights the myopia inherent in electoral politics, which stunts or indeed stops the development of policies that imply costs for current generations in order to benefit future generations (Roberts 2004:165).

THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT AT LOCAL LEVEL

The international climate change regime has indeed fostered learning, but that learning is most prevalent outside of the international arena at other levels, including domestic, and in many cases is generating imaginative responses (Depledge 2006:18&19). Domestic- or local-level action and policy formation are thus not to be underestimated and much can be done to address the challenges of climate change at this level, despite international ossification and policy deficits at a national level. Arguing for this decentralised approach, Okidi (1996:56) points out that the 'machinery' in close proximity to the environmental resource should have jurisdiction over its management – in this case, it would be local government.

Local governments in South Africa enjoy a great degree of independence and the power to make by-laws and impose rates (Glazewski 2005:136). Furthermore, the Constitution states that one of the objects of local government is to 'promote a safe and healthy environment' (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Local governments therefore not only have the power to manage their own environments, but are constitutionally obliged to do so.

In the policy process the local sphere of government in South Africa is largely responsible for the implementation of policy formed at national and provincial levels. Central government tends to develop broader policies and these can be detailed at local and provincial levels (Clark *et al.* 2000:7). This has presented a

myriad of problems or challenges at a local level. Among these are a failure to consult local government in policy formation and a failure to recognise the role of local government in this process. Furthermore, local government suffers from a lack of representation in core national environmental legislation, indicative of the policy implementation gaps that plague the policy atmosphere in South Africa (Rossouw and Wiseman 2004:133, 134). A further problem experienced at local level is that of capacity; the highly beauracratised environmental management system often results in the passing of legislation or the issuing of regulations without considering the lack of capacity to support this response (Van Reenen 1994: 39; Glazewski 2005:132). Local governments need to be capacitated and skilled in order to deal with the complexity of climate change-related matters.

The close proximity of local government to its constituency demands interaction and communication with it. Local governments in South Africa have a role to play that extends beyond the ambit of service delivery to include fostering and managing the participation of marginalized and excluded groups, thereby encouraging a democratic approach to council activities and ultimately promoting community involvement (Deegan 2002:52). In South Africa the policy processes are highly regarded for their high levels of public participation and the inclusion of civil society is often seen as a prerequisite for a sustainable and representative policy process (Clark *et al.* 2000:10). But this process, although necessary, is cumbersome and presents an additional challenge to the policy process. Local communities are by definition a diverse group consisting of a myriad of income groups, races and social classes, all with different interests, priorities and values. This diversity of interests will result in a conflict of interests and local government must therefore act as the final arbitrator in this volley of conflicting interests, and it is unlikely that any one interest group will have its desires met in full (Deegan 2002:52). Acting as arbitrator and managing public participation is time consuming and costly, and it stretches local government capacities. Given the diversity of adaptations that civil society may be required to undertake and comment on in support of a climate change policy, this lack of capacity represents a core consideration in policy environment.

Case Study:
The EThekwini Municipality and Climate Change Policy

The EThekwini Municipal Area (EMA) is situated on South Africa's east coast littoral in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and covers an area of 2297 square kilometres. Although only 1.4% of the land area of KZN, it houses over 30% of the population of KZN and as much as 60% of the provinces economic activity occurs here. Within the municipal limits a broad diversity of land uses occurs including residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural, with a

number of densely populated informal settlements found within urban and peri-urban areas. The community is similarly diverse, representing a cross-section of race, culture, religion, income group and age. EMA is South Africa's major port city and is the second largest industrial hub after Gauteng. The city is a key trade gateway as a result of its access to important trading routes to the east and its proximity to the mineral-industrial complex of Gauteng. The city's economy grew by 5.3% for the period 2005-2006. The municipality recognises its role in providing democratic and accountable governance, providing services, promoting socio-economic development and a safe and healthy environment (EThekwini Municipality 2007:6, 7).

In response to the growing realisation of the negative implications of climate change and the requisite mitigation and adaptive strategies, the EMA commissioned the CSIR to detail a report on the climatic future of Durban (CSIR 2006). Salient predictions as to the likely consequences of climate change include, *inter alia*, an increase in temperature, a rise in sea level and associated storm surges, a change in rainfall distribution, a reduction in the water available for consumption and industry, a decrease in agricultural production, the spreading of malaria into the EMA and a loss of biodiversity (CSIR 2006: 59-77). These effects, although still clouded with degrees of uncertainty, are certainly dire and it is prudent to consider in the light of the precautionary principle

In the light of the abovementioned significance of public participation, an initial step, and indeed challenge, for the EMA is to gain public support for climate change policies. In order to instigate significant change to society with regards to environmental issues, 'winning the hearts and minds of most sections of society' is essential (Roberts 2004:166). Given the aforementioned diversity of the population of Durban, this is no easy task. In an attempt to understand public perception of climate change in the EMA more fully, a questionnaire-based research programme was conducted (CSIR 2006: 116-153). 46% of the respondents claimed they did not know much about climate change, or that they knew nothing at all. It was concluded that the majority of respondents have a limited understanding of climate change and, furthermore, are unaware as to the causes of climate change. Most participants viewed themselves as external to the solution and commonly believed that it was up to industry to find the answers (CSIR 2006:126). Education and raising awareness on the subject of climate change can be viewed as a critical challenge to the EMA, if there is to be support for local climate change policy initiatives.

A further challenge is the apparent power deficit that inhibits the effectiveness of the city's environmental authority. The Environmental Management Department (EMD) of the EMA does not have the power to make final decisions on environmental applications, although its comments

are usually taken into account and required conditions, instigated by the EMD, 'usually become conditions of approval'. The EMD is therefore a commenting authority requiring the department to communicate with other departments and authorities, not only at local, but also at provincial and national level. This has necessitated the creation of a forum between the EMD and the provincial Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs. This forum has been established to aid communications between the two spheres of government and assist in reducing conflict between the two. The EMD is currently attempting the creation of a similar forum to communicate with the Department of Minerals and Energy. These forums are an integral part of the principles of cooperative governance (EThekwini Municipality 2007:42). The need for the creation of forums is indicative of the administrative powerlessness of the EMD and it is postulated here that this process exacerbates problems associated with a lack of capacity. Furthermore, this cumbersome process highlights that the great need for environmental departments to move up the hierarchy, as discussed above in a national context, also applies to a local level. This mobility deficit stunts the EMD's ability to fast-track policy and is bound to entrench an approach of incremental change in the policy process, rather than the need for rapid adjustment that meaningful and effective climate change policy demands.

Mapping the progress of a core environmental policy process found within the EMA will serve to highlight how these hierarchical challenges have affected the EMD in its environmental, and ultimately social, obligations. The Durban Metropolitan Open Space System (D'MOSS), initially instigated by an NGO in 1979, survived the transition politics of the democratisation of South Africa in the early 1990s by shifting focus to include socio-economic and equity concerns. By conserving and carefully managing the open spaces within municipal limits the D'MOSS system is designed to ensure the sustainable delivery of environmental goods and services. In 2001 D'MOSS was reconstituted as the EThekweni Environmental Services Management Plan (EESMP) and 54% of the EMA surface area was deemed as optimal and set aside for the open space system for the city. Growing development pressure and an attempt to secure long-term political support for the programme, however, required that the size of the system be reduced from 123 000 ha to 76 000 ha. In 2002 the area was remapped and reassessed, and once again, in order to accommodate the city's pressing development needs, only those areas vital to the viability of the system were included and the total was further reduced from 76 000 ha to 63 115 ha (or 27% of the EMA) (EThekwini Municipality 2007:11). The salient trend in this programme has been the reduction in the size of the open space area (from 54% to 27%) and this is a direct result of political and development pressure. The EMD does not have sufficient capacity to challenge these reductions and

in its capacity as a commenting authority it can do little more than lobby for support for its initiatives.

Related to this power deficit is the inability of the EMD to effectively implement regulations to ensure the integrity of the EESMP. Power, in this instance, refers to the extent of power that municipalities have over their constituencies rather than the power to move within the administrative hierarchy as discussed above. In short, the EMD has no legal mandate to enforce the law and the department must seek other means to enforce regulation. One method used by the department when dealing with non-compliance from the public sector is compliance monitoring. To this end the EMD endeavours to ensure that the relevant government departments take action when there is non-compliance with regulations (EThekwini Municipality 2007:47). Lacking the power therefore to enforce its own regulations, the EMD has to rely on other departments to give these regulations clout. This is a seemingly cumbersome process that demands time and effort from departments outside the environmental management framework and has the potential to exacerbate the capacity issues that plague the local administration. In response to this the EMD has intentions of drafting 'green' environmental by-laws to protect the natural resource base of the EMA and to ensure the effective implementation on EESMP, but this has yet to be realised (EThekwini Municipality 2007:47). For the effective and meaningful implementation of climate change policy, this is an essential step forward. In the latter half of 2007 it was proposed that the EESMP should be revised once again and climate change (and its impacts on biodiversity) will be introduced into the plan (EThekwini Municipality 2007:18). Without the requisite power and the inability to move upwards in the administrative hierarchy, the EMD has limited potential to make a meaningful contribution towards providing a safe and healthy environment for its citizenry.

To a large extent local municipalities suffer from the same economically orientated policy boundaries as national government.

CONCLUSION

Mitigating the effects of climate change and learning to adapt to these consequences requires good governance on international, national and domestic levels. The delivery of good governance is realised in large part through the implementation of meaningful and effective policy that is dependent on a healthy policy environment for success. This policy environment is influenced by, *inter alia*, international, national and local agendas as well as administrative and legal arrangements. An attempt has been made in this article to highlight the negative influences of these agendas on the policy environment. Because of

the great scale of this environmental problem, climate change policy demands the rapid formulation of policy and effective implementation.

An examination of the situation in practice, however, highlights some of the more salient reasons for the shortcomings in this regard. On an international level the climate change debate is stifled by the diversity of conflicting agendas and the North/South divide, leaving the critical issue of emissions reduction targets unsolved. The knock-on effects of this are felt at a national level and to some extent pollute the South African policy environment. Aggravating this are complex administrative systems that complicate the policy environment and limit the potency of environmental authorities to deliver on their environmental and ultimately social obligations. At a local level the policy process is similarly flawed, aggravated by the weighty responsibility of acting as arbitrator in the public participation process and a lack of capacity. The struggles experienced by the environmental authority of the Ethekwini Municipality are examples of these challenges.

NOTES

1   This article forms part of an ongoing research project supported by the National Research Foundation

2   This article is based on a research paper by Richard White in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining a Masters degree in Environmental Management at Stellenbosch University

REFERENCES

Bäckstrand, K. and Lövbrand, E. 2006. Planting Trees to Mitigate Climate Change: Contested Discourses of Ecological Modernisation, Green Governmentality and Civic Environmentalism. *Global Environmental Politics.* 6(1): 50-75.

Biermann, F. and Dingwerth, K. 2004. Global Environmental Change and the Nation State. *Global Environmental Politics.* 4(1):1-22.

Birger, J. Skjærseth, O. and Wettestad, J. 2006. Soft Law, Hard Law, and Effective Implementation of International Environmental Norms. *Global Environmental Politics.* 6(3):104-120.

Blignaut, J. and Zunckel, M. 2004. The Cost of a Decline in Air Quality. In Blignaut, J. and De Wit, M. (eds.). *Sustainable Options: Economic Development Lessons from Applied Environmental Resource Economics in South Africa.* Cape Town: UCT Press.

Carter, N. 2001. *The Politics of the Environment: Ideas, Activism, Policy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clark, R.E., Willis, C.B. and Brown, P.J. 2000. *A Generic Approach to Policy Formation in South Africa.* CSIR Internal Report ENV-P-I 2000-066.

Clapp, J. 2005. Global Environmental Governance for Corporate Responsibility and Accountability. *Global Environmental Politics.* 5 (3):23-33.

CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research). 2006. *A Climatic Future for Durban. EThekwini Municipality. Durban.*

Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. 2004. *A National Climate Change Response Strategy for South Africa.* Pretoria.

Deegan, H. 2002. A Critical Examination of the Democratic Transition in South Africa: The Question of Public Participation. *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics.* 40(1):43-60.

Depledge, J. 2006. The Opposite of Learning: Ossification in the Climate Change Regime. *Global Environmental Politics.* 6(1):1-22.

EThekwini Municipality. 2007. *EThekwini Municipality Biodiversity Report 2007.* Durban.

Glazewski, J. 2005. *Environmental Law in South Africa.* 2nd edition. Durban: Butterworths.

Guimaraes, R. 2004. Waiting for Godot: Sustainable Development, International Trade and Governance in Environmental Policies. *Contemporary Politics.* 10:203-223.

IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). 2007. Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis – Working Group I, Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. UK.

Loots, C. 1996. Distribution of Responsibility for Environmental Protection. *South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy (SAJELP).* 3:81-89.

Okidi, C.O. 1996. International Perspectives on the Environment and Constitutions. *South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy (SAJELP).* 3:39-69.

Peart, R. and Wilson, J. 1998. Environmental Policy-making in the New South Africa. *South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy (SAJELP).* 5:237-266.

Republic of South Africa. 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996. Government Gazette.* Cape Town.

Republic of South Africa. 1998. *The National Environmental Management Act No. 107 of 1998.* Pretoria: Government Printer.

Roberts, J. 2004. *Environmental Policy.* Routledge: London.

Rossouw, N. and Wiseman, K. 2004. Learning from the Implementation of Environmental Public Policy Instruments After the First Ten Years of Democracy in South Africa. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal.* 22(2):131-140.

Saward. M. 1998. Green State/Democratic State. *Contemporary Politics.* 4 (4)345-356.

UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). 2006. Kyoto Protocol. http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php.

Van Reenen, T.P. 1994. Environmental Policy-making and Effective Environmental Administration. *South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy (SAJELP).* 1:35-48.

WRI (World Resources Institute). 2006. *Climate and Atmosphere – CO2: Total Emissions.* http://earthtrends.wri.org.

AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS

Richard White
Rockjumper Birding Tours
16 Fettes Rd
Pietermaritzburg 3200
rwhite@webmail.co.za
http://www.rockjumper.co.za

Prof Kobus Müller
School of Public Management and Planning
Stellenbosch University
Private Bag X1
Matieland 7602
jjm1@sun.ac.za
http://www.sopmp.sun.ac.za
021 918 4125
021 808 2195

Editorial policy

1. *Administratio Publica* is a quarterly journal. The aim of the journal is to promote academic scholarship in Public Administration and Management and related fields.

2. *Administratio Publica* publishes original theoretical and empirical manuscripts. This includes articles, debates, research notes, review articles and book reviews in English.

3. All articles, research notes and review articles are submitted to the Chief Editor. The Chief Editor decides whether a proposed article falls within the ambit of scholarly material and research that supports the objectives of ASSADPAM. The article is then submitted to subject specialist referees for evaluation. Normally, these referees are members of the editorial board of the Journal. In the case of any one of two reviewers rejecting the article completely, the editorial committee considers the reports, and may appoint another independent reviewer.

4. Anonymity is maintained by omitting the name of the author and all identifying footnotes or other references in the text. Referee reports may be made available to authors but the names of the referees will be withheld. The particulars of referees will only be made known to the Department of Education, for purposes of auditing the requirements as set out by the Policy for the Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions (Higher Education Act 101, 1997).

5. Copyright of published material vests with ASSADPAM (Association of Southern African Schools and Departments of Public Administration and Management). Authors, however, bear full responsibility for the contents of their own contributions. Opinions expressed in the journal are those of the authors, and are not necessarily subscribed to by the Chief Editor, the editorial committee, the Editorial Board, or the Executive Committee of ASSADPAM.

6. Accepted papers will, as far as possible, be published in the sequence in which they were received. A page fee will be charged for all articles approved for publication. This fee is subject to annual adjustment.

Presentation of manuscripts

Formatting requirements

- Typewritten on one side of the paper and language edited; A4 format; one and a half spacing with generous margins; statistics are to be presented in table format, and graphic images in boxed diagrams.

- Contributions should preferably not exceed 6 000 words. Each article must be preceded by an abstract (maximum length 200 words). Abstracts should represent the contents of the article concisely.

- Biographical details: Title of Paper (Centre, Bold, 12pt Times New Roman, Caps), Name and Surname, Affiliation (name of university/institution), (Align left, Bold 12pt Times New Roman)

- **ABSTRACT** (Bold, 12 pt Times New Roman, Caps), 250 words, Do not format or place in textbox or table

- **HEADINGS:** Do not number headings in text.
  - **HEADING 1** (Bold, 12pt Times New Roman, Caps)
  - **Sub-heading 1.1** (Bold, 12pt Times New Roman,
  - ***Sub-heading 1.1.1*** (Bold, Italic, 12pt Times New Roman),
  - <u>Sub-heading 1.1.1.1</u> (Underline, 12pt Times New Roman)

- When listing, please use bullet form

- Please do not format or use any special style in your article.

- All tables and figures should be numbered and given a heading

- Remember to give credit to the original authors from which the table or figure was adapted

- References in the text: (Auriacombe 2008:3) and (Cloete et al. 2008:4)

- **BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Bibliographical particulars arranged alphabetically, no numbering and according to the simple Harvard method eg:
  - **Book:** Gildenhuys, J.S.H. and Knipe, A. 2000. *The Organisation of Government: An Introduction.* Pretoria: Van Schaik.
  - **Article:** Auriacombe. C.J. 2007. Deconstructing the public interest for application in South Africa. *Administratio Publica.* November 15(1):28-52.
  - **Official publication:** Public Service Commission. 2008c. Report on the Audit of Reporting Requirements and Departmental Monitoring and Evaluation Systems within National and Provincial Government. Public Service Commission. Pretoria: Government Printer.
  - **Internet reference:** Patton. M.Q. 1999. Utilization-Focused Evaluation in Africa, training lectures presented at the African Evaluation Association, 13-17 Sept 1999. Nairobi. Kenya. <u>www.afrea.org/documents/document.cfm?docID=64</u>. Accessed 25 March 2009.

- **AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS:** The title, the name(s), e-mail addresses, telephone and fax numbers and postal address(es) of the author(s), to whom correspondence should be addressed.

- A separate application first page(s) should contain the proof of language editing by a qualified language practitioner, title, the name(s), e-mail addresses, telephone and fax numbers and postal address(es) of the author(s)names and to whom correspondence and the invoice for page fees should be addressed. The article is to commence on a new page.

- Two kinds or references are distinguished; notes and bibliographical particulars. Notes should be numbered consecutively and be inserted at the end of the text.

- A statement should accompany all manuscripts (at the end of the document when submitting the paper) in which the author(s) state(s) that the contribution has not been published, is not being published, or is not being considered for publication elsewhere, and will not be submitted for publication elsewhere unless rejected by the Editorial Committee of Administratio Publica. The author(s) need to declare that they are willing to pay the page fee, if the article is approved for publication.

Confirmation of provisional acceptance of articles will be forwarded to authors on receipt by the Chief Editor. Authors will be given notice of the outcome of peer reviews within twelve weeks of submission. It is important to know that an article submitted in the second half of the year may only be published in planned editions of the following year.

Administratio Publica