

CHAPTER 2

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Public Administration research, by nature, is a dynamic process that requires a combination of research methods. The fact that Public Administration intends to inform both history and political debate thereby contributing to policy formulation, directed this study to employ a variety of research methods to legitimate its conclusions (Johnson, 2002:2). The choice of these research methods, in the main, has been premised on the fact that “whilst Public Administration research accepts that things are knowable and quantifiable, due recognition should be given to the growing importance of intuition, vision and reflective thought as sources of knowledge” (Johnson, 2003:5). The intellectual consensus that not everything can be understood in terms of numbers has resulted in this study’s reliance on a qualitative research design.

In this chapter the author will provide a rationale for the choice of a qualitative research design for the study. The various qualitative research strategies and/or methods will be explained. These will be supported by expanding on qualitative analysis methods and thereafter by describing the impact of research ethics that provided navigational coordinates to arrive at the conclusions in this study. In closing the author will argue for a combination of these methods and provide a list of the main sources used in this research.

2.2. THE RATIONALE FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative research is defined as any type of research that produces findings not only arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantifications (Straus and Corbin, 1998:10). It also refers to research about persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions as well as about organizational functioning, social movements, socio-cultural phenomena and interaction between individuals (Straus and Corbin, 1998:5). Dooley defines this as research based on non-quantitative observations made in the field and analyzed in non-statistical ways, and in most cases the subject(s) may not be aware that they are being observed (1990:276). Creswell states that qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem (1998:15). In a qualitative research process the researcher consistently builds a complex and holistic picture, analyses words, reports views of informants or practitioners and restricts the study to its natural setting (Creswell, 1998:16).

The reliance of qualitative research on a range of variables but using few cases has revolutionarised the need always to present research as a fixed process that had to first present a problem, ask questions, collect data to answer the question, analyse the data and then answer more questions (Creswell, 1998:16-18). The traditional inquiry process has been found to be responsible, in many cases, for the obfuscation of concepts and theory development thus limiting the flow of ideas. The qualitative research process entails direct observation and relatively unstructured interviewing in natural field settings where genuine interactions occur between participating observers and the subjects (Dooley, 1990:277). Observations and/or research data is typically less structured, and is often spontaneous, flexible and open-ended.

The scientific reality of Public Administration research is that it also uses systematic observation and experimentation to test ideas in order to understand why the world works as it does (Johnson, 2002:10). Unlike the natural sciences, the laboratory of Public Administration is represented by an environment where the researcher is within and among phenomena to be observed, as opposed to observing some incubated phenomena. The positional interchange between the researcher, research process and existing theory often correlates with the intention of Public Administration researchers in the contested terrain of objectivity versus subjectivity. Such a scenario is often associated with social science research. The almost scale-free topology of Public Administration dictates research approaches that demonstrate a researcher's will to draw on own experiences when analysing source materials (Straus and Corbin, 1998:5). Hence the research paradigm of this study has been rooted, primarily, in the qualitative domain.

The qualitative research paradigm requires a willingness from researchers to spend extensive time in the field for collecting data, gaining access, for rapport and for an insider perspective on issues at hand (Creswell, 1998:17). In this study, the author has collected data from state departments and from political parties. Access to some information was not only facilitated by its general availability, but also by the rapport the author established with institutional functionaries critical to the theme of this study, particularly within the African National Congress (ANC), The Presidency and the department of provincial and local government (DPLG). In the process of handling collected information the author engaged in data analysis and made conclusions on the basis of available multiple perspectives as dictated by the spontaneity of observational data (Dooley, 1990:277; Creswell, 1998:17).

A qualitative approach was also adopted because the topic of this study required a focus on the “how” and the “what” regarding the subject under investigation. The “why” questions, in some instances, generated a need to switch to the quantitative paradigm, but since qualitative data generation and evaluation has been selected for this study, the author relied on the non-reactivity and comprehensiveness of observation inherent in qualitative research (Dooley, 1990:277).

Another factor of the qualitative approach was the degree to which variables related to IGR can be independent in relation to existing and/or non-existing theory. Goel (1998:9) explains an independent variable as a presumed cause and can affect a dependent variable, which is an aspect of reality the researcher wants to explain: in this case IGR is a dependent variable. Through a historical journey of what was South Africa, this study has been able to create a series of variables that determined conclusions in Chapter Seven. The independent variables that shaped the South African IGR system had a direct influence on theories applied and generated in this study.

The need to present a detailed view on IGR in a newly emerging South African policy required of the study to follow a qualitative approach. The South African Government’s governing system has a number of factors that shaped it. IGR, as an operating system of governance, would not have escaped such influences. In the design of this study, the author realised that details about the “what has been”, “what is” and “what may be” could only be elucidated through a qualitative research method. The influence of history, particularly as it pertains to the socio-economic, political and ethnical demography influencing the creation of existing power centres in South Africa also required a detailed and descriptive view, hence this qualitative approach.

A qualitative approach to research is followed when there is a need to study individuals in their natural setting (Creswell, 1998:17). The definition of IGR in Chapter One places emphasis on transactions and interactions between and amongst officials (elected and/or appointed). Subsumed in the emphasis is the human element that characterises IGR, as the study will further demonstrate in the ensuing chapters.

The perspective of this study, to investigate the extent to which a central agency such as The Presidency, can administer and manage IGR in South Africa, established another need, namely, to study and to compare the different South African regimes and governments in relation to the leadership style of the political head, hence a President Mbeki and a President Botha comparison later in this study. Reference to the character and nature of public officials in the study is also a result of the qualitative research paradigm that has been selected.

The literary style of writing where the author, in most instances, presents facts from the perspective of a role-player as well as an interested party, has steered the author towards choosing the qualitative research method (Creswell, 1998:18). Although there is no reference to “I” in the study, reference to “the author”, is a demonstration of the role playing position sometimes assumed.

The fact that South Africa is in transition from an Apartheid state to an all-inclusive Democratic state has placed an obligation on all South Africans, particularly public administration practitioners, to ‘design-in-flight’ governance systems that should take the country forward. Having been in the privileged position of involvement in the liberation struggle, including being appointed into structures of the first democratic government, allows the author first-hand knowledge when drawing certain conclusions and presenting

certain historical facts. Certain analyses, that will be found in ensuing chapters, are reflective of the observation and role player status of the author, hence a qualitative approach was necessary. As a qualitative observer who looked, who listened and who was caught up in the social currents of the setting, it is expected that this study will perceptually reflect the author's point of view on some historical facts (Dooley, 1990: 277). This is despite the fact that a person's concept of reality is not directly accessible to outsiders; hence it is believed that the construction of reality or the process through which people make sense out of their lives can be best understood through an interpretative or a qualitative approach (De Vos, 2000:280). The study will be conscious of the fact that the same actions, events or situations may have varying interpretations by different individuals and also may result in varying prescriptions as to future courses of action (De Vos, 2000:280). This may be illustrated by the fact that while former President Mandela was once classified as a terrorist, in another context he remained a freedom fighter. The study has used such metaphors and examples to present new perspectives on occurrences that could be interpreted both favourably and unfavourably depending on their particular times in history.

Besides the community of scholars, this study also targets policy makers particularly in governments exhibiting a transitional economy. Others targeted by this study, by definition will be receptive to qualitative research. A different research approach would generate a condition whereby the research axiom "the nature of the data and the (problem) issue for research dictate the research methodology could" be refuted (De Vos, 2000:14). The profound influence of the need to present arguments in a manner that sustains the reliability of conclusions in this study has had an impact on the nature of the audience that this study targets.

In the design of the study the author will create conditions wherein emerging issues on the subject of IGR are accommodated, and the material presented does not follow any pre-determined and/or fixed pattern of research. Kuye (2002:3) claims that Public Administration research, over time and in a consistent manner, has disengaged with the positivist model of social science research, and, instead, has moved in the direction of collaborative ventures and transdisciplinary approaches. Qualitatively the expansion of the interdisciplinary approach to research not only broke down boundaries between disciplines, and therefore research methods, but also removed unnecessary borders (Kuye, 2002:3).

These assertions are instructed by the generic philosophical assumptions characteristic of qualitative research. Creswell (1998:19) argues, as the study will demonstrate, that these assumptions are related to man's understanding of knowledge. The assumptions are that knowledge is in itself, within the meanings people make of it; gained through people talking about their meanings; laced with personal biases and values; written in a personal, up-close way; and evolving, emerging and is inextricably tied to the context in which it is studied (Creswell, 1998:190). The historical developments in South Africa, particularly in Constitutional development as it pertains to a franchise for all, overlays in historical phases, distinct ideological stances that situates this study within particular historical frameworks and socio-political perspectives (Creswell, 1998:79). The different qualitative research approaches employed in this study will now be unpacked.

2.3. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACHES

Qualitative research has a number of approaches that could be employed in the execution of a research project. The process of understanding these approaches requires researcher

knowledge of the different classes of qualitative research. McNabb (2002:269) groups these into three broad strategic classes, namely: explanatory, interpretive and critical research studies.

Explanatory research studies involve a process of developing a causal explanation of some social phenomenon. In this class the researcher seeks to identify, amongst sets of variables, the cause of a consequence (McNabb, 2002:270). Theories devised are then to be used in explaining phenomena. It is characteristic of qualitative research in a sense that it affords the researcher some degree of control over research events. The historical nature of the grounds for and the events informing IGR in South Africa, place this study within a specific class within qualitative research. In identifying factors that influenced IGR, the study provides a platform for gaining insights and ideas about the study question and thus delivers elements of completeness, seldom associated with this class.

Interpretive research has as a standard, the ability to assume that humanity's understanding of reality is a function of meanings assigned to social phenomena, such as language, consciousness, shared experiences, publications and other artefacts (McNabb, 2002:271). Whilst causal explanations account for most human events, it is the interpretation of such variables that give subjective meanings to social events. (McNabb, 2002:271). The reliance on meaning by this class of qualitative research and the dynamism inherent in social phenomena, with change as a constant variable, requires of this class to create conditions for multi-layered, transdisciplinary and collaborative interpretations of human experiences (Kuye, 2002:1-2; McNabb, 2002:271). Interpretive research requires the researcher also to understand events in

historical context, hence the study focuses on the historical background of the South African IGR system as a method of presentation.

The nature of public administration practice and of IGR dictates to a researcher the need to understand through interpretation the norms, values and belief systems of organizations and humans involved (McNabb, 2002:272). McNabb (2002:272) identifies principles of interpretive research as firstly the hermeneutic circle, where the researcher looks at the parts of the whole and then the whole and its parts in an ever expanding and yet concentric circle; secondly, the principle of context as it relates to the time and situation-specific nature of a particular social phenomena; thirdly, the principle of relating the researcher and the subject; fourthly, the principle of abstraction and generalization, particularly in relation to subjective inferences the researcher imposes on a conclusions; fifthly, the dialogical principle where the researcher revisits the research design assumption in the light of new and emerging information; sixthly, the principle of multiple interpretations that compels the researcher to juxtapose interpretation of phenomena against competing interpretations; and lastly, the principle of doubt wherein the researcher deliberately uses a healthy dose of scepticism on any established conceptualizations.

One of the salient outcomes of a research process is to bring to the fore unsharpened contradictions. It is the contention of the author that one of the standards of evaluation in scholarly research should be its ability to sharpen contradictions, thereby generating further inquiry into the subject.

Critical qualitative research has an objective need to help people change their beliefs and actions, and consider emerging alternatives as a process and way forward (McNabb, 2002:273). In the cause of this research the author has pointed out inconsistencies between what may be true or false, good or bad, thus compelling, in a relative sense, the target audience to act in accordance with truth and goodness. Schwandt (1997:24-25) contends that critical research aims at altering the distortions of reality thereby generating social action; this is done through an unwillingness to accept established patterns of thought as advocated by positivist social scientists claiming objectivity and disinterestedness. The study creates a continuum approach to centralization and decentralisation as a platform to accommodate the revalidation of established notions of federalism and unitarism.

The above classes of qualitative research begs the critical question: which class is best? To pass judgement on which is best will be to refute what Kuye (2002:3) refers to as an inaccurate assumption that the positivist approach to conducting research is the appropriate standard for comparison. Denzin (1978:2) argues that no single method will ever meet the requirements of what Kuye (2002:2) refers to as transdisciplinary research. The need, therefore, to use all classes in a research process become inevitable, hence this study interchangeably employs more than one class.

There are many research approaches to Public Administration and in each case these approaches are supported by a number of tools and techniques. The most popular of these utilized in this study are ethnography, the case approach, grounded theory and action-science.

2.3.1. The Case Study Method

A case study method is a strategy of doing social inquiry when the inquirer seeks answers to 'how' or 'why' questions, in circumstances where the inquirer has little control over events being studied (Schwandt, 1997:13). A case study is also defined as an exploration of a 'bounded system' or case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context (Creswell, 1997:61). Yin (1993:3) argues that it is preferable to have the phenomenon under study not readily distinguishable from its context, when the object of study is a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context as well as to know when it is desirable to use multiple sources of evidence. Cases are appropriate when the researcher is trying to attribute causal relationships within the explanatory-interpretive-critical classes of qualitative research design. The cases used in a case study are generally characterised by their concreteness, circumstantial specificity and by their theoretical interest and generalizability (Schwandt, 1997:12). Cases provide practical wisdom requiring perceptual recognition whilst the theory used to analyse cases offer a cognitive understanding usually expressed in rules, in principles and in theories.

The choice of this method affords the researcher with an opportunity to infuse the context as a major part of research. The distinctive challenges created by this opportunity generates from the context more variables than data points. There is a reliance on multiple sources of evidence as opposed to a single data collection method, and the need to employ distinctive strategies for research design and analysis, irrespective of the quantitative nature of variables (Yin, 1993:3). The multiple sources of evidence include observation, interviews, audio-visual material and documents and reports (Creswell, 1997:61). The process of analysing these sources is a scientific one requiring independent evaluation and explanation. This study applied all of these with the exception of interviews.

Land and Heis (1990:82) submit that the basic rationale for a case study is that there are processes and interactions and hence it is dialogical. The inherent intellectual dialogue between the researcher and phenomena tends to direct case studies towards individualized outcomes (McNabb, 2002:286) a condition required in quantitative research although there is a bias towards the ideologies of the researcher. The multiplicity of variables inherent in the case-study method, lionizes the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research as a caricature in the social sciences (Yin, 1997:57). It is the author's observation, therefore, that the scientific, data-driven and outcome orientation of case studies bridge the divide between quantitative and qualitative research within the social sciences. The fact that cases present a context, which may be from numerically arrived at conclusions, that have to be interpreted through existing or in-development theory, has anchored the centrality of the case study method for perceptual and attitudinally arrived at conclusions (McNabb, 2002:287). Consequently, the qualitative and quantitative debate becomes relegated to a mere issue of good or poor research as opposed to examining resulting dichotomies.

This study employed a number of cases, albeit in narrative form, to establish a basis for new and existing theory in the IGR field. Also involved were identity antecedents, as well as establishing the fundamental importance of the identified variables to the study as related to the phenomenon of IGR in South Africa (McNabb, 2002:287). The cases employed in this study relate to incidents within a continuum of occurrences at particular historical moments. The study of governance patterns of the different South African Governments from the 1909 Constitutional dispensation through to that of 1996 provided chunks of bounded information of which an imbedded analysis of specific aspects was made to either prove or disprove new and past conclusions. The time, era and place

elements of the bounded information provided a multiplicity of sites. Therefore, they became case-based historical phases that presented themselves as a cultural portrait of the IGR system in South Africa and a phenomenon (Creswell, 1997:61-2). The study, therefore, follows a multiple-case study method or what Yeager cited in McNabb (2002:231) refers to as multisite qualitative research.

2.3.2 **The Grounded Theory Approach**

The goal of the grounded theory approach defines its method. Creswell (1997:56) captures the intent as being to generate or discover a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a phenomenon, that relates to a particular situation. The axle of grounded theory research is the generation of theory closely related to the context of the phenomenon being studied (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:56). A grounded theory approach is when theory is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents; hence it is eminently interested in theory building as opposed to theory testing (Yin, 1993:61). Schwandt (1997:60) contends that the non-specification of the manner in which theory is generated within this method, does not discount it for not having specific, highly developed and rigorous procedures for producing theory. As a method it has an over-reliance of the inductive-deductive and cross verification techniques often associated with qualitative research. Strauss and Corbin (1998:12), explain grounded theory as theory derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process. Therefore, there is a close relationship between the data collection and the analysis processes with the developed theory.

The grounded theory research method requires from the research first to identify an area of study and progress towards a theory, in a generating or a discovering mode (McNabb, 2002:302). Strauss and Corbin (1998:12) are of the opinion that theory derived from

analysed data is more likely to resemble reality; hence a grounded theory approach offers insight, enhances understanding and provides a meaningful guide to action. The adage that “the map is not the territory” best describes the grounded theory approach because it encourages learning through process. The grounded theory approach, of late, has become a paradigm of choice in much of the qualitative oriented research in Public Administration. The data collection process in a grounded theory approach typifies a zigzag process where the researcher goes to the field, gets data, analyses it and then restarts the process until a theory is generated, developed and/or confirmed (Creswell, 1997:57).

The organisation and application of structure to data according to an eclectic set of researcher-determined categories is a key requirement for the grounded theory process (McNabb, 2002:302). The constant interplay between the researcher and data, sometimes referred to as analysis, requires a classification process that assigns to data and its linkages, discrete codes that organises them into groupings. The process of taking this information from data collection and comparing it to emerging categories is referred to as constant comparative data analysis (McNabb, 2002:302). According to Creswell (1997:57), this follows a standard process of coding. There are four phases in the process.

Open coding, the first phase, is where the researcher creates categories within which several properties are established in a continuum format that allows for creating dimensions of emerging data elements. In this phase new data is compared across earlier categories. Straus and Corbin (1998:101) define open coding as the analytic process, through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions discovered in data. The categories established in this study take the form of chapter titles as well sub-titles within the chapters. In the

process of inputting through research, emergent data created new dimensions that have lead to theoretical discoveries about the South African IGR system.

Second in the process is *axial coding* where the researcher identifies central phenomenon, explores causal conditions, specifies strategies, identifies the context and intervening conditions and delineates results. (Creswell, 1997:57). Strauss and Corbin (1998:123) explains axial coding as a process of relating categories to their sub-categories, termed axial, because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and of dimensions. The study has identified IGR as a central phenomenon to be explored. The organisation of data around this phenomenon has taken a route that included an explanation of causal conditions through the delineation of research results presented as Findings in Chapter Seven.

Third in the process is *selective coding* where the researcher presents conditional propositions (Creswell, 1997:57). Selective coding is also explained as a process of integrating and refining the theory (Straus and Corbin, 1998:143). The focus on the degree to which a central agency such as The Presidency should be involved in IGR, provided a story line that ran as a thread to link collected data and information. This was subjected to the axial coding process in order to create a relationship with discovered and emerging theories.

Fourth in the process is a condition where the researcher develops a *conditional matrix* that elucidates the socio-economic and historical conditions influencing the central phenomenon (Creswell, 1997:57). In this phase new data is integrated into expanding categories to build understanding (McNabb, 2002:303). The integrative

manner in which the various authority models, the different IGR structures both in historical and present context as well as factors and values requisite for IGR, provide an elucidating and almost virtual matrix on the phenomenon being studied.

The fact that Public Administration has grown to become the conceptual tool that not only guides the delivery process of management (Kuye, *et al.*, 2002:1), but has also integrated theory and practice in the quest for new discovery and knowledge, posits this method of social enquiry as the most relevant in Public administration research. The varied, diffuse and interactive process at probing, and the resolution of conflicting perspectives inherent in Public Administration research (Kuye *et al.*, 2002:4), confirms the assertion that grounded theory has become a “type of central organizing concept that serves to both direct the research process as well as provide a heuristic for data analysis and interpretation” [McNabb, 2002:302]. The predominant use of this approach in the study foregrounds this fact.

2.3.3. **The Ethnographic Approach**

Ethnography describes and interprets a social or cultural group or system. As a method of research it directs the researcher to observe the patterns of behaviour, customs and ways of life in a society (Creswell, 1997:58). In ethnography the ethnographer develops cultural themes in the analysis of a culture-sharing group’s data, where a culture-sharing group is one that shares learned and acquired behaviours (Creswell, 1997:245). In ethnography the researcher studies an intact cultural or social group (or an individual or individuals within the group) based primarily on observations by the researcher in the field. This explains why it is sometimes referred to as a work of describing a culture and a way of understanding phenomena from the native point of view (Berg, 1989:51). Van Moonen

(1982:103) defines ethnography as a research process that involves elaborate fieldwork of various types; this may include techniques such as participant observation, formal and informal interviewing, document collection and so on.

The ethnographic process immerses the researcher in the day-to-day activities of people involved in the phenomena being studied. In such circumstances the researcher records how people (groups, coalitions and societies) perceive, construct and interact in their own private world (McNabb, 2002:326). The process embraces the subjective realm of individuals (groups, coalitions and societies) it seeks to understand, and therefore defines the group in a manner it describes itself (McNabb, 2002:326-27). As a Public Administration research method it has enabled researchers to gather information about behaviours (heroic and non-heroic) embedded in cultures and sub-cultures (McNabb, 2002:333).

The reliance on historical data established within traditions, societies, groups and coalitions creates a focus, in this method, on the patterns of human thought and behaviour. Ethnographic research dictates an almost personal participation of the researcher in the phenomena being observed. The culture and operating climate of organisations is the pivotal point from which ethnographic research makes inferences and draws conclusions. Public Administration ethnographic research requires the most intense connection between the researcher and subjects. Whilst ethnography provides a window for historical reflection of the phenomena studied, it can, however, compromise the researcher in relation to groups, coalitions and societies studied (Creswell, 1997:61). This will be explored further in the discussion on research ethics.

The dedication of a chapter on the historical background of IGR in South Africa and a focus on the behaviours of political parties and leaders by this study will be guided by this method. Whilst there will be subjective conclusions on political leaders and coalitions, the author accepts that, like any research, there will be other opposing and also subjective views. The use of this approach also informs another significant objective of the study, namely, of generating conclusions that illuminate possibilities for action that would not otherwise be apparent (Kuye et al., 2002:22).

2.3.4. **Action research**

Action research is a way of initiating change in social systems through the participation and involvement of members of the group in the research process (McNabb, 2002:345). The choice of such a method is usually informed by the need to address social problems. The process of executing this method involves a spiral of interlocking cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Schwandt, 1997:1). As listed below, action research has at least 5 models that are in use, particularly in the administrative sciences.

Traditional Action Research

The objective of the researcher, in this model, is to help change societal dysfunctionalities whilst contributing to the general fund of theory and knowledge (McNabb, 2002:347). This method advocates a condition whereby the researcher is concerned with knowing both the general laws of human and organisational behaviour, and specific information about the institution or system that is the focus of the change effort. It is sometimes seen as being informal though qualitative,

formative, interpretive and experimental (McNabb, 2002:347-8). The practical nature of this model makes it relevant to both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The model is characterized, firstly, by the fact that the data gathered might be of any type and can be collected through a gamut of methods including questionnaires, interviews and simple observations; secondly, it is contextual although universalistic in approach, hence interventionist in nature; thirdly, it focuses on a single case of an organizational unit; lastly the researcher, through bringing theoretical knowledge and skills to the practice and experiential knowledge laden group, collaborates with subjects (McNabb, 2002:348).

Participatory Action Research

The primary goal within this model is to initiate fundamental and emancipating change in society (McNabb, 2002:349). The preoccupation of the present South African ruling party, at the time of this study, with 'democratic centralism' instructs this study to employ elements of this approach, hence the intellectual interaction with political party positions on unitarism and federalism. The fact that this model emerged from social movement in oppressed societies, South Africa included, creates a condition where interaction with data cannot be divorced from this model. The service delivery and the challenges of governance paradigm change facing South Africa (and most transitional economy type governments) make any research with the intent to trigger fundamental change, explicitly political. Smith, cited in McNabb (2003:350), submits that the ideological framework inherent in this approach emphasizes large-scale structural forces, conflict of interest and the need to overcome the legacy of oppression and inequality through transforming the social order. Whilst this study will be employing elements of this model, interaction with

subjects will be through the analysis of pronouncements as well as through in-arena experiences of the author.

Empowerment Research

Empowerment research concerns itself with individuals who are excluded by the majority (or dominant cultural, socio-political and economic coalitions) on the basis of their demographic (including ethnic, racial and affiliate) difficulties (McNabb, 2002:35; the author's italics). The historical focus of this model has been on persons with physical challenges that can result in their marginalisation by physically unchallenged and dominant coalitions. It is the submission of the author that emergent studies point to the fact that this model may also be useful to address ethno-racial, socio-economic, religious and affiliate exclusionary tendencies currently engulfing global societies. Much of this approach will emerge in the study.

Feminist Research

This model promotes the feminist agenda by challenging male dominance and advocating equality between men and women (McNabb, 2003:251). The study will subscribe to elements of this approach by ensuring that any reference to a particular gender orientation will be construed to be applicable by the author.

Action Science

The action science model is an intervention method advocating that people can improve their interpersonal and organizational effectualness by examining the underlying beliefs that guide their actions (McNabb, 2002:352).

The model also takes the form of an evaluation, with the intention to bring to bear any covert contradictions related to the phenomena under study. The action science model integrates the theory-building element of basic research with the then-current applications of research (McNabb, 2002:352). The inquiry process followed by this study is premised on the 'what was', 'what is' and 'what should be' paradigm, and the then-current information analysed herein subscribes to the critical tenets of this model.

2.3.5 **The Phenomelological approach**

A phenomenological study describes the meaning of lived experiences for societies (and individuals) about a concept (Creswell, 1997:53). Phenomenologists insist on careful description of ordinary conscious experiences of the life-world and the description of 'things' as one experiences them (Schwandt, 1997:15). Such 'things' are experienced through perception (including hearing and seeing), believing, recalling, deciding, feeling and so on. Creswell (1997:52) argues that in a phenomenological research process the researcher has, as a constant, the challenge to bracket his or her experiences. This allows one to set aside all pre-judgements and rely on intuition, imagination and the universality of knowledge to obtain the underlying characteristics and essence of the experience.

A phenomenological approach requires of the researcher to understand in a philosophical sense, all perspectives behind the manner in which people experience the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 1997:54). The decentralization practices of the erstwhile apartheid minority government, as interrogated in this study indicate the degree to which analysis of historical issues required bracketing of own experiences in favour of creating universal knowledge.

A further requirement of this approach is that the researcher presents questions that explore the meaning of that experience for individuals (organizations, societies and coalitions) and asks such to describe their lived experiences (Creswell, 1997:54). The phenomenological researcher analyses data in a manner that recognises contextual realities. Textual descriptions are always juxtaposed against structural descriptions; here the researcher treats reported experiences with suspicion until they are linked to the milieu of experiences (Creswell: 1997:55). This study will recognize this method as the philosophical cue to be adopted through this study, and that resonates with a realm of thought often reserved for metaphors and biblical parables.

2.4. RESEARCH TOOLS

The above explanation of research approaches does not provide explanations of data analysis methods employed in the study. Research data is derived from a number of sources, and these include people's pronouncements and actions, publications, cultural settings as well as symbols communicating a message. In the process of conducting this research the author took cognisance of the available data gathering methods. McNabb

(2002:391) classifies the different sources of research data into written texts, formal and informal documents, non-written communication and non-verbal signs and symbols.

Written texts include books, periodicals, narratives, reports and other published materials. The generic character of written texts is that they are secondary in nature and thus require interpretation and analysis. The secondary nature of written texts makes them vulnerable to dominant ideological constructs at a particular historical era.

Formal and informal documents include personal messages, archival information, government records, statistics and quantitative data, letters, e-mail and other informal and written material. The generic character of these documents is that they are primary source documents. It should be noted, however, that some formal documents may be regarded as secondary sources.

Non-written communications include graphic displays, photographs, cartoons, films and videotapes. These fall into both the primary and secondary service realm of categorization.

Non-verbal and symbols include body language, music, gestures, facial expressions, animal behaviour and noise.

Researchers navigating through the different sources make use of a number of analytical tools. For the purposes of this study, the author will focus on those tools and methods used in the study. In each case the author will define or explain the method and show its advantages and use.

2.4.1. Literature review

A literature review is defined as a systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and interpreting the existing body of recorded work produced by researchers and practitioners (McNabb, 2002:393). A literature review gives evidence to the research audience, that the researcher is aware of work already done on the subject, and identifies what the researcher believes are key issues, crucial questions and gaps in the researched field (McNabb, 2002:394). It also establishes theoretical and principle based co-ordinates for readers in terms of what was used to shape the research design.

Piantanida and Gorman, as cited in McNabb (2002:394), submit that literature reviews have the following strategic purposes: tracing the historical evaluation of the research theme; schematically providing the different schools of thought around the research theme; examining the research theme eclectically; and reviewing policy positions of different stakeholders as well as tracing the different schools of thought that have emerged over time (McNabb, 2002:294).

A literature review should, as a standard, have the ability to provide a point of reference to use when discussing and interpreting the finding of the research. Literature reviews have the advantage of setting specific limits for subsequent research, creating a multiplicity of approaches to the research problem, reducing the risk of data omissions in the research as well as acquainting the researcher with new sources of data (Lang and Heis, 1984; McNabb 2002: 395).

The design of this study is based on the literature reviewed over a period spanning the South African Constitutional Negotiations era through to the adoption of the 1996

Constitution. The historical coordinates have been traced from the 1909 Union of South Africa Convention, which had strikingly similar constitutional and public policy challenges with the 1990 to 1996 constitutional negotiating conventions. The examination of the IGR challenges facing South Africa used the historical evaluation of constitutional government in South Africa as its point of reference, namely, the Union, Republic and the Tri-cameral Parliament. The literature reviewed was extensive and included use of archival records. The focus of the literature review was on what McNabb (2003:398) refers to as the running records, essentially meaning all types of public documents, artefacts and mass media.

2.4.2 **Hermeneutics**

Hermeneutics generally refers to the art, theory and philosophy of the interpretation of meaning of text (Schwandt, 1997:62). As a method of research it is used to analyse all types of written text according to a set of principles requiring the analyst to decipher the meaning of the text (McNabb, 2002:407). Deciphering meaning in the text is done through the eyes of its writer, according to the timeframe existing at the time of writing and within the then cultural, socio-economic and political context (McNabb, 2002:408).

Hermeneutic analysis is relevant when studying historical documents such as past legislation and records of past discourse. The deciphering of the intent of policy framers at particular historical moments is a critical element of Public Administration research, especially because the meaningfulness of legislation and policy is directly related to contextual circumstances, hence Public Administration is a dynamic process (Kuye *et al.*, 2002:2-6).

The centrality of language as a shaper of thought and therefore of paradigms, dictates to the hermeneutic analyst the need to follow all laws regulating language use (McNabb, 2002:408). The meaning of words at particular historical moments tends to be dependent on the writer's interpretation at that time. For instance, the meaning of the term 'Non-White' could have generated a different emotional acceptance if it was positively communicated in favour of Blacks, and if Whites were then referred to as 'Non-Black'. The study will be using such contextual terminologies to denote an analytical paradigm within a historical period or policy passage period being explained and/or explored. In this method there is always a presupposition that the hermeneutic analyst is knowledgeable of the grammar and historical evolution of the language in which the work is written, and is familiar with the laws of logic and rhetoric as well as the ideological principles informing language at the time.

The hermeneutic approach advantages the researcher in a number of ways. Firstly, it recognizes the inherent nature of humans (and therefore researchers) to always want to achieve understanding and interpretation. Secondly, it is centred on interpretation and thus follows the principles of meaning construction. Thirdly, it accommodates the role of context, both in time and in ideology. Lastly, it fractures the notion that there are fundamental and underlying truths (McNabb, 2002; Schwandt, 1997).

It is the author's view that, ideologically, most socio-political exclusionary practices are only sustainable through the creation of conditions that will in the long-run make such exclusions organic. Amongst others, language as a tested mechanism of social control, which was and still is dominant in South Africa, is extensively used to guide the application of these practices. The use of terminology such as 'homeland' evoked a near-liberation emotion to certain sections of the depressed African masses in South Africa. Given the

extensive use of 'control' language used by South African governments, past and present, the contextual interpretation of currently written text has been hermeneutically approached, in order to unravel misconceptions and underlying ideologies embedded in words used in legislations and policy documents. The 'half-empty' and 'half-full' interpretation tradition predominates text analysis in this study.

2.4.3 Content analysis

Content analysis is a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying the specific characteristics of text and messages (Holsti, 1969:14). It is used most often to describe attributes of messages, without reference to the intentions of the message generator and/or sender or the effect of the message on the receiver (McNabb, 2002:414). The strategic objective of this method is to enable the researcher to make inferences about variables in a text and because of this, it is used where messages tend to be clear, obvious and straightforward. As a method it always proceeds from a theoretical base, hence it is sometimes regarded as a quantitative description of the manifest content of communicated text and message (Goel, 1988:124). Content analysis is used to complement narrative analysis and discourse analysis tools.

The advantage of content analysis is that it provides the research process with tools to quantify contents of a qualitative or interpretative text (McNabb, 2002:414). In Public Administration, issues such as the number of Parliamentary seats, municipal jurisdictions, and the number of state departments are represented quantitatively, although supporting qualitative research arguments and conclusions. The simplicity and repetitive nature of text vulnerable to content analysis creates an added advantage to the research process. In cases where implied meanings in a text fade, it becomes incumbent on the researcher

to switch to other analytical tools, hence the research adage that “no single method completes a research” (Kuye, 2003: *on the occasion of discussing research approaches with the author*). The main disadvantage of content analysis is that it isolates information from its context and therefore contains a built-in bias.

The relationship between quantitative and qualitative content instructs researchers not to assume that qualitative methods are insightful and quantitative ones are merely mechanical and used for checking hypotheses (Holsti, 1969:11). The study will use this method by creating the circular relationship between quantitative data and qualitative interpretations, and this will enable numbers emerging within observed phenomena and text to inform analysis. The presentation of some information through legislation and other recorded text is so clear and straightforward that this study will have to rely on content analysis as a method.

2.4.4 **Policy Analysis**

The use of the information based on policy pronouncements by organs of state and political office bearers may assist policy analysts as a method of research. Quade, cited in Dunn (1981:61), defines policy analysis as “any type of analysis that generates and presents information in such a way as to improve the basis for policy-makers to exercise their judgement. In policy analysis, the word analysis is used in its most general sense; it implies the use of intuition and judgement and encompasses not only the examination of policy by decomposition onto its components but also the design and synthesis of new alternatives. The activities involved may range from research to illuminate or provide insight into an anticipated issue or problem to the evaluation of a completed program. Some policy analyses are informal, involving nothing more than hard and careful thinking

whereas others require extensive data gathering and elaborate calculation employing sophisticated mathematical processes". Carley (1980:23) defines policy analysis as a process of deciding on the objectives of an organization, on changes in these objectives and the resources used to attain these objectives. Dror (1969:266) sees policy analysis as an approach and a methodology for design and identification of preferable alternatives to complex policy issues. Jones and Olson (1996:115) explain policy analysis as being a disciplined and logical approach to determine what might be in any given circumstance, a style extensively used in the analysis of IGR.

Dunn (1981:ix) provides a research dimension to policy analysis by referring to it as an applied social science discipline, which uses multiple methods of inquiry and arguments to produce and transform policy relevant information that may be utilized in political settings to resolve policy problems. Weimer and Vining (1992:1) define it as client-oriented advice relevant to public decisions and informed by social values, Carley (1980:23) explains policy analysis as the application of analytic rationality to resource allocation decisions. As a policy research tool, policy analysis is aimed at predicting the impact of changes in variables that are changed by government, while as an academic social science research method it is aimed at constructing theories for understanding society (Weimer and Vining, 1992:4). For the purposes of this study we will explore policy analysis as an academic research tool. The operating definition will therefore be a process of examining policy in relation to the manner in which it assists researchers to generate generic theories on phenomena under observation.

In the study, various policy documents of political parties, government and coalitions in the IGR field were analysed. Theoretical models emanating from the literature study and other written texts were used to provide a reference point from which the author tested IGR

theories. This was done in retrospect, thus infusing into the process the role of historical context and predicted consequences (Weimer and Vining, 1992:4). The critical questions asked or used to interact with policies and policy data included what are the facts about the existing policy, which values informed the policy and what action should be taken to address visible and salient gaps (Dunn, 1908:63). The examination of legislation through the demarcated historical period and the analysis of the workings of IGR structures in this study, were subjected to the policy analysis method of monitoring past and present impacts, forecasting the results of continued use, evaluating the worth of sustaining such policies and recommending probable changes (Dunn, 1981:65).

The advantage that the policy analysis method presented to this study is that it drew from other methods of qualitative inquiry the purposes of which are descriptive, evaluative and normative. It created an opportunity for the author to transform policy information into recommendable and useful information for future use. The dialectical nature of policy emerged as a weakening element of this method, in that the policy system analysed remains the subjective creation of stakeholders who are products of policy systems (Dunn, 1981:13). The author argues that the cycle of influence that policy systems have on stakeholders and that stakeholders have on the policy systems, can only be broken by a modernization process within society or a generation's discontent with past practices. The period before this decisive break creates an ideological framework that could blur research assumptions, hypotheses and questions. Therefore, the author refused to be trapped in the post-liberation psyche prevalent in South Africa thereby, in some instances, blurring critical policy analysis.

The choice of research approaches, methods and tools in the design of a study has never been an issue of "either or" but rather a combination, collaboration or a "win-win" issue

(Kuye *et al.*, 2002). Methodologies in research are not competitive but should rather be seen in a complementary mode of application. However, the truth is that researchers have at least one methodological approach they feel most comfortable using, and by limiting a research process to one approach, the researcher also limits perspectives on reality about the phenomenon being investigated.

The methods explained in this chapter present a portrait of intellectual inquiry processes that resemble an interlocking system of levers, typical of internal mechanisms in a clock, controlling the research and finding justifications. Consequently, each method was used to reveal the different facets of the same symbolic reality under investigation. Berg (1989:5) argues that a methodological approach is a line of sight directed toward the same point observing social and symbolic reality. The use, therefore, of different methods provides assurance to the research audience and the researcher that a number of theoretical, practical and symbolic constructs instructed the research outcome. The process of using the multiple lines of sight is referred to as triangulation (Berg, 1989:5). Schwandt (1997:163) describes triangulation as a means of checking the integrity of the inferences that a researcher draws. Triangulation is seen as a procedure to examine a phenomenon from more than one vantage point or line of sight. Dooley (1990) defines triangulation as a method of comparing observations that are direct, implied, inferred and/or deduced, from different times, and that also serves to arrive at correct analyses.

The study will employ data that relate to its time, context (space) and the individuals involved, wherein analysis of such will be aggregated, interacted with and juxtaposed against its collective (Berg, 1989:5). The comparative approach the study will follow in analysing different data sources at particular historical points, presents this study and the author with an opportunity to use multiple methods and thus triangulate the research

process. The employment of existing Public Administration authority relationship and management theories in this study, will present multiple perspectives to guide findings and answer the research inquest (Berg, 1989:5). The interactive and eclectic nature of IGR could not, and will never allow, research in this field to be done through the use of a single method, hence the use of triangulation. The triangulation process can place the research in an ethically compromising position because of the high risk of bias in ignoring other lines of sight. To neutralize the risk, the author allowed the ethical issues and concerns that impact on conducting qualitative research to provide moral coordinates.

2.5 ETHICAL CONCERNS

Generally moral dilemmas arise from dealing with issues of trust, confidentiality, harm, consent, deception, and so forth.

Mafunisa (2002:193) defines ethics as that branch of philosophy dealing with the values that relate to human conduct with respect to the rightness or wrongness of specific actions and to the goodness or badness of the motives and ends of such actions. Ethics is the study of the moral behaviour of humans, where morality constitutes standards that people have about what is right, wrong, good and/or bad (Mafunisa, 2002:193). Moral standards are rules by which societies function. Therefore, they are dependent on the historical, socio-economic and cultural context within which they are set (McNabb, 2002:36). The conventional treatment of ethics attends to unique moral dilemmas arising from the kinds of ethical frameworks and principles that might provide guidance in reasoning ethically (Schwandt, 1997:41).

Research ethics, therefore, refers to the application of moral standards to decisions made in planning, conducting and reporting results of research studies (McNabb, 2002:36). Public administration research morality is confined by the principles of truthfulness, thoroughness, objectivity as well as relevance. The potential of Public Administration research outputs to redirect the course of policy making, obligates researchers in this field to ensure that their research is *truthful*. It is the submission of the author that truthfulness should be reflected in the entire research value chain.

The research assumptions, questions and directions should be informed by truthful data generating processes. The process of ensuring that truthfulness reigns in the research introduces us to the principle of thoroughness.

McNabb (2002:37) explains research *thoroughness* as being methodologically thorough. In an oral discussion on research methodology, Kuye (2003) submits that the quality of a research output lies on the thoroughness of its methodology. It is therefore ethically proper for a researcher to ensure that terminological and conceptual issues are clarified to the research audience; because this eliminates ambiguity in the interpretation process (McNabb, 2002:37). Research findings should be thoroughly reported both in terms of bad and good results. The standard by which “good and bad” news is reported leads us to the next principle, namely, the objectivity principle.

The *objectivity principle* refers to a condition where the researcher remains objective and impartial (McNabb, 2002:38). As argued earlier by the author, objectivity should also run through the entire research value chain. The political nature of the environment within which the study was conducted, created challenges of objectivity for the author. In an attempt to be objective the author relied on the research methods explained earlier in this

chapter. The thoroughness of the study was protected by the methodology employed. The challenge of remaining objective was supported, in principle, by focusing on the relevance of the study.

Public Administration research, if mismanaged, can result in the socio-economic disintegration of society. Whilst the quest to remain relevant tends to make most Public Administration researchers become political party loyalists and praise singers to the government of the day, the opposite is also true. Recognising the risk of wanting to be “relevant” either politically or otherwise, the study observed phenomena from practical and objective vantage points. The triangulation of theories and perspectives assisted the author’s quest to be objective.

2.6 SOURCES USED

The following primary and secondary sources were used to collect information regarding IGR design in South Africa.

- Minutes of the 1996 Constitution Making process at the World Trade Center as well as the National Constituent Assembly.
- Speeches of officials (elected and appointed) charged with IGR, particularly those delivered at IGR conferences.
- Official government documents such as White and Green Papers, Parliamentary Bills, Acts of Parliament.
- The Constitutions of South Africa from 1909 to 1996.
- Newspaper reports, journal articles, text-books, opinion papers and reports from international IGR conferences.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The profound influence of politics on Public Administration has directed the research methodologies employed. In this study, the author's selection of research methods and approaches was informed by a need to ensure that the research audience is properly guided through the study. The combination of research approaches was intended to provide the various lines of sight that each methodology generates. The avoidance of quantitative analyses was informed by the nature of the subject under study, statistical data was used in the study only to quantify the qualitative analyses made. The policy nature of most source documents created a need, in almost all instances, to overlay the policy dimension of analysed data. The profoundly human nature of IGR introduced to this analysis a focus on personalities, particularly those of Heads of State during periods under review.

The intractable social, political and economic problems often associated with Public Administration research and practise, called on the study to use methods that address the issues of relevancy, public concern and policy innovation requisite in the current IGR discourse. The next chapter addresses the critical historical development of IGR in South Africa.