PROFESSIONALISM: THE ETHICAL CHALLENGE FOR MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES*

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of professionalism in promoting effective, efficient, impartial, fair, equitable and ethical municipal service delivery. The paper starts by identifying relevant literature on the topic. It further focuses on the identification of the characteristics of a profession. These characteristics include: intensive compulsory education at recognised educational institutions as prerequisite for entry, existence of a code of conduct, organising into a professional association, a monopoly in a particular field of work and intellectual rather than manual work. These characteristics are used as yardsticks to determine whether public administration (hence municipal administration) is a profession or not. Attention is paid to the role of municipal administration education and training in promoting professionalism. The role of the Institute for Local Government Management of South Africa in promoting professionalism has been identified. The professional roles of municipal managers are identified and explained. These roles are acknowledging politics, acting as leaders, promoting ethics and acknowledging workplace diversity. It is concluded that municipal employees must be willing to pay the price for choosing to uphold their obligations as citizens (as whistle-blowers) in the face of governmental corruption and irresponsible conduct. The price they must be willing to pay include victimisation.

INTRODUCTION

The South African municipalities need managers who are competent and loyal in their work. [In this paper, the title "municipal manager(s)" does not refer to municipal manager(s) in general but to chief administrative officer(s) of a municipality, previously referred to as the town clerk(s)].

These managers are responsible for setting an example, not only in terms of methods and use of municipal resources, but also for sound judgement and respect for societal values. Their behaviour consequently becomes a model for their subordinates. In addition,

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* This article emanates from research submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of a Master of Administration degree at the School of Public Management and Administration, University of Pretoria, 1995.

municipal managers should strive to maintain a positive work climate; a negative work climate will lead to loss of morale and other negative behaviour. Municipal employees whose morale and enthusiasm are low are in most cases not productive.

It is the duty of municipal managers to ensure that their subordinates perform their duties competently. To do this, municipal managers must be aware of their professional roles, which include acknowledging workplace diversity.

ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM WITHIN PUBLIC AND MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

Professionalism imbues its practitioners with a *public service ideal* and code of ethics - that is, internalised standards. To this way of thinking, professionalism becomes the basis for a version of virtue or character ethic. Professionalism can also offer a basis for the external version of ethics, i.e. often public administration practices have been directed at external control (Cooper, 2001:294). These controls include national legislation such as the *Public Protector Act*, 1994 (Act 23 of 1994) and institutional mechanisms such as the Public Service Commission. The depth and breadth within public administration literature on external controls should be applauded. However, it is unclear whether such theoretical formulations make an appreciable difference in the internal standards and norms of practising public administrators. When joined with a code of conduct and the oath of office or solemn affirmation, professionalism establishes a value system that serves as a frame of reference for decision-making and creates a special form of control conducive to high work standards.

According to Cooper (2001:294), there is a clear consensus that the preferred role model for both aspiring and current public servants is that of the professional. Students and practitioners of P(p)ublic A(a)dministration see the role model of a professional as Public Administration satisfying the need for a system of ethical standards. [In this paper the academic subject is spelt whereas the practice is spelt public administration, (i.e. the one of activity)]. To be professional is to be ethical. Thus, the association between professionalism and ethics is strong within public administration. Ethics is general and unifying, whereas professionalism gives pride of place to the specific vocation of each profession. For the manager in contact with the public, it is the quest for the greatest level of customer satisfaction (Le Bris, 1996:24).

Sinclair (1993:910) states that professionalism refers to being competent, efficient, masterly and qualified. According to Ott, Hyde and Shafritz (1991:388), professionalism means a commitment to an ethic of product and service quality, and a need to be innovative. It is most effective when it begins at the top and proceeds downwards throughout the organisational structures. It must begin as a part of an individual's philosophy.

Article

New municipal managers are being appointed to municipalities, which brings about the ethical question of service rendering and training. The municipal service for the new dispensation consists of four categories of municipal employees:

- public employees of the previous dispensation, including those of the "independent states" and "self-governing territories";

- employees from political liberation movements who participated in the democratic process;

- civics and other political groupings; and

- public employees who were trained in foreign countries such as Great Britain prior to the democratisation of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa) (Mafunisa, 2000:81-82).

It is possible for the above categories of public employees to subscribe to different service ethos. This raises an ethical dilemma in that there could be lack of uniformity in rendering municipal services. Internal and external controls need to be put in place to ensure uniformity in the interactions of municipalities. The transfer of responsibility to different municipalities must be undertaken within a framework of national norms and standards that will ensure that the municipal service remains unified. These norms and standards, include loyalty to an occupation and municipal objectives and functions, and not to party politics and private interests.

The *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery* (White Paper)(1997:9) has been drafted with the purpose of providing a policy framework and a practical implementation strategy for the transformation of public service delivery. This White Paper primarily deals with how public services should be provided and is specifically about a relentless search for increased efficiency and reduction of wastage within public institutions. Public institutions are expected to publish standards for the level and quality of services they will provide, to enable all potential users to be aware of the level of service they are entitled to expect, and can complain if these levels are not attained. Performance against standards must be regularly measured and the results published.

From the foregoing it should be deduced that the professionalisation of the post of municipal manager would promote respect for technical expertise, rationality in decision-making and high work standards; provide incentives for the acquisition of new knowledge and promote the ethical behaviour of employees. Professionalisation will also insulate the employee from undue political and public pressures; facilitate communication and innovation in the municipality; breed professional loyalty; provide worker satisfaction and increase the undertaking of the responsibilities of the employees.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFESSION: THE CASE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

According to Rainey (1991:150), a profession involves the application of a skill based on theoretical knowledge; intensive training at recognised educational institutions; organisation into professional association; existence of a code of conduct enforced by a statutory body and commitment to one's work as a calling. Thornhill and Hanekom (1995:196) describe a profession as an occupation that involves intensive education and training at an acknowledged higher educational institution; mental rather than manual work; specific prescribed training to gain entry into the profession; a code of conduct, the violation of which may lead to expulsion and a monopoly in a specific field of activity.

There is no short answer to the question as to whether public administration (hence municipal administration) is a profession or not. This part of the discussion attempts to establish whether it is a profession or not, using some of the above characteristics as points of departure.

Intensive compulsory training at recognised training institutions

A professional person has mastered a body of knowledge and acquired operational skills through specialised education and enriched by career experience. This body of knowledge combines theory and practice (Esman, 1991: 149). For an occupation to be called a profession, professionals should have received intensive training or education at recognised training or educational institutions. The compulsory education and training must serve as a prerequisite for entry into the profession. This characteristic of a profession in most part is lacking in public administration. There is no general post-school qualification recognised as the minimum requirement necessary for entry to any post in any department of any public service. There is no clarity as to the utilisation of Public Administration graduates/diplomates in the public service (Thornhill & Hanekom, 1995: 201).

Existence of a code of conduct enforced by a statutory body

Chapman (1993: 18) defines a code of conduct as a statement of principles and standards about the acceptable conduct of employees. It normally contains only a portion of a government's rules on public service ethics and is, therefore, a narrower term than ethical rules, which include statutes, regulations and guidelines.

Professionals should maintain a code of conduct that require them to behave towards clients with objectivity essential to protect the public interest and consequently to protect a particular profession. They adhere to a code of conduct that specify the overall responsibility, interacting with the clients and other professionals and accountability for

their actions (Rainey, 1991: 150). Written codes of conduct for municipal councillors and staff members are provided for in Schedule 1 and 2 in *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act,* 2000 (Act 32 of 2000).

Organising into professional association

At some point in an occupation's progression to professional status an association is formed. The functions of such professional associations are to organise their members; raise the status and enhance the service potential of their members through the development of education, research and the conditions of service and undertake research into all aspects relating to the profession and communicate the findings to members and the authorities (Searle & Pera, 1992: 79).

Professionalisation started almost simultaneously with the emergence of Public Administration as a field of conscious inquiry. An organisational lineage in the early stages of the process of professionalisation can be traced from the South African Institute of Public Administration, which was established in 1963. It was established for the promotion of the practice of public administration and research into the field of study of the discipline of Public Administration. It has, since 1999 been replaced by the South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM).

The mission of SAAPAM is to encourage and promote good governance and effectual service delivery through the advancement of professionalism, scholarship and practice in public administration and management. Its objectives include promoting excellence in theory and practice of public administration and management by promoting ethical conduct and accountability of its members and providing a variety of services including publishing a journal to disseminate information and serve an educational purpose (SAAPAM Annual Report, 2000:1-2). The founding of SAAPAM represented a shared sense of professionalism. Therefore, although membership is not limited to public administrators, the characteristic of "organising into professional association" exists.

Monopoly in a particular field of work

Professionals largely monopolise the activities of their profession (Hanekom & Thornhill, 1986: 87). According to Searle (1987:122) the classification of an occupation as a profession gives it a particular status, for it implies special expertise and moral probity, which justifies protection against competition in the labour market, ensuring a monopoly for the occupation.

Public administrators do not have the monopoly of administrative functions. The administrative functions are policy-making, organising, financing, staffing, and determining work procedures and control. Professionals recognised in most parts of the world as such use the administrative functions in giving effect to co-operative action. Thus, it could be

argued that administration is a generic function and thus universal. The diagnosing, treatment and prevention of diseases by medical doctors are functional activities, but performing the administrative functions serves as a support function. Administration for all professionals is to a large extent limited in scope. In most cases the support service is mostly clerical. Clerical work refers to the work of bookkeeping, registration, accounting, internal communication and recording (Coetzee, 1991: 7).

Intellectual rather than manual work

Professionals generally perform intellectual rather than manual work. Public administrators deal with intellectual rather than manual work (Hanekom & Thornhill, 1986:89). Public administrators' tasks focus on the administrative and auxiliary functions. The latter functions include planning and research. These functions are required to ensure that functional activities are carried out which require for instance manual labour, in the construction of public buildings. The latter level of labour may also require a particular mental ability, but is aimed at utilising skills to achieve a goal which is most often of a physical nature e.g. construction or building.

The above characteristics of a profession serve as standards that indicate that public administration is not yet a profession. The main reason is that one of the primary characteristics of a profession, namely intensive training at an acknowledged tertiary training institution as a pre-requisite for entry, is still not a pre-condition for appointment in an administrative post (Thornhill & Hanekom, 1995: 202). It could be deduced that although public administration does not possess all the characteristics associated with a profession, in some areas progress has been made to such an extent that professionalism has been established. The *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act*, 2000(Act 32 of 2000), which provides for codes of conduct for municipal councillors and employees, serves as an example of efforts to promote professionalism in municipal administration.

Professionalism in municipal administration can be promoted by ensuring strict but cautious application of the prescribed Code of Conduct in a manner that will enable society to note that those who violate the Code of Conduct are acted against. The professionalisation of public administration (hence municipal administration) is important and should be promoted, as professionalism is one of the effective cures for unethical conduct.

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING

While professionalism is mostly concerned with the practice of public administration, it is also of serious concern to academics in the field. Public Administration academics provide professionals with standardised knowledge, technologies and training. Training is a most powerful legitimisation for the claims

to cognitive and technical superiority and to social and economic benefits (Cooper, 2001:301). In educating municipal employees, Public Administration academics should take particular the nature of municipalities into consideration.

The nature of municipalities includes constitutional, legal, political, economic, social, administrative and service-rendering dimensions. The demands emanating from these environmental dimensions would require the orientation of new appointees and retraining of the existing municipal employees in the meaning and significance of professionalism; laws and regulations governing the conduct of municipal employees; conduct in relation to the prohibition of using public office for self interest; efficiency and effectiveness; respect of societal values and the fundamental rights of members of the South African society as contained in Chapter 2 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,* 1996 (Act 108 of 1996).

It is the role of a municipal manager to promote and advise the municipal council about the *Skills Development Act*, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998). The purposes of this Act are, *inter alia*, (i) to develop the skills of the South African workforce by improving the quality of life of workers; improving productivity in the workplace and the competitiveness of employers; and improving the delivery of public services; (ii) to increase the levels of investment in education and training in the labour market and to improve the return on that investment by using the workplace as an active learning environment; providing employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills; and providing opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience; (iii) to encourage workers to participate in learnership and other training programmes and (iv) to improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education.

Managerial training in municipalities is important for managers in general to adapt to changing dimensions of municipal government and administration. In a study (Mafunisa, 1995:121-122) on how municipal administrative professionalism could be promoted, directors of local government departments who were offered managerial training after their promotion to the managerial positions indicated that it was useful in enabling them to perform their managerial functions effectively. The majority of managers included in research into the issue who indicated that they were unable to perform their duties effectively also indicated that they were not offered managerial training after their promotion to the current position. The argument could thus be forwarded that training could contribute towards effective and efficient work performance and the improvement of the quality of municipal administration.

Cherrington (1980:159-160) writes that induction training includes explanations of the value of work and values that work, comments about the pride that accompanies good-

quality workmanship, discussion about the rewards that follow diligence and statements that encourage work ethos. Municipal employees can be taught about the work values and habits, but they must adopt the insight for themselves and incorporate them into their value systems. This could be viewed as a pre-condition for the development of an ethos conducive for the promotion of professionalism in municipal administration.

Mabuya and Thornhill (1993:7) referring to training write: "This can, however, not be an once-off intervention. The base of local officialdom will continue to be broadened and the demands on the incumbent and new officials will continue to change. Ongoing orientation of all such officials - and, in fact, councillors - will therefore have to be an integral part of the training package for the future". It can be concluded from this quotation that training and orientation must be continuous aspects of municipal administration, to be relevant to the changing dimensions. Through training and re-training new perceptions are inculcated, new skills are acquired and new knowledge is imparted. These in turn would enable the municipal employees to perform their duties in a manner that could ultimately acquire the stamp of professionalism.

ROLE OF THE INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Institute for Local Government Management of South Africa (ILGM) (Information Pamphlet: Undated) was established in Port Elizabeth, in 1997. It superseded the erstwhile Institute of Town Clerks of Southern Africa and the more recent Institute of Municipal Managers. It was established after protracted negotiations between the National Executive Committee of the Institute of Municipal Managers and the National Working Group representing the interests of the then local government emerging managers. The negotiation process was inclusive and consultative in nature, as other role-players in local government also took part.

Mission and objectives

The mission of the ILGM (Information Pamphlet: Undated) includes excellent governance by pursuing the following goals, *inter alia*, training in, and development of, managerial skills and co-operative governance. The objectives of the ILGM include promoting the quality of local governance by enhancing the managerial skills of persons in managerial positions; promoting the image of local governance; developing criteria which will guide the selection of candidates into the local government managerial posts; promoting or challenging proposed legislation pertaining to local governance in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, within the framework of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) and promoting the professionalism of its members.

Curriculum development, training and workshops

The President of the ILGM argued that local government professional bodies should develop ethical standards and aim for professionalism of the highest quality amongst its members. Professionalism should be achieved through structured capacitating and training programmes. She further argues that these professional bodies should play a critical role in local government curriculum development, providing sectoral support through input to the legislative process, availing expertise to the South African Local Government Association and other relevant government departments if requested to do so and developing best practices through interaction with their counterparts internationally (Mashiane, 2001: 3-4).

The Institute (Information Pamphlet: Undated) influences training content and trends pertaining to local governance. It has been instrumental in developing relevant and up to date curricula for local government management courses offered by some universities and technikons. The Institute also organises, for their members, periodic workshops on fundamental issues facing municipalities in general. It can be deduced that professional associations and associations promoting professionalism, e.g ILGM, further the development of professionalism by providing training courses to their members. Training equips municipal managers in general and employees with skills to enable them to utilise the limited resources effectively and efficiently.

Code of ethics

A member of the Institute is to sign a pledge that he/she shall uphold the values of the Institute and conduct himself/herself in his/her professional and personal capacity, in a manner that is a credit to both the Institute as well as the profession of local government management as a whole. In doing this he/she shall be committed to efficient, effective and democratic local governance and high standard of professionalism; uphold the personal values of honesty, independence and impartiality, competence and duty of care as well as loyalty; and conform to promoting local government management as a respected and reputable profession; demonstrate professional competence and management skills and act in the best interest of the public, fellow members of the Institute, employees and colleagues, amongst others (Code of Ethics of ILGM: Undated).

There is no clarity about the enforcement of the Code of Ethics of municipal managers. For the Code of Ethics of the Institute to be effective, it must have some enforcement mechanisms. The most important requirement for the code of ethics remains the attitude of its members towards the profession. If members of the Institute do not adhere to the Code in actions and attitudes its success would be seriously impaired.

ROLE OF MUNICIPAL MANAGERS IN PROMOTING PROFESSIONALISM

The municipal manager's role in professionalism in municipal administration is discussed in more detail under the following headings.

Acknowledging municipal politics

Craythorne (1993:314) states that where a municipality is democratic in the sense that voters elect councillors to govern and represent them, it is inevitable that the municipal manager's independence of the political parties should be unquestionable. To assess the objectivity of the municipal managers is not to deny the need for acute political awareness on his/her part. There is a difference between political awareness and political commitment and the municipal manager should ensure that he/she is fully aware of the difference between the two functions. From the professionally oriented municipal manager a clear commitment to efficient and effective administration is required. However, there should also be an acknowledgement of the political effects of administrative decisions, i.e. a political awareness.

The municipal manager should display total objectivity and the impartiality of a judge and must not align himself/herself with a particular political party in the municipal council. He/she must serve all councillors on an equal, objective and thus professional manner to get respect and co-operation from all the councillors. According to Boynton (1986:58) the municipal manager owes a duty to the municipal council as a whole. The municipal manager cannot simply inform the majority party about the administration of the council, he/she must inform the whole council. If for example, a legal counsel had advised that a contemplated action was unlawful, the municipal manager and chief legal officer could not simply acquiesce or suppress such a view or even make it known to only some of the councillors. It is the duty of the municipal manager to ensure that all the councillors were aware that the opinion had been given. The municipal manager has a duty to ensure that the council considers all material facts within his/her knowledge before they enter into any commitment, for example, penalty clauses in a contract, hidden extras to a disclosed purchase price or the possibility of various future liabilities. All councillors must be informed about the administrative and other consequences of policies, which they may wish to adopt. If the administration was undertaken in a professional manner, it would contribute significantly towards obtaining policies that would be executed efficiently and effectively.

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that the municipal manager must serve all political parties in the municipal council on an equal and objective manner.

Acting as a leader

Leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. It is the human factor that binds a group together and motivates it towards goals (Coetzee, 1992:149). The municipal manager has a vital role in developing morale and creating enthusiasm in local government and administration. Heads of departments themselves also need leadership from the municipal manager. They need to be guided in the right direction and have their efforts focused. The municipal manager must have a clear and strong sense of vision, mission and focus. The art of leadership consists of concentrating the attention of subordinates on a pre-determined mission (Shea, 1990: 33).

The municipal manager as a leader must have the following moral attributes: sound judgement, endurance and tactfulness. Sound judgement implies that the municipal manager must have the ability to muster all influences, macro and micro, all the varied restraints and checks on leadership and to come to rational conclusions. It also implies designing an effective administrative system for a municipality. Endurance means that he/she must be able to endure and survive. Leadership requires the municipal manager to move forward despite setbacks. He/she must have the ability to avoid the mistakes of the past or setbacks and not be governed by fear of them. Tactfulness means that the municipal manager must have a keen sense of timing and an eye for an opportunity; the ability to take decisions at the right time and act swiftly when required (Shea, 1990:34,36&37).

When acting as a leader, the municipal manager should act as a positive behaviour model. The municipal manager should do this through the socialisation process, which is the formation of "character and conscience" (Selznick, 1992:125). Cherrington (1980: 153) states that to create an institutional climate that contributes to the development of professionalism, managers need to set an example in (i) their own behaviour and (ii) the functioning of their institutions. He further states that top officials exert a much greater influence on subordinates through their personal behaviour than through the things they say. Economic values such as efficiency and professional values such as respect for a code of conduct and pride in one's job are just so many words if the municipal managers disregard them in their actions. If the municipal manager wants his/her subordinates to adhere to the provisions of the Code of Conduct he/she has to adhere to these provisions.

In promoting professionalism in municipal administration, the municipal manager should act in an exemplary manner and operate in such a way that the characteristics of an administrative profession are seen to be honoured.

Promoting of ethics

Ethics are rules or standards governing the moral conduct of employees in an institution. Ethics deals with values relating to human conduct, with respect to rightness or wrongness of particular actions and to the goodness or badness of the motives and ends of such actions (Chandler & Plano, 1988: 17). Rightness refers to what ought to be or what is approved and wrongness to what ought not to be or what is disapproved by the society (Kirkpatrick, 1987: 588-589).

The municipal manager plays an important role in promoting ethics. Where a municipal employee is involved in unethical conduct, the remedy lies in the requirements of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,* 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) and the Code of Conduct as provided as Schedule 2 in the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act,* 2000 (Act 32 of 2000). The municipal manager plays a major role in enforcing the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct for municipal officials' objective is to promote professionalism. Section 3 of this Code states that a staff member of a municipality, as a public servant, must accordingly foster a culture of commitment to serving the public and a collective sense of responsibility for performance in terms of standards and targets, and promote and seek to implement the basic values and principles of public administration.

The basic values and principles of public administration include:

- a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained;

- efficient, effective and economic use of resources must be promoted;

- services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;

- public administration must be accountable; and

- providing the members of the public with timely, accessible and accurate information must foster transparency (Section 195 (i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)).

The municipal manager, as an employee of a municipal council owes a duty of loyalty to the councillors and to the code of conduct of his/her profession. Loyalty is one of the moral attributes of the municipal manager. It involves loyalty to the democratic ideals, which at times may conflict with the logic or purity of professional expertise. Loyalty to the democratic ideals is also referred to as the ethics of democratic responsibility (Evans, 1989:192).

Acknowledging workplace diversity

Workplace diversity does not only refer to cultural differences or the number of diverse individuals entering the workplace, it also includes other differences such as race, sexual orientation, gender, parental status, age, language, geographical origin, differently - abled, religion and culture (Chang, 1996:7-8). People from different educational, religious, political, economic and socio-cultural environments are appointed into municipalities. The behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, prejudices and personal value preferences of these people are shaped by the environments from which they come. The result is that not all candidates immediately fit in with the new democratic, non-racial and non-sexist municipalities. The new municipalities require particular behaviour and attitudes that are in line with the basic principles of public administration (Mafunisa, 2000:85).

Diversity impacts on an institution in several ways. For example, if not managed properly, diversity can hinder productivity, create conflicts, lead to communication gaps and result in unfair hiring/promotional preferences. Diversity is beneficial to municipalities. For example, capitalising on workplace diversity can help the municipality to gain a competitive advantage, that is, a group of homogenous people can certainly come up with ways to do things cheaper, faster, or better, but the odds are that a well-managed group of diverse individuals will be able to look at proposed policies from all the angles. In addition, diverse individuals will be able to add different inputs such as stronger flow of creativity, more ideas and greater number of innovations. Capitalising on workplace diversity means learning how to accept differences and work well with one another, which increases employee satisfaction and morale (Chang, 1996:10-11).

The aim of orientation and training is to help the new employee make a smooth, positive adjustment to the workplace. To do this the municipal manager will need a well-planned and executed orientation program that will communicate how diversity ties into the institution's overall vision and goals. When dealing with the diverse backgrounds of members of the training group, it is important to consider not only differences in communication but also differences in learning styles due to cultural issues. It may also be essential to accommodate a disability within the training environment. For example, a deaf individual may need an interpreter (Chang, 1996:65).

Areas for workplace diversity training include how to get the job done in a diverse workplace; introduction to the *Employment Equity Act*, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998); the affirmative action measures; challenges/problems in the recruitment and selection process in the context of employment equity; equal employment opportunities; and dealing with a possible backlash by formerly advantaged groups. Further attention should be paid to orientation to the roles and functions of the institutions supporting constitutional democracy. These institutions include the Human Rights Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality and the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities.

EVALUATION

According to Le Bris (1996:23), the civil servants find themselves in a very special situation: to serve the government to which they owe obedience and duty, but also - and above all - to serve the nation. It is this second consideration, which requires complete loyalty to the democratic principles and fundamental rights, which the nation has enshrined in its constitution. Objectively, public administrators are accountable both to their superiors and to the citizenry - proximately and routinely to the former, but ultimately and more importantly to the latter. Sometimes situations emerge in which these dual obligations come into conflict, thus giving rise to conflicts in the administrators' subjective responsibility. Conflicting feelings of loyalty require assessing the limits of accountability to superiors. The public servants' ultimate obligation to society may call for action that breaches their loyalty to the institutional hierarchy - i.e. whistle-blowing (Cooper, 1998: 200-2001).

Refusing to be bound by loyalty to the administrative hierarchy when unethical or illegal activity appears to be condoned is clearly risky, lonely and costly. The price public servants must be willing to pay for maintaining responsible conduct or for ultimately choosing to uphold their obligations as citizens in the face of governmental corruption and irresponsible conduct include victimisation; harassment; social ostracism; dismissal; reassignment to obscure, uninteresting and menial duties; being overloaded with extra-ordinary amounts of work and unexpected demands; exclusion from the organisational "grapevine" of informational communication and frequent transfers. The continuous lesson learned is that if enough employees stand up for what they know in their hearts are right, they can have an influence in the outcome of the fight against corruption (Cooper, 1998:204). Public service unions should also support an employee who has been victimised for serving as a whistle-blower. The mass media also play a crucial role in exposing senior employees who engage in victimising their subordinates for their fight against unethical behaviour. Reports by the mass media such as newspapers could deter employees from engaging in unethical behaviour for fear of exposure.

Another challenge to professionalisation is the traditional view that all citizens whether they have appropriate qualifications or not, have an equal opportunity to occupy public office. The establishment of specific, appropriate post-school qualification - rather than general qualifications - for posts in the public service will be diametrically opposite to the traditional approach of equal opportunities irrespective of the appropriateness of qualifications. However, establishing a specific - post school qualification could be regarded as an attempt to ensure equal rules, equal starting and finishing posts (Thornhill & Hanekom, 1995:202).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

From the above discussion it is clear that professionalism is an effective cure for unethical conduct and that local government education, re-education, training and re-training play an important role in promoting professionalism. In this regard the municipal manager plays a pivotal role, as he/she is the chief administrative official. Municipal managers and their juniors should be trained to be able to operate effectively and efficiently in the changing external environments and also, to enable them to perform their duties in a manner conducive to the development of professionalism.

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