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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	1
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	1
1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	3
1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	6
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	8
1.6 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS	9
1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE RESEARCH PAPER.....	10
1.8 SUMMARY	11
CHAPTER TWO	12
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE	12
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	12
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT MODEL	12
2.2.1 NPM: THE ORIGIN AND UNDERLYING FORCES	12
2.2.2 PUBLIC CHOICE THEORY	13
2.2.3 MANAGERIALISM	14
2.2.4 REASONS FOR REFORMS / DRIVING FORCES.....	14
2.3 REDEFINING THE ROLE OF THE STATE	16
2.4 NATURE OF THE POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE	17
2.5 REFORM TRENDS IN DEVELOPED STATES.....	22
2.6 REFORMS IN DEVELOPING STATES	30
2.6.1 POST INDEPENDENCE STATE	31
2.6.2 STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES	33
2.6.3 DOWNSIZING EFFORTS.....	35
2.6.4 PERFORMANCE-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY	36
2.6.5 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.....	38
2.6.6 IMPROVING QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY	40
2.7 SUMMARY	42
3. SOUTH AFRICAN REFORM AND CONTEXT.....	43
3.1. INTRODUCTION.....	43
3.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REFORM	43
3.2.1 RATIONALISATION AND RESTRUCTURING.....	46
3.2.2 RESTRUCTURING OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT ECHELON	48
3.2.3 INSTITUTION BUILDING AND MANAGEMENT	50
3.2.4 HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT	50
3.2.5 EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS AND LABOUR RELATIONS	52
3.2.6 PROFESSIONALISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY	53
3.3 SUMMARY	54
CHAPTER FOUR.....	56
4. MAIN FEATURES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM.....	56
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	56
4.2. THE POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE	56
4.2.1 POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES	60
4.3 BATHO PELE.....	66
4.4 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	77
4.4.1 MANAGING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CYCLE	79
4.2 SUMMARY	84
CHAPTER FIVE	86
5. CONCLUSIONS	86
5.1 THE CONCLUSIONS DRAWN ARE AS FOLLOWS:.....	88
5.1.1 POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE.....	88
5.1.2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	89
5.1.3 BATHO PELE	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY	92

ABSTRACT

The past two decades have seen a global trend towards a new form of reform model known as new public management (NPM) designed to find a better way of managing public sector organizations. This was a response to the attack on the traditional public administration which was regarded as inflexible, defective and wasteful. The assumption is that in this era of competitiveness states need to adopt private sector management practices, introduce market forces to government and establish liberal democratic principles. Consequently, governments' desires to improve performance in the public service have devolved more powers to the managers, become more cost-conscious in their operations and changed the status of citizens to customers. The NPM thus seeks to focus more on performance and outputs rather than rule-bound rationality inherent in the traditional public administration model.

The purpose of this research is to examine the extent to which the public sector reform process in South African Public Service has been influenced by the NPM ideas. The study adopted a case study approach to look into the public sector reform in the South African public service. It looks at three main areas of reform: Performance Management, Batho Pele and the Political/administrative interface. The aims of the research were firstly to examine the origins and underlying objectives of new public management model and thereby provide an insight into the South African reform measures. Secondly, examine the reasons for adoption of performance management, Batho Pele and the nature of political and administrative interface at the minister and senior management level and finally the implications on service delivery.

In order to achieve these objectives, the key characteristics of NPM were used to gauge the degree of NPM influences in these three main features of South African public sector reforms. The bulk of secondary data comprised of the literature and journals on new public management in both developed and

developing states. The primary data was drawn from several government legislations and White Papers.

The research reveals that indeed the South African Public Service has borrowed heavily from the NPM model in an attempt to modernize the public service as an efficient and effective service delivery instrument. However, in practice it has been shown that attempts to strengthen the political leadership influence in the public service have raised concerns regarding politicization of the public service. This move is in contradiction to the envisaged professionalized and impartial public service as enshrined in the Constitution. Furthermore issues of accountability seem more problematic especially on human resources management, which are more prevalent in performance management as there is no one accountable for the management of outcomes.

Besides lack of accountability, it has been argued that the public service still lacks a performance-oriented culture, which is important for driving other transformation efforts such as Batho Pele policy initiatives further. It also appears that although the top management seems to have fully embraced the notion of putting the customer at the centre of service delivery, the participation of citizens who are now regarded as 'customers' have been given minimal consideration mainly because of the contradiction inherent in the NPM model such as efficiency, effectiveness and use of performance contracts which puts pressure on the senior government officials to focus on outcomes given the limited financial allocations. The researcher concludes that participation of the citizenry is important for sustainable service delivery. Equally important is the need to realize that collaboration between public servants and politicians is more crucial than before in order to drive the reform process and promote the culture of learning on an ongoing basis.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Many countries are undertaking reform measures to improve efficiency in their service delivery in recognition of the fact that economic growth and development are not solely a function of increases in the factors of production. A large portion of growth in “total output is explained by non economic determinants including better management, organisation and work procedures” (Country Economics Department, 1991:2). Since the 1980s many advanced industrialised countries have engaged in reforms, which have been directed toward reducing the size and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of their core public sectors.

According to Hughes (1998:8-18), there are several factors that gave impetus to reforms mainly: financial constraints faced by governments, the decline of public confidence in government, technological change and finally the global dynamics in economies and decision making requires many states to become more competitive. The declining role of the state due to pressure exerted on it to move away from direct involvement in the running of the economy has influenced governments thinking in terms of re-assessing their public service capacities. It is thus becoming important for the governments to focus their attention on those activities in which they have a comparative advantage, in terms of the capacity to deliver services efficiently and effectively. The changing role of state and the re-assessment of the public service have had many implications. As such the focus of this research will be on the implications of public sector reform, its underlying objectives and the extent to which it resembles and conforms to the ideas encompassed in the new public management, mainly within the South African context.

South Africa has been no exception in the effort to re-assess its public service. However, what make South Africa different are the complexities surrounding its transformation process. The first years of democracy in post-apartheid South Africa saw a major focus on creating a more representative and legitimate public service (Ncholo, 2000:87). This essentially meant that the challenge for the government was to formulate new policies and design public service institutions, which reflect a departure from apartheid rule to democratic governance. The democratic South Africa thus realized that the successful implementation of transformation and development policies initiatives largely lies with the public service. This is significant in that it strengthened the sense of trust between the new democratic government and the citizens who were legitimately expecting to see a more representative public service committed to improving service delivery and better life for all South Africans.

While the 1994-98 periods focused more on formulating new policies and designing legislation, the second era of democracy put emphasis on policy implementation. Thus, the democratic government will now be judged by the quality of services it provides to the citizen. This has been a rather challenging task for the democratic government and is likely to remain with any government coming into power for quiet some time. The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) in its Provincial Review Report 1997 admits that some provinces are still facing serious capacity problems, poor management and service delivery problems. The conclusions drawn by the Presidential Review Commission in 1998 echoed the same sentiments with the findings of the DPSA report that the public service has made little progress eradicating the inherent inequalities and inefficiencies of the past. Moreover, the qualities of services provided are questionable at best (PRC, 1998:17). It is on this basis that the Presidential Review Commission recommended that there need to be a new thinking towards the roles and functions of the public services.

One of the findings of the Presidential Review Commission regarding a slow progress in service delivery is that there is lack of clear and agreed vision for change; the lack of strategic direction and effective leadership; the lack of clarity on political and administrative interface; inappropriate prioritization and strategic planning and no close link between strategic planning and the budgetary process. It is therefore not surprising that the Presidential Review Commission recommended that in order to overcome these problems there need to be proper planning, prioritization, resourcing and monitoring of human resource management in line with the individual needs of staff and the service delivery needs of the departments. Furthermore the Commission placed emphasis on the urgent need to move towards performance-related contracts for heads of department including the senior managers with the ultimate goal to promote greater managerial responsibility and accountability for results (1998:237).

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The Presidential Review Commission (PRC) signaled the government commitment towards the transformation process as it was meant to review and evaluate the structures, operations and functions of the public service since 1994. The government responded positively to some of the recommendations by the PRC, as the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service initially proposed for the creation of new structures to drive the transformation process forward. It was envisaged that such structures should be based on proper consultation and participation with the relevant stakeholders mainly: the public service staff and unions as well as the civil society. Furthermore, the PRC recognized that there is a need for greater coordination at the centre; as such the Cabinet was restructured into the cluster system. These developments led to the Minister of Public Service and Administration and the Director-General assuming the leadership roles in the new governance and Administration and the Director-General cluster respectively (DPSA, 2003:8).

Although the PRC revitalized the government commitment towards transformation process, the Department of Public Service & Administration has played a proactive role in leading and guiding the transformation process in the public service. More significant measures introduced by the Department are a number of policy documents mainly the White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service, Human Resource Management, Public Service Training and Education, Affirmative Action in the Public Service and the Batho Pele policy. These important policy shifts ultimately led to the enactment of the Public Service Law Amendment Act of 1997 which replaces the 1994 Public Service Act (DPSA, 2002:7). The significance of the Act is that it gives the executive powers to the Ministers and MECs at the national and provincial level respectively. This implies that the Ministers or MECs as the political heads are responsible for matters such as internal organization, staff appointments, promotion and other related career matters of the public servants (PRC, 1998:93).

This study will attempt to provide a critical look on important policy shifts taking place in the public service. In particular, to examine the key themes to the introduction of public sector reform in the South African public service, mainly political administrative interface, performance management system and the transformation of public service delivery. The government has identified the transformation of service delivery to meet basic needs as one of the priority areas for the transformation process. As a move towards realization of this goal, the White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery (the "Batho Pele" policy) became operationalized in 1997. The significance of this policy document is that it is designed to provide guidance to the provincial and national government service delivery in the direction of improvement with regards to efficiency and effectiveness. Batho Pele policy thus adopts a new strategy towards increased efficiency and outputs by taking on a customer-service approach, which puts the needs of the citizens first. The notion of customer is thus aimed at instilling a sense of responsiveness and courtesy among the civil servants when dealing with the citizens. This will further enable the citizens who are seen as customers

to hold public servants to account for the services delivered (White Paper on Transforming the Public Service Delivery, 1997:12).

Central to the transformation of service delivery is the need to improve productivity and performance in the public sector by establishing a new system of performance management based on accountability for specific, measurable outputs within defined time frames (White Paper: Transformation of the Public Service, 1995:26). The new approach to performance management thus aims to instill a new performance culture that would reward and recognize effective performance in a participative and consultative manner (Ncholo, 2000:95). The successful implementation of Batho Pele policy thus lies with the clear policy measures of performance management system that links the objectives of the institution and work objectives of the individuals. As such the performance management system if properly applied can have a profound impact on the government delivery machinery as it will act as an important tool through which the executive can evaluate the performance of the public servants in relation to the agreed set goals.

Equally important is the increasing realization that good governance in the public service needs to be located within a clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This further strengthens the lines of accountability between the political policy-making and the administrative policy implementation (Kaul, 1996:139). On the other hand the PRC detected that the system of governance in South Africa is characterized by great uncertainty and confusion on the roles and responsibilities of the ministers and MECs and the senior government officials. In the absence of explicit delineation of roles and responsibilities from the political head and the administrative body it becomes clear that the role conflict between the senior public servants and the political heads at both the national and the provincial level can have the detrimental effects towards the full realization of the central objective of the government, mainly to transform service delivery to meet the basic needs of every South African. The tension regarding role ambiguity has

been felt in almost all levels of government but has been more acute in the provinces where a new form of administration was put in place following the amalgamation of the former apartheid administration and their territories (PRC, 1998:99). It is therefore important that the government strengthen the system of governance in South Africa by putting in place a clearly defined structure on the roles of the political heads and the administrative organs.

In the South African context it is important therefore to critically examine these key features of public sector reform in South Africa namely: performance management, political/administrative interface and Batho Pele policy initiatives. As it has been shown earlier, an assessment of the reform process by the Presidential Review Committee revealed that in general great strides have been made in formulating new policies although most departments remain weak on delivery (PRC, 1998:16). It becomes important therefore in this study to look at the implementation process in practice. New Public Management (NPM) features will therefore be used to gauge the degree of NPM influences in these three key features of South African public sector reforms.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Examine the origins and underlying objectives of new public management model.
- Examine the nature of political and administrative interface.
- Examine the key features of performance management system in the South African public service.
- Examine the Batho Pele policy in South Africa and its implications for service delivery.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The literature on performance measurement seems to agree on the positive benefits that can be brought by performance monitoring such as the ability to improve on accountability and making the government more responsive and competitive (Fairfax County 1999; Gore 1994; ICMA 1998; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; GAO 1997; Wholey and Hatry 1992 Cope 1987; Gearhardt 1999; O'Toole, Stipak, and Rabin 1988 cited in Coplin, Merget and Bourdeaux: 2002:699-700).

Moreover, it has become a critical link to effective budgeting, which has become a common concern for governments facing fiscal budget constraints. As Hughes (2003:161) notes "governments wish to have some means for deciding which parts of their operations are using resources well". Although several countries are in support of performance-oriented management reform, critics of this movement point out that in practice it has proved difficult for public sector organizations to reorient and organize themselves in a manner that they are able to measure outputs, assess outcomes and use the information to systematically evaluate and continuously improve the process (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000:131).

In addition to the focus on performance measurement at global level, there is also an increasing challenge to avoid wastefulness in public expenditure and to improve the quality of services provided by the state to the citizen. The adoption of Batho Pele principles in South Africa therefore signifies an important step towards improving service delivery and addressing the past imbalances caused by apartheid rule. Most importantly, the transformation process in South Africa treats the citizen as a customer, thus challenging the system to afford ordinary citizens full participation in influencing the policy making process to address their basic needs. Furthermore although the lines of accountability between the citizen and the government remain intact, the change towards responsive public service calls for a radical shift from an inward-looking, bureaucratic systems, processes and attitudes towards innovative ways that puts the needs of the citizens first (Kroukamp, 1999:329). The drive towards client-oriented service systems

therefore puts the public managers under pressure to account directly to the users for the quality of services provided to them. Although there is an increasing awareness of the need to separate the roles and functions of the executive and the administration, the new public management recognizes that the relationship between the politicians and public managers is complementary in nature as the public managers are involved in public policy and politics issues, which were once considered an arena for politicians only.

As such this study has practical policy and managerial implications. It will shed some light on a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration when embarking on public sector reform measures. These factors are assumed to be largely understood as a complex mixture of environmental pressure, polity features and historical institutional context and can therefore determine the success or failure of the reform process (Laegreid 2001:4). The research findings will be useful to the executive as well as managers for understanding transformation and change initiatives directed at increasing performance and service delivery in the public sector. More significantly, it will shed some light on how these changes are impacting on the role of the managers and the executive. Finally, the research will hopefully add valuable contribution to the current debate on new public management which seeks to move from process and procedure towards results-oriented service systems.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study will use a case study approach in addressing issues of performance and productivity in the public sector with particular reference to the South African public service transformation process. According to Welman and Kruger, (2001:182) "case study pertains to the fact that a limited number of units of analysis (often only one) such as an individual, a group or an institution, are studied intensively." Thus the research objective aims at "understanding the

uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity.” (Welman and Kruger, 2001:21). Furthermore, the case study approach allows the researcher to study one aspect of a problem in detail; this allows the researcher to put much attention on a specific situation. This being the case, political-administrative interface, performance management and Batho Pele policy initiatives will be the main focus in this study.

The researcher will also use the information gathered from the primary and secondary data. The primary data will constitute documents relating to government documents such as The White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery 1997, White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service 1995, White paper on Human Resource Management and Public Service Training and Education and White Papers on Affirmative Action and Training Development. The evaluation reports by the PRC and the PSC on the transformation process will also be used. This will also be supplemented by using other legislative documents governing the public service such as the Public Service Act 1994, Public Service Laws Amendment Act, 1997 and 1998.

The theory section containing the literature review on new public management in both developed and developing countries will form the bulk of the secondary data. As such reviewing books, journals or articles relating to these areas will provide a basis for understanding the current moves towards public sector reform globally and its relevance to South Africa.

1.6 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

New Public Management is the global reform movement inspired by the economic and managerialism ideas meant to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the government services.

Political –administrative interface is the nature of relationship between the political and the administrative leadership.

Batho Pele refers to the policy meant to improve the way in which services are delivered. It is inspired by the notion that citizenship is central in service delivery, as such calls for a new cultural change aimed at promoting customer satisfaction and promptness in service delivery.

Performance Management System here is taken within the context of adopting better management of individuals' performance by clearly linking their performance with the organizational objectives. It is based on the premise that proper management of performance facilitates employees' development, reward of good performers and imposing sanctions to poor performers.

Public sector reform and transformation are used interchangeably to denote a deliberate attempt to change the processes, systems and practices in the public services in order to meet the country's new priorities, policies and strategies towards better performance.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE RESEARCH PAPER

Chapter one provides a description of the research process and methodology. It will consist of the following:

- An introduction
- Research Problem and objectives
- Significance of study
- Research Design and methodology
- Definition of terms
- Outline of the study

Chapter two looks at the theoretical and conceptual model of new public management with particular attention to its growth and influences as a global phenomenon.

Chapter three looks at the general overview of the South African reform process within the context of New Public Management.

Chapter four will look at the three main features of reform measures adopted in the South African public service, mainly: political and administrative interface, performance management and Batho Pele, in particular to look at the reasons why such policy measures are being adopted.

Chapter five provides conclusions on the main findings as well as recommendations.

1.8 SUMMARY

Attempts to transform the South African public service from an instrument of oppression, discrimination and control have become the main focus of the democratic government since 1994. The public sector reform process is part of the transformation in South Africa meant to consolidate democracy and strengthen a sense of trust between the democratic government and the citizens who are legitimately hoping to see a more representative public service committed to improving service delivery and bringing better life for all South Africans.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the key features of public sector reform in the South African public service, mainly: the new political/administrative interface, performance management system and the transformation of public service delivery (Batho Pele). The study will adopt a case study approach in specifically looking at the South African public service transformation process by critically examining the three mentioned features of public sector reform as the main focus of the study. This will be supplemented by the primary data emanating from government documents and other evaluation reports by the Presidential Review Commission and the Public Service Commission. The next chapter will be the secondary data comprising of the literature review on new public management ideas, its origins and underlying forces in both developed and developing countries.

CHAPTER TWO

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is on the theoretical framework as well as review of the new public management ideas as the global phenomenon from the various sources of the literature. The theoretical framework is designed to develop a better understanding of the context and ideas which shaped the emergence of the modern public sector reforms. In the South African context this is crucial because the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service and the main findings and recommendations of the Presidential Review Commission put strong emphasis on the need for the establishment of a new culture of governance which is in line with the best international practices.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT MODEL

There is no clear definition or description of the term “new public management” among various authors who have written extensively on the subject. Considering its loose interpretation, the term “new public management” (NPM) is conveniently regarded as the set of broadly similar administrative doctrines which had a strong influence on the bureaucratic reform agenda in several OECD countries from the late 1970s (Hood, 1991:4). The key features of these similar administrative doctrines as adopted in several advanced industrialized countries encompasses the move towards increased market orientation, devolution, commercialization, privatization, deregulation of public sector management, managerialism, contracting-out and performance monitoring (Hood 1991, Wallis and Dollery 2002).

2.2.1 NPM: THE ORIGIN AND UNDERLYING FORCES

Several scholars perceive the new public management as the global reform movement that became more prevalent during the early 80's. There are two major sets of economic theories and normative values linked towards increased efficiency that gave rise to the new public management ideas. The first set of ideas is derived from the public choice theory, while the other set of ideas is inspired by managerialism (Aucoin 1990, Hood 1991, Hughes 2003).

2.2.2 PUBLIC CHOICE THEORY

According to the public choice theory, the idea that bureaucrats are being motivated by public interest in serving the public is questionable at best because a rational man is guided by his own selfish interest. Public choice theory therefore posits that bureaucrats are essentially driven by the desire to maximize their own utility at the cost of their agency; maximizing their own welfare and not the public interest (Hughes, 2003; Mascarenhas, 1990: 76). The argument goes further that the inefficiencies inherent in the bureaucracy can be addressed by opting for a more market-oriented approach to public policies as well as injecting business oriented mechanisms to public sector management. The primary argument of the proponent of markets is that markets are more efficient than bureaucracy in that they open up for competition and individual choice which provides incentives to reduce costs (Hughes, 2003:41). Competition is therefore seen as the better alternative towards improving the performance of the public bureaucracies because public managers will improve their performance if exposed to market forces (Kettl, 1997 cited in Terry, 1998:195).

The second argument is that markets provide somehow clear lines of accountability between the principal and the agents, whereas in the bureaucracy it is difficult to determine the needs of the principals given their diverse interests. Also, it becomes difficult for the agency to find out what each principal expects from them; as a result there is nothing motivating the agency to perform given the

inadequate control mechanisms of the agency. Based on these arguments, the agency problem which is more prevalent in the public sector can be minimized by contracting-out much of the functions of the public sector (Hughes, 2003: 11-12). Although the theory has been influential among the politicians especially with regard to curbing the growth and power of bureaucracy, there have been mounting criticisms on its assumption that markets are more superior in efficiency compared to the traditional bureaucracy (Kolthoff, 2003:3).

2.2.3 MANAGERIALISM

Managerialism is another set of ideas which focuses on improving productivity, performance and control in the public sector. The central objectives underlying managerialism is based on the premise that "the capacities of modern complex organizations to realize their objectives can be enhanced by management structures and practices which debureaucratize organizational systems" (Aucoin, 1990:117). In a way, managerialism denotes an indirect attack on bureaucracy which is regarded as inefficient, fragmented, poorly organized and not capable of performing to the expected level (Huberts et al. 1999 cited in Kolthoff, 2003:2). As such there are several managerial changes in the bureaucracy aimed at making the public sector more cost-effective and productive. The key elements to these changes include: the adoption of business management techniques, greater service and client orientation, introduction of market mechanisms and competition in the public sector (Kickert, 1996:1). These set of ideas have become entrenched in every aspect of public sector reforms in most developed states as well as developing countries, in particular those believing in the idea of modernizing their public sector.

2.2.4 REASONS FOR REFORMS / DRIVING FORCES

The idea of reform in the public service is not a new phenomenon as many countries across the world have attempted to remodel their public sectors with

the changing socio- economic and political factors. However, a series of reforms in many countries since the 1980's took a form of global movement in character with a high degree of politicians' commitment to bring about change in public sectors' performance (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000:24).

Pollit and Bouckaert, (2000:33) identify three main broad factors that gave impetus to reforms in the last twenty years, mainly: global economic forces, socio-economic change and the influx of new management ideas. Global economic factors would encompass a number of sub-categories namely: globalization of capital markets, rapid growth of multinational corporations and international trade. It is argued that these factors largely constrain government abilities to enjoy their sovereign powers to formulate their economic policies as they would desire. The predicament faced by nation state due to the globalization forces is more clearly captured by McCrews, 1990 (cited in Edoho, 1997:3) in defining globalization as:

The multiplicity of changes and interconnections between states and societies, which make up the modern world system. It describes the process by which events, decisions and activities in one part of the world can come to have significant consequences for individuals and communities in quite distance part of the globe.

The increasing globalization of the world economies poses a challenge for governments to be more efficient and competitive. Hughes (1998:8-18) also sees technological innovations as the further drive towards changes in the public sector. Technology has enabled rapid flow of information, which in turn has facilitated global trading, spread of ideas and unrestricted labour movements. As a result, due to cheap transmission of data; management functions have become more decentralized leading to reduction paper work and time as well as confinement into the offices (ibid). Governments have thus realized the vital role that information technology can play in the improvement of service delivery,

mainly because it is clear that the traditional model of public administration cannot cope well in the rapidly changing environment. Osborne and Gaebler, being the champions of an entrepreneurial government argues that bureaucracies do not function well in the rapidly changing, information rich, knowledge-intensive society and economy of the 1990s.

According to Porter 1990 (cited in Hughes, 1998:16), there is a link between the quality of public service delivery and the national economic performance. The quality of training, healthy workforce, efficiency in tax administration and promotion of small enterprise development largely determine the economy competitiveness. As such these important factors need to be strengthened within a more innovative and capable administrative structures to increase the country's competitiveness. Consequently, governments have been under pressure to reduce their sizes and increase efficiency and effectiveness of their core public.

The rationale behind reforms is thus meant to control government spending, lessen the bureaucratic burden as well as redesign social policies that are putting strain on governments' budgets (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000:28). The 1980s and 1990s saw an increasing criticisms levelled against the government for being too large and wasteful. It was argued that the government was too much involved in socio-economic activities although it was clear that its performance in service delivery was not satisfactory (Hughes, 2003:73). There were also indications that the changing demographic and environmental patterns were exerting too much pressure on governments already facing the declining financial resources base. Pollit and Bouckaert, (2000:29) describe these socio-demographic changes as encompassing increased life expectancy, high rates of family break-up and divorce as well as an increasing level of unemployment. These trends have thus indirectly contributed to the demand on state financed services such as health care, social care and social security. More strain is likely to be felt because of HIV/AIDS pandemic which has become a world wide socio-economic problem, although its negative impact is having a direct blow on the developing countries

especially Africa. In order to combat these socio-economic problems governments are being forced to improve their service operations but what is much more significant is to reassess the roles that need to fall under the jurisdiction of the government, the private sector and the NGOs (Kaul, 1998:118).

2.3 REDEFINING THE ROLE OF THE STATE

The reform movement has had profound impact on the governments, in terms of re-assessing the capacity of the public service to deliver services in an increasingly complex environment. The direct attack was levelled on the public service for being bloated, wasteful, unresponsive, resistant to change and unable to cope with new challenges in the modern societies. The governments thus, believed that the public service needs to be re-examined with more focus on clients, value for money, efficiency and output rather than inputs, process or rule bound functionality. According to Peters and Savoie (1994:419), two significant elements were seen missing in the public sector, mainly: the inability to centre its focus on clients and efficient management of operations as well as failure to render sound advice and creativity needed to guide the policy changes. It is not surprising therefore that in several developed countries the political leadership played a pivotal role in reforming the public sector that seek to instill performance oriented culture in a less centralized public service.

2.4 NATURE OF THE POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE

It is significant to note that although managerialism ideas are largely driven by the desire to implement the '3Es' of economy, efficiency and effectiveness at all levels of government structures, these changes have also had profound impact on the nature of the relationship between politics and administration (Peters and Wright, 1996:629). The notion of separating politics and administration has been

a hotly debated issue in the academic and non-academic circles. The classical view on the theory of political-administrative dichotomy as influenced by the writings of Woodrow Wilson, Max Weber and the Northcote-Trevelyan Report holds that policy making formulation remains the role of politicians, while the implementation of policies is the responsibility of the administration. The arrangement is such that the administration is expected to be neutral, impartial and professional in carrying out the directives from the political master. In order to maintain professionalism and continuity in the traditional model of public administration, it was essential to appoint the civil servant on the basis of merit and competence as opposed to nepotism.

The civil servants as permanent officials were thus expected to serve successive governments without any political inclination. In a way, these traditional models of public administration can be regarded as a departure from the early administration which was largely based on the network of friends or relatives for employment. The early administration preceding the traditional model of public administration was therefore characterized by patronage and nepotism which often resulted in misuse of public office for personal gain, corruption and maladministration. Competence and professionalism were less important issues in this kind of administration as patronage and loyalty to a monarch or the minister determines who gets employment (Hughes, 2003:18-25).

The assumption on separate roles between the politicians and administrators has long been accepted as normative ideal in most western bureaucracies. However, empirical studies done by several authors have shown that in reality there is no such separation. It is argued that the interaction between the politicians and administrators is complex in nature as the administrators are often engaged in the formulation of policy issues as well as the implementation process (Hansen and Ejersbo, 2002:734). This is due to the fact that they have expertise and are knowledgeable about their respective fields. Furthermore, unlike the politicians who have a short-term tenure in office, the administrators tend to have a secure

tenure in office (Cameron, 2003:56; Auriacombe and Mavanyisi, 2003:74). There are some scholars who argue that the notion of separation of roles is being not well interpreted by the later generation of writers after Wilson. The argument is that in advocating for a clear separation between politics and administration, Wilson was trying to strengthen policy direction within the Congress as well as protecting public administration from political interference in the day to day running of government activities (Cameron, 2003:56).

The debate surrounding strict separation of politics from administration have led some authors to conclude that there is a need for a model that recognizes a more realistic working environment between the politicians and administrators. One such model is the Dichotomy-Duality-Model as advocated by James Svara, 1998 (cited in Hansen and Ejersbo, 2002:736). According to this model, neither the politicians nor the administrators have the legitimate right to monopolize neither the political process nor the bureaucratic function. The important aspect that needs attention from both parties is the overlapping roles of politicians and bureaucrats, in which case electoral legitimacy of the politicians and the technical know-how of the latter needs to be recognized. Although the dichotomy-duality-model put emphasis on the interaction between politics, policy and administration as a new mode of governance, its shortcomings are also highlighted as it is difficult to give a clear picture of democratic accountability and control (Hansen and Ejersbo, 2002:736).

In the context of public sector reform, measures are being taken to establish a realistic mix of roles and responsibilities between the administrators and the elected politicians (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003:48). The distinct roles played by the politicians and the administrators need to be seen as complementary in the policy-making process as such the roles of both parties have to be balanced. It is envisaged that this will strengthen the quality and capability of the public service to be more politically responsive and accountable to the elected and politically-appointed officials (Mascarenhans, 1990:86). In the

Westminster-influenced countries, the pressure has been mounting from the politicians to expand their influences on the bureaucratic structures which were seen to have grown in power and influence. The concern was to strengthen bureaucratic responsiveness to the political executive as well as to redefine the relationships between politicians and administrators.

According to Halligan (1997:3), there are four major changes in the public service that denote an attempt to strengthen political control aimed at altering the main features of the traditional system towards a more responsive public service in the Anglo systems. Halligan's analysis of the changes in the relationship between the politicians and the bureaucrats reveal the following trends in various Anglo traditions: the decline in the permanency of the senior public service, the power to appoint senior officials by the political leadership even from outside the civil service instead of the advisory bodies, the use of political resources and capacity to curb the influence of bureaucracy and the appointment of special advisers to the minister.

In Australia the pressure for politicians' influence mounted in the 1970's. The major concerns were raised on the elitist, too independent and unrepresentative nature of the bureaucracy. The public servants monopoly over advising the ministers was also questioned and ultimately resulted in the increasing number of political appointees who assumed roles that were previously handled by the senior public servants (Halligan, 1997:6). The career system of the public servants also changed significantly as the long term tenure was abolished. The key changes included the passing of the Public Service Reform Act in 1984 which allowed for the redesignated head of department to be appointed on fixed term contract and the establishment of the Senior Executive Services meant to allow greater autonomy in the recruitment of senior public service appointments in a more open and competitive manner. These measures were meant to strengthen the policy capacity at the ministerial level in particular making it a top down process. The changing relationship between the political and the

bureaucrats also meant that the senior public servant assumed a managerial role focusing their attention on achievement of objectives reflecting the preferences of the political leadership.

New Zealand attempted to put in place the system that reflects a new policy-making relationship between the bureaucrats and the politicians. The first measure entailed replacing the permanent feature of the career service for public servants with the Senior Executive Services whose head became known as chief executives responsible for recruitment of staff and the contractual appointment of the senior public servants. The State Services Act 1988 also brought significant changes on the separation of roles between the policy and administration. Firstly, the minister determines the policy outcomes while the senior executive is responsible for managerial outputs. The arrangement is such that the ministers enter into a contractual agreement with the chief executives for the delivery of specified outputs as defined, specified and measured in the annual estimates (Laking cited in Halligan, 1997:13). The chief executives are thus accountable to their ministers for results. Secondly, the chief executives are given more managerial discretion to appoint departmental staff without any political interference which might tarnish the non-partisan image of the public service.

In Britain, the desire to expand political leadership across the civil service became noticeable during Thatcher's era. Key changes that became eminent in her era were an attempt to exert political influence in the appointment of senior civil servants and instilling the managerial principles across the Whitehall. Following the creation of Next Step initiative in 1988, she was active in showing her preferences to the Senior Appointments Selection Committee through the Cabinet Secretary the kind of senior civil servants deemed suitable for appointment into higher positions (Halligan, 1997:13). Chief Executives were also appointed on fixed-term contract and appointments were sourced both internally and externally to stimulate competition. Although the use of political advisers to the ministers increased, the non-partisan integrity of the civil service remained

intact in the British system. The use of contracts for employment was reserved for the senior civil service cadre only not for the entire civil service.

An extreme attempt to increase the role of the political leadership in the civil service was witnessed in Canada under the leadership of Mulroney. One significant attempt was to appoint chiefs of staff who were on par with the deputy ministers as well as appointing outsiders for senior positions. The ministers were also given more powers to run their departments and poor performing civil servants were threatened with dismissals. In a way the Canadian system was moving more towards the US system as the civil service was being opened to the outsiders as well as extending political appointments down into the hierarchy (Aucoin, 1995 cited in Halligan, 1997:10). Mulroney's administration was however criticized for politicizing the entire public administration and led the incoming prime minister to curtail the influences of the minister's office by abolishing the position of chief of staff. He was eager to restore the non-partisan public service and put emphasis on maintaining a proper ethical behaviour for both political staff, civil servants and the ministers (Masse 1993 cited in Halligan, 1997:19). Critics however, were skeptical of Chrétien's efforts to return to the traditional principles amid political pressure mounted by the liberals who perceive the career civil service to have been politicized by the previous government and maintained the need for increase in loyalty and commitment in ministerial staff (Aucoin, 1995 cited in Halligan, 1997:20).

Taking a closer look at the changes taking place in these Anglo systems, there is a continuing commitment towards maintaining the traditional, neutral and professional public service even though attempts to strengthen the role of politicians appears to be moving towards the politicization of public administration in these countries. There are also concerns that political dominance over the civil servants might reduce the policy role of civil servants leading to the erosion of accountability as the ministers rely more on the political advisors thereby losing touch with their respective departments (Mascarenhas, 1990:87). Several

scholars have raised concern that attempts to separate the role of the politicians and administrators fail to integrate the administration, political and technical components in governance, which has led to unclear and incoherent understanding of public accountability in the new public management model (Carroll 1990 cited in Gregory, 1991:299; Barbarism, 1998; Stone, 1995 cited in Bouckaert and Pollit, 2000:139). These observations are important in this study as the South African reform model seems to be following the similar trends taking place in the Anglo systems. It will be important to find how the issue of political and administrative interface is being addressed by the South African leadership in an attempt to strike a balance between these issues.

2.5 REFORM TRENDS IN DEVELOPED STATES

More vigorous reforms began in Britain and the United States, which were similarly followed by Australia and New Zealand. In Britain, after winning the elections Thatcher embarked on a vigorous privatization as well as radically restructuring the civil service through the Next Steps Initiative with many services formerly provided by public agencies at the central and local government level, being contracted out to the private sector suppliers (Dollery and Wallis, 2002:178). The creation of Next Steps Agencies were meant to introduce business-like environment to improve executive service delivery by advocating higher efficiency through the reduction of the size of the civil service, value-for-money to taxpayers as well as granting more autonomy to these agencies. This allowed for a clear separation of functions of policy formulation and policy implementation in order to provide for the clear sense of purpose and operational goals (Kaul, 1998:123). Indeed privatization became one of the key elements of the British reform experience during Thatcher and Major administrations as their term in office was marked by a large scale privatization of publicly owned industries, the major utilities and the service sector mainly telecommunications, water, electricity, railways, steel and car industry (Minogue, 2000:21).

According to Kickert (1996:6), during the late 70's to 80's privatization was regarded as the acceptable mode through which market and competition principles can be adopted in the public sector. Market-type mechanisms were introduced in several service oriented institutions such as the healthcare, community care and education in which case the central government used the purchaser/provider split model for locally provided services (Pollit, Birchall and Putman, 1998 cited in Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000:273). These measures were adopted in order to encourage competition which was considered an essential tool towards improving the performance of public bureaucracies (Peters and Savoie, 1994:419). In a way this further reinforces the argument that use of market and market-type mechanisms can act as a catalyst in improving the performance level of public managers because they will be forced to compete with the more superior and technologically advanced private sector (ibid).

The introduction of market conditions in the public service was further reinforced by adopting the Citizen's Charter in 1991. The purpose of the document was meant to improve the quality of service delivery of the public agencies by making them more service and client oriented (Kickert, 1996:6). Each executive agency was encouraged to function according to a clear set of service standards comprising of the following principles:

- Set standards of performance to be used as the yardstick against which actual performance can be monitored and evaluated.
- Transparency on the services provided its cost and who is responsible for the provision of these services.
- Consultation with the recipients of these services
- The notion of treating citizens with respect and helpfulness as customers

- Being ready to swiftly address mistakes and complaints when services stipulated are not met including apologizing to the customers even if it means financial compensation
- Value for money in terms of providing services efficiently within the affordable resources (Minogue, 2000:21).

An evaluation of public sector reform in Britain by most scholars, points that there has been a dramatic change from the bureaucratic, rule-bound culture to a new culture embracing private sector superiority premised on being responsive to the customers and adoption of business management techniques for efficient and effective service delivery. However, although Citizens Charter is regarded as the success story of best practice by the Commonwealth Secretariat a critical assessment of the impact of 'charterism' point to a rather indifference attitude among the British citizens as there is no clear picture on the impact (Wilson 1996; Pollit, 1994 cited in Minogue, 2000). Furthermore, critics argue that service charters are in not legally binding as such makes it difficult for the service users to compel the heads of agencies to adhere to the promises set in the service charters (Bellamy and Greenaway, 1995 cited in Ayeni, 2001:20).

Similar trends of reforms at the federal government took place also in the United States. During Reagan and Clinton administrations the general feeling was that the bureaucracy was wasteful and inefficient. The attack on the federal bureaucracy therefore became a significant weapon for political leaders during the elections campaigns (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000:281). On the contrary, George Bush term in office 1988-92 was marked by a rather passive role when it came to management reform. Although he was concerned with the morale of the federal service in particular following the task force report which identified serious problems within the civil service, no bold steps were taken to rectify the problems (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000:282). Significant changes geared towards bringing

business ethos to the federal civil service such as the launching of Reform 88 in 1982, Grace Commission 1982 and President's Productivity Program of 1985 were introduced during Reagan's term in office. These series of reforms were meant to eradicate and identify bureaucratic waste, improve productivity of government agencies and put in place good management practices used in the private sector. Furthermore, Reagan emphasized more on empowering the line managers, performance measurement system and the delegation of decision-making to senior-level managers and flexibility to manage better for results (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000; Peters and Savoie, 1994).

Clinton's administration also signaled a move towards re-inventing the United States federal government which had several problems but key issues that warranted urgent attention were over-regulation and red tape. The political leadership in the United States believed that the problem facing the country largely centered around too much bureaucracy as such there was need to instill entrepreneurial management principles which are flexible to adapt to change in the new, information-driven technological world (Moe, 1994:368). The ultimate goal driving the US public sector reform is to have a government that "works better and costs less." The launching of the National Performance Review under the custodian of the Vice President Al Gore in 1993 became the guiding instrument in the US public sector reform strategy. In advocating for an entrepreneurial government, the famous Gore report influenced by the writings of Osborne and Gaebler argued that an entrepreneurial management paradigm needs to be based on the following principles:

- Effective entrepreneurial government cast aside red tape, shifting from systems in which people are accountable for following rules to systems in which people are accountable for achieving results
- Successful entrepreneurial government is judged by customer satisfaction
- Transform cultures by delegating authority and responsibility thereby empowering employees

- Strive for excellence by finding ways to make government work better and cost less (Moe, 1994:367).

According to the writings of Osborne and Gore which had free market economics and business thinking influences, the shift from a bureaucratic government and an entrepreneurial government can become a reality if there is a cultural and behavioural shift in the management of government affairs (Moe, 1994:365). The first step in this regard was to change the budget process from annual and biennial cycle. This was meant to facilitate planning for agency managers as well as setting broader policy priorities and allocation of funds to specific programmes and the monitoring of the implementation of performance indicators as opposed to the focus on their power to "nit-pick." These changes were effected through the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) which instructed departments and agencies to design strategic planning and performance measurement in the entire federal government structures (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000:283). The other initiative in terms of personnel savings and waste reduction was to charge the Office of personnel management (OPM) with the responsibility to oversee that departments and agencies implement customer-driven and empowerment ideas. It was envisaged that savings worth \$108 billion from the reduction of 252, 00 civilian employees (Peters and Savoie, 1996:287).

Since the red tape was regarded as a major constrain towards unlocking agency manager's creativity and innovation there was a strong believe that there need to be deregulation in the selection and employment of personnel. This led to the official abandoning of the management laws and accompanying regulation towards the adoption of guiding principles on funding, personnel, procurement procedures, improved information technology to access agency records and audit procedures (Gore, 1993:8). Another significant change related to the office of the Inspectors General who were seen as crucial agents in reviving the management capacity in the executive branch. It was the view of the Gore report that the Inspector Generals need to change their focus to assist managers to review their

management control system rather than being preoccupied with the strict adherence to the rules and regulations. In this regard results not the process will be the guiding principle (Moe, 1994:119).

The implementation process in the US has not been an easy exercise for the US Presidents mainly because of the competing power structures between the Congress and the interest groups. Moreover, the increasing number of political appointees rather than career civil servants meant that much of their focus turned to other pressing political issues as opposed to the implementing management reform. Although the political appointments are important in giving impetus to reforms, a high turnover of political appointees undoubtedly lead to poor policy coordination and decision making among key structures of the government mainly the budget office, agency organization and the established committees. A broad assessment of government performance since the reform process points to a mixture of success and failure as there are still continuing problems of coordination and consistency in the federal government. On the other hand, some scholars point to the positive efficiency gains as well as the modernization of systems and increased responsiveness to the customer (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000:283-84).

Commonwealth countries have similarly borrowed heavily from the British and American reform strategies. The most comprehensive programmes of governmental reforms have been pursued in New Zealand and Australia. New Zealand reform programmes are often regarded as more vigorous, formalized and coherent as emphasis was put on devolution of management powers, contracts and performance assessment as a result managers are held accountable for results expected (Laegreid, 2001:13). The literature on new public management has common overlapping ideas which feature in various description of the model. The key broader characteristics include privatization, contracting, executive agency and efficiency and quality improvement reforms.

Moreover, the key strategies promoting new public management entails the following:

- Hands –on professional management in the public sector
- Explicit standards and measures of performance
- Greater emphasis on output controls
- Shift to *disaggregation* of units in the public sector
- Shift to greater competition in public sector
- Stress on private sector styles of management practice
- Stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use (Hood, 1991:325).

Holmes and Sand (1995); Pollit (2001) cited in Hughes: 52-54) adds the following to the menu:

- Down-sizing of public service by contracting out and privatization
- Increased competition in the public service within and between departments
- Use of explicit performance contracting to match authority and responsibility
- Strategy, planning and results oriented decision-making approach
- Use of Public-Private Partnerships
- A stress on accountability and transparency
- A shift in values such as universalism, equity, security and resilience towards efficiency and individualism
- Service-wide budgeting and management systems to support and encourage these changes.

Although various sources of literature on NPM bring forward common overlapping ideas describing the model, the NPM model is still a highly contested issue in the field of public administration. For instance, in the academic world there are those who question the appropriateness and effectiveness of the NPM

reforms even in their countries of origin and their inclination towards the neo-liberal thinking. On the other hand, there are those who show their unequivocal support to the ideas enshrined in the NPM reform model despite the criticisms from the public policy specialists and the political scientists (Minogue, 2000:15). Their perception is that NPM is a new paradigm that seeks to find a new way of managing public sector organizations. Strategic planning and flexibility have come to fore as important aspects in the NPM. Given the fiscal budget constraints facing governments, great emphasis is placed on goal attainment, management of the processes and accountability for the final result.

It has become imperative that managers are given discretionary powers to manage freely their financial and human resources in the manner that best suits their organizations' needs. The argument is that granting management autonomy would lead to an improvement in the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the production and delivery of goods and services (Kickert and Verhaak, (1995:544). By all accounts it becomes clear that NPM is emerging as a new managerial approach, which offers a new way of looking at and carrying out management functions within the public sector. The argument is that efficiency in the public services can be achieved by "stimulating a business situation, adopting the methods and practices adapted from the private sector to the public services" (Bougdanor, 2000:291).

NPM seeks to focus more on performance and outputs rather than rule-bound rationality inherent in the bureaucratic theory. According to Hughes, (2003:44) the departure from the traditional administrative model is identified with several changes such as giving personal responsibility to the managers in return for achievement of results. There is a move towards flatter organizational structures, with more flexibility to the utilization of personnel, the terms and conditions of employment. Clearly the distinct character of the civil service which had guarantees for lifetime employment and incremental salary increase based on the number of years in the service are being replaced by promotion on merit

bases. Furthermore, under NPM model individuals are given opportunities to grow, expand their knowledge base while on the job, and develop their skills and expertise. Thus, whereas before the public servants were expected to follow orders, NPM strives to push ahead notions of rewarding initiative, encourage innovation and incentivising results as means of targeting apathetic, demotivated staff. (Commonwealth, 2000:134-135).

Also in an attempt to motivate employees to be productive and innovative, performance-related pay has been introduced in several countries to reward good performers as well as to sanction poor performers. There are predefined goals and objectives for the operations of the organization and the staff, which enable proper allocation of resources within the organization. This makes it easier to measure and evaluate the set goals and objectives in terms of the employees' performance and the achievement of the allocated roles and responsibilities (Hughes, 2003:44).

However, some scholars are critical of the assumptions surrounding the new public management paradigm. In particular the assumptions that the use of market can bring significant changes in the public sector performance consequently minimize the costs of running the public sector programs to tax payers. There are also strong arguments that the complexities surrounding the provider/consumer transactions in the public services makes it difficult to apply the market principles to the consumer in a similar manner as the normal market setting. Whereas, market put emphasis on efficiency for consumers, in the public setting consumers are more than this, they denote citizens demanding effectiveness and accountability (Peters and Pierrie, 2003:6). For instance, some critics point out that the concept of customer is not appropriate to serve the people by the government as it erodes the citizens' rights to equal treatment, human dignity and justice. The argument goes further pointing out that the lines of accountability becomes more vague in the public management settings, which is based on the narrow idea of receiving goods and consuming goods and

services; whereas in the public administration it is much broader and encompasses all the citizens (Haque 2000:604).

Moreover, the notion of bringing greater control over the bureaucracy in which case the politicians will act as strategic policy makers and vision guiders while the managers are left with the responsibility to oversee the operational matters has been under criticisms. For instance, Pollit and Bouckaert, (2000:140) question the credibility of such statements in real practice. The main argument is that most politicians at the level of ministers lack the capacity and will power to set clearly defined goals and visions, for the political dynamics prohibit them to adopt such policy measure unless it enables them to shed responsibility for policy failures.

2.6 REFORMS IN DEVELOPING STATES

2.6.1 POST INDEPENDENCE STATE

At independence the state became involved in too many activities of the economy in order to address socio-economic related problems as well as the inequalities of the colonial legacy. At independence there were great expectations by the masses of the government's speedy delivery of services. A number of problems confronting the governments were poor transport and communication infrastructures, high rates of literacy and a critical shortage of skilled human resources, capital and technology for development (Mutahaba, Baguma and Halfain 1993:8). Contrary to the western countries which have a strong bourgeois, the lack of a bourgeois class in the developing countries meant that the state had to be involved in almost every aspect of the economy. This, many times, entailed government ownership and management of economic and commercial ventures, as well as the provision of facilities and infrastructure to

privately owned and managed economic activities. This also implied that Weberian model, in which bureaucracy was seen as an ideal model that could promote efficiency in the organizations had to be applied in the developing countries.

However, Hughes (1998:22) argues that the inherited public service system of governance was not the ideal Weberian model used by the colonial masters back home. The public service that Africa inherited was meant to maintain law and order as opposed to development of the continent. It is not surprising therefore, that problems were experienced in applying this model to implement development policies, as the old culture of using bureaucracy as an instrument of oppression remained. Moreover, the idea of building the capacity of the civil service to cope with the developmental demands was not afforded high priority by the colonial masters. This meant that when most senior public servants returned to their home country, the acute shortage of skilled manpower was experienced as the lower ranking officers had to occupy senior positions without any managerial or technical expertise. The problem was exacerbated as the function and role of the states expanded. The bureaucracy grew in size, scope and importance, as it was the only source of expertise and knowledge, particularly of a professional and technical kind (Hughes 1998:210).

Due to the weak political system, there were no controlling bodies such as the legislation, parties, local councils and interest groups to maintain control and accountability. The main principles underlying the Weberian model, such as neutrality, fairness and honesty in carrying orders were eroded as the bureaucracy became aloof and alienated from the society, thus the aim was to serve the elite interest, their ethnic or religious counterparts (ibid). The problem of corruption and self-enactment became more powerful in developing countries due to the weak political system, thus the legislature and the judiciary lost control over bureaucracy as it was the most powerful political force and undermined the rule of law. The fact that the government was the sole employer and distributor

of goods and services made it fertile for nepotism and favoritism to grow, which ultimately resulted in inefficiency as recruitment or appointment was no longer based on merit but loyalty to the ruling party.

In such cases whereby government is involved in every sphere of the economy, there is a tendency towards centralism in that functions and responsibilities tend to move towards the center. This inhibits decision-making on policy issues from various informed parties, the presidency or party politburo often have the sole responsibility on policies dealing with socio-economic and management issues. Besides centralization of authority and responsibility, the bureaucracy lacks competency in policy-making as well as policy implementation and evaluation. These weaknesses have tended to lead to the formulation of poor or irrelevant policies, which are never implemented or lead to unanticipated consequences (Mutahaba et.al. 1993:15).

Just like the developed states, the highly centralized and rigid traditional model faced severe problems which warranted policy makers' attention. The key problems facing the developing countries were largely attributed to lack of states' capacity to reverse the declining productivity in the civil service. Also the poor performance of the public sector led to severe criticisms on the adopted interventionist strategy which was seen to be failing to provide sustainable delivery of goods and services.

2.6.2 STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES

According to Mukandala, (2000:411), in trying to analyze the problems afflicting the developing states' economy, particularly in Africa, the IMF together with the World Bank argues that policies pursued by African postcolonial regimes are the main source of Africa's problem. They do not actually blame external factors for poor performance in these countries. The argument is that poor productivity in agricultural products due to poor agricultural policies, which lack incentives to

farmers to produce more, have resulted in shortage of foreign exchange. The intervention of government in setting product prices prohibits market competition, which ultimately results in inefficient and corrupt marketing of crops (Mukandala 2000). Criticisms are also leveled on the funding of social services at the expense of investments in production together with over-employment in public services, these policies are said to have contributed to “a black market mode of conduct and degeneration in social morals” (ibid: 411). The problems have further been aggravated by political instability and civil conflicts.

On the overall analysis, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank regard poor economic policies pursued by the developing states especially Africa largely responsible for the economic crises and poor performance (Mukandala, 2000:411). Consequently, reforms of the public service in the developing countries have been pursued within the framework of structural adjustment programs (SAPs). The key objectives of these programs were aimed at stabilizing developing countries' external and internal balances by devaluation of currencies, producer price increases, trade liberalization, privatization and support for institutional changes (Engberg-Pederson, Gibbon, Raikes and Udsholt, 1996: ix).

The literature on evaluation of structural adjustment programmes in Africa points to the fact that these programmes have achieved little in terms of building public sector institutions towards a new role in relation to both the market and civil society. Consequently, criticisms are being leveled on their assumption that private sector has the capacity to take over the functions of the state (ibid). Furthermore, the argument is that state capacity effectiveness; motivation and professionalism have been eroded in the public sector due to salary freezes, retrenchments and removal of subsidies for provision of services. These inhumane policies as advocated by the SAP's have essentially laid a basis for civil service reform geared towards building national capacity as it became clear during their implementations that there need to be an efficient and effective public

sector to implement and sustain reform measures. On the same note Olowu (2000:216) argues "it took serious flaws identified during the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in most countries in the region to force the international community to refocus attention once more on the issue of capacity."

The adverse impact of privatization as one of the strategy used to reduce the state role in managing the economy became more acute among the poor communities as they were hit hard by the reductions in basic social services. Also the weakened governance structures made Africa a fertile ground for corrupt activities among the bureaucrats, businessmen, political or military bodies (Adamolekun, 2002:377). Although there has been a strong lobbying against strong state intervention in the economic affairs during the 80's, it was soon realized that the state is a vital aspect for development and democratization process in the developing states (Olowu, 2000:347). In fact, the major institutions responsible for transplanting public management ideas in developing countries such as the World Bank and other UN agencies are agreeing in principle that the state in the 21st century will not necessarily be expected to be involved in the detailed provision of goods and services like it was the case in the 1970s. However, there is recognition that a strong strategic state is necessary to combat the negative influences of globalization which gave rise to the NPM ideas. In order for governments to cope within new public management ideas the challenges facing governments are to build strong institutions to strengthen effective democratic principles, strong technological development base and human resources development base (World Public Sector Report, 2001:12).

The move towards democratic rule, respect for human rights and political accountability are thus seen as a pre-requisite to smooth economic reforms. Therefore, civil service reform is based on the premise that sound and accountable administrations are key elements towards democratic development and good governance. Despite the fact that all countries have had to confront

common global changes, be they political, social, economic, and technological and environment, the civil service reform programs are very diverse depending on the political evolution of the different countries. However, cutting across this diversity there has been in both developed and developing countries, a reassessment of the role of government in the planning and management of economic and social policies and increasing trends towards liberal-market economic policies (Kaul, 1998:118).

The changing role of government has found legitimacy as a means towards improved economic efficiency in many countries. There is now a decline in the role of the government as a principal agent for socio-economic development to more of a guider and a facilitator of economic activity. Consequently the major causes and objectives of civil service reform in developing countries have been to overcome public sector inefficiencies, reduce monopoly, minimize budget deficit, relax trade protection, streamline public expenditure, withdraw subsidy, generate investment, improve service quality and increase customer satisfaction (Haque, 2001:66).

2.6.3 DOWNSIZING EFFORTS

According to Adamolekun and Kiragu (1999:163), several African countries have embarked on downsizing measures to minimize the budget deficits. Since most developing countries have a poor record keeping, the first attempt was to establish a reliable base-line information about who is employed and where in the government. Through this exercise it was easy to eliminate ghost workers, these are normally workers who have died, retired or never existed. The exercise proved a success in reducing wage bills in countries like Ghana, Guinea and Uganda (Country Economics Department, 1991:15). In some countries however, critics point out that the downsizing exercise was left incomplete due to lack of political will and lack of funds for severance payments particularly Malawi,

Senegal and Zambia. Criticisms are also leveled on the non-participation of the locals in the preliminary functional and organizational reviews prior to the downsizing process which were largely conducted by the external experts and as such not taken seriously by the locals. Downsizing efforts in most African countries thus differ from United Kingdom "efficiency scrutinizes" which encompassed private sector expert and a panel of officials from several ministries and departments (Adamolekun and Kiragu, 1999:164). Furthermore, McCourt 1998b (cited in Polidano, 1999: 21) points out that the difficulty arises due to the fact that "civil services have many entry points and governments can find it difficult to plug them all". Another component of the downsizing efforts in most Sub-Saharan African countries have been the introduction of compulsory retirement age and voluntary retirement programmes. These programmes were designed to attract the less skilled but instead the skilled manpower left the civil service for better payments in the private sector (Country Economics Department, 1991:15).

2.6.4 PERFORMANCE-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY

A number of developing countries have begun to experiment with performance management systems. As the move is towards reducing taxes and targeting the escalating public expenditure, it is believed that performance management systems can make a significant contribution to public sector performance. Significant reform measures similar to developed states in the developing countries have been the adoption of budget reform and expenditure controls. Many developing countries are therefore moving towards a transparent form of budget systems in which case there is a link between allocation of money and performance.

One of the identified shortcomings of the traditional budget model is that it focused more on inputs into the administrative process. In this case the budget process is characterized by the annual financial allocations in an incremental

manner and also legally approved by the legislative bodies. With this type of budgeting it is difficult to link the budget figures to what the departments and agencies do and how well they perform their functions. Other problems of the traditional budget system include short-term focus as opposed to long-term focus which makes it difficult for the policy makers to forecast on the future costs of new programmes. Also it lacks flexibility as managers cannot divert funds from one programme to another, thus restricting managers to channel resources to the areas of need. Besides these mentioned limitations, the limited information inherent in the traditional budget makes it difficult for the politicians to make substantive policy changes geared towards addressing the citizens' needs and aspirations (Hughes, 2003:170).

The departure from the annual budget system is thus meant to make the budgeting process an integral part of planning, operational management and performance measurement process (Bouckaert and Pollit, 2000:64). The implementation of medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) by several developing countries is meant to provide a policy framework for budget reform and expenditure control in that it facilitates planning, strategic allocation of resource and management of the budget process, transparency as well as accountability (Ademolekun, 1999:165). However, an evaluation of budget reforms showed that in most cases the training component was lacking, and where it was provided it was not meant to target the needs of civil servants, management and those charged with the supervision of change process (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003:11).

Another aspect of financial reform in developing countries relates to building capacity in accounting and auditing including the design and implementation of the new accounting system as well as creating executive agencies by merging customs and income tax into autonomous agencies. These autonomous revenue authorities have discretionary powers to increase wages, recruit skilled labour

force and reward bonuses for achieving revenue targets as well as sanctioning poor performers. Drastic improvements in the revenue collection have been recorded in several countries such as Ghana, Uganda and Zambia that have experienced with these revenue authorities initiatives (Pollidano, 1999; Ademolekun, 1999).

2.6.5 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A similar trend towards measures aimed at improving performance in the public sector has been the introduction of performance management and contractual agreements. According to Wescott, (1999:160) performance management as a system has four important aspects: firstly, it links organizational goals to work plans, secondly provides for performance-oriented staff appraisal system, thirdly it focuses on capacity development through training and development of human resources, finally it facilitates for a fair reward system in a form of pay and incentives for individuals and teams. In the context of public service improvement, performance management is perceived as a means towards attaining higher quality service through improved accountability in performance and individual motivation (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003:219). Most developing countries have responded with enthusiasm to the use of performance-oriented staff appraisal system. There is however, a growing concern that most countries have found it difficult to design and implement this result-oriented management style, in particular the problem arises when trying to link appraisals to career rewards and sanctions (Pollidano, 1999:21).

According to Commonwealth Secretariat (2003:219), performance management process requires a cultural change in the organization as such needs to be taken in a serious manner by the governments and the managers driving change. The effective use of performance management system requires that the ministries/departmental agency strategic objectives are defined within the

broader framework of public service vision. The broad objectives and intentions need to be clearly understood by the departments, division and units including individuals' objectives. It is important therefore that when establishing standard of performance, individual targets are linked to the organizational objectives. Performance management process also needs to be regarded as a two-way communication between individuals and management in which achievements are measured and individuals are given an encouraging and motivating feedback (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003:219). Performance oriented appraisal forms an integral part of performance management process aimed at linking individual performance to organizational goals, to jointly review the problems encountered by the employees in reaching the set targets as well as providing training and coaching where needed.

Most organizations realize that performance-oriented appraisal system is critical to an organization's ability to be successful in an increasingly competitive and changing environment. In a similar manner the civil service has undergone profound changes due to global factors that it is essential to put in place a system that guarantees a better understanding among the employees on how their work contributes to the attainment of organizational goals. There are several advantages that organizations can achieve by adopting performance related appraisal system mainly identification of training needs, clear career development path and an improved communication between the managers and the subordinates to tackle problems in an open manner. On the other hand, under the confidential reporting system an assessment of an employee had no link with the overall organizations' objectives and not taken seriously by the employees and the supervisors. Besides these weaknesses the confidentiality inherent in the appraisal provided little room for feedback except on the negative aspect of employee performance.

While performance management is being embraced as a viable developmental tool towards improvement of performance in the civil service, it is also being

recognized that a prerequisite for successful implementation lies with the ability to respond to the new needs of managers through development programmes (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003:219). In this regard developing countries are considering initiating performance contracts for senior public servants in order to hold them accountable for performance as stipulated in their performance agreements. This move denotes a decline in the traditional system of life tenure in senior management positions as merit and output are becoming crucial factors to determine one's progression within the civil service. The use of performance contracts will in turn facilitate the linking of pay to performance. Botswana, Ghana, Uganda and South Africa are in the process of experimenting with performance contracts system while some countries such as Singapore and Malaysia already have performance contracts entrenched in their systems (Ademolekun, 1999; Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003).

2.6.6 IMPROVING QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY

Attempts to improve on the quality services that address public's expectation in a reliable and cost effective manner have come at the top of the policy makers' agenda in most of the public sector reform programmes. It is becoming apparent that for the civil service to be responsive to the needs of the masses there need to be a change in organizational culture. Instilling a new culture that emphasizes workers commitment and passion to excel at all levels is considered crucial towards unlocking employees potential to be innovative and creative in striving to satisfy their customers and users (Kaul, 1996:143). Therefore, democratization of work practices including more open, flexible participative practices at every level of the organization is being advocated to further strengthen devolution and decentralization of managerial responsibility. These views which are borrowed from the private sector are being experimented in several countries such as Botswana, Singapore and Malaysia, in particular, work improvements teams (WITS) as part of the Total Quality Management (TQM), which have been

introduced as strategies to enhance quality and innovation in order to devise practical solutions for service improvements (Kaul, 1996:144).

The use of TQM as NPM technique in the public sector has gained a popular increase as a driving philosophy meant to bring change in the organizational effectiveness, efficiency and service delivery by involving everyone in the organization towards team work spirit for the common goal of the organization.

Total Quality Management as a management technique thus aims to include participation and commitment of all members in the continuous attempt to improve service delivery, satisfaction of the customers and the elimination of waste (Sharma and Hoque, 2002:340).

The common trend in all public sector reform programmes is the efforts to redefine citizens as customers (Ayeni, 2001: v). Consequently, an emphasis is made on the importance of an outward looking civil service with a customer-oriented approach. The approach further signals a dynamic process to nurture a cordial, friendly and customer-focused relationship between the public service and its individual clients. To this end, several countries have resorted to introducing market-oriented mechanisms, public-partnerships and new performance management approaches in order to promote genuine empowerment of the customers. Thus, the new strategies are being devised towards meeting the needs and expectations of the public for an efficient, accountable and user-friendly management (Ayeni, 2001: v). It is being recognized that service users need to be active participants in making choices and standard of services they expect. Namibia, Singapore, Mauritius and South Africa have also adopted these customer-oriented principles (Kaul, 1996:144).

An evaluation of NPM related reforms in developing countries shows a partial success in this venture. The conclusions drawn by some scholars are that there have been some improvements in efficiency and a mixed effect on equity. On the other hand the negative side shows an overemphasis on efficiency while accountability has decreased (Batley, 1999 cited in Manning, 2001:301).

However, Manning, (2001:303) argues that even though NPM has failed to bring significant changes in the performance of developing countries, it has however, broadened possible options for managerial choice within the public sector. In particular, it has proved that a system that allows for the meaningful participation of the masses to complain or express their preferences about the services provided somehow puts pressure on the government to improve service delivery. Furthermore, he contends that there are certain conditions necessary for NPM related reforms to be successful mainly: predictability in resourcing, credible regulation of staff and policy. These are regarded as important Old Disciplines that build capability towards effective contract-like arrangements and are simply lacking in many developing countries (Manning, 2001:303). All in all, the argument is that developing countries have to concentrate on building capability mainly because even where governments are motivated and capable, the traditional administrative reforms remain important to push forward NPM positive results.

2.7 SUMMARY

This review has covered the nature of the new public management model as the global reform movement that became prevalent in the 1980's. The theories underlying this model and its main characteristics mainly the public choice theory and the managerialism ideas in developed states will form a foundation towards the critical analysis of how applicable these theories are to the South African context. The review of the reform process and measures in the developed states as well as developing states will assist to substantiate the debate surrounding the South African public sector reform as a unique country confronted with the challenges of dealing with the international demands to design its policies in such a manner that it survives in the globalization era. Another important issue emerging in this era of rapid transformation is the importance of changing the

bureaucratic structures into the flexible entities that can focus on policy implementation. The issues of political and administrative interface has also come to fore, as governments are moving towards strengthening the upper hand of the politicians in the formulation of policies and implementation. The senior positions have become politicized in several countries in an attempt to give political executive more political influence. This has been criticized as politicizing the civil service.

This will be looked within the context of dealing with local problems such as eradicating apartheid legacies, tackling poverty and affording the previously disadvantaged masses the right to democratic participation, equal treatment and building a stable responsive public service closer to the peoples' needs and aspirations. The main themes under study mainly the political/administrative interface, performance management and Batho Pele policy initiatives would be located within the changing role of the state in the 21st century which has put pressure on governments to be efficient and effective in dealing with budget constraints as such emphasis is on the need to measure performance.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER THREE

3. SOUTH AFRICAN REFORM AND CONTEXT

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter covered the origin and the underlying forces surrounding the NPM model. This chapter will look in a more specific manner, the transformation process in the South African public service and its underlying objectives. This brief overview of the public sector reform trends in South Africa will assist in analyzing the extent to which the transformation process resembles and conforms to the ideas of the new public management.

3.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REFORM

The 1994 first democratic elections marked a turning point in the history of South Africa. With the end of apartheid which was based on unjust laws that discriminated against the majority of Africans, the country was for the first time able to negotiate the democratic process in an inclusive manner. Several scholars make note of the challenging task facing the policy makers in South Africa in trying to transform the public service into a representative, service-oriented, transparent and accountable institution (Mc Lennan, 1997; Cameron and Tapscott, 2000; Bardill, 2000; Mhone and Edigheji, 2003). In particular they stress on the predicament facing South Africa as efforts are being made to address service delivery backlogs, inequalities in wealth and income distribution, employment opportunities, extreme poverty and political transition. Besides these challenges the demise of apartheid has opened lots of new opportunities for South Africa to participate in the global arena. As a result, its economic policies need to be designed in such a manner that the country survives in the competitive world. It is fortunate that the South African approach towards political transformation and development needs to be integrated with a broad

transformation process of the public service to successfully address the changing society needs (Mc Lennan, 1997; Bardill, 2000; Ncholo, 2000). It could be noted that the public sector reform process in South Africa is twofold in that it seeks to locate transformation of the public service within the local and international context.

The 1996 Constitution of South Africa highlights important values that need to guide the public service structures, functions and operational methods. These include the following principles:

- A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.
- Efficient, economic and effective utilization of resources must be strived for.
- Public administration need to be development orientated.
- Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably.
- Promotion of responsiveness in addressing people's needs through participation in the policy-making.
- Transparency and accountability are emphasized as the cornerstones of the public service; more importantly is the provision of timely and accurate information to the public.
- Proper human resource management and career-development practices to reap human potential.
- Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with a working environment based on fairness and objectivity and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation (Constitution of South Africa, 1996 S 165 (1)).

The 1996 Constitution has thus uplifted the status of the public service as an institution of governance entrusted with the responsibility of being loyal in executing the lawful policies of the government in power. The principles of good governance and democratic values mainly impartiality, professionalism, public

participation, transparency and accountability are also integrated in the White Paper on the Transformation of the South African Public Service, 1995. The White Paper and the Public Service Act have made provision for a conceptual framework that guides a coherent, co-coordinated approach towards the management and change process in the transformation effort. The vision and mission guiding the implementation of policies and other legislative measures meant to transform a representative, coherent, transparent, effective, accountable and responsive public service were also premised on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which was adopted by the Government of National Unity (GNU) on assuming power in 1994. The document put an emphasis on a people-centered, people-driven public service based on equity, quality, timeousness and a strong code of ethics (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995:14). The key strategies adopted to transform the public service in accordance with the GNU's vision and mission encompasses the following:

- Rationalization and restructuring to ensure a unified, integrated and leaner public service;
- Institution building and management;
- Representativeness and affirmative action;
- Transformation of service delivery to meet basic needs;
- Democratization of the state;
- Human resource development;
- Improvement of employment conditions and labour relations;
- Promotion of professional service ethos (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995:14-15).

3.2.1 RATIONALISATION AND RESTRUCTURING

Since the advent of the democratic rule significant progress has been made towards a unified and integrated public service as a major focus of GNU. One significant piece of legislature passed was the Public Service Act in 1994, which give effect to the transfer of powers, functions and resources of the previously Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC) states with the new national and nine provincial administrations. The need for this legislative reform measures were largely precipitated by the fact that too much centralized powers and functions were perceived as the major impediments towards the establishment of efficient and effective administrations at national and provincial level (Ncholo, 2000:89).

The complexities surrounding the South African public service is clearly captured by Mc Lennan, (1997:100) when states that "historically, the South African public service emerged as a peculiar mixture of centralization and racial/regional deconcentration and devolution." Thus, the pre-democratic public service did not only reflect fragmented and bloated administrative structures but also differed in the legal approach, procedures, policies and practices, organizational culture and personal systems (Public Service Commission, 1996:3-4). The democratic government was therefore confronted with an array of legislative documents, regulations and statutes that were designed to address different administrations' own needs, preferences and circumstances. These differences were more apparent in the division of powers, functions, conditions of service, staffing and salary grading system (Ncholo, 2000:95).

Another important long-term goal in restructuring and rationalizing the public service is the creation of a leaner and more cost-effective service. The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service emphasized on the need to contain fiscal budget especially the reduction of the wage bill as a proportion of the public expenditure over the four years. The key strategies to be undertaken in

this regard included rightsizing the public service through the optimal allocation of human and other resources for effective service delivery. Measures were also to be taken to improve productivity, efficiency and reduce waste by introducing improved work practices which devolves more decision making powers and responsibilities to the lower levels. Further savings were envisaged by adjusting remuneration structures, introducing early retirement packages, retrenchment, redeployment and training (White Paper on Public Service Transformation, 1995:46). The goal towards a leaner public service was characterized by the coalition between the government and the unions. Essentially, this coalition was meant to forge a common understanding of both parties' needs that is the need to improve the protection of workers and to speed up the transformation process of the public service (Hassen, 2003:124).

However, maintaining coalition between these two parties proved difficult to sustain and often contradictory because all the policies and agreements need to be located within the macroeconomic constraints posed by the adopted economic framework known as Growth, Employment and Redistribution: A Macroeconomic Strategy (GEAR). To begin with, the agreement signed between the labour unions and the government which led to the introduction of the voluntary severance packages (VSPs) made insignificant progress in terms of reducing staff numbers and envisaged savings. Instead, the public service suffered a major loss of skills as highly skilled people opted for VSPs to join the private sector or work as consultants in the public service. The significant increases of the wages across the board could not be sustained as the envisaged savings did not materialize, resulting in an agreement to reduce the wages agreed to in the first agreement (Hassen, 2003:125).

Furthermore, the unions and the government often locked horns as the two parties failed to agree on the cost containment strategy. This misunderstanding has led to a series of strikes which have consequently resulted in the declining

staff morale, motivation, retention and low productivity as increased tensions characterized the public service due to announcements of retrenchments, redeployment and rightsizing (Presidential Review Commission Report, 1998:89). A comparative study on rightsizing measures in America and South Africa by Hohls & Peroff, (2000:10) reveals that there is no statutory policy compelling departments and administrations to surrender posts for abolition and determine all-inclusive rightsizing targets. In the absence of this statutory policy it is understandable that a more planned, coherent and systematic approach to the rightsizing efforts can not be realized.

3.2.2 RESTRUCTURING OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT ECHELON

In order to speed up the transformation process the restructuring of the senior management echelon has been high on the policy agenda. An analysis of the status of Africans occupying senior positions depicts a skewed imbalanced picture even during the new democratic era. According to Picard, (1999:318) there was virtually no representation of blacks in the middle and senior categories except in the homeland states despite the fact that they formed a large portion in the civil service by the mid-1980s. The central administration on the other hand reflected a high number of white dominating senior positions. Since 1994 several legislative documents have been passed geared towards transforming a new representative public service in terms of gender, race and disability ratios. In this regard the Employment Equity Act has had profound impact on the restructuring process as it had two main objectives mainly: promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of discriminatory policies as well as implementing affirmative action policies aimed at affording previously disadvantaged groups equal employment opportunities to achieve representativity in all categories. Significant progress in the restructuring of the senior management echelons has been evident with the increasing percentage of 63.93 into senior positions by black public servants

(PSC, 2004:37). The number of women occupying these senior positions has also recorded an increase of 24.82 percent in 2004, although the Cabinet retained the 30% target for women at the managerial level (ANC, 2004).

The restructuring process at the senior management level was based on the understanding that the civil service should be representative of the South African people. Public Service Act, 1994, No.103 thus gives effect to equality and other democratic values enshrined in the Constitution in making appointments and filling of vacant positions. Affirmative Action is therefore perceived as the legal instrument through which a representative and equitable public service should be build, in particular giving practical support to those previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination (Public Service Regulations, 2001: Part VII, A).

An overview of the restructuring process of senior management echelon at the provincial and national level reveals that appointments into these positions have been political in character, with a lacking regard for the necessary skills and experience. The Presidential Report (1998:16) points out that while such appointments are crucial to combat negative resistance from unsupportive elements at the senior management level, they need not however, become the permanent feature of the public service. There is a general understanding among scholars that some redress is necessary. However, they argue that in dealing with issues of representativeness, there is also a need to strike a balance with ability, objectivity and fairness (Hilliard and Kemp, 1999:364). The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service also stresses that affirmative action needs to be an integral part of human resources development and capacity building efforts. It warns that caution needs to be exercised not to turn affirmative action into a numerical goal, but should be approached in a manner that enhances the capability of the previously disadvantaged people, in line with other transformation goals (WPTS, 1995:20).

Another issue that has attracted government attention in its effort to restructure the senior management echelon is that of attracting and retaining the best skilled professionals and managers. The launching of the Senior Management Service (SMS) in the public service in 2001 is thus meant to strengthen the management capacity of this distinct body by improving their recruitment and the retention, introducing flexible remuneration package, flexibility in their deployment, improved training and development opportunities, improve professionalism and ethical conduct as well as developing and implementing performance management system suitable for SMS (van der Vyver, 2001:24).

3.2.3 INSTITUTION BUILDING AND MANAGEMENT

The White Paper on the Transformation of the public Service (1995:48) put emphasis on the need to transform management practices and organizational culture in order to attain the goal of institution building and management. This is premised on the understanding that aligning management practices with the best international practices would improve performance, responsiveness and accountability of the public service. The White Paper argued that in order to enable managers to effect change rather than merely following rules and procedures, an adaptive model of governance need to be put in place which emphasizes on the decentralization and devolution of managerial powers, directly linked to the accountability for performance against stipulated objectives. It suggested that the employment contracts of Director Generals need to be linked to the achievement of agreed performance objectives and simultaneously granting the Director Generals more flexibility in managing human and financial resources to attain the departmental objectives (White Paper on Public Service Transformation, 1995:49).

3.2.4 HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Human resource development has become one of the key priority areas in most countries in the endeavor to transform civil service structures into responsive and competitive entities. In South Africa the greatest challenge facing the democratic country is the lack of skilled manpower. The training and development of public servants is regarded as an important tool towards equipping public servants with the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies to deliver quality output (White Paper on Transformation of the public Service, 1995:64). Issues of representivity, management of diversity would be easily managed through long-term strategic training and development of public servants who were previously denied opportunities in training and development.

The drive towards human resource development is more critical in the South African context where the government is estimated to have spent from 50%-60% of the overall national budget of salaries of its employees, between 1996-2000 (Cameron and Tapsott, 2000:85). Much of the initiatives and expenditure allocated to human resource development stem from concerns over lack of representivity within the public service and lack of capacity and skills to cope with the increasing demands placed on state resources. Human resource development forms an important component in the transformation process as the sustainable provision of service delivery depends on the public servants. Given the fact that the South African public service has been accustomed to the old system of strict adherence to the regulations and administration of the process, the urgent need to bring into practice a new culture as emphasized in the new public management setting can be fully realized through training and development measures. Furthermore, the White Paper argues that the development of human resource will inculcate the public servants with a sense of professionalism and responsiveness to the public needs.

In order to realize training and development as a catalyst towards change, training measures need to be strategic and based on the broader need of transformation, institution building and human resources development; well coordinated, organized and accredited to promote equity, accountability and cost-effectiveness; flexible and decentralized in line with the prevailing national norms and standards; include the broader participation of different relevant stakeholders; aimed at enhancing access and empowerment of previously disadvantaged groups. The Presidential Review Commission (1998:48) recognizes the important role that the South African Management and Development Institute (SAMDI) can play in providing capacity building support for meeting the skills and upgrading training programs relevant to the departments' strategic goals and needs. However, the Presidential Review Commission has made note on some of the weaknesses of SAMDI as a primary capacity building institution. The key concerns are lack of capacity to provide clear strategic training interventions that are in line with various departments' needs and orientation.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) responded positively to the presidential Review Commission by integrating the training function of SAMDI into the broader transformation process driven by the DPSA. One of the positive benefits envisaged by DPSA in including SAMDI as a line function is that this will enhance the director-general role in overseeing the transformation process including giving strategic direction in the training and capacity building efforts (DPSA, 1998:23). Since then SAMDI has been continuously trying to keep abreast with the latest best practices through forming partnership alliances with other international institutions in an attempt to offer capacity building programmes that are in line with the transformation process. Such training programmes include human resource management, change management, basic administration skills and presidential strategic development (South Africa Yearbook 2003/04:366).

3.2.5 EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS AND LABOUR RELATIONS

The White Paper argued that an efficient, productive, honest and well-motivated public service, committed to a professional service ethos and work ethic requires more equitable employment conditions in the public service (White paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995:68). In this regard several measures geared towards attaining the above were adopted. These included the introduction of an adequate minimum wage across the board, equal pay and benefits for work of equal value, in particular the removal of discrepancies in pay differentials and equal benefits for both men and women. Also human resource policies will be designed in a manner that open career development opportunities for public servants including training, recruitment, grading and promotion based on merit and performance as opposed to seniority. Furthermore, the White Paper proposed compression of the number of grades to encourage competency based evaluation, performance appraisal and multi-skilling in the public service. Discriminatory policies against women and the disabled people will also be eliminated (ibid).

Apart from these measures meant to improve the working conditions of the civil servants, the Labour Relations Act (LRA) 1995 came into operation to promote collective bargaining at the sectoral level, employment participation and peaceful dispute resolutions. The LRA makes provision for the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC), Sectoral Bargaining Councils for education, police services and the Workplace Forums. The relations between the government and the unions have generally shown an understanding of the transformation agenda, even though they differed at times on the strategies to be adopted. Perhaps the most important issues agreed upon that deserve mentioning here, relate to the generation of more 20 000 jobs as well as the multi-year wage agreement linked to the inflation rate and the human resource restructuring plans. These plans are basically meant to establish a clear link

between personnel demands and the broader organizational strategies in order to speed up the service delivery efforts (Hassen, 2003:129).

3.2.6 PROFESSIONALISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The government regards honesty, integrity and efficiency in the public service as the important principles that should guide the process of reconstruction and development (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995:72). It is argued that departments and provincial administration need to put in place measures aimed at enhancing internal accountability by providing an environment conducive for employees and management participation in decision making. Apart from the internal accountability measures emphasis is also put on external accountability in which the public are given the opportunity to influence and evaluate the policy making process. This will ensure that the public service as a public institution becomes responsive in addressing the public needs (WPTPS, 1995:61). The Constitution makes provision for several pieces of legislation mainly: the Public Protector, Auditor-General and the Public Service Commission to strengthen external accountability. Other mechanisms to promote professionalism and accountability include Parliamentary Portfolio Committees with substantial decision-making powers, the strengthening of the political influence at the national and provincial levels, the Department of Public Service and Administration and the expansion of central agencies such as the cabinet secretariats, treasury and the management boards. The White Paper also made recommendations for the setting of the performance measures and targets for Director-Generals to ensure that national and provincial administrations establish effective internal and external mechanisms to promote accountability, transparency, professionalism and democratic participation (WTPS, 1995:62).

Another significant measure intended to strengthen and build professionalism in the public service is the development of the code of conduct. The Code of Conduct gives effect to the Constitutional values to guide public officials on the kind of behaviour that is expected from them, in their individual conduct and in their relationship with others. Despite the mentioned measures, there have been increasing reports of corruption and maladministration cases in the public service but the government has continuously shown its commitment to combating corruption and maladministration through various ways ranging from awareness campaign and prevention strategies. Such measures include the establishment of an Anti-Corruption Forum in 2001, Protected Disclosures Act 2001 and The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2000. A number of discussions regarding the issue of corruption suggest that the effective implementation of these measures lies in the officials understanding of their duties as being to serve all people with dedication and commitment. To this end the Ethics Division in the Public Service Commission has embarked on a wider public campaign to sensitize the public as well as providing guiding manuals for national and provincial administrations in their training and development efforts to instill the values enshrined in the code of conduct (Sing, 1999:599).

3.3 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an overview of the transformation process in South Africa. There are attempts to build a professionalized, democratic and accountable public service responsive to the people's needs. The issue of human resource development emerges as a key component in the transformation process. This is mainly because there is a recognition that the post apartheid South Africa falls short of the required skills and expertise to cope with the service delivery demands. Affirmative action policies have been adopted to give the previously disadvantaged people an opportunity to be part of the economic system. Consequently, training and development is being realized as key

strategies towards building the capacity of the public servants to fulfill their responsibilities in the society. Decentralization efforts are also meant to democratize workplaces and devolve more managerial powers to the provincial heads of departments. Downsizing measures have also been taken through voluntary saving schemes to make a lean, efficient public service, although this has not been an easy exercise due to the vehement opposition from the trade unions. These developments are seen to be reflecting the ideas of managerialism in the South African public service. However, the important question is the applicability of these ideas in the poverty stricken, diverse society like South Africa. The next chapter will look at the specific features of public sector reform in South Africa.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER FOUR

4. MAIN FEATURES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on three areas of reforms in the South African transformation process which are important in shaping the way forward for the public service as the vital instrument driving the transformation process. Comparing these key reforms areas to the NPM will be important in understanding how South Africa has been successful in transplanting these ideas into the local context as well as the challenges facing the public service in an attempt to adopt the best international practices. These key reform areas namely: the new political and administrative interface, Batho Pele and Performance Management System will be critically looked at, mainly because these reform areas are interlinked and the successful implementation of all is imperative to the overall success of transformation effort.

4.2. THE POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE

The pre-democratic era public service was shaped and organized in a racially, highly politicized environment. The Afrikaner ideology was premised on the exclusion of black people from participating fully in the economic mainstream, while vigorous measures were taken to open ample opportunities for the Afrikaner community. Such measures included the passing of legislations effected to support the policy of separate development ranging from the Industrial Conciliation Acts, job reservation clauses, differences in grading agreements and the relaxation of entry and promotion requirements for the Afrikaner whites in the different sectors of the economy (Levy, 1997:313). In this context, the public service as a public institution was not meant to serve the interests of the larger

population in South Africa but rather the interests of the minority group who showed support and loyalty to the apartheid ideology. As several authors have noted, it became a powerful instrument through which the fundamental principles underlying apartheid ideology could be transplanted and entrenched (Harrison-Rockey, 1999; Ncholo, 2000). Thus, the public service organizational structures and environmental systems were designed in such a manner that the Afrikaners were the sole beneficiaries in terms of progression along the public service as large investments were devoted to their training and development.

An important observation made by Mafunisa, (2003:93) is that the National Party's policies which were structured along racial, ethnical, language and sex lines made it difficult to differentiate between the National Party as the ruling party and the public service as the public institution. The public service that emerged at that particular time had distinct characteristics of a rigid, conservative and secretive institution that was only responsive to the needs of the Afrikaners. It could be argued that these characteristics also depicted deep-rooted, descriptive and prescriptive elements of the South African Public Administration which relied heavily on the elitist model, which assumes that a certain group of people can drive the policy-making process on behalf of ill-informed masses in that the policy-making, managerial and leadership roles were reserved for the Afrikaner political and administrative elite (Schwella, 1999:338). Furthermore, Schwella points out that this outdated framework needs to be changed into a more analytical, explanatory, predictive, development-oriented theoretical framework which takes into consideration other apartheid legacies such as racial and gender imbalances in order to facilitate the transformation process in South Africa.

The post-apartheid government faces the challenges of addressing issues of redress and representivity for the entire South African community, increasing diversity and incorporating a new culture of responsiveness, participation, accountability and transparency in the public service. These values were

obviously lacking in the apartheid era as the quality and accessibility to service delivery were determined along race and ethnic lines (Harrison, 1999:169).

The post apartheid dispensation therefore inherited an organizational culture that was highly centralized, authoritarian, rule-bound that lacked innovation, creativity, representivity, professionalism and transparency. These challenges and the recognition of areas of South African public administration which needed addressing have proven instrumental in helping forge the way for the development of new ideas in managing the public service. Thus, Mafunisa, (2003:93) argues that the key challenge for the ruling party was to transform the public service in a manner that would ensure that the ruling party programmes are translated into the transformation vision. Service delivery to the entire South African community is the ultimate goal guiding the transformation process in South Africa. As such, the politicians who have been elected into power through popular participation during elections are expected to provide political leadership and vision towards satisfying citizens' demands and aspirations. The politicians are thus accountable to the electorates for the well functioning of their respective departments. In a similar manner, the public servants are directly accountable to the politicians to ensure that the implementation of government policies is carried out efficiently with the minimal resources allocated.

Although the public servants especially the senior public servants are regarded as major players in the transformation process, the long standing debate surrounding their powerful influence due to the information and expertise they possess still remains a major concern because of the fears that too much bureaucratic power can lead to the erosion of democratic accountability (Auriacombe and Mavanyisi, 2003:73). There are strong arguments for the need to establish controlling mechanisms to curb the bureaucratic powers to guard against corruption, maladministration and misuse of government power (Heywood, 1997:353 cited in Auriacombe and Mavanyisi, 2003:73). There are various mechanisms used to increase the political power over bureaucracy

ranging from the use of political appointments, ministerial accountability and political advisers. In South Africa these mechanisms are well entrenched, however, what is more significant in this study is the provision made by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996(Act 108 of 1996) for political appointments. Such key positions include the Public Protector, Public Service Commission, Auditor General and Directors-General. It is not surprising that such appointments are being effected by the supreme law of the Republic given the South African history. The new political dispensation had legitimate fears that the old firmly established public service culture need to be brought under control by resorting to the appointment of sympathetic party loyalists into sensitive administrative positions.

Although the use of political appointments have become a common trend in most countries even in the old established democracies such as Britain, USA, France and Germany; in South Africa there has been an outcry from the opposition parties that the ANC led government is entrenching its political base by appointing its loyal supporters in order to remain in government. Perhaps the argument put forward by Ademolekun, (2002:381) for transparency in the matters relating to the appointment of the political appointees, their qualifications, job description and remuneration is very critical for the strengthening of fragile democracies such as that of South Africa. A study undertaken on the South African senior public service roles revealed interviewees concerns over lack of clarity about the roles of these political appointees in both the national and administrative level (Maphunye, 2001:312). In the absence of transparency the abuse of such appointments for political gains will remain high and lead to suspicion and mistrust in the government efforts to promote dedication and commitment towards service delivery. The Presidential Review Commission also argues that the use of political appointments is indispensable in the public service to guard against unsupportive elements. It, however, points out that due to lack of skills among some of political appointees there has been little progress made on service delivery. Moreover, the appointments showed an inclination to the

minister's race or ethnicity (Presidential Review Commission, 1998:16). The issue of merit and loyalty towards the ruling party's policies should be the guiding principles in these appointments rather than too much focus on the latter.

A study carried out by Cameron (2003:61-62), in the City of Cape Town recommended a minimalist appointment of senior staff by the ruling party for two important reasons: firstly, the important role played by the senior officials in policy making and strategic planning need to be realized as such the incoming political executive should have confidence and trust in these senior staff. Thus, their commitment and loyalty in implementing policy programmes of the ruling party together with the sharing of the common vision and values are seen as the important principle of democracy and good governance as the failure to share these vision and values can lead to sabotage or compromise of some policies. Secondly, the issue of competence was seen as equally important. The emphasis was placed on the need to appoint suitably qualified candidates for these senior positions in order to secure merit and professionalism (Cameron, 2003:61).

4.2.1 POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES

The executive powers vested on the ministers and MECs are stipulated in the Public Service Laws Amendment Act of 1997. An important effect of this legislation relates to the functions of the Public Service Commission (PSC), which have been streamlined in line with its Constitution 1996 mandate to monitor and oversee compliance with the policies and practices in the public service. The PSC's investigation, evaluation and monitoring role is guided by the core values and principles of public administration as enshrined in the Constitution 1996 Section 195 and 196 which include among others: maintaining and promoting a high standard of professional ethics, an impartial, equitable and fair provision of services and a transparent and accountable public administration (Constitution of South Africa, 1996).

Also important is the transfer of the policy making and executive powers to the Minister of Public Service and Administration as the political head of the public service. The Act therefore empowers the Minister to provide advice to the President on matters relating to the policy functions of the public service such as restructuring, working conditions of the public servants and employment policy. Similarly, the Act brought about significant devolution and decentralization of decision making powers to the provincial heads on matters relating to human resources and financial responsibilities. The executive powers of the ministers and MECs to appoint the heads of department have also led to the introduction of a five year performance contract which could be renewed based on the satisfactory performance of the incumbent.

The contract may include an agreement between the Minister and Director General elaborating on the following terms and conditions:

- Duties of the head of the department.
- The specific criteria for evaluating the performance of the head of department.
- The grounds and procedures upon which the services of the head of department may be terminated before the completion of his/her contract and any other matter which may be prescribed by the executing authority (Public Service Amendment Act, 1997, section 9).

The above denotes an understanding that the politicians have a responsibility to direct and lead public servants to accomplish government policies towards a common interest. According to the Presidential Review Commission (1998:23), the role of the politicians as executing authorities needs to be located within the following premise:

- Rendering policy direction and common vision.
- Overseeing and monitoring the implementation of policy.

- Securing support from the colleagues in the form of necessary resources for their ministries and departments.
- Effectively carrying out policy issues
- Representing ministry in Cabinet and Parliament
- Being publicly accountable for the performance of the department
- Being accountable to the legislature for their action and to take collective responsibility for Cabinet decisions.

There are several policy and legislative framework guiding the role of appointed government officials in South Africa. The key legislations being the Public Service Act, 1994 and subsequent amendments 1997, 1998 and 1999 which gives the executive authority the powers to delegate authority and responsibility to the heads of department at the national and provincial level to facilitate proper management of the departments. In terms of Public Service Act 1994 s.7 (3) b the head of department is responsible for the efficient management and administration of his/her department including the effective utilization and development of human resources. Furthermore, he/she is responsible for the promotion of sound labour relations, disciplinary matters and act as a custodian of state property as well as other duties that may be assigned to his/her department by the executive. Another important legislation that holds head of departments accountable for the proper utilization and control of misuse of financial resources as the accounting officer is the Public Finance Management Act 1999. As the accounting officer the head of department is responsible among others for the following:

- Maintaining an effective, efficient, fair and transparent financial, internal auditing system, procurement and provisioning and capital evaluation projects systems and procedures,
- Effective, efficient, economical and transparent utilization of resources of the department,

- Effective systems for collecting all financial resources due to the department, prevention of the unauthorized and irregular use of department resources, prevention of wasteful expenditure and losses resulting from criminal conduct and management of capital efficiently and effectively (Public Finance Management Act, 1999:s38).

A research undertaken by Miller, (2004) on the roles of senior public servants revealed that both pre-1994 and post-1994 Director Generals have a general understanding of their administrative roles with regard to human resource and financial management. However, there seems to be more confusion and lack of clarity on the policy formulation roles between the Ministers and Director Generals. Moreover, the delineation of political and administrative lines of responsibilities is difficult to distinguish. It is also important to note that policy in South Africa is being formulated in clusters following the recommendations by the Presidential Review Commission that there need to be a stronger policy formulation and coordination at the apex level (Presidential Review Commission, 1998:27). As such the role of the senior government officials as special advisors seems to be declining as policy formulation is being coordinated through the office of the Presidency. This implies that the role of the heads of department is being confined mainly to the generalists as opposed to the specialist advisors on policy formulation.

Whilst it is important to have effective coordination mechanisms within and between spheres of government, it is also critically important to strike a balance in the policy formulation between the Ministers and their respective heads of departments. A clear understanding on the policy formulation and implementation by both parties is an important aspect in the transformation process as the Minister is charged with the responsibility of providing leadership in policy issues while the head of department at the national and provincial level is responsible for articulating government mandate and policies as imagined by the political leadership. However, Maphunye, (2001: 320) argues that there seems to be a

poor understanding of these intertwined roles in the South African public service. As it has been mentioned in this paper, one of the greatest challenges facing the post democratic government is the urgent need to speed up service delivery process so as to bring positive change into the lives of the ordinary citizens. It is not surprising therefore to note that at times the politicians facing pressure to fulfill their mandate to the people found themselves interfering in the daily operations of their respective departments, an area which appointed officials consider to be their jurisdiction. This had often led to strained relationship between the Ministers and the senior civil servants. It is encouraging to note that the political leadership at the apex is aware that conflict is inevitable between the minister and the head of department on policy formulation and implementation. As a result the 1999 public Service Act no.5 has been effected to give the President the powers to intervene should such conflict arise mainly to avoid loss of skilled manpower which was experienced with the pre 1994 heads of departments who were protected by the 'sunset clauses'.

It can also be noted that the Public Service Amendments Act 1997, no.47 which effected performance management contracts for senior government officials, attempts to strengthen the lines of responsibilities between the political and the administrative organs in the governance process. However, it can be argued that the complex nature of political and administrative interface in South Africa makes it difficult to separate clearly the role of the head of department as an administrator and policy advisor. For instance, as administrators, heads of departments are accountable for the achievements of affirmative action targets whereas the staffing powers on internal organizational restructuring, appointments and promotions, have been granted to the national and provincial executive. The proposed incorporation of affirmative action targets in the performance contracts of heads of departments will further precipitate tension as their role in staff matters is largely curtailed by the executive powers. It becomes clear that an issue of accountability in this regard is likely to be problematic. The increased role of the political executive in the appointment of senior public

servants has shown a tendency to make appointments based on nepotism or political patronage. The issue of affirmative action became an urgent priority for the ANC led government because it was rightly believed that more bold measures needed to be taken to address issues of equity, representivity, non-sexist and non-racial public service. While one might be tempted to believe that usurping of staff related powers by the executive is meant to closely monitor progress made by the senior public servants in the implementation of affirmative action policies, cases of alleged nepotism based on political or ethnic inclinations points that there is no genuine commitment from some political executives to deal with issues of redress in a fair equitable manner.

Another crucial observation made by the PSC is a rather lax attitude towards an evaluation exercise by the executive authorities despite the constant calling from PSC on the need to speed up the evaluation process (Public Service Commission, 2002:ix). The failure to give the evaluation process the seriousness it deserves confirms the critical analysis made by Maphunye, (2001:319) in questioning the effectiveness of these performance contracts if the elected officials are not seizing the opportunity of utilizing performance contracts to monitor closely performance.

Since the advent of democracy the nature of political and administrative interface in South Africa has been inclined towards the increased politicization of bureaucracy. This phenomenon is not different from other developments taking place in other democratic countries. However, what seems to have prompted an increased political influence in the public service is the lack of trust and confidence among the ANC leadership on the commitment and loyalty of the pre1994 senior government officials towards transforming the democratic government service delivery mandate. Although in South Africa there seems to be an understanding that the notion of separating politics and administration is a myth, policy roles appear to be more complex making it impossible to clearly demarcate lines of accountability. Moreover, the politicization of the public

service at the senior management positions denotes a trend towards appointing people sharing the same ideological background with the ruling government to the negligence of the skills needed to perform the roles efficiently. The important question that can be raised is the extent to which the Minister of Public Service and Administration and the Public Service Commission can hold the executives and their senior officials accountable for non-performance given the diffused nature of accountability?

It is also important to mention that in an attempt to build a responsive and professionalized public service workforce, the Department of Public Service and Administration has created the Senior Management Service (SMS) which is meant to provide more flexibility in the pay structure and performance contracts for managers. These developments are similar to the creations of Senior Executive Services (SES) in the US, New Zealand and Australia. The introduction of SES was meant to integrate the three areas of governance, administration and politics, however, in practice the political leadership failed to integrate these three important issues. In South Africa there might also be danger in moving towards domination of the ministers over the civil servants, as their policy role and involvement in politics will be reduced.

There is a clear indication that South Africa is moving towards confining the roles of senior public servants only to the management of their departments. For instance, the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) exerts too much pressure on the heads of departments for proper utilization and accountability for allocated budget in their respective departments. The Act therefore empowers departmental heads to serve as accounting officers responsible for innovative and creative ways of directing scarce resources, while the ministers are expected to see clearly what has been achieved in terms of outputs and outcomes. However, the important question is how far the minister is committed to supporting and providing strategic vision to his/her senior public officer? The present scenario in which the minister has more political influence is likely to lead

to a weaker senior management caliber that is fearful or reluctant to give ministers sound policy advice. There is no doubt that there is a need for the political leadership and the administration to strike a balance in their relationships in order to strengthen democratic accountability.

4.3 BATHO PELE

As indicated in the first chapter introducing the study, the issue of service delivery has been identified as one of the key element in the South African Public Service reform initiative. The strategy and policy adopted is that of Batho Pele. The approach is thus designed to foster increased efficiency and output whilst taking on a customer-service approach, which encourages public participation and transparency in order to ensure that the government is continually striving towards meeting the needs of the people.

The launching of Batho Pele policy in 1997 therefore, signaled an ongoing commitment from the democratic government to improve service delivery mechanisms in the public service. It can thus be regarded as the most aggressive service delivery approach undertaken by the democratic government to promote commitment and dedication among the civil servants in their service delivery approach to the entire population of South Africa. While almost every piece of legislation passed in the country recognizes the need to strive towards improved service delivery, the most important aspect about Batho Pele is that it seeks to change the culture and attitudes towards service delivery. The ideas and values of Batho Pele should thus be seen pervading the entire machinery of the public service delivery (DPSA, 2003:45).

There are eight principles guiding Batho Pele which puts pressure on each and every department in the three spheres of government to integrate citizens in their planning and operations. The principles include, *inter alia* the following:

Consultation - attempts should be made to consult citizens on the level and quality of services received including the choices on the services provided. Consultation process can be helpful in identifying the citizens' needs in the order of priority and preference.

Service standards - citizens should also be informed on the level and quality of services to be provided in order to be aware of what to expect.

Access - information should be provided on the accessibility of services being provided for the convenience and comfort of the citizens.

Courtesy - in providing services to the citizens the civil servants are expected to be respectful and considerate.

Information - public servants are expected to provide accurate and reliable information on the services being rendered.

Transparency - there need to be openness and transparency on the running of the departments including the person in charge of that department.

Redress - in the case of failure to deliver services according to the set standards, an apology should be made to the citizens as well as how the department intends to rectify the mistake or complaint in a speedy and responsive manner.

Values for money – services are to be provided in an efficient cost effective manner with the ultimate goal to add value to their money. (Batho Pele, 1997:15)

In broad terms the policy document is a means through which government departments can deliver services to the people especially the previously disadvantaged communities in a fair, equitable and cost effective manner. The

goals of a people-centred and people-driven civil service as envisaged in the White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service are further enshrined in the Batho Pele principles as the emphasis is placed on an outward looking civil service with new culture and attitude geared towards fostering cooperative and harmonious working relations with the citizens in an endeavor towards improved service delivery process.

The launching of the Batho Pele policy has been fully supported by the Department of Public Service and Administration through the establishment of an in-house Transformation Unit to oversee the transformation process in each department. This support Unit is meant to play an important role in identifying any impediments that could not be accounted for earlier, taking note of where improvements can be made as well as to provide advice to departmental heads. The Service Delivery Improvement Programme is another institutional mechanism aimed at bringing more awareness for effective change in order to ensure that Batho Pele is firmly understood (Batho Pele, 1997:24-25).

It is remarkable to note how Batho Pele resembles the main ideas enshrined in the NPM model. In particular the emphasis placed on customer services rather than citizens' services, the need to have a well functioning public service delivery mechanism including a well monitoring and evaluation system in place. Batho Pele seems to be a well considered policy initiative meant to speed up the service delivery process in South Africa. For instance, the government embarked on the massive advertisement campaign as a strategy aimed at incorporating Batho Pele ideas in the hearts and minds of every South African. This cannot be denied to be a good communication strategy in that it captured well the large number of audience. However, what is important is how the civil servants have in practice been able to incorporate Batho Pele ideas and values in their daily functions.

Despite vigorous attempts to raise the levels of awareness around Batho Pele principles, the resulting outcomes of implementation strategies put in place to improve service delivery has been less productive than envisaged. A review undertaken by the PSC through survey in 1999-2000 on the compliance of various departments with Batho Pele principles including the strategies adopted revealed the following:

Little progress has been made in terms of consulting the public and actively attempting to retrieve their feedback to be used as a guideline of the existing community's specific needs and norms. The general feeling is that departments were not taking consultation seriously. The PSC thus proposed that consultative bodies be set up to serve as mechanism for consulting the public and encouraging active participation (PSC, 1999/2000: xiii).

The PSC also found that departments are generally not taking courtesy as a serious objective, despite the fact that it is the most easily achievable one. There is an encouragement for departments to undertake customer satisfaction surveys and incorporate this in the monitoring and evaluation strategy. Department are therefore encouraged to strive for courtesy in every delivery approach.

The issue of service standards and the general information provision, which serve to inform the public of what services they should be receiving and what they can expect from the respective departments, seems to be inadequately set in most cases. Moreover, these standards should not be lowered and plans should be available to monitor them annually, striving to raise them. The Departments of Justice, provincial Education and Health are given out as such examples and where there are standards set they are not readily made to the public. Departments which have recorded good performance in this regard are the Correctional Services, SAPS and Home Affairs (PSC, 1999/2000: xiv).

Similarly, equal access provision has also been slow in many instances in particular the rural areas. The Department of Justice is cited as lacking in this

regard, which is disturbing given the high rate of crime and domestic violence in the country. The South African Police have made significant attempts here but the police stations are still not equally distributed or equipped across the country. The report also mentions that most police stations are not easily accessible to the physically handicapped. The PSC hopes to see all departments making clear commitments to improving access (PSC, 1999/2000: xvi).

Openness and transparency is a democratic objective which few of the departments surveyed have made much progress. The need for transparency has been highlighted as a means to improve the relationship with the public service and the public. The PSC advises, that the departmental annual reports be submitted by each department, highlighting its performance over the year and making public its activities, weaknesses and strengths. Justice and Home Affairs have failed to adequately provide performance reports, which can only hamper prospects for future improvements. Many schools have increased openness and transparency measures, though (PSC, 1999/2000: xiv). This also serves to allow departments a form of self-assessment, to look back on the past year, learn from mistakes and strive to achieve better results in future. More significantly it also serves as a tool for accountability in forcing departments to take responsibility for their actions.

The report further points that, the issue of redress which is linked to public participation and feedback has been very poorly administered. "Limited efforts have been made to provide complaints handling mechanisms. Where these exist they are rarely functioning". In theory the system of redress is there but no physical structures have been put in place to deal with these. (PSC, 1999/2000: xxi)

The extent to which departments have been able to satisfy the public's needs in the provision of equitable and quality services in a cost effective manner given the limited resources allocated provide best value for taxpayers and users. The PSC survey indicates that greater emphasis needs to be placed on internal

performance analysis and efficiency testing. There is a lack of creativity and imagination in the ways services are provided, but public servants are dependent on support and encouragement from the higher levels. Departments should be looking to innovate rather than set backs in old styles of delivery, especially at provincial level so as to customize the service delivery to the regional environment and its demands (PSC, 1999/2000: xxi-xxii).

The overall picture portrayed in this survey illustrates that there is much work that needs to be done in terms of satisfying the service delivery objectives of Batho Pele. However, it is encouraging to note that PSC is mindful of its monitoring and evaluation role and constantly puts pressure on the departments to perform to their level best knowing that they are under scrutiny. Furthermore, PSC investigations contribute greatly to the reflective, learning process in that the struggles and constraints encountered can be identified earlier.

In realizing these shortcomings the Batho Pele Revitalization strategy was designed and distributed to various government departments in 2001. This strategy is based on the understanding that to be effective in implementing the policy, there need to be a holistic approach towards management styles which encompasses the following:

- Re-engineering and improving the back-office operations of government.
- Re-engineering and improving the front-line operations of government.
- Internal communication and external communication (DPSA, 2003:11).

In this four broad categories there are several key developments taking place in the departments in an effort to change for the better public service that puts people first. The key measures include introducing performance management systems, review of organizational structures to best support work objectives, re-organizing work processes to best utilize employees' creativity and talents thereby minimizing inefficiencies, venturing into the use of technology to speed

up service delivery and the improvement of working conditions for employees (DPSA, 2003:11).

Although the Batho Pele lacked a detailed analysis of how the civil servants should go about fulfilling the objectives of the policy, the Batho Pele Handbook proves helpful in that it recognizes that without addressing the above critical issues there is little that can be accomplished. There is clear indication that without integrating Batho Pele into the broader transformation objectives there is little progress to be made in terms of transforming the ordinary lives of the South Africans.

Although the re-engineering and improving the back-office operations of government have no direct link with the end users, any inefficiencies attributed to these operations can greatly impact on the quality of the services being rendered. Another crucial aspect that warrants serious attention is the front-office operations of government. This is the actual point whereby the government and the public meet and the key issue is how efficient and diligent are these front-office operations in meeting the needs of the public such as access to health services, being helped to gain access to social security grants, traveling documents, birth certificates and report crime incidences to the police station. Any form of frustration and delay encountered in these operations will thus tarnish the image of the government. Although the government has launched the Multi-purpose Community Centres (MPCCs) to further enhance the convergence of various service delivery under one roof, there are still numerous problems encountered such as lack of capacity in terms of financial, human resource, office equipment and infrastructure (PSC, 2003:19-20).

Apart from these significant developments, there are efforts meant to improve internal and external communications (DPSA, 2003:12). It is crucial to note that good internal communications strategies can enhance customer satisfaction in that public servants would be in a better position to understand what the White

Paper on Transforming Service Delivery is all about, in particular its vision as it was being formulated. A clear understanding of the roles and expectations of the public servants in their daily functioning can positively impact on how they respond to the demands of Batho Pele as well as the entire transformation process. This will also generate a sense of belonging and pride to serve with commitment and dedication, thus boosting the morale of public servants to focus clearly, enthusiastically to the challenges of service delivery.

The nature of governance in South Africa also necessitates for external communications strategies that are meant to promote an ongoing dialogue between the end-users and the service provider. The key emphasis here is that users need to be consulted and provided with sufficient information on how to access services. These will build strong partnership towards a common goal.

Batho Pele Handbook has attempted to provide clearly defined guidelines on service delivery approach based on four pillars of Batho Pele Revitalization strategy. This initiative is important in that it seeks to integrate these four dimensions into the broader strategic management of the organizations. Layton, (2002:26) defines strategic management as "the planning, decision-making and actions that determine the success of the organization in the medium- to long-term". Since strategic management entails long-term, future-oriented and complex decision making process, it is clear that considerable resources and top-management commitment is essential to facilitate the achievement of the set objectives. However, in the implementation of Batho Pele the PSC survey indicates that lack of human and financial resources are still major impediments. In trying to unpack this further one can point to the fact that the successful implementation of the policy lies with the top management understanding of the transformation issues. It is here that the important role played by the leadership and management skills needs emphasis.

A good leader will facilitate a better understanding of the policy in terms of what needs to be done so as to properly direct, motive and influence the behaviour of

the large workforce in translating policy goals into reality. In effecting changes the leadership needs to understand the environmental factors such as the needs of the communities being served, the needs of other actors in the society as well as the limited financial and human resource they face in their service delivery mandate. However, currently there is an indication that the public service still faces an acute shortage of senior management officials capable of communicating Batho Pele principles as part of the transformation vision to the frontline workers. Consequently, there is an argument that more attention needs to be paid to the existing gap between the top management and frontline workers about their understanding of the transformation imperatives. The leadership therefore needs to ensure that there is a clear understanding of culture, values and vision guiding the transformation process. Unless frontline workers, who have a direct link with the people, buy into the values of the organization, Batho Pele policy and other transformation initiatives will merely become statements of intent (Harrison-Rockey, 1999:178; Mokgoro, 2000:32).

Similar problems have been experienced during the implementation due to lack of finance. There is no doubt that putting people at the centre of service delivery requires financial support. However, the lack of financial resources to effectively consult and provide information has made it difficult for some departments to formulate service charters or fulfill their promises to the consumers. Furthermore the adopted cost containment strategy under the GEAR policy attempts to limit the portion of recurrent expenditure and advocate for increased share of capital expenditure. This means that more stringent measures are being put into increased employment in the public service rather than finding ways to equalize and extent services to the previously disadvantaged communities (Hassen, 2003:130). Although the public service is believed to be overstaffed, there are still other areas where there is critical shortage of manpower to man service delivery issues especially the rural areas.

Given this scenario, it is clear that issues of career development and skills development are likely to be given low priority given fiscal constraints facing the departments even though they are vital to the success of Batho Pele policy. There have been incidences of poor management of budgets, which have led to some departments overspending their expenditures whilst others have underutilized the allocated funds. Such outcomes are clearly indicative of the deep underlying problems affecting some departments such as lack of proper financial management and planning skills. The focus on career development and skills development therefore needs to be given serious attention given the past legacy. Furthermore the Presidential Review Commission argues that decentralization of powers to the provincial level were done in such a hurry that less attention was paid to capacity building issues in order to make provinces effective (PRC, 1998:34).

It seems that there are certain preconditions for the successful implementation of Batho Pele just like any other policy initiative. These include financial and human resource capacity, more importantly an innovative and creative senior management cadre that understands the working environment such as having to function within fiscal constraints, ability to bring about improved co-ordination within departments and being responsive to the needs and expectations of the political leadership, the public, business and civil society. Forging a co-operative relationship between the public servants relies on communication between these parties' understanding of the transformation process and their roles. The success of the service charter also rests very heavily on the communication between the public and the public service, including the maintenance of the strong link between these parties. The importance of effectively incorporating the public in its activities and fostering a co-operative relationship has been given minimal consideration so far (Mathoho, 2001).

Despite the problems encountered in the implementation process, Batho Pele has admirable intentions in that it seeks to put people at the centre of service

delivery. Even in Britain where Batho Pele ideas have been borrowed, the Citizen's Charter have not been able to strengthen "the essentially participative role of the citizen in influencing the policies and management of the public services they pay for and use" (Falconer and Ross, 1999:342 cited in Elcock, 1996:37). This points the contradictions inherent in the new public management ideas, advocating for an empowerment approach and market-based competition strategy simultaneously. An attempt to speed-up service delivery process in South Africa has led to the use of public-private partnerships. The argument is that different actors need to be involved in the service delivery in order to enhance efficiency and a more customer-oriented approach in service delivery (Kihato and Schmitz, 2002:10). Since constitutionally, the local government is charged with the responsibility of providing basic service delivery, the municipal service partnerships policy is regarded as a viable option for the local government to fulfill its constitutional mandate. There is an understanding therefore, that empowerment of the municipalities is essential because they are the democratic institutions through which full participation of the citizens in service delivery can be enhanced (Kihato and Schmitz, 2002:20).

There are however, indications that attempts to improve service delivery through increased private participation mechanisms have made it difficult to achieve full participation of the citizens. The use of contract system for public services and performance measures to increase competition among service providers implies that more focus need to be on adhering to specific performance targets in order to secure contract. Although there is a requirement for the empowerment of the local people tied to the awarding of contracts and the performance measures, the reality is that the nature of NPM puts pressure on the managers to concentrate on efficiency and results as the main objective not the empowerment of the locals (Smith, 2003:360). Experience with the use of contracts in water delivery has shown that since the municipalities are less involved in the operational issues, they often rely on the advice from the service provider who have the technical know how of operational issues. This in itself restricts municipalities' ability to set

water tariffs in an affordable manner on behalf of the consumers. The glaring picture in South Africa is that some areas do not even have basic services (Hassen, 2003:136). In this regard participation of civil society in the drafting of contracts is crucial, mainly because they can mobilize for the award of contracts towards equity and a sense of ownership. However, there are allegations that SA Municipal Workers Union did not take part in the drafting of the contracts between the service authority and the provider (Kihato and Schmitz, 2002:21). While it might be understandable that vehement opposition for privatization might be seen to delay service delivery, dissatisfaction among civic groups might increase more tension and delay in service delivery. If efficiency goals override full participation of the citizens as the NPM ideas seems to be advancing, it becomes clear that long term sustainability of service delivery which lies with the active participation of the citizens will be greatly jeopardized. It is thus important for the public service to be seen moving towards empowering the socially deprived and vulnerable members of the society more especially because they are the main users of public services. The revolt around increased prices in basic services like water and electricity in Soweto points to the essence of being sensitive to the poor peoples' needs.

However, there are strong arguments that service users have benefited indirectly in that public managers use charters as an organizational and managerial tool to improve the consumer awareness of service providers. Consequently, this top-down approach has a trickle down effect as the public servants will strive to improve the quality of service in the public sector (Falconer and Ross, 1999:343). In a similar manner it can be argued that although the departments have not been able to include the full participation and consultation of citizens in the design of service standards, there is need to consider the fact that the civil servants especially the top management are more or less aware of the importance of utilizing Batho Pele as a management tool to sustain transformation process. This was revealed by the study undertaken by Mokgoro, (2000:150-51) on the provincial experiences in managing national policies.

4.4 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

In order to improve service delivery in the public service the government believes that there need to be an integrated approach towards management functions. Performance management is part of the public service management framework meant to support the transformation process towards better service delivery. There are several problems identified with the old management framework for the public service, mainly:

- The assumption that there is no need for creativity and innovation towards achievement of goals and serving the public interest.
- The assumption that accountability and superiority are defined in hierarchical terms and strict adherence to the rules and procedures in the use of money, personnel and other resources.
- Failure to facilitate learning, development or accountability and recognition of personal achievement.
- Failure to integrate performance management and development into the human resource systems in support of accountability to the public.
- Failure to link assessment of staff to the strategic priorities, requirements and context of departments.
- Due to the individualized nature of the appraisal process, there was lack of transparency, participation and fairness in the whole process (DPSA, 2000:12).

Therefore, in the context of the new public service management framework which came into effect in July 1999, performance management system attempts to move away from the pre-1994 public service that was rigid and rule bound to a flexible results oriented that emphasis more on performance outputs and outcomes.

The Public Service Regulations (1999:31) mentions four important issues in relation to performance management and staff development:

- “Departments shall manage performance in a consultative, supportive and non-discriminatory manner, in order to enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness, accountability for the use of resources and the achievement of results.
- Performance management processes shall link to broad and consistent plans for staff development and align with the department’s strategic goals.
- The primary orientation of performance management shall be developmental, but shall allow for effective response to consistent inadequate performance and also for recognizing outstanding performance.
- Performance management procedures should minimize the administrative burden on supervisors, while maintaining transparency and administrative justice”.

It is therefore expected that each department should align itself to this broad objectives of 1999 Public Service Regulations in approaching performance management and development systems. The overall objective is to strive for the continuous improvement of the capacity of public service to develop and implement policy in the public interest. Also to provide means for assessing, reviewing and accounting for what is actually achieved (DPSA, 2000:11). Therefore, performance management system in the South African public sector signify an important move towards transforming the public service into a highly productive institution which strengthen service delivery by holding the civil servants accountable for the quality of outputs delivered (Ncholo,2000:95).

Although performance management applies to all the civil servants, the use of performance contract is only applicable to the Directors and the Director Generals. It can be argued that the use of performance contracts for these senior managers can legitimize the whole performance management system as their commitment and support to the process will be perceived to be fair and

transparent by their immediate subordinates who in turn will have the guts to enforce on their subordinates. Public Service Laws Amendment Act of 1997 provides for an agreement between the executive authority and the head of department on specific performance criteria for evaluating the performance of the head of department. On the other hand performance agreements for senior management level 13 and higher is administered by the 1998 Resolution 13 agreed upon with the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC). This legal framework is meant to provide a framework for performance agreements that would facilitate for a flexible performance based pay for the senior managers in the public service (DPSA, 2000:18). The agreement therefore is a valuable tool for enhancing accountability and effectiveness of top-management (DPSA, 1998:17).

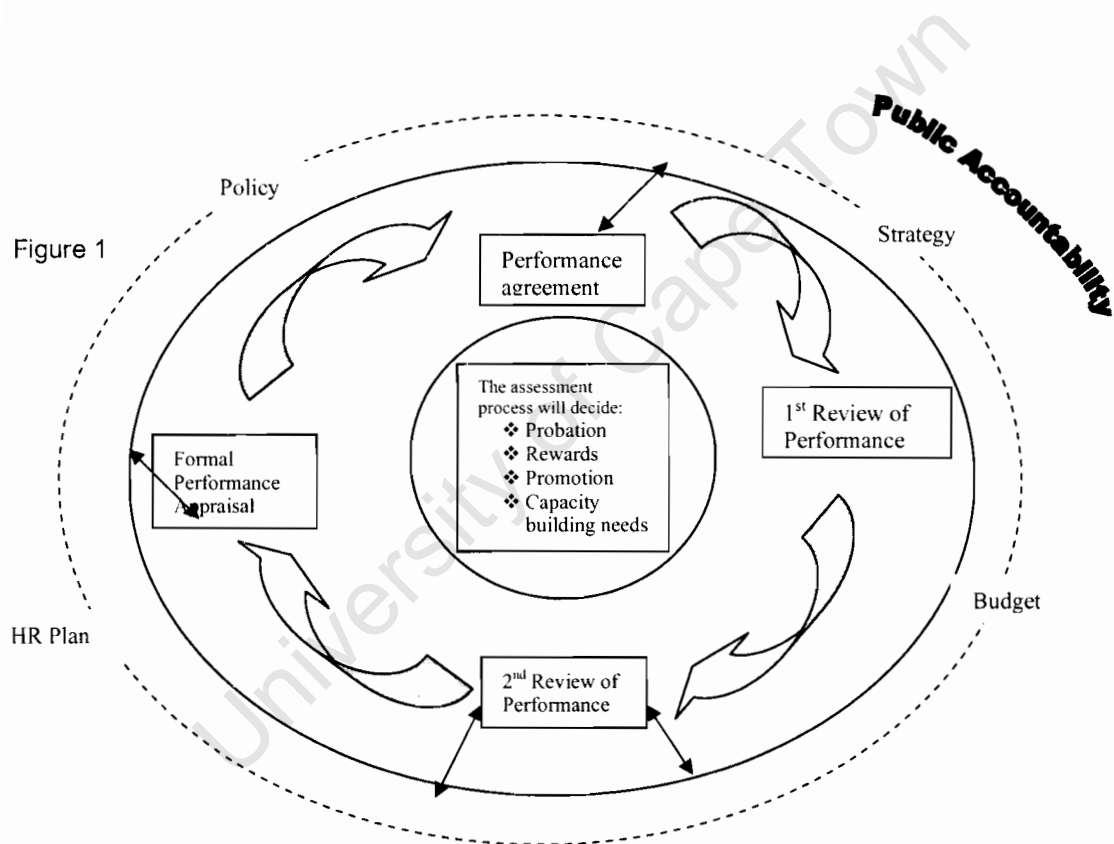
According to the Resolution No 13, 1998 the key components of performance agreements should include among others:

- Definition of a senior manager's work according to her/his key duties and responsibilities and the specific outputs required from the manager for that specific financial year.
- Output measurement criteria in terms of which the senior manager's performance can be assessed.
- Dates for assessment and if necessary, revision of outputs.
- Dispute resolution mechanism and increment date. (cited in DPSA Handbook , 2000:15).

4.4.1 MANAGING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CYCLE

Departments are requested to align performance agreements of individual employees with the strategic objectives of the department. The formal review of performance agreements are conducted on a quarterly basis and supplemented with the formal assessment at the end of the financial year (PSC, 2002: viii). To be effective, performance management system needs to be an integral part of

the human resource management and development strategy. It is important therefore for the individual to know how he/she fits into the overall organizational structure as well as the relationships supportive for effective performance. Although the ultimate goal is the attainment of the organizational objectives, the system must also provide for realistic mechanisms to develop the well-being of the individual (Van Dijk and Thornhill, 2003:464). Therefore the management of senior managers' performance need to be understood as an ongoing process aimed at the achievement of departmental objectives in general through systematic interventions and remedial actions (PSC, 2002:23). The diagram below illustrates the annual cycle the performance management and development process should follow and its links to the achievement of organizational objectives.



Source: Department of Public Service and Administration: Public Service Handbook.

The proper implementation of performance management and development system can contribute towards achievement of government objectives and further more enhances public accountability. Key important components of human resource management mainly promotion, rewards, training and career development can be managed in an objective manner. Another important aspect that can contribute substantially towards performance in terms of service delivery is the open, collaborative communication between the senior managers and their supervisors. A working environment that is free of mistrust and arbitrary actions can enhance individual performance as one is afforded an opportunity to participate openly thereby adding more value and expertise to the overall organizational strategy.

Taking into consideration government efforts to create the Senior Management Service (SMS) meant to professionalize the public service in order to develop a specialized class that is able to direct and motivate departments towards policy implementation and cost effective utilization of limited resources, it is clear that use of performance management as a developmental tool can bring positive gains towards the identification of key competencies from the employees. In particular it enables the selection of candidates with the potential to join the senior managers' level as well as the competencies required and their training needs. Performance agreements are part of the performance management system meant to provide a uniform minimum basis through which the performance of senior managers should be managed. However, it seems that the issue of performance management has not been well taken at the top management level even though it can play a crucial role "in the management of skills or identification of competence gaps". (Van Dijk and Thornhill, 2003:465).

An investigation into the management of senior managers' performance agreements by the PSC raised some concerns regarding the manner in which performance agreements are managed in departments (PSC, 2002: i-ii). Key among them included the following:

- The failure to realize the importance of concluding performance agreements between the executive authorities and their HODs on time by both parties.
- Performance agreements currently focus more on outputs rather than outcomes. In which case the time-frames and quantity are used as performance criteria to the neglect of qualitative measures through which institutional objectives can be measured.
- The majority of senior managers have not completed performance agreements. PSC reached this conclusion based on the fact that only 1290 out of 2700 performance agreements have been filed with the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).
- The failure to respond by some departments confirms the analysis that no performance agreements were ever concluded (PSC, 2002: IV). Furthermore, PSC is concerned about the few performance agreements filed with DPSA despite the directive from the Minister for Public Service and Administration that such agreements should be filed with DPSA and be subjected to public scrutiny (PSC, 2002:28).
- Performance agreements are only done once or twice a year not on a quarterly basis as required. On the other hand 20% showed that no performance review ever takes place during the entire financial year.

The above mentioned problems encountered in the management of performance agreements indicates that most national policy documents appreciate the importance of establishing a performance management framework through which individual performance can be evaluated in relation to the achievement of the organizational objectives. However, it seems the political executives and head of departments have not been able to show much enthusiasm in seeing to it that such management system is being fully utilized. The literature perused earlier on performance management shows that cultural change is one of the essential components for successful implementation of performance management system. It is rather disturbing to note that in the South African public service the key

people who are supposed to be driving change in the public service have not given performance management the seriousness it deserves.

Perhaps the observation made by Polidano, (1999) that performance based accountability has become one of the rhetoric reforms is true for the South African public service. Performance based accountability requires more radical change on the existing structures of accountability and the government culture itself. However, it appears that there is a lack of will to transform the inherited organizational structures. Despite the call from various South African scholars on the need to dismantle the authoritarian, hierarchical and rule-bound structures, it has become a norm to focus on administration as opposed to management for better quality and results (Wooldridge and Cranko, 1999:326) In the public service currently, performance management and its deliverables are not clearly defined and it is not accountable to anyone for the results. Besides this, Rapea, (2002:25) sees the underlying problem emanating from the centralized human resource powers by the executive authority which makes it difficult to hold the HOD and HR departments accountable for performance management outcomes. It could be argued that clear lines of accountability can facilitate a move to an outcome-focused approach to management, planning and reporting, while remaining accountable for the delivery of outputs. It therefore makes sense that heads of departments should be held accountable for managing for outcomes.

Another vital component of performance management system process is that it strengthens communication between the two parties. This is extremely essential for the relationship between the political executive and the head of department as it can assist in clarifying the roles of each parties thereby minimizing conflict that might jeopardize service delivery. One can also question how the political executives are going to monitor and evaluate progress being made towards the achievement of their departments' objectives if less attention is given to the management of performance agreements, in particular utilizing performance review to assess and give feedback on how well the adopted strategies are

improving the performance of their departments including the broader national objectives?

A closer look at the performance management system within the public service reveals striking similarities to the NPM features. One of the key developments emerging from the NPM ideas is the devolution of powers and authority to the managers. The emphasis is more on outcomes through the use of corporate planning by the ministries and departments with the ultimate goal of linking strategic planning with budgets and resource allocation. Also an assessment of individual performance is being systematically measured through the setting of output targets within the broader organizational objectives. Therefore the importance of putting in place proper performance management system to ensure good performance, control and accountability to the politicians and the citizens cannot be overemphasized in this era of competitiveness and the financial constraints facing governments. Performance management strategies are invariably linked to the broader neo-liberal governance approach that reinforces the reduced role of the state through various NPM techniques ranging from introducing more contract-based competitive provision with internal markets and term contracts, stresses on private sector styles of management practice. These techniques basically make it possible to bring about new values and administrative culture that stresses on efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility in resource usage and an increased emphasis on output controls (Christensen and Yoshimi, 2000:434).

4.2 SUMMARY

The nature of the political and administrative interface in South Africa has traditionally, been shaped and organized in a racially, highly politicized manner. The diffused lines between political and administrative role made it difficult to differentiate between the National Party as the ruling party and the public service

as the public institution. In an attempt to build a responsive and accountable public service the new political and administrative interface seems to be moving towards strengthening the upper hand of the politicians in the formulation and implementation of the policies. As a result the senior positions have become politicized in order to give the political executive more political influence. Given the past discriminatory policies and practices in South Africa, politicization seems to be an attractive option to the politicians. However, Mafunisa, (2003:88) argues that the greatest challenge facing the political and administrative interface in South Africa, is managing the relationship between political-bearers and public servants in a manner that the relationship compliments broader transformation goals other than serving narrow political goals.

Batho Pele policy has been launched as a strategy to enhance service delivery in the public service. The approach is designed to foster increased efficiency and output whilst taking on a customer-service approach, which encourages public participation and transparency in meeting the needs of the people. There are arguments that the objectives of using Batho Pele as a transformation tool have so far not been realized. The key constraints towards achieving the set principles include among others: lack of financial and human resource capacity, poor coordination and communication among the public servants, the public and the political leadership.

Performance Management System is also viewed as an important tool towards improving productivity and enhancing service delivery. There are arguments that in order for the system to be effective it needs to be an integral part of the human resource and development strategy. The effective management of Performance Management can also enhance accountability as promotion; rewards, training and career development are managed in an objective manner. The successful implementation of the system also lies with the changed culture. The evaluation of the management of performance management system in South Africa shows that the political leadership and heads of the department have so far failed to use

performance management system as a useful tool for productivity and a remedy for poor performance in the public service.

The next chapter is the final chapter that will provide concluding remarks and recommendations pertaining to this study.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSIONS

The new public management (NPM) model has emerged as a dominating model in the discipline of Public Administration. The model is a direct response from the rigid, hierarchically Weberian model which lost its credibility as a productive and efficient tool due to its lack of responsiveness and inability to be proactive in coping with economic and technological demands. One of the greatest strengths of new public management model is the realistic approach that it takes in managing the affairs of the states. For instance flexibility in the operations of the organization and employees terms and conditions of employment, emphasis on output and outcome as opposed to inputs and emphasis on accountability for performance.

Although, there are some underlying assumptions of NPM that are being contested by the scholars and practitioners, the model has in recent times proven highly influential in how various governments have chosen to administer the affairs of the state. The new public management model has as a result become more appealing to the governments as it allows public functions to be carried out in a more efficient, cost effective manner by providing more and better information to the policy makers (Hughes, 2003:70). NPM is influenced by a variety of fields of study derived from two main theoretical bases namely: economics and managerialism, which found major support from the neo-liberal ideology. The ideology advocates for market-based approach in the provision of goods and services.

There is a clear indication that the reform process in the South African public service has been precipitated by local and global demands. However, what emerge are the contradictory goals of a developmental state versus the

managerial goals and ultimately it seems the NPM influences have emerged as powerful forces dictating the course of direction that the government takes. Although the government has clearly set its transformation process along the democratic principles which are centred around people-oriented approach, this at times have appeared to be in conflict with the managerial principles and sometimes complicates the reform initiatives.

The broad objectives of this thesis were to examine the following:

- Examine the origins and underlying objectives of new public management model.
- Examine the nature of political and administrative interface.
- Examine the key features of performance management system in the South African public service.
- Examine the Batho Pele policy in South Africa and its implications on service delivery.

5.1 THE CONCLUSIONS DRAWN ARE AS FOLLOWS:

5.1.1 POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE

The post apartheid political and administrative interface is moving towards strengthening the upper hand of the political executives in the policy formulation and implementation process. This is not different from other developments taking place in the democratic countries. The lack of trust among the ANC leadership on

the commitment and loyalty of the pre-1994 senior government officials towards transforming the democratic government service delivery mandate have thus precipitated the move towards politicization of senior positions in the civil service. However, the roles of the politicians and the administrators have become more blurred and create further confusion thereby making it impossible to clearly demarcate lines of accountability.

Furthermore, the formulation of policy in cluster forms has led to the decline of the role of the senior government officials as special advisors. This further complicates issues of accountability and responsibilities between the politicians and the administrators. The desire to break away from apartheid approach has also led to the embracing of the norms from abroad. In particular, strengthening the political leadership influence in the appointment of senior civil servants regarded as loyal and committed to the policies of the government in power. Although this move attempt to subject civil servants to the political will, as developed countries have a combination of highly politicized professionalized senior public servants. In developing countries such as South Africa there is a danger that politicization of the public service can be used as a means of showing favour to some allies irrespective of their level of performance or merits. In fact it has been shown that most senior public servants in South Africa have not been able to offer much in terms of improved performance than political loyalty.

5.1.2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The lack of clear lines of accountability and responsibility has also made it difficult to manage performance management system. For instance confusion becomes more prevalent in the human resource management, as it becomes difficult to hold either the minister or the head of department accountable for output in this area. Furthermore, since the majority of the political executives and

senior managers in the public service are ANC members, the minister of Public Service and Administration finds it difficult to put blame on her comrades. Whereas the PSC could also play a bigger role in questioning the government policy of moving towards a highly politicized public service with less focus on performance or output, it seems, however, that it only goes as far as seeing to the compliance with government policies. The need for a concerted effort towards building a strong performance-oriented culture in order to strengthen a customer-oriented style of delivery and improved management practices is being recognized in several government policy documents (DPSA, 2002). However, at the moment it seems that the political executives have not yet fully embraced the concept of performance management as the tool for performance improvement and capacity building.

5.1.3 BATHO PELE

Forging ahead with the transformation agenda has required a move from the old authoritarian structure into a new public service structures able to collaborate with the government in achieving its developmental and transformation agenda. The Public Service Commission is aware that although significant developments have been made in instilling Batho Pele principles in the civil service, a lot remains to be done. Further the DPSA recognizes the need to strike a balance between responding to globalization through modernization of the public service whilst recognizing and striving to solve the prevailing poverty, inequality and issues of redress (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2004:13).

The DPSA admits that meeting these challenges have not been easy, more especially the negative aspects of decentralizing human resources management has led to a largely fragmented, uncoordinated as well as poorly monitored policies. There is thus recognition for a more coordinated approach promoting proper resource allocation across the public service. This demonstrates the

complex challenges facing the public service in trying to grapple with economic, social and political demands.

The dual nature of the South African public sector reform thus depicts a unique situation of South Africa. It could be argued that the reformers somehow underestimated the importance of prioritizing and sequencing the reform process. The unique features of South Africa as a developing country emerging from apartheid rule with a high rate of unemployment and poverty calls for a cautious approach in transforming the public service. Batho Pele policy cannot be fully realized unless there is a full structured participation and equal access to services by the poor and marginalized groups.

It is clear that an over-emphasis on the technical efficiency as advocated by the NPM ideas will be in conflict with the role of a developmental state in addressing urgent issues such as ensuring equitable distribution of resources, upliftment of the poor and providing welfare function. It can be argued that there are some fundamental Weberian principles that developing countries like South Africa need to value such as discipline, predictability and a high commitment to equity in dealing with the citizens before being wholeheartedly engaged in NPM ideas. These values will mark a significant step towards dealing with internal public management practices and norms in the development of the transformation initiatives. Specifically, issues such as clear vision and planning for objectives, trimming expenditure and the size of the public service, instilling accountability in the public service along with flexibility and clear lines of responsibility.

To sum up, it can be argued that the South African public sector reform initiative reflects ideas inherent in the NPM model. However, the implementation process has been largely constrained by internal factors that need urgent attention, such as high poverty levels, unemployment, and maldistribution of resources. Although Batho Pele remains a noble approach towards being responsive to the service users' needs, its good intentions have been in conflict with other NPM principles

such as individualism and competition, which neglect collaborative and co-operative values across departments.

There is a need for more collaborative and coordinated efforts among the politicians, the civil servants and the public in order to sustain service delivery and eradicate poverty. Training and development is therefore essential in facilitating a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of these key stakeholders.

Equally important is the clarity of roles and responsibilities between the political heads and administrators in particular on issues relating to human resource management, which have an important component of performance management. A good performance management system can hopefully bring increased productivity and performance in the public service since an individual and organizational performance will be evaluated against the achievement of the broader organizational goals. The leadership and management role in instilling performance oriented culture among the public servants will thus remain critical.

Since the public service is still in a developmental stage being faced with the challenges of grappling through issues of trying to satisfy democratic, economic and social objectives, there are still some positive elements of the Weberian model such as honesty, continuity, predictability and high commitment to equity in dealing with the citizens that need to be adhered to. It is only when these values are balanced with the NPM ideas like efficiency; effectiveness and performance management that the reform approach can work for the people.

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