CHAPTER 1:   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In an effort to promote a sustainable public service, the attention of the South African government has increasingly shifted to the most critical issue confronting the South African public service today, that of service delivery. The ultimate goal of the South African public service is to provide services to all South Africans. In keeping with the democratic ideals of the new South Africa, the public service also has to ensure that services are delivered in an equitable manner. The South African public service is thus required to redress service delivery imbalances and inequities in previously disadvantaged communities. To meet this challenge the South African public service should be sustainable. Within the context of this study, sustainable, means that the public service should be efficient, effective, economical and equitable. This has numerous consequences, specifically with regard to creating effective approaches for the public service.

This chapter presents a general overview of the study. Firstly, a historical overview of the South African context sets the scene for the study. A general overview is given of South Africa since the establishment of the Dutch colony in 1652 through to the post-apartheid era of 1994 to 2003. The relevant political, social, economic and cultural aspects are briefly discussed. Secondly, the chapter discusses the South African public service and service delivery during the apartheid era (1949 to 1994). The discussion revolves specifically around the leadership and governance framework adopted by the South African public service during this era, which was structured around the needs of an apartheid state. Service delivery to the majority of Black South Africans was either non-existent or only a minimum was provided. Thirdly, the post-apartheid era (1994 to 2003) is described, with particular reference to the South African public service. In 1994, the post-apartheid public service was confronted with addressing service delivery imbalances and inequities in South Africa. Transformation and reform of the South African public service was therefore necessary to promote a sustainable public service to ensure effective service delivery. The transformation and reform of the South African

public service is discussed against the background of leadership, governance and service delivery.

After having presented the historical overview above, the chapter defines central concepts used in the study, namely: public service, service delivery, leadership, governance, and transformational African leadership and governance framework. Thereafter, the motivation for this research study is presented, followed by the problem statement and the research question. The justification for the study and its objectives are outlined. Lastly, a chapter outline is captured.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The historical overview of the South African context sets the scene for the study. In terms of section 40 of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996, the government of South Africa is divided into three spheres (The Constitution of South Africa 1996, Act 108 of 1996): national, provincial and local spheres of government. These are required to observe the principles of the Constitution. The national government is responsible for policy formulation and for developing national standards, rules and regulations. The exclusive functional areas of provincial governments include ambulance services, provincial roads and provincial planning. Municipalities, which are the constitutional units of the local sphere of government, are involved in local issues, such as municipal roads and the provision of local amenities to the community.

The public service in South Africa comprises of national and provincial government (The Machinery of Government, 2003: 30). South African society, however, does not see any distinction between the three spheres of government (Naidoo, 2003: Discussion). Unfortunately, according to Chandu (2004: Discussion), the public sees any challenge in one sphere of government as a weakness of the South African public service as a whole. When considering the effectiveness of service delivery by the South African public service, it is thus important to understand the general context of South Africa, as well as the historical context of the public service and its present context.

General overview of South Africa and its history

The Republic of South Africa is situated at the southern tip of the African continent. The arrival of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape (at a place now called Cape Town, situated in the Western Cape Province) in 1652 heralded the development of a Dutch colony whose objective it was to cater for ships on the trade routes to the East (Kuye, *et al.* 2002: 29). As a result of various political and economic changes in Europe, countries such as Britain consequently became interested in Southern Africa. Thus, during a period of about hundred and fifty years, the Dutch and the British governed the government and administration of Cape Town, alternately.

The discovery of diamonds and then gold in South Africa from 1867 onwards spurred the arrival of a wealth of immigrants to the country and intensified the subjugation of its native inhabitants (World Factbook–South Africa, 2002: 1). These herding and hunting societies, known as the Khoikhoi and the San, or collectively as the Khoisan, had been present in the west and northwest since around 1000 BC (Butler, 2004: 5). In 1870, within the borders of the yet-to-be created South Africa, different types of society were engaged in competition for resources. One of these, were known as Bantu-speaking African people during the colonial era. (Bantu-speaking African people, is that phrase that the colonialists themselves used). They later became known as the Xhosa or Zulu. Their economies and social organisations were centred upon livestock. The effective political units of African pastoralists and farmers were hereditary chiefdoms, which included people of different descent groups and migrants from other regions (Butler 2004:7). The others that were engaged in competition for resources were the Dutch and British.

Britain took direct control of the Cape in 1795, resulting in the Cape colony becoming inhospitable to the Dutch settlers (also known as the Afrikaners or Boers) (Butler, 2004: 7). Consequently, in 1806, many of the Dutch settlers trekked north and eastwards to create their own republics in areas that were, however, already occupied by African polities. New opportunities for the Boers were created by a major transformation in African societies (Butler 2004:8). There was a great dislocation of African farmers as a result of a series of conflicts, driven by the Zulu kingdom. The resulting instability presented White settlers with an opportunity to colonize seemingly 'empty' and

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unclaimed land. By 1870, as a result, the Boers had occupied great tracts of the Southern African interior.

The Cape Colony was consolidated as a British possession after 1806. During this period, the Boers (an Afrikaans word meaning farmers) resisted British encroachments, but were ultimately defeated in the Boer War (1899 to 1902). The resulting Union of South Africa in 1910 operated under a unitary system of government, but with strong federal properties (Kuye, *et al.* 2002: 29). Although the South African Parliament was the supreme legislative body, each of the provinces could elect its own provincial council and was assigned particular powers and functions. The policies adopted by various governments since 1910 had shaped the South African society and the public service. From 1949, onwards when the National Party (Afrikaner government) came into power, it adopted a system of apartheid (a term referring to the 'separate development' of the races). In the 1990s, apartheid came to an end politically, and a government of national unity was instituted in South Africa.

The size of South Africa is 1,219,912 sq km (World Factbook–South Africa, 2003: 1). It has common boundaries with the republics of Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe, Mozambique, the Kingdom of Swaziland and Lesotho (South Africa Yearbook, 2003/2004: 8). The total South African population is approximately, forty-two million (42,768,678). The South African population is racially diverse: Approximately 75,2 percent are classified as African, 13,6 percent as White, 8,6 percent as Coloured and 2,6 percent as Indian/Asian. Africans, Coloureds and Indians are collectively known as Blacks in South Africa. With regard to the gender distribution, approximately fifty-two percent women and forty-eight percent men that comprise the South African population.

To cater for South Africa's diverse peoples, the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)*,* provides for eleven official languages, namely: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. National and provincial departments may use any two or more official languages for the purposes of government, taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the needs and preferences of the population. The literacy rate of persons fifteen years and over, i.e. people who can read and write is 86,4 percent.

In terms of Section 132 of the Constitution (1996), the country is divided into nine provinces, each with its own Legislature, Premier and Executive Councils. These provinces are the Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North-West, Northern Cape and Western Cape (World Factbook–South Africa, 2003: 1). The South African Parliament consists of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). The National Assembly comprises four hundred seats whose members are elected by popular vote under a system of proportional representation to serve five-year terms. The NCOP comprises ninety seats, consisting of ten members elected by each of the nine provincial legislatures for five-year terms.

South Africa is an emerging market, with an abundant supply of natural resources, well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy, and transport sectors. It has a stock exchange that ranks among the ten largest in the world. South Africa also has one of the world's most progressive Constitutions (GOVZA: Imbizo: 2002) (Access<http://www.gov.za/issues/imbizo/2002: *Retrieved: 20 October 2003*). South Africa has had nine consecutive years of positive economic growth (World Factbook–South Africa, 2003: 1). The gross domestic product (GDP) has grown by an estimated 3,1 percent, during 2002. In the first three quarters of 2002, household consumption expenditure increased by 3,2 percent on average and disposable income by over 3,5 percent. The household debt as a percentage of disposal income is at its lowest level since 1993 (State of the Nation Address of the President of South Africa, Mr. Thabo Mbeki, House of Parliament, Cape Town, 14 February 2003). Over the last decade, real government expenditure on social services has grown by four percent per annum. The manufacturing sector has also grown by 5,4 percent in 2002.

There is, however, a structural fault in the South African economy and society and this is that South Africa has a dual economy (World Factbook–South Africa, 2003: 1). One part of the economy is modern and relatively well developed, whereas the other is characterized by underdevelopment and an entrenched crisis of poverty. Moreover, there is a distinct relationship between underdevelopment, poverty and race in South Africa (GOVZA: Imbizo: 2002) (Access<http://www.gov.za/issues/imbizo/2002: *Retrieved: 20 October 2003*). The historical reason for this is that the previous National

Party government (1949 to 1994) promoted mainly the interests of the White minority in all sectors of society in South Africa, to the detriment of the other race groups.

The South African population can be described as a fragmented portion of a whole (World Factbook–South Africa, 2003: 1). Each race group has received uniquely different and racially based treatment from the previous National Party Government. For example, the new democratic government in South Africa (1994) inherited a divided and unequal system of education. Under the apartheid system of government, South Africa had nineteen different education departments separated by race, geography and ideology. Before 1994, each race group grew up in different social-political, educational and cultural environments. This system of 'separate development' prepared people in different ways for the positions they were expected to occupy in social, economic and political life. The entire system reinforced inequality in all sectors of South African society. The advent of multi-party negotiations, in the early 1990s and subsequent democracy in April 1994 marked the end of three centuries of colonial conquest and White minority rule in South Africa.

Apartheid era: The South African public service and service delivery (1949 to 1994)

When considering service delivery by the South African public service, it is important to understand the historical context of the public service (A Report on the State of the Public Service, 2001: 11). For the purpose of this study, it is important to examine the nature and history of the public service and service delivery prior to 1994. Essentially, the South African public service prior to 1994 reflected a highly fragmented and repressive system of government. In this regard, at the time of democratization (1994), the public service consisted of eleven separate and distinct systems, based on race, gender and ethnicity. Each of these public service systems was organized around its own priorities, which took on distinctive and idiosyncratic characteristics. The doctrine of 'separate development' involved the idea that Africans and others should reside and enjoy citizenship rights in distinct ethnic homelands (Butler, 2004: 19). 'Separate development' was one of the key concepts of apartheid. It implied that every South African must be assigned to an ethnic group, nation or tribe, and that each of these must have its own site of self-government. This resulted in the establishment of ten

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Bantustans and moreover in 1970 homeland citizenship was forced upon Africans in the country. Each of these homeland bureaucracies moreover had it's own public service.

In line with the South African government's policy of discrimination, the public service employed a brutal and authoritarian form of leadership and governance (A Report on the State of the Public Service, 2001: 1). The system that emerged under the apartheid regime was profoundly undemocratic. Furthermore, the public service was explicitly organized around the imperatives of inequitable principles, in which racism and sexism provided an important justification for many of the discriminatory practices adopted by government. Moreover, the public service created opportunities for gross malpractices, such as corruption and mismanagement (A Report on the State of the Public Service, 2001: 11). This was evident at every institutional level in 1994 in the South African public service.

Prior to 1994, the South African public service, adopted an ineffective leadership and governance framework that was characterized as unaccountable, non-transparent and non-participatory (Report of the Presidential Review Commission on Reform, 1998: 1). Furthermore, centralized control and top-down management practices were evident. Accountability within the South African public service was limited to bureaucratic accountability (A Report on the State of the Public Service, 2001: 8). Public servants in the South African public service were held accountable for adherence to rules and procedures, rather than for service delivery outcomes. Wider accountability of service provision to the public was even less in evidence (Naidoo, 2004: Discussion). According to a Report on the Transformation of the Public Service in South Africa (1998: 2), there were a number of weaknesses in the South African public service prior to 1994, which hampered efficient service delivery. The most obvious weaknesses that were identified by the report were inefficient systems, processes and procedural issues. The absence of clearly defined roles and responsibilities was also a source of tremendous confusion (Report of the Presidential Review Commission on Reform, 1998: 1). There was also a lack of effective co-ordination and communication mechanisms.

The total number of public servants in South Africa was about one per thirty inhabitants, which is extremely high in relation to other countries at a comparable stage

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in their economic development. Above all, productivity was relatively low in the public service, particularly if judged in terms of the ability to deliver services that would meet the needs of all people in South Africa (Bardill, 2000: 104). This low productivity resulted, in part, from the lack of appropriate human resources development (HRD) for staff, especially those in the managerial cadre of the South African public service. It also resulted from the fact that a disproportionate number of staff was involved in essentially duplicative administrative functions, whereas serious understaffing frequently occurred at the level of essential service provision, in areas such as health, social services and education. Many of these constraints have served to inhibit the development of a professional work ethic and commitment amongst public servants. However, Bardill (2000: 104) argues that some public servants in the South African public service showed impressive dedication and capability under the most unfavourable conditions.

The South African public service prior to 1994 were structured around the need of the apartheid state (Media Briefing of the Minister of Provincial and Local Government, Mr. FS Mafumadi, Cape Town, 2 September 2003) (Access<http://www.gov.za/search97cgi/s97: *Retrieved: 20 October 2003*). Services to the majority of the population (namely Blacks) were either non-existent or, if delivered, were partially, inefficiently and inequitably distributed. The public service had a policy, which explicitly promoted the exclusion of service provision to Black communities, or at least the provision of minimal services. The converse was true for White South Africans (A Report on the State of the Public Service, 2001: 8). The apartheid state of South Africa directed the majority of its resources into service delivery programmes for the upliftment of, at best, the 13,6 percent of the South African population that was White. The post-apartheid South African public service is consequently faced with the urgent need to improve service delivery imbalances and inequities, especially in previously disadvantaged communities.

Post-apartheid era: The South African public service and service delivery (Post-1994 to 2003)

The post-apartheid democratic government in South Africa (since 1994) has had to deal with the legacy of apartheid and colonialism (Media Briefing of the Minister of

Provincial and Local Government, Mr. FS Mafumadi, Cape Town, 2 September 2003) (Access<http://www.gov.za/search97cgi/s97>: *Retrieved: 20 October 2003*). In 1994, when the new South African government came into power, it was evident that there was an absence of basic services, such as water, proper sanitation and electricity in many rural communities (Second Economic and Social Rights Report 1998/1999, 2000: 1). In some communities, however, minimal services were provided. In 1995, it was estimated that approximately eight million people from previously disadvantaged communities did not have adequate sanitary facilities, and that only fifty percent of South Africans, had waterborne sewerage. In 1996, it was estimated that approximately fifteen to sixteen million people did not have piped water.

According to research conducted by the government on the South African public service in 1994, it was reported in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (WPTPS) (1995: 7) that urban areas in South Africa are better provided with higher levels of services. Conversely, the biggest backlogs are in rural areas, where services were virtually non-existent in 1994. If one has to compare the urban areas with the rural areas with respect to public service delivery, a number of differences become evident.

In 1994, for instance, 10,1 percent of the households living in urban areas had a below basic service level for water (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995). Similarly, 39,2 percent of the households living in rural areas had a below basic service level for water. The difference is even more marked in the case of sanitation, where 25,8 percent of urban households and 75,8 percent of rural households lacked at least a 'ventilated improved pit latrine' (the basic level). These service backlogs are reflected in Table 1/1.

Table 1/1

Service delivery backlogs in urban and rural areas at 1994

Service	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
Water	10,1%	39,2%
Sanitation	25,8%	75,8%

(Source Naidoo: 2004)

In the light of these urban-rural differences in South Africa, it is questionable whether national averages have much value, such as the statement that 45,9 percent of the nation's households lack at least a basic sanitation service level (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995). The reasons for these differences can be attributed to the past urban bias of services, mainly towards White communities in South Africa (Second Economic and Social Rights Report 1998/1999, 2000). This system had been designed to promote the exclusion of Blacks from the mainstream of South African society after all the majority of the citizens who live in rural areas are Black.

The impact of the lack of service delivery by the previous South African public service is further evident in the rural areas of the provinces: for example, in 1995, 13,6 percent of Western Cape rural households had a below basic water service level, whilst the same figure in the Eastern Cape was as high as 76,4 percent (White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service, 1995). Two percent of the Western Cape's urban households have a below basic water service level, whilst the same figure in Eastern Cape is three percent. Approximately thirty-eight percent of Gauteng's rural population had a below basic sanitation service level, while the figure for KwaZulu-Natal was 88,2 percent. Fifteen percent of Gauteng's urban population had a below basic sanitation services level, whereas the same figure in KwaZulu-Natal is fifty-four percent (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995; Second Economic and Social Rights Report 1998/1999, 2000). These figures are summarised in Table 1/2.

Table 1/2

Service delivery backlogs in urban and rural areas of the provinces in 1995

Service	Province	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
Water	Western Cape	2 %	13,6%
	Eastern Cape	3 %	76,4%
Sanitation	Gauteng	15 %	38 %
	KwaZulu-Natal	44 %	88,2%

(Source Naidoo: 2004)

Clearly, there were vast differences with respect to the service levels, both between rural and urban areas and among different rural areas. The South African government of 1994 thus inherited households in urban areas that had inadequate municipal services, and which were able to contribute very little to the cost of public services (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995: 7). Most municipal authorities (local government level) experienced difficulties in financing, delivering and sustaining existing public services.

At a National Conference held by the South African government on Public Service Delivery in 1997, it was stated that the South African public service had to address two important issues (Du Toit and Waldt, 1999: 22). Firstly, there was a need to provide services to all people in South Africa. Secondly, the need to improve service delivery imbalances and inequities among previously disadvantaged communities was highlighted as an urgent priority. In this study the focus is on both aspects of service delivery, although the focus is on previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa.

The improvement of service delivery means improving and the redressing the imbalances of the past, while maintaining the continuity of services to all levels of society. The main focus, however, should be on meeting the needs of the fifty percent of South Africans who are currently living below the poverty line (World-Factbook, 2003: 1). The objectives of service delivery should, therefore, include welfare, equity and efficiency. Unless the South African public service transforms its service delivery backlogs, it cannot claim to have achieved the democratic goals outlined in section 195(1) of the South African Constitution (1996). An efficient, effective, economical and equitable public service is the hallmark of a sustainable public service (Van Niekerk, *et al.* 2001: 96).

The post-1994 public service inherited a system that was ineffective and inefficient in addressing the service delivery needs and demands of the South African society (Ncholo, 2000: 22). The instruments necessary to effectively deliver services to all South African communities did not exist (Ramaite, 2002: 1). An ethos and culture of service delivery first had to be created by the public service (Ncholo, 2000: 22). There was a need for change and reform in the South African public service (Bardill, 2000:

104). As part of the process of change, the government led by the African National Congress (ANC) identified the transformation and reform of the South African public service as one of its primary goals. To this end, the South African government embarked on initiatives to improve the ability of the public service to deliver services.

After the proclamation of the Constitution of South Africa, 1993 (Act 200 of 1993), the structure and composition of the South African public service changed significantly. In 1994, when the new democratic government came into power, most of the South African provinces had one or more former homelands in their jurisdiction, have had to confront difficult issues of integrating and accommodating these separate entities into one public service (A Report of the State of the Public Service, 2001: 11). One step that was taken in this direction was the introduction of the Public Service Act of 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994). This Act created the basis for integrating the fragmented system of eleven public services into a single unified public service, which would operate at both national and provincial spheres of government (Public Service Act of 1994, Proclamation 103 of 1994). A restructuring of the various public services thus followed.

During the first two-and-a-half years of its first five-year term, the new South African government focused primarily on developing its policies and on streamlining and improving frameworks, structures and systems (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2003) (Access<http://www.gov.za/structure/pubserv.htm: *Retrieved: 17 October 2003*). This was necessary to give effect to the values and principles of the interim Constitution of South Africa, 1993 (National Conference on Public Service Delivery Conference Report, 1997). Accordingly, various new Acts and Regulations were formulated and introduced in the South African public service to improve service delivery (Ramaite, 2002: 1). The transformation of the South African public service initially focused on legislative reform, but is presently undergoing massive administrative reform (Service Delivery Review, 2004). The goal is also to replace the classical public administration model with an efficient, effective, economical and equitable model of public administration (Theron, *et al*. 2000: 30). The classical model of public administration focuses on extensive control, but is not necessarily efficient in achieving service delivery outcomes. The model is slow and cumbersome. Moreover, the public service is rigid, with standardized operating rules procedures. The focus of

this model is, predominantly on following rules and regulations, rather then achieving service delivery outcomes.

The agenda for the legislative reforms had its roots in the principles drawn from both the 1993 and 1996 Constitutions of South Africa (National Conference on Public Service Delivery, Conference Report, 1997). Both Constitutions and the policies of the current South African government prioritize service delivery to all South Africans. To redress imbalances and inequities in service delivery in South Africa, the three spheres of government (national, provincial and municipal) are expected by the government to broaden access to services at costs that are affordable to the public (National Conference on Public Service Delivery: Conference Report, 1997). They are also required to design appropriate levels of services to meet their customers' needs and demands (Batho Pele - People First' White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery, 1997). In this regard, they are required to adopt innovative and efficient approaches to redress imbalances and inequities in service delivery (Intergovernmental Fiscal Review, 2001: 11).

The early policy formulation phase, between 1994 and 1999, was characterized by the production and dissemination of policy papers, which formed the basis for legislations and regulations in the public service (Bardill, 2000: 104). These were prepared in nearly every sector of the South African public service. The aims and objectives of the South African government are manifested in these policies (Ramaite, 2002: 1). At this time, however, nine years after apartheid, it is important to determine whether these initiatives and policies have in fact been translated into meaningful action, especially in previously disadvantaged communities.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has noted improvements in a number of national and provincial departments (Service Delivery Review, 2004). The DPSA is responsible for the formulation of national policy in South Africa. The public service is currently implementing a number of public-sector driven programmes, aimed at improving basic needs and services, such as expanding the social security net, creating job opportunities and putting the necessary socio-economic infrastructure in place for sustained growth. The DPSA has acknowledged nonetheless that there is still vast scope for further progress (Department of Public Service and Administration,

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2003). In this regard, the DPSA has indicated that some public service departments are confronted with challenges that impact on their performance. These challenges mainly relate to policy implementation. This is reiterated in the Synthesis Report on the Implementation of Government Programmes (Towards a Ten Year Review, 2003). This Report indicates that, efforts towards service delivery need to be consolidated with greater attention to policy implementation.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) in South Africa is of the view that the previous patterns of inequality remain largely unchanged in previously disadvantaged communities (Service Delivery Review, 2003). The PSC is a central government department that is constitutionally mandated to monitor public service delivery in South Africa. It maintains that previously disadvantaged areas, especially remote rural communities in South Africa, still continue to be under-serviced. It claims that, in many instances, the scale of the imbalances has proved enormous, and that the inherited inequalities from the previous government cannot be fully addressed in the next five to ten years, at the pace that is needed in South Africa. Furthermore, the PSC states that there are challenges in the South African public service that impact on service delivery. These challenges revolve around leadership and policy implementation.

Analysts argue that the pace of improving public service delivery is not fast enough (Molopo, 2003: Discussion). According to the Report on the State of the Public Service (2001: 20), the implementation of the government's policies is a major challenge in this regard. Despite advances in policy design by the South African public service, the transition to implementation remains a challenge (Report on the State of the Public Service, 2001: 20). Ramaite (2002: 1) contends that many public service departments are unfocused, and that this impacts negatively on service delivery. Leaders do not align subordinates to the vision of the institution. Moreover, this vision is not communicated to subordinates, and they are not motivated to realise them. Others argue that the leadership and governance framework adopted by the South African public service is not very effective in promoting improvements in the quantity and quality of services, especially in previously disadvantaged communities (Molopo, 2003: Discussion). Molopo (2003: Discussion) claims that large disparities are still evident in previously disadvantaged communities. Its ultimate success should be judged on whether it could overcome the large disparities that still exist between the levels of service in different

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parts of South Africa. The provision of services to society should be an ongoing and dynamic process that ought to be sustained because, as standards are met, they must be progressively raised.

Improving public service delivery is essential for the future economic prosperity and social development of South Africa. The South African public service is pursuing different approaches to promote a sustainable public service to improve service delivery (Minister for the South African public service, Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Dialogue around Africanizing Public Administration: Issues for leadership and good governance, October 2003). The public service has considered models of excellence and good practice in other institutions, communities and/or public service systems in other countries. In this respect, the trend is the transformation of a public bureaucracy to a model of public administration that is service driven.   The focus is placed on performance and efficiency.

Lungu and Esua (1999: 44) however state that the approaches adopted by developed countries would not be effective in a new developing democracy such as South Africa. They claim that it would be important for the South African public service to also consider local narratives and cultures. Nonetheless, the incorporation of both Eurocentric and Afrocentric models ought to be examined by the South African public service.

DEFINITIONS AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The issue of defining and operationalizing key concepts is central to this study. The definitions provided should clarify the meaning of terms and concepts that are important in understanding the study. The definitions of these key concepts and perspectives on the South African public service, service delivery, leadership, governance and transformational African leadership and governance framework follow.

South African public service

According to section 197(1) of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), within public administration there is a public service for the Republic of South

Africa, which must function in terms of national legislation. The South African public service must loyally execute the lawful policies of the current government. The South African public service comprises national departments and provincial administrations as defined in the Public Service Act of 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994). Within the confines of this Act a conglomerate of South African public institutions, is being grouped together as the South African public service. The current machinery of the South African public service comprises (Service Delivery Review, 2001: 1):

(i)   National departments that set broad frameworks for government operations, for example, the Presidency, the National Treasury, the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) and the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).

(ii)   National departments, which set frameworks for service delivery at the sectoral level, for example, the Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare.

(iii)   Provincial departments, which plan and oversee service delivery at the provincial sphere, and service delivery institutions that interface directly with the public, for example, hospitals, prisons, police stations, schools and front-line offices of the Department of Home Affairs.

For the purpose of this study, the public service is defined as the group of public institutions or departments (both national and provincial) providing essential services, such as basic services to the general public. The basic services, for example, include defending the community. This service benefits the general public. Without the necessary resources, though, it would be physically impossible for the national or provincial departments of South Africa, to effectively implement the government's policies (Du Toit, *et al*. 2002: 76). It is essential for the public service to be efficiently resourced with public servants to ensure service delivery. According to the Public Service Act 1994, the public service consists of persons who (Public Service Act 1994, Act 103 of 1994):

(i)   Hold permanent posts in these bodies: The Permanent Force of the National Defence Force, the South African Police Service, the Department

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of Correctional Services, the Department of National Intelligence Services, and state educational institutions;

(ii)   The public service shall also consist of persons having ceased to hold posts on permanent appointments and not having retired or having been discharged, are employed additional to the fixed establishment or who are deemed to continue to hold posts under the circumstances contemplated in subsection (3)(c); and

(iii)   The public service shall also consist of persons who hold posts on the fixed establishment other than posts referred to in paragraph (a)."

The total number of workers employed with the South African public service in 2003 was about 1,1 million (The Machinery of Government, 2003: 62). It accounts for about a fifth of all formal employment and for about a tenth of the whole labour force of South Africa. This means that the South African public service is effectively the largest single employer in South Africa (The Machinery of Government, 2003: 62). With regard to the distribution of personnel in public service sectors, 61,4 percent is attached to the social services cluster (health, social development and education), followed by 16,5 percent in the criminal justice cluster, 14,7 percent in the governance and administration (GandA) cluster and 7,4 percent in the defence and intelligence cluster (GOVZA: System-The   Public   Service,   2003) (Access<http://www.gov.za/issues/imbizo/2002: *Retrieved: 20 October 2003*).

According to Van Wyk, *et al*. (2002: 193), a sustainable public service is conceptualised as the structural, functional and cultural ability of public service departments. This is necessary to implement the policy objectives of the government, that is, to deliver those public services intended to raise the quality of life of all citizens. A sustainable public service also refers to the availability of and access to concrete or tangible resources, for example, human, financial, material, technological and logistical. It also includes the intangible requirements of leadership, motivation, commitment, willingness, endurance, and other intangible attributes needed to transform rhetoric into action (Van Wyk, *et al.* 2002: 193). The political, administrative, economic, technological, cultural and social environments within which actions are taken should be conducive to successful policy implementation (Cloete, 2002: 441). A sustainable public service depends on strong institutions, skilled personnel, accountability, transparency, responsiveness and enabling

systems and processes, cost effectiveness and a competent and committed leadership cadre. In sum, the phrase 'a sustainable public service' in this study refers to an efficient, effective, economical and equitable public service. The adoption of effective approaches is necessary to promote such a sustainable public service.

Service delivery

Kickert (2002: 90) states that; "service delivery is concerned with the provision of a product or service, by a government or government body to a community that it was promised to or which is expected by that community." Service can be variously defined as the performance of work or duty by an official, an act of helping others, the power to control or make use of resources, or an institution or system providing the public with something useful or necessary (Oxford Universal Dictionary, 1961: 1394). The act of delivery can be defined as producing or performing, handing over, taking goods to the intended recipient, or producing results as promised or expected (Oxford Universal Dictionary, 1961: 413).

Du Toit, *et al*. (2002: 24) argues that the two concepts of functions and services are generally used synonymously, but that there is a distinct difference between them. The difference lies in the fact that before a service can be delivered various functions or processes have to be carried out. For example, before running water can be made available in a house or in an area, the department responsible, would have to budget and plan for the service, to draw up a programme of execution, and finally to supply a pipeline to the area. From this, it can be deduced that services refer to the results emanating from the execution of policy and that they entail a variety of functions or processes.

Within this context, service delivery includes citizens being protected by the public service (Du Toit and Van Der Waldt, 1999: 22). In exchange for being governed and protected, citizens expect the public service to maintain an orderly community by providing basic goods and services. This relationship between them confirms the public service's responsibility to govern on behalf of the citizens of such communities and to protect their interests. This responsibility further implies that the public service is responsible for delivering its services to the community.

Fox and Meyer (1995: 118) define service delivery as "the provision of public activities, benefits or satisfactions." Service delivery relates both to the provision of tangible public goods and of intangible services. According to Flynn (1997: 163), the responsibility for service delivery denotes the delivery of collective or common services. Services that are delivered that are collective and basic, for example, are defending the community. As communities grew and became more sophisticated, their need for more and improved services increased. The public service was thus created to deliver these services, because citizens are unable to satisfy all their own needs, and to perform the activities required for public administration. This implies that the outcomes of public administration are aimed at service delivery. The aim of public administration is therefore to improve the general welfare of the people. However, the needs of the people became increasingly difficult to meet, which required other stakeholders to become actively involved in assisting it.

It can be argued that the basic principle of government in a true democracy is optimum service delivery, at minimal cost, in order to realize the ultimate goal of creating a good quality of life for every citizen. The business of every government is, or rather should be, to improve the lives of all its' people. It does so by providing services to the community. For example, it provides infrastructure (i.e. communications, road and rail network and transportation) to facilitate social and economic growth. It can offer services by implementing development programmes or strategic interventions, for specifically targeted social groups and areas that are disadvantaged. For example, the government can provide training and development. Government can provide or facilitate access to social services. For example, it can offer health services to the communities. It can bestow services by directly supporting needy communities, households or individuals. In a democratic environment, governments stay in power on the basis of how well they have delivered essential services to the electorate.

In a democracy, citizens elect representatives to ensure that the services they need are provided. As part of the democratic process, governments are called upon to account for their mandate to govern, which, in practice, amounts to service delivery. Since 1994, the South African public service has been called upon by the South African society with greater intensity to provide and improve public services to South African communities.

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If a government fails to meet the needs of its community, then the elected representatives and councillors should accept responsibility for such failure. According to Kickert (2002: 89), members of the public can and should demand explanations from their elected representatives, if the demanded standard of service is not met. Meeting the service delivery needs of a community is thus an essential indicator of a truly democratic society. This does, however, require a sustainable public service.

Leadership

The dictionary definitions of leadership are simple, and are not very helpful in understanding the concept for the purpose of this study. Most dictionaries define leadership as "the position or office of a leader", which indicates that leadership involves occupying a position of management or administration. The dictionaries have also contributed to the notion that leadership is a bundle of traits, by defining leadership as "the ability to lead" and stating that; "leadership resides with the leader."

Leaders can also be defined as "those who articulate particular values within institutions and who negotiate those values into the institutional illusion that shapes, sustains, and justifies behaviour" (Northouse, 2001: 1). The verb to 'lead' comes from an old English word 'leden' or 'loedan', which meant "to make go, to guide, or to show the way" and from the Latin word 'ducere' which meant "to draw, drag, pull, to lead, guide and conduct."

Academic research has given us a large number of perspectives and definitions of leadership. However, according to Kotter (1996: 14) neither the scholars nor the practitioners have been able to define leadership with precision and conciseness. As a result, people cannot define leadership correctly, neither when they see it happening nor when they engage in it. Rost (1993: 1) therefore concluded that leadership studies as an academic discipline has a culture of definitional permissiveness and relativity.

Rost (1993: 1) argues that books on leadership are majestically useless and pretentious. This assessment may be, extreme to some extent, but there is considerable truth in it. Most of what is written about leadership from a Western perspective has to do with its peripheral elements and content, rather than with the essential nature of leadership as a relationship. Rost (1993: 1) contends that most of the works on leadership do not in fact

describe leadership, but management. The author demonstrates how the study of leadership is being dominated by different theories; namely: 'great man' leadership theories, group leadership which focuses on facilitative leadership processes, psychologists theories which focuses on trait leadership and political scientists' theories which centres on behavioural leadership.

It is useful at this point to analyze different definitions and perspectives on leadership. Leadership through the centuries became the topic of several treatises such as Machiavelli's 'The Prince' and Carlyle's 'O Heroes, hero-worship, and the heroic in history' (Roos, 1991: 43). Their work, however, merely focused on the presumed competencies of a leader or on his or her personal attributes. This traditional Western approach to leadership still influences writers today, although psychologists and sociologists have emphasized the interrelationships of persons and conditions. Nonetheless, the four basic components of leadership that receive attention in these studies are (Northouse, 2001: 4):

    (i)   the abilities, personality and authority of the leader;

    (ii)   the abilities, personalities, and authority of the followers;

    (iii)   the special attributes of the situation; and

    (iv)   the objective or task with which the group may be concerned.

Roos (1991: 242) and Northouse (2001: 5) refer to leadership as that relationship which exists between an individual and a group sharing a common goal or interest. The group is likely to behave in a manner influenced or directed by the one who assumes the leadership role. When leadership is viewed as a relationship existing between an individual and a group, with both parties sharing a common objective, then the description given by Roos (1991: 42) seems apt, namely that leadership "is an administrative process that involves directing the affairs and actions of others." According to Christopher and Smith (1987: 3) leadership is concerned with power, people and goals. This latter view means that leadership is about persuading people to do what the leader requires of them, while simultaneously encouraging them to acquire new skills and expertise to set out their objectives for accomplishment.

Kotter (1996: 14) concurs with Roos (1991: 242); they argue that that the word leadership is used in two basic ways in everyday conversation "to refer to the process of moving a group or groups of people in some direction through mostly noncoercive means, and to refer to people who are in roles where leadership is expected". According to Naidoo (1996: 10), traditional African leadership espouses that the most effective leader is the one who can lead others to lead themselves. Leaders should thus maximize the contributions of others by helping them to guide their own careers effectively, rather than using the ability to bend the will of others to the leaders will.

Micklethwaite and Wooldridge (1997: 17) levelled the charge that leadership theory is 'faddish'. Consequently, they argued that there is a real need to return regularly to the basics of leadership. In this regard, they refer to leadership as a relationship, which was oriented toward achieving a common goal. Drucker (1979: 194) says, "the purpose of an institution is to make common people do uncommon things." Much the same is true of the leader's role in leading and this is possible only by developing sound leadership skills, which are appropriate to the situation and the followers whom the leader is leading.

Sashkin and Sashkin (2003: 11) state that, "the art of leadership is the divine will of the group, not to electrify the institution with (the leader's) charisma." They argue that, "the modern boss is not supposed to be bossy." They point out that the Japanese tend to see leadership as "being similar to air: necessary for life but invisible and insubstantial." Leadership can thus be defined as having a vision or agenda of one's own, coupled with the ability to articulate one's message, to gain support through transactional means, and to bring one's own goals to fruition.

It is important to look at other viewpoints on leadership. According to O' Toole (1996: 37), leadership is a set of processes that creates institutions or adapts them to significantly changing circumstances. Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people to that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles. This definition highlights the importance of vision, change and the fact that people need to be committed fully to all that must happen. Leadership is centred on the concept of achieving group or institutional goals. The most consistent element noted in

all of the above definitions is that leadership involves the process of influence, between the leader and his or her followers to attain specific goals.

This is reiterated by Kets de Vries (2001: 4) who argues that leadership is the influencing process between leaders and followers, to achieve specific objectives through change. This definition highlights the roles of leaders as well as followers and the creative processes of change, which make the achievement of objectives possible. Leadership in this definition is about non-coercive influence, directing and coordinating the activities of followers towards the accomplishment of institutional goals.

According to Mokgoro (2001: 5) leadership is about "developing responsibility; different people taking responsibility; forcing people to take responsibility; influencing the community or society to face its problems and mobilizing people, communities or society to tackle tough problems." The author argues, "leaders are virtually all military generals or politicians decisive and credible". Moreover, "leaders have strong personalities. Leaders empower others and have a clear vision. They demonstrate courage and have a simple message. They are effective communicators". More importantly, they manifest charisma. They mobilize followers, and are winners. It could be argued that leadership here refers to leaders who make use of the motivations and actions of others to achieve specific goals. The definition by Mokgoro (2001: 5) of leadership can thus be viewed as an interpersonal relationship in which followers comply because they have to, not because they want to.

It can be argued that the goal achievement notion of leadership in these definitions reduces leadership to group facilitation and human relations skills, all of which indicate an emphasis on style, as a way of developing leadership. The goal achievement view of leadership makes effectiveness a part of the definition, instead of the quality of the leadership.

The influence relationship among followers and leaders is also highlighted in Rost's (1993: 102) and Northouse's (2001: 5) definitions on leadership. In this regard, Rost (1993: 102) indicates that leadership "is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes." Every word in this definition conveys a specific meaning that contains certain assumptions and values,

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which are necessary for a transformed, post-industrial model of leadership. Taking into account Rost's (1993: 102) definition on leadership, it may be stated that there are four essential elements that should be present if leadership exists:

(i) The relationship is based on influence. According to Northouse (2001: 5), the influence relationship is multidirectional.

(ii) Leadership and followers are in a relationship. The followers are active. There must be more than one follower, and there is typically more than one leader in the relationship. According to Molopo (2003: Discussion), this type of leadership is typical of traditional African leadership. According to Rost (1993: 102), in the Western leadership definition the relationship is inherently unequal because the influence patterns are unequal. This is a departure from traditional African leadership, which advocates that the relationship between leaders and followers is equal (Naidoo 2003: Discussion).

(iii) Leaders and followers intend real changes. According to Rost (1993: 102), 'intend' means that the leaders and followers purposefully desire changes. These changes should be substantive and transforming. However, leaders and followers do not have to produce changes in order for leadership to be successful. They intend changes in the present but the changes take place in the future if they take place at all.

(iv) Leaders and followers develop mutual purposes. The mutuality of these purposes is forged in non-coercive influence relationships. In this regard, leaders and followers develop purposes, not goals. The intended changes reflect, but do not realize, their purposes. Moreover, the mutual purposes become common purposes.

Rost (1993: 104) concurs that all four elements must be present if any relationship is to be called leadership. The authors argue that the relevance of the above three out of four elements is not sufficient, if leadership is to be successful within a particular context. In order to establish if leadership is indeed happening, it is essential to determine if these four essential elements are present. If they are present then according to Rost (1993: 104), the phenomenon is leadership. However, it is obvious that this definition of leadership by Rost (1993: 102) is an extension of the previous definitions outlined in

this study. The other definitions outlined and emphasized either one or the other of the elements mentioned by Rost (1993: 102) and Northouse (2001: 6), but not all four.

In examining Kuye's (2001: 1) definition of leadership, it is evident that there are several representative definitions. Kuye (2001: 1) argues that, firstly, "leadership is an interpersonal influence, which is directed through communication towards goal attainment". Secondly, "leadership involves an influential increment, or it is the art of influencing people by persuasion, which entails direction from the leader, which is over and above mechanical compliance". Thirdly, "leadership is an act that causes others to act and respond in a shared decision". Fourthly, "leadership is the principal dynamic force that motivates and coordinates the institution in the accomplishment of its objectives". Fifthly, "leadership is a willingness to take the blame". These are all important components in defining leadership.

It can be deduced that leadership is conceived variably as a group process, as a personality, as inducing compliance, as the exercise of influence, as particular behaviours, as a form of persuasion, as a power relation, as an instrument to achieve goals, as an effect of interaction, as a differentiated role, as the initiation of a structure, and as many combinations of the definitions outlined. It can be argued that leadership is a role in which the individual expends energy on a continuous basis in order to achieve certain goals. The individual normally considers these goals to be very important, and he or she uses this power and influence to inspire others to follow and work with them to achieve these goals. Both the goals committed to, and the exercise of power and influence require energy and the ways in which this energy is expressed reflects the talents, abilities, beliefs and values of the person exercising leadership. It would be sensible for fruitful research on leadership in the South African public service not to single out any of the above foci but to study leadership as a phenomenon, which embraces all the facets as discussed above.

It is important to examine how these definitions of leadership apply to the South African public service context. For instance, Goshi (2001: 1) mentions that "the inclination of the South African public service is to always seek short term solutions to long term problems and to grab any leadership definition, technique or style that comes along, only to find after a short while that a better one is available." Naidoo (2003:

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Discussion) argues that the South African public service should consider the positive attributes of both Western and traditional African leadership approaches.

For the purpose of this study the word African refers to diverse perspectives, approaches and sensitivities of culture, socio-economic and political perspectives in South Africa. Traditional African leadership seeks to focus on interpersonal and group relationships. It is defined as a value-based and ethical leadership (Naidoo, 1996: 3). In this regard, it entails values, such as diligence, respect, empathy, and an appreciation for diversity, transparency, accountability, humanness and honesty. These values are part of the moral basis which African societies are built upon. These values can positively contribute to the creation of a sustainable public service. However, the imposition of apartheid in South Africa prior to 1994 has had a negative impact on the development of traditional African leadership.

In this study, then, leadership is thus defined as the relationships that exist between an individual and a group of individuals in the South African public service. The leader should get others to willingly contribute to the attainment of aims or objectives. A leader ought to be a source of vision, an activator of processes and a builder of trust. He or she should be active in influencing others to understand meaning, to grow, to be creative and to develop a culture of change, innovativeness and performance in the public service. Local narratives and context are crucial when deciding on a leadership framework for public service organisations. The leader, the followers, the situation, values, ethics, cultural factors and the task are all important determinant factors within the leadership framework of the South African public service.

Governance

An international symposium in 1999 of about twenty academics and practitioners traced the roots of governance back to the 18th century. The symposium collected definitions from different sources, which illustrated the progressive widening of its meaning (Plumptre and Graham, 1999: 1). The group noted that the changed role of government and the changed environment, in which it has to discharge its role, have brought the term governance into common usage, as a process for which the word 'government' is no longer sufficient. At the symposium, it was argued that governance is not, in fact, a

new word, but that its appearance in discussions about the public service is a comparatively recent development.

A common, for instance, tendency is to use governance as a synonym for government. This confusion of terms can have unfortunate consequences (Plumptre and Graham, 1999: 1). For example, one of the aims of the symposium was to explore what should be done about a particular public policy issue. It was agreed that the heart of the issue was a problem of governance. However, governance and government were used interchangeably. The consequences were that the policy issue became defined implicitly as a problem of government. The notion that there might be other ways of addressing the problem, or that other sectors of society might take the initiative in dealing with it, was not considered. Thus, equating governance with government constrained the way in which the problem was conceived and reduced the range of strategies available for dealing with it. The confusion over terminology related to governance can evidently have important practical consequences. It may affect not only the definition of a problem but also the policy analysis about how to resolve it.

To avoid any confusion within the context of this study, it is important to clarify the government refers to a body of public institutions that makes and applies all enforceable decisions for a society. Government functions are typically divided into horizontal categories. In this regard, Johnson (1991: 396) states that the term government conventionally refers to the formal institutional structure and location of authoritative decision-making in the modern state. These include legislative, executive and judicial authorities. The vertical categories of government are usually divided into national, provincial and local spheres of government. There are a variety of relationships between such spheres of government. Together they aim at promoting the general welfare of the public at large (Van Niekerk, *et al*. 2002: 68). The national level of government makes decisions and has legislative power concerning matters of national interest. These include aspects such as foreign affairs, education and defence. The provincial level of government makes decisions and has legislative power on matters that are dealt with in a provincial context. Examples of functions performed at the provincial sphere include nature conservation, roads and provincial health issues. The local sphere of government makes decisions and has legislative powers over those issues that are dealt with by local governments, also referred to as municipalities. The various spheres of government

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need to co-operate with each other to maximise output and prevent duplication in an attempt to co-ordinate the activities that need to be rendered to the communities. The nature of a governmental system is characterized by the way in which governmental authority is spread. It can be argued that a government is only able to function effectively if it has the adequate authority, public support and stability to maintain law and order.

Government can be thus referred to as a structure, consisting of public institutions in which people work, with the aim of providing certain services and products to a society. In essence, a government, is firstly, responsible for making laws, secondly, for ensuring that there are public institutions to implement its laws, and thirdly, for providing goods and services which these laws prescribe (Ranney, 1971: 26). According to Kaela (1998: 134), it is this implementation of laws and the actual provision of goods and services that constitutes governance. Government, on the other hand, refers to a body of persons and institutions that make and apply all enforceable decisions for society. Governance is, however, possible only as long as governments manage to implement policy.

The definitions provided above clarify the meaning of terms and concepts that are important in understanding the purpose and function of government. Government, within the context of this study, therefore, implies the establishment of government structures within the context of a state, to ensure that services are rendered to communities that promote their general welfare and quality of life.

Governance, on the other hand, is a term, which, from about 1990, has progressed from obscurity to widespread usage (Draper, 2000: 4). There are different views as to what governance actually means. The range of issues that fall under the umbrella of governance is extremely broad (Draper, 2000: 4). Draper (2000: 4) claims that governance refers to policy implementation, institutionalised rules and norms, and structures. Kaela (1998: 134) more specifically indicates that governance within government encompasses the institutions, structures and activities of the legislature, executive and the judiciary at the central, regional and local spheres of government.

Plumptre and Graham (1999: 1) argue that governance is the result of the interaction of a multiplicity of influencing actors; namely: businesses, communities and individuals.

Nyambi (1998: 96) also points out that it is important to bear in mind that interest in public issues such as service delivery, is not confined to government. The list of actors includes civil society, which encompasses voluntary agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), as well as including the media, the military, religious organisations, business institutions, communities and individuals, all of whom share an interest and play a role in addressing public issues, such as service provision (Plumptre and Graham, 1999: 5).

Doh (1998: 160) indicates that these institutions, communities and individuals actively participate in and influence public policy that affects people's lives. The term governance thus characterizes various interactions between diverse stakeholders. It refers to both formal and informal norms and conventions (Muthien, *et al.* 2000: 240). According to Schacter (2000: 3), the concept may usefully be applied in different contexts, namely to global, regional, national and local, as well as societal and institutional arrangements. The concept of governance may therefore be applied to diverse forms of collective action.

In view of the proliferation of definitions of Vil Nkomo (1998: 137), suggests that the concept of governance tends to be illusive in many respects. This is particularly the case when societies are undergoing structural changes, such as is happening in South Africa. Vil Nkomo (1998: 137) in his paper on Governance for Sustainable Human Development argues that for clarification, it would be important to consider the definition of governance that is espoused by the United Nations Development Programme (1998: 137). It defines governance as "… the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. Governance comprises the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations."

According to Mohiddin (2002: 1), traditional African governance is the art and skill of collective management in the administration of public affairs. In this regard, it is the product of knowledge, information, culture, experience, motivations, competence and commitment to goals. The key element is the utilization of collective management by those placed in leadership positions in pursuit of common objectives or goals.

Collective management in a traditional community involves shared management and leadership, for example in the sharing of responsibilities for a particular outcome. Traditional African governance entails co-leadership, co-responsibility and co-accountability (Mohiddin 2002: 1). In the South African context, the ideas and practices of traditional African governance can be particularly useful in improving service delivery.

According to Kotze (1998: 15), leadership effectiveness in conjunction with the participation of various stakeholders in public service delivery will constitute effective governance. Governance refers to practices that enable governmental activity, where such activity is broadly defined as the production and delivery of publicly supported goods and services. It is apparent that this definition focuses on the implementation of public policies. Heinrich and Lynn (2000: 1), argue that governance is important for achieving policy or institutional objectives. In sum, governance generally refers to the means of directing, controlling, implementing and coordinating of public policy, by individuals or institutions, to achieve a common goal. Adopting an effective governance framework in the public service is thus an important precursor to improve service delivery.

Governance is about how governments and other social institutions interact, how they relate to citizens, and how decisions are reached in an increasingly complex world (Plumptre and Graham, 1999: 1). Governance occurs through interactions among structures, processes and traditions that together determine how power is exercised and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say (Rigumamu, 1998: 251). Governance is about relationships and accountability for results. In short, governance entails who has influence, who makes the decision, and how decision makers are held accountable.

Nyambi (1998: 9) states that the outputs of governance are not different from those of government. Rather it is a matter of a difference in processes. Governance goes beyond government to include the role of actors outside of government, for example, civil society and the private sector. Government, by comparison is, viewed less as a process and more as a public entity. Governance is concerned with public issues, but interest in such issues is not confined to the domain of government. Examples of this are public private partnerships (PPPs) or community participation in public service delivery.

Governance is about both direction and roles of different role-players implementing public policy, whereas government is a mechanism used to make new decisions and to solve collective problems. Government functions to serve the needs of the community. Governance is, thus not only about where to go, but also about how to get there, who should be involved, and in what capacity.

Coston (1998: 481) states that governance represents how things get done, in other words: "the way in which any social unit from an entire society to the smallest community organizes itself to make collective decisions, to promote shared interests, or to solve common problems." Effective governance should, then, relate to effective problem solving and decision-making and to the efficient allocation and management of public resources. It can be argued that for governance to be effective in the South African public service, the state's role ought to be matched to its current capability, which can then be enhanced by a reinvigorating leadership. The sustainability of the South African public service can be gauged by its ability to meet society's demands, such as in the provision of particular goods and services to all communities.

Ayee (1998: 103) states that effective governance can be understood in terms of three major components. The first is the form of political leadership that exists in a country (parliamentarian or presidential, civilian or military and autocratic or democratic). The second is the means through which leadership is exercised in the management of economic and social resources. The third is the ability of governments to discharge their functions effectively, efficiently and equitably through the design, formulation and implementation of sound policies. In this study, the researcher will focus on all components of governance, although the emphasis would be on the implementation of public policy.

Van Wyk, *et al.* (2002: 94) focuses on outputs, because determining and judging the effects of public policies, resource use and institutional behaviour within the South African public service is crucial. Kuye (2003: Discussion) similarly argues that, "governance is the critical set of arrangements, authorities, expectations and linkages which determine policy and direction for the institutions. The citizens would periodically express their assessment of government performance through rejection or

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reselection of their political representatives". It is therefore imperative for governments to provide services to the citizens of the society who have elected them.

The importance of the relationship between the formulation of public policy and its implementation is re-iterated by Taylor (2000: 110). In an empirical analysis of public policies and their implementation, the term 'governance' may be defined as the regimes of law, administrative rules, judicial rulings, and practices that constrain, prescribe and enable government activity, where such activity in turn is broadly defined as the production and effective delivery of publicly supported goods and services (Heinrich and Lynn, 2000: 3).

From the above description, it can be deduced that governance implies the actions undertaken to improve the general welfare of a society by means of the services delivered. This further implies that priorities have been determined. For instance, the immediate priority of the South African public service is to improve service delivery imbalances and inequities in South Africa. The different public service departments reflect these priorities; for example, one department is responsible for the provision of housing to the poor, another provides welfare services, and a third department is responsible for the provision of education and training the country's citizens.

The adjectives 'good', 'sound' or 'effective' governance, which are often appended to the term (Gildenhuys and Knipe, 2000: 91). For the purpose of this study, governance will be understood to be 'good', 'sound' or 'effective', when the South African government attains its ultimate goal of creating conditions for a satisfactory quality of life for each citizen. Within the context of this study, then the ultimate goal in the South African public service is to overcome service delivery imbalances and inequities in previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa. According to Cloete (2002: 438), an important strand of this is that effective governance is prescriptively conceptualized as the achievement by a democratic government of the most appropriate developmental policy objectives to sustainably develop its society. This is achieved by mobilizing, applying and co-ordinating all available resources in the public, private and voluntary sectors, as well as domestically and internationally, in the most effective, efficient and democratic way.

As we have seen, then, the term governance is multi-dimensional and should be unpacked very carefully within the South African context. From the above definitions, a number of useful focal points emerge. Governance covers the obligation of supervising and monitoring public service delivery performance. It entails ensuring accountability for service delivery to stakeholders and society. This includes promoting effective relationships between the different stakeholders, social stability, meeting the needs of society, fostering democracy and, more importantly, creating an effective leadership that can achieve these objectives.

Governance within the context of this study is not intended to be a comprehensive theory of bureaucracy, government performance, or public management in the South African public service. It ought to be a schematic framework that identifies how the values and interests of citizens, legislative enactments and oversight, executive and institutional structures and roles, and judicial review are linked through a dynamic, interactive and continuous public administration process. This process should induce the performance of public programmes. It ought to mediate the consequences of particular approaches in the implementation of policy through various arrangements by the public service.

Governance within the South African context should moreover be viewed as the connections and interactions between national, provincial and municipal spheres of government and the public they serve. The regular connections and interactions between authorities on all levels of government and the public are examples of governance. It also refers to various arrangements by the public service with actors outside the public service to improve and promote service delivery, especially in previously disadvantaged communities. These arrangements should promote responsiveness and encourage responsibility. These are indicative of proactive decisions and actions that should be taken by the public service. It can therefore be argued that governance within the context of this study relates to both formal and informal arrangements by the South African public service, with the ultimate aim of improving service delivery.

For the purpose of this study, governance can be defined as the responsibility and accountability of leadership in the South African public service for the achievement of service delivery objectives. Effective governance in the South African public service

should be a shared process of, on the one hand, political and bureaucratic leadership, and on the other hand stakeholders (the business sector, civic organisations, communities or individuals) in both policy making and policy implementation. Effective governance should ensure the successful implementation of public policy through various partnerships both within and outside the South Africa public service. The end goal ought to be the improvement of service delivery by the South African public service.

Transformational African leadership and governance framework

In this study, a pragmatic and transformational African model is tentatively referred to as a hybrid leadership and governance framework. Pragmatic refers to a practical leadership and governance framework that would be adaptable to different contexts in the South African scenario. Transformational African model refers to the unique circumstances faced by the post-apartheid public service, which require a conception of public service leadership and governance that draws on relevant approaches, in other words it is a hybrid model. In this study, a hybrid leadership and governance framework is defined as a framework that is multifaceted and multidimensional with its own unique characteristics, diverse perspectives, approaches and strategies. The framework caters for sensitivities of culture, gender, religion, ethnic origin and socio-economic and political differences. These divergent perspectives, approaches and sensitivities are incorporated and developed in such a way that the full potential of public servants and public service institutions may be realised optimally. A combination of leadership and governance approaches are essential, in order to improve service delivery. This model thus incorporates traditional African values, transformational leadership and team leadership. It also refers to effective governance approaches towards public service delivery, such as civic governance. For example, it refers to the active involvement of communities in service delivery. It also refers governance principles such as accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equality and public participation.

It is proposed that a uniquely South African leadership and governance framework will shape public administration positively within the context of the public service. The leadership and governance framework developed in this study is flexible, so that it can be applied to diverse settings and circumstances in the country. This study serves as a

vehicle to advance a pragmatic transformational African model for the improvement of service delivery in South Africa. The aim, therefore, is to utilise the divergent perspectives within the South African public service and to reach a synthesis in order to reach the highest possible levels of performance.

MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH

The provision of services (i.e. houses, roads, water and electricity) to society, especially among previously disadvantaged communities is not being addressed at the pace that is required in South Africa. Although the public service has committed itself to addressing the disparities of service provision, many provinces and municipalities are confronted with extensive service backlogs. The Ministry for the Public Service and Administration (MPSA) and, in particular the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) expressed their concern about the issue of service delivery. There is no issue more important in South Africa at the moment than addressing imbalances and inequities in service delivery.

It has become increasingly apparent to both policy-makers and policy implementers that a significant expansion in the scope and quality of service provision by the South African public service is vital. In fact, there is a growing need for a hybrid leadership and governance framework. More specifically, a need is expressed for unique South African leadership and governance model with a view to improving the current framework, or exploring new alternatives to promote a sustainable public service for a renewed focus on the issue of service delivery. A distinctively South African leadership and governance framework, with its own unique characteristics and incorporating diversities perspectives, strategies and socio-economic and political differences is required, to be an effective instrument in improving service delivery in South Africa

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The South African public service is not addressing service delivery imbalances and inequities at the pace that is needed in South Africa. Despite efforts to improve service delivery by the South African public service, huge disparities are still evident, especially in previously disadvantaged communities. There are challenges impacting on

the sustainability of the public service, which impede the ability of the public service to effectively deliver services.

To improve service delivery performance, it is essential that the South African public service adopt an appropriate and effective leadership and governance framework. In this regard, the importance of local culture and narratives ought to be considered for the South African public service. In adopting a leadership and governance framework within the South African public service, it is important to explore the attributes of different approaches. In this study both Western and traditional African leadership and governance approaches are explored. To this end, a research question to address the tenets of this study is proposed. The first priority of this research is to understand to focus on it throughout this thesis.

RESEARCH QUESTION

To what extent can a leadership and governance framework improve service delivery by the South African public service?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are:

(i)   to provide a broad overview of service delivery in the South African public service, as a context within which to understand issues of leadership and governance between 1994 and 2003;

(ii)   to discuss both Western and traditional African leadership and governance approaches that have been successfully adopted within an institutional or community context both locally and internationally;

(iii)   to critically analyse the current status of service delivery in the South African public service by focusing on the experiences of the national Departments of Health, Housing, Safety and Security, and Justice and Constitutional Development; and

(iv)   to recommend a leadership and governance framework for the South African public service that would improve service delivery in public

service organisations in a more sustainable manner. This leadership and governance framework would have its own unique characteristics and strategies that would accommodate the diverse perspectives and socio-economic and political differences in South Africa.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1:   Introduction and background to the study

The chapter provides a historical overview of the South African public service in context. A general overview of South Africa's historical evolution is outlined before presenting a broad overview of the South African public service and its service delivery during the apartheid era, prior to 1994. Thereafter the chapter highlights the status of the South African public service from 1994 to 2003. This provides a benchmark against which to measure both its successes and challenges. The definitions and operationalization of key concepts are examined, analyzed and elaborated, and a justification for this study is clearly sketched; it is important to examine whether the South African public service should improve its leadership and governance framework to improve service delivery. The objectives of the study are delineated, and the research problem is succinctly outlined. Finally, the chapter concludes with a breakdown of each chapter.

Chapter 2:   Research methodology

Chapter Two looks at the research methodology of the study. It elaborates on the reasons for conducting qualitative research, the research design and its phases. Against this background, it is explained why the case study method is used in this study. The target population or the sample for the study is indicated. In this respect, the selected public service departments that have been chosen for this study are also indicated. The data collection techniques used for this study are outlined in detail; the study specifically uses a host of both primary and secondary data. The data analysis, validation and reporting of the study are discussed. The scope and limitations of study and significance of study are also sketched.

Chapter 3:   Conceptual framework of the study

Chapter Three considers both the past and current trends in public administration. The relationships between public administration, new public management (NPM), leadership and governance and service delivery are explored. Within the context of this study, it is evident that there is a relationship between these processes and service delivery. The most pertinent mechanisms to promote a sustainable public service in South Africa are discussed in detail. In this respect, the study discusses the Constitution of South Africa (1996), the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the White Paper on Transforming Public Service (WPTPS) (1995) and the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele) (1996). A model is developed by the researcher to illustrate the relationship between public administration, new public management (NPM), leadership, governance and service delivery in the South African public service. The basic conceptual model of public administration is redesigned and adapted for the purpose of this study.

Chapter 4: Literature review: An overview of leadership and governance approaches

Chapter Four provides an in-depth theoretical framework to the study. Leadership and governance approaches are extensively discussed. Both Eurocentric and Afrocentric approaches are examined. By focusing on the theoretical framework, the connection on the debate between a need for effective approaches for a sustainable public service and service delivery could be made in Chapter Five.

Chapter 5:   Analysis and findings of selected case studies in the South African public service

Chapter Five investigates actual service delivery in selected South African public service departments. An overview is given of service delivery in the Departments of Health, Housing, Safety and Security, and Justice and Constitutional Development. The chapter conceptualizes the successes achieved thus far. It analyses the factors that are impacting on service delivery performance. The scope and quality of the services is analysed against the backdrop of the leadership and governance framework adopted by

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the South African public service to determine its effectiveness in improving service delivery especially in previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa. Throughout the discussion, conclusions and recommendations are made. The findings of the study are succinctly summarised in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions

Chapter Six concentrates on addressing the factors impacting on the sustainability of the South African public service that slows service delivery. The adoption of an effective leadership and governance framework is considered particularly important for adoption by the South African public service, as this is a necessary pre-condition for improving service delivery, especially in previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa.