

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTORY PERSPECTIVES

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The field of public relations (hereafter referred to as PR) has developed from a practice-orientation to a scientific field. Therefore, the purpose of PR has evolved from merely generating publicity, building images and focusing on the management of relationships to the management of building confidence, accountability and transparency. The pluralistic nature of society has enforced the concept of freedom, resulting in a freer society. In this process citizens are, however, expected to act more responsibly and therefore to have an impact on the regulatory systems of society. The triple bottom line, comprising the social, environmental and economic issues, has changed the business environment. This new development focuses on all issues of concern to society, and a call for responsibility and urgency to act accordingly has been present (Opukah, 2003: 4 & 8).

These developments have influenced the way PR is currently practiced. This study attempts an understanding of the fundamentals of the practice of PR in Africa. It is believed that Africa can provide a very unique contribution to the global PR society. Steve Biko, an anti-apartheid activist from South Africa, expressed clearly how authentic Africa's contribution can be when he said the following:

*“We believe that in the long run the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationships. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa – giving the world a more human face”* (Biko in Coetzee & Roux, 1998:30).

The PR society is currently striving to create a global body of knowledge. In creating a global body of knowledge it is important to define the profession of PR. An article titled *The definition, dimensions and domain of PR*, published by Hutton (1999), acted as a catalyst for re-opening a long-standing debate on a global level. European educators and practitioners criticised this article for primarily following a North American approach to the theory and practice of PR (Van Ruler, Vercic, Flodin & Bütschi & Flodin, 2001:373). Van Ruler *et al* (2001:373) were of the opinion that PR is very different in the European context but no mention was made of Hutton's article. Hutton's article merely referred to PR from a North American perspective. The European critics formed a project team and started the European Body of Knowledge project (hereafter referred to as EBOK), in an attempt to assess what is similar to and what is different from North American PR in the European context.

The purpose of the EBOK project was firstly to compile a bibliography of European PR literature and secondly to understand the current practice of European PR. The findings also crystallised the realisation that, in order to develop a global body of knowledge, an understanding of the differences and similarities in PR across the globe is of great importance. The field of PR will be able to draw conclusions as to what the PR profession in the 21<sup>st</sup> century entails, only when there is an understanding across the globe with regard to the current status of thinking and practicing of PR (Van Ruler *et al*, 2001:373-374).

The findings of the EBOK project were so profoundly different to that of the North American approach to PR that it was decided to globally discuss the fundamentals of PR. The theme of the 9<sup>th</sup> International PR Research Symposium in 2002 was *Status of PR Knowledge in Europe and around the World*. Researchers and practitioners from five continents were asked to represent their continents to voice their opinions on the status of PR on their specific continent. The main conclusions of this conference were that global discussions on the fundamentals of PR are of the utmost importance. Furthermore, a dialogue between the continents is necessary. These findings both inspired and motivated Africa to participate in this process.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

In the attempt to develop a global body of knowledge, it is necessary to understand what constitutes such a body of knowledge. It consists of research, education and the practice of PR. The focus of this study is on one of these three aspects, namely the practice of PR.

According to Hutton (1999:200), PR is a relatively new field of practice and scholarship. Hutton states that there is a need for general agreement in order for PR to grow as a scholarly and professional endeavour. In the attempt to reach this agreement, different perspectives need to be taken into consideration in order to fully understand the nature of this field.

Most of the literature and empirical evidence found in the field of PR originate from countries with well-structured and established systems. As PR faces the challenges of the global and international arena, practitioners need to discover and understand macro-environmental changes and the impact thereof on business and on the practice of PR (Wakefield, 2000:186; Zaharna, 2001:136). In order to develop a global body of knowledge it is necessary to analyse and assess continents on the global fundamentals of PR. According to Pratt (1985:10), PR practitioners from developed and developing countries fulfil different roles. Pratt further states that practitioners from the industrialised West are generally socially responsible, but in the Third World PR practices are designed to be consistent with political ideologies, levels of development, and socio-political controls. This study will attempt to address whether this statement is in fact correct. The socially responsible behaviour of major organisations has recently been under investigation, specifically in the industrialised West. The African world-view focusing on the importance of man and building the community may influence the role PR practitioners play on this continent.

In order to describe the practice of PR in Africa, it is necessary to use the global literature on the practice of PR as a benchmark. The theoretical

framework for the literature review as well as for the empirical phase of this study will mainly consist of the work of Professors Grunig (North American perspective), EBOK and Susanne Holmstrom (European perspectives) and lastly Benita Steyn (South African perspective). Africa will only be able to participate in the global discussions if it can be explained according to global standards.

### **1.3 THE PRACTICE OF PR**

The major concept under discussion in this study is the practice of PR. This concept will be theoretically described by referring to two other concepts. The first concept is the models (purpose) of the practice of PR, referring to the value it contributes to the effectiveness of the organization. The second concept is the roles (activities) of the practice of PR. In this study the practice of PR will be studied as a strategic function, which means that PR can be explained as a framework developed to provide clear direction. This will enable the organisation to test all activities performed and problems that have been solved accordingly to the framework provided. It is therefore critical for PR to reflect the enterprise (societal role regardless of the size or sector of the economy, which is stakeholder-orientated) as well as corporate strategies (referring to the portfolio of businesses that the organisation is competing in, which is financially orientated) of the organisation (Steyn, 2000:41-53; Likely, 2002:27). Chapter 3 will discuss the origin of PR, where both the North American as well as the European literature will be discussed.

In the attempt to describe the current level of the practice of PR, it is necessary to investigate the development levels of both the models (purpose) and the roles (activities) of the practice of PR. Global literature will be explored in order to determine the current level of the practice of PR. The empirical phase of this study will therefore be guided by the theoretical framework and will also be measured against it.

### **1.3.1 The models (purpose) of the practice of PR**

Various world-views have been captured in the four models (press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical) of PR developed by Grunig & Hunt (1984). These four models are used to describe the variation of PR practice. Grunig (1992:286) explains that these models are viewed as a set of values and patterns in order to describe the behaviour that characterises the approach taken by a PR department or individual. These models will therefore provide an understanding of the dominant world-view followed by PR departments as well as PR practitioners. The models can also provide an understanding of the conditions that influence the practice of a particular model within a particular context.

The European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA) initiated the EBOK project in 1998. The most profound contribution the EBOK project made was the identification of the reflective paradigm. This paradigm emphasises the importance of linking PR to social responsibility. It further states that PR should be concerned with the organisation's behaviour in society, by focusing on legitimacy and public trust. The importance of the common good is emphasised by serving public interest. The reflective model is seen as the most advanced level of PR practice. It was stated earlier that the development levels of the models (purpose) of the practice of PR would be explored by referring to global literature. The researcher views the reflective paradigm as a further development in the models (purpose) of the practice of PR, even more advanced than that of the two-way symmetrical model identified by Grunig & Hunt (1984). Through a literature review the reflective paradigm will be operationalised as a model for the purpose of the empirical phase of this study and it is critical to include in this study.

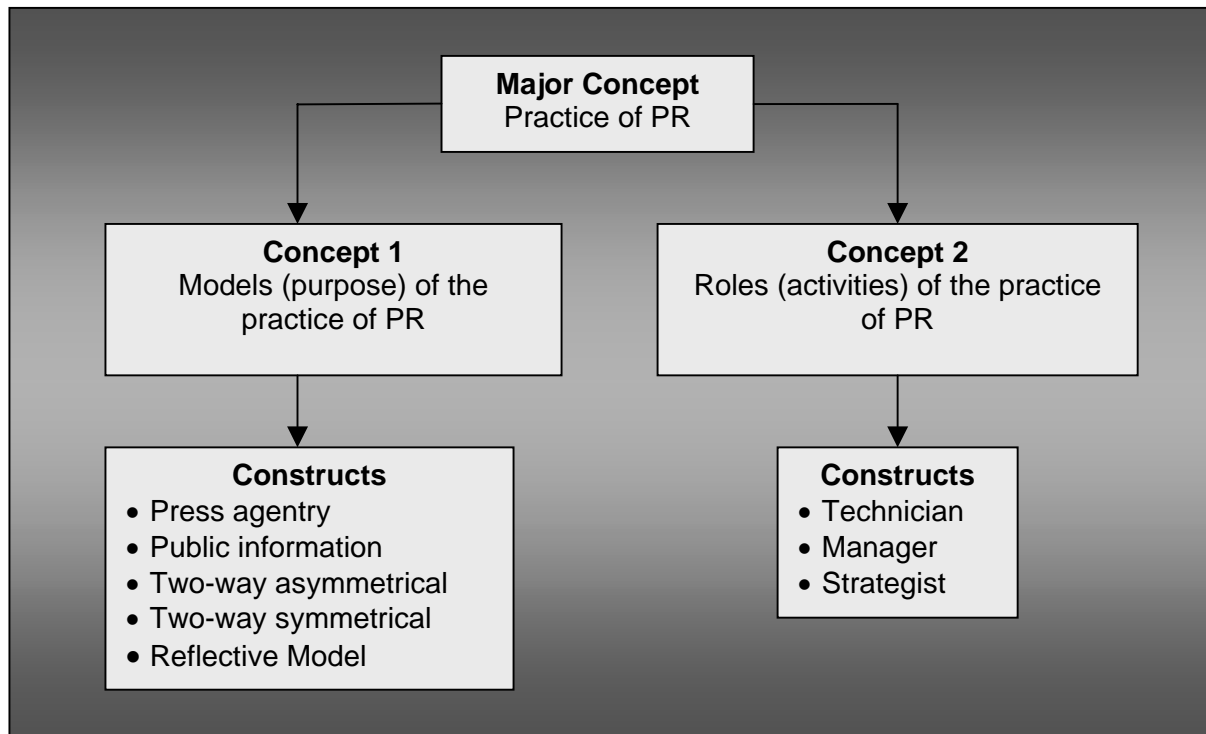
### 1.3.2 The roles (activities) of the practice of PR

Broom & Smith (1979) in Dozier in Grunig (1992:329) conceptualised four theoretical roles, namely the expert prescriber, the communication facilitator, the problem-solving process facilitator and the technician role. However, two predominant roles were identified, namely the manager and the technician. The role of the manager was conceptualised in the first three roles and the role of the technician was conceptualised in the last role (Broom in Steyn, 2000:16).

The European PR activities according to Van Ruler *et al* (2001:380) refer to identifiable differences in the approach to PR. The reflective role of PR is the most profound difference. Reflective PR adapts organisational standards and values according to the changing standards and values of society's expectations. This behaviour focuses on social responsibility in order to increase legitimacy accordingly. Steyn (2002:20) theoretically conceptualised a third role and empirically verified the role of the strategist in the South African context. According to Steyn (2003), many similarities can be drawn between the role of the strategist and the reflective role and will be discussed in Chapter 3. As previously stated, global literature will be explored to investigate the level of the role (activities) of the practice of PR. The researcher views the role of the strategist as the most advanced level of the roles (activities) of the practice of PR. Therefore, through a literature review the role of the strategist will be further operationalised for the purpose of the empirical phase of this study.

Figure 1.1 provides a visual illustration of how the major concept, namely the practice of PR, will be investigated theoretically as well as empirically by exploring global literature. The practice of PR will be investigated by referring to the models (purpose) of the practice of PR and the roles (activities) of the practice of PR. Each of these concepts is defined by various constructs that will be used in the empirical phase of this study.

Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework underlying the practice of PR



#### 1.4 THE IMPACT OF THE MACRO ENVIRONMENT ON THE PRACTICE OF PR: REMOTE AND INDUSTRY ENVIRONMENT

Organisations currently function in a constantly changing environment. These macro-environmental changes influence the organisation's decision making and strategy formulation. Steyn (2000:57-59) divided the external environment into categories and two of these categories are included in this study, namely remote and industry environment. In this study, when reference is made to the macro-environment and its impact on the practice of PR, it will be discussed firstly in terms of the remote environment and secondly in terms of the industry environment. It has been mentioned before that PR will be studied from a strategic perspective and therefore the changes in the macro-environment will impact on the practice of PR. Africa as a continent has often been described in terms of the macro-environmental issues such as poverty and economic difficulty. A discussion of macro-environmental issues is necessary, as this will provide a better understanding of the context in which PR is practised in general but also in Africa.

The macro-environmental discussion will firstly focus on the remote, macro-environmental perspective, where reference will be made to world development and the role of business in society. Secondly, the macro-environmental discussion will focus on the industry as a macro-environmental perspective, where reference will be made to PR as a profession.

#### **1.4.1 World development**

The world is a social system and its development refers to the interdependent relationships between the economic and non-economic factors. The latter refers to aspects such as attitude towards life, work and authority; public and private bureaucratic and administrative structures; patterns of kinship and religion; cultural traditions; systems of land tenure; the authority and integrity of government agencies; and the flexibility or rigidity of economic and social classes (Todaro, 1994:13). World development takes place when social, economic, political, cultural and technological changes help or hinder the basic needs of the majority of the people.

The impact of world development has an impelling impact on the human beings that share one planet where two worlds are present. These are the world of the rich and the world of the poor. The poor are largely the people of the Third World countries that have fallen behind the economic levels of the West since the beginning of the modern colonial period in the 16th century (Weitz in Todaro, 1994:3). Steiner & Steiner (2000:5) explains that economic, political and social activities are the subdivisions of the universe of human endeavour.

The level of development has an influence on the way social systems are independent and interdependent on one another. All social systems cluster together owing to various specialised functions of the system. The rationality of each function produces its own world-view and reality. This increases the complexity within society and changes the social expectations of society. Therefore, the process of balancing the independence and the interdependence of the functional systems is the major problem when one



wants to coordinate contemporary societies (Holmström, 2003:3-6).

#### **1.4.2 The evolution of business**

Businesses have evolved from a profit-centred model to a social responsible model and more recently towards a collaborative working relationship referred to as a corporate community model. Businesses have developed from the industrial age where a profit-centred model focused on capital formation as the only legitimate role, to the Neo-Industrial Age focused on a social responsibility model as a remedy to the profit-centred model, focusing on “doing good”. These two models illustrate the conflict that prevails today in corporate governance (Halal, 2000:10-12).

The economic role of profit is fundamental for the survival of business but often overrules the social aspects of business. Halal (2000) has developed a new governance model, called the corporate community model, which was recently developed to address the economic rationale for the important role that stakeholders play in wealth creation. This model views the organisation as a socio-economic system where wealth is created through collaboration, therefore creating social and economic wealth. The focus of businesses is on knowledge, which behaves different to capital, as it is transferable and intangible and its value increases when shared. Organisations are thus evaluated by the status of how they behave towards their publics as well as to their profitability (Halal, 2000:10-16). Business has evolved from a purely economic rationale - towards a broader perspective - considering values more than economic aspects (Holmström, 2003:13).

As these collaborative relationships between organisations, publics and society have become increasingly important it is understandable that the need to coordinate society has become important. The increased complexity of society has motivated different social systems to voluntarily assume co-responsibility for the larger societal context, each from its own perspective. In the business community, organisations are integrating social and environmental concerns in

their business operations and have expressed it in notions such as corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, triple bottom line, and stakeholder dialogue. When organisations emphasise social responsibility it is seen as institutions acting responsibly. This builds trust and contributes to the long-term profitability of an organisation (Holmström, 2003:10).

The changes within the business environment have influenced the operations of organisations and therefore PR has also been influenced and has evolved considerably. The evolution of PR can broadly be related to four trends. Firstly, the increase in the number of big institutions, secondly, the increasing nature of change, conflict and confrontation in society. Thirdly, the technological innovations in communications have created an informed society. Lastly, the increase of public opinion as democracy was introduced in the 1990s (Seitel, 1995:26).

Discussions on the issue of world development and the evolution of business as part of the remote macro-environment will provide a particular context, which will create greater understanding of the practice of PR. This will be discussed in Chapter 4. Africa's current position with regard to these issues is of great importance to contribute to a clearer understanding of the social activities performed within this context. Africa's position will influence the way in which business activities are performed and therefore also the way in which PR is currently being practiced.

### **1.4.3 The PR profession**

Although PR associations include only a portion of those working in the PR field, these associations exert considerable influence through their advocacy for the professionalisation of this practice. PR has predominantly been a practice-based field but owing to the attempt to create a scientific base, PR is developing into a profession. Striving for the professionalisation of PR institutionalises the best practices and establishes standards of quality that serve the public interest. Therefore, the institutionalisation of PR should be

concerned with the processes of integration and disintegration of society, where social responsibility becomes the regulating mechanism of social order (Holmström, 1997:25).

In the attempt to professionalise PR, emphasis was placed on many aspects but recently the focus has moved to the individuals and their actions. Therefore, the roles practitioners fulfil are now being questioned. When practitioners act, they are questioned by referring to whether these actions fall within the description of 'acting as a professional' (Wilcox, Ault, Agee & Cameron, 2000:65). It is therefore evident that part of the value that PR practitioners add to organisations is their moral obligation to share the values of the external stakeholders into the decision-making process. With the focus on the individual it has become even more critical to equip practitioners with a set of basic professional values. These values are necessary in guiding them, especially when they are faced with conflicting loyalties. The way in which PR practitioners think about the social role they fulfil will assist in the understanding of these basic professional values (Grunig, 2000:29).

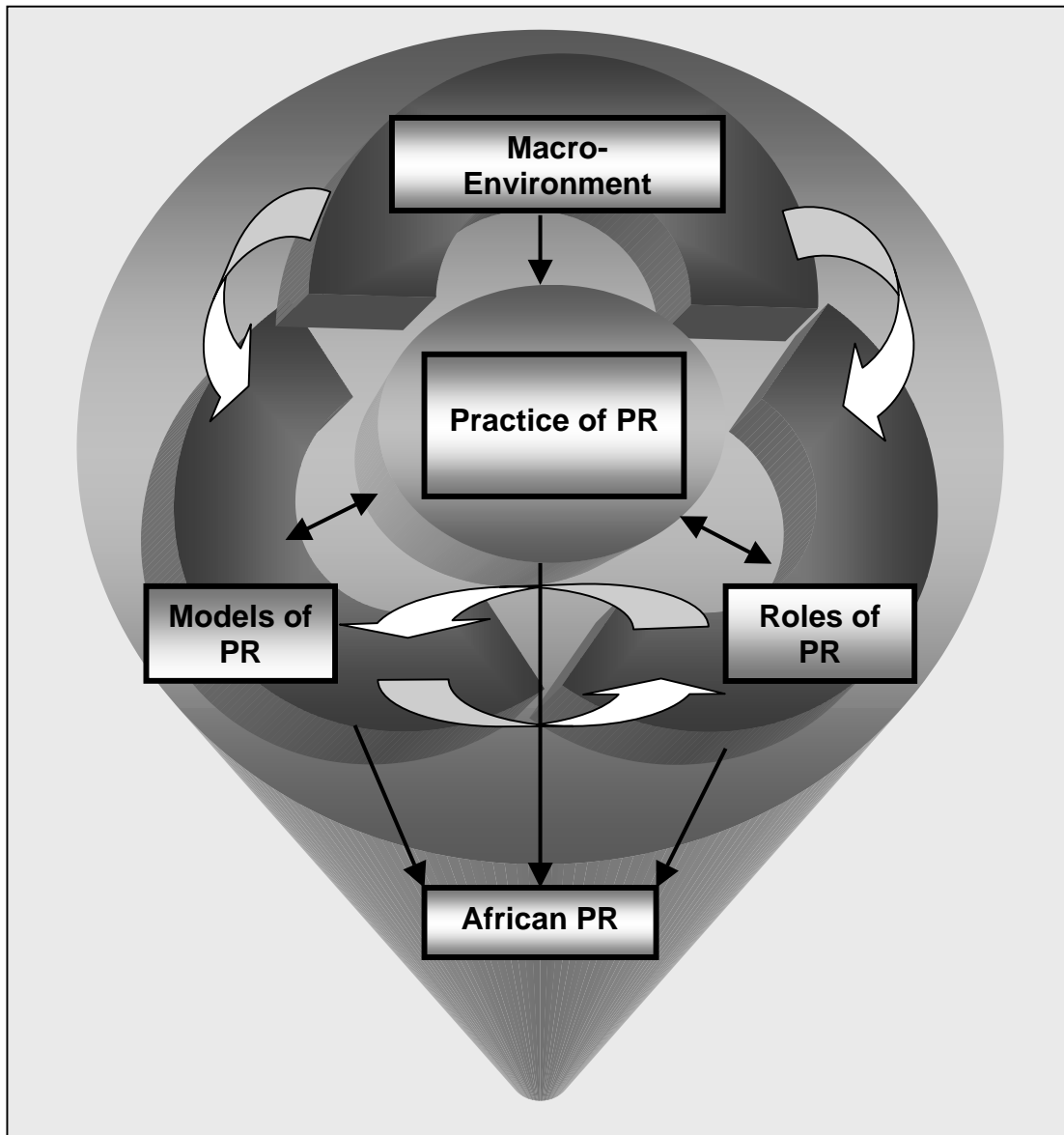
## 1.5 THE PRACTICE OF PR IN AFRICA

Very little has been documented about African PR. An electronic literature search on the subject of African PR, during 2001, resulted in no information. Besides electronic database information, no textbooks on this topic could be found. The only documented literature on the subject to be found was an *ad hoc* study conducted by Ferreira (1994) and two articles published in a South African accredited journal, *Communicare*. Furthermore, Zarine Roodt addressing the issue of the professionalisation of PR conducted another South African study. A few articles in a journal titled *Frontline* published by the International PR Association (hereafter referred to as IPRA) were also found. This journal focused on practitioners and the information included is applied research or practical issues and case studies shared. It is clear that Africa has not optimised in sharing information about the practice of PR.

The complex and diverse nature of the culture, development, economic and socio-political issues of the African environment have an impact on the effectiveness of the social activities on this continent. These macro-environmental factors therefore also impact on the way in which PR practitioners function. It is these factors that cause Western scholars to struggle to appreciate the complexities of Africa as well as the strong collectivist cultural approach (as opposed to the traditional individualistic Western approach) of the African continent (Rensburg, 2002:12). The challenge for PR practitioners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to position them to be part of the strategic nerve of the organisation. Sustainable development should be explained as a long-term investment and opportunity for political expediency. Business, people, communities, countries, military, police and therefore also PR should meet society's expectations of good corporate conduct, corporate governance, good government governance, media conduct, quality political leadership and enlightened self-interest (Opukah, 2003:5 & 8).

Owing to the interactive nature of the various aspects under discussion the researcher developed Figure 1.2 in order to visualise the interaction of the various aspects. The focus of this investigation is the practice of PR, which is defined by referring to the models and roles of the practice of PR, but it will be studied by referring to the impact of the macro-environment on the practice of PR.

Figure 1.2 Conceptual framework of the literature review



In order to understand the phenomenon of PR within the context of this particular study it is necessary to provide a definition for this function. According to Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch (1997:22), defining a field in a research study is important for two reasons. Firstly, it captures the essence and distinguishes it from other concepts, and secondly the aim is to translate it into observable events in order to measure the concept. The specific definition of PR selected for this study will now be discussed.

## 1.6 DEFINING PR

The search for a single, broadly accepted definition for the field of PR is an ongoing struggle and both PR literature and practice have not yet agreed on a definition (Hutton, 1999:199; Mersham, Rensburg & Skinner, 1995:8). The search for a definition started in 1975, when the American Foundation for PR Research and Education searched for a universal definition. Sixty-five PR leaders participated and 472 definitions were analysed (Seitel, 1995:6). In 1980 the PR Society of America did research on the stature and role of PR (Lesly, 1981:32). It is therefore clear that the search for a single definition has been an ongoing process. PR has suffered from an identity crisis, which is largely the field's own making, and therefore numerous definitions for PR exist.

For the purpose of this study, PR will be defined as follows:

*"PR practice is the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisation leaders, and implementing planned programmes which will serve both the organisation and the public interest".*

This definition resulted from a World Assembly of PR held in Mexico City in August 1978 (Wilcox, *et al* 2000:4).

The following brief interpretation of the definition above will provide an explanation for selecting this particular definition:

- *"the art and social science of analysing trends"*

This part of the definition refers to macro-environmental issues, therefore scanning the environment. These issues need to be analysed in order to feed information into the organisation. The information is then used in a scientific way, studying the social implications and expectations of society by referring to experience gained necessary for decision making and organisational behaviour.

- *“predicting their consequences”*

The focus of this part of the definition refers to proactively communicating with various stakeholder groups. The overall knowledge that the practitioner has with regard to the macro-environment in which the organisation functions as well as knowledge of the stakeholders and the effect these issues might have on the organisation as well as the effect on perceptions and opinions of the organisation are crucial to the success of the organisation.

- *“counselling organisation leaders”*

This part of the definition refers to the importance of the relationship between the PR practitioner and the decision makers within the organisations. The effectiveness of this relationship will enable the PR practitioners to feed strategic information into the organisation. The focus here is therefore on participation of the PR practitioner in the decision-making processes of the organisation.

- *“implementing planned programmes”*

The focus of this part of the definition refers to, firstly, the planning of programmes and, secondly, the implementation of these programmes. The focus is therefore on the management of planned programmes, therefore emphasising that PR is a separate management function as well.

- *“serve both the organisation and the public interest”*

This part of the definition refers to the dual purpose of the practice of PR. The PR practitioner is required to collect strategic information by listening to the public. This is mostly done through the public communication system (mass media) feeding this information into the organisation. This information should be used to adapt to the public's expectations from an organisational perspective; the opposite, however, is also true.

This definition clearly proves that PR should be studied as a strategic function seeking more than merely maintaining and building relationships; the focus

should be on broader societal issues. This definition is therefore the basis for the aim of this study.

## 1.7 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Very little has been documented about African PR, and in order to participate in the global discussions and contribute towards a global PR body of knowledge, it is evident that Africa needs to determine its current position *vis-à-vis* global PR literature.

Furthermore, Africa has a responsibility towards the global PR society. The continent has a responsibility towards the urban and rural classes of developing countries, as most of the countries in Africa are developing countries. This responsibility includes the empowerment of African PR practitioners with the necessary knowledge and skills to serve their societies, to build PR theory and to contribute to the understanding of PR on the African continent. The problem that this study addresses can therefore be formulated as follows: *There is a lack of knowledge and understanding of the practice of PR in Africa.* This prohibits the continent from participating in global discussions on the fundamentals of PR. Africa must assist in creating a global understanding of the current practice of PR.

In order for Africa to participate in global discussions on the fundamentals of PR and to assist in creating a global understanding of the current practice of PR, an understanding of the practice of PR in Africa is critical. This study therefore endeavours to *describe the current practice of PR in Africa*, which also implies the *status of the current practice of PR in Africa*.

## 1.8 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study consists of two research phases, the first being a theoretical literature study and the second an empirical study. Several objectives have



been formulated to address the above-mentioned problem statement and will be briefly stated below:

**1.8.1 Phase one: A theoretical literature study will be undertaken to:**

- describe the practice of PR, in terms of the models (purpose) and roles (activities) of PR from a theoretical perspective, focusing on global theory (Chapter 3);
- explore the level of development of the practice of PR, from a theoretical perspective, using global theory (Chapters 2 & 3);
- provide a theoretical explanation for the importance of the relationship and impact of the macro-environment on the practice of PR (Chapter 4);
- explore the African PR literature on the practice of public relations from a theoretical perspective (Chapter 5);
- provide a theoretical justification of the importance of the relationship and impact of the macro-environment on the practice of PR in Africa (Chapters 4 & 5).

**1.8.2 Phase two: An empirical research study will be undertaken to:**

- identify the models (purpose) of the practice of PR in Africa;
- identify the roles (activities) of the practice of PR in Africa;
- operationalise and empirically verify variables defining the reflective model of the practice of PR in Africa;
- operationalise and empirically verify variables defining the role of the strategist of the practice of PR in Africa;
- determine if a relationship exists between the models (purpose) and the roles (activities) of the practice of PR in Africa;
- identify differences between PR practitioners in terms of their demographic characteristics and the models (purpose) of the practice of PR in Africa;
- identify differences between PR practitioners in terms of their demographic characteristics and the roles (activities) of the practice of PR in Africa;

The findings of the excellence study (Grunig & Grunig, 1992), referring to the knowledge base of PR practitioners, influences the practice of PR and therefore the following objectives were formulated in order to:

- establish the differences between PR practitioners in terms of PR training received and the model (purpose) of the practice of PR in Africa
- establish the differences between PR practitioners in terms of PR training received and the roles (activities) of the practice of PR in Africa (Chapters 6-8).

### **1.9 ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS FORMULATED FOR THIS STUDY**

Alternative hypotheses were formulated based on the literature review. It is essential to take note that these hypotheses were formulated before the factor analysis was conducted. This implies that there is at this stage no knowledge of the number of models and roles that occur in the African context. According to theory, 5 models and 3 roles are identified but each of these hypotheses will make provision for an elaboration on each of these hypotheses.

- H1: There is a relationship between the models (a/b/c/d/e) and the roles (a/b/c) of the practice of PR in Africa.
- H2: There is a significant difference between male and female practitioners in terms of the models (a/b/c/d/e) of the practice of PR in Africa
- H3: There is a significant difference between young and old practitioners in terms of the models (a/b/c/d/e) of the practice of PR in Africa
- H4: There is a significant difference between the practitioners in terms of their levels of education and the models (a/b/c/d/e) of the practice of PR in Africa
- H5: There is a significant difference between the practitioners in terms of their country of origin and the models (a/b/c/d/e) of the practice of PR in Africa

- H6: There is a significant difference between male and female PR practitioners in terms of the roles (a/b/c) of the practice of PR in Africa
- H7: There is a significant difference between young and old PR practitioners in terms of the roles (a/b/c) of the practice of PR in Africa
- H8: There is a significant difference between the PR practitioners in terms of their levels of education and the roles (a/b/c) of the practice of PR in Africa
- H9: There is a significant difference between the PR practitioners in terms of their country of origin and the roles (a/b/c) of the practice of PR in Africa
- H10: There is a significant difference between PR practitioners who received PR training and those who did not and the models (a/b/c/d/e) of the practice of PR in Africa
- H11: There is a significant difference between PR practitioners who received PR training and those who did not receive PR training and the roles (a/b/c) of the practice of PR in Africa

### **1.10 IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY**

Since global discussions on the fundamentals of PR have been initiated, it is critical that developing countries participate in these discussions in order to state the issues faced in a developing context. This study will therefore, firstly, provide information on a broad understanding to all concerned with the practice of PR in Africa. The empirical findings of the study will also allow Africa to participate in the global discussions on the fundamentals of PR as Africa will be described in terms of global literature. Furthermore, the study will build a network amongst African PR practitioners. This will create a platform for transferring knowledge and skills. The sharing of ideas will also contribute to the development and advancement of the field of PR on the African continent. Very little empirical research has been documented specifically referring to the practice of PR in the African context. This study will provide empirical information about African PR. Lastly, this study will assess the level of development of the practice of PR in the African context.

### **1.11 DELIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

In order to develop a global body of knowledge it is necessary to define the PR profession. In the attempt to define the profession it is necessary to determine the status of education, research and the practice of PR. The main concept under investigation in this study is the practice of PR. The models (purpose) and roles (activities) of the practice of PR are used to define this main concept, the practice of PR. The focus of this study is therefore aimed at exploring and describing the current practice of PR in Africa, excluding the education and research part of PR. This is done through a literature review as well as an empirical phase. Reference will be made to the importance of education and research on the practice of PR but these concepts will not be the focus of this study. The theoretical and empirical investigation in this study will concentrate on the practice of PR, mainly addressing the models (purpose) and roles (activities) of the practice of PR in Africa.

### **1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

Chapter 8 will discuss the limitation but the most important limitation was the sample method. A snowball sample method was used in the attempt to get respondents. This method relies on the assistance of individuals. Due to the limited knowledge of African PR practitioners the possibility is there that respondents who participated in this study were PR practitioners who are functioning at a high level. Furthermore the findings of this study cannot be used to generalise the whole of Africa as only 7 countries were involved and these countries mostly represented East and South Africa.

### **1.13 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. A literature review of the practice of PR was conducted, addressing both the models and roles and the level of development of these concepts. Secondary data was collected

through scientific journals, research publications and previous studies. The empirical phase of this study used a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by adapting existing measuring instruments by adding the latest developments of the practice of PR. This implies the operationalisation of the reflective paradigm, as another model and an adapted version of the role of the strategist, including the reflective role. The data collection was done through 3 mediums namely an electronic questionnaire sent via e-mail, a training session where delegates were asked to complete the questionnaire and lastly delegates at a conference. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted in the attempt to determine if these models and roles exist in the African context. Furthermore, hypotheses were formulated and tested.

#### **1.14 DEMARCATION OF THIS STUDY**

### **Chapter 2: Theoretical perspectives for the practice of PR**

This chapter provides a discussion of the theoretical framework used for this study.

### **Chapter 3: Practice of PR: Models and Roles**

This chapter discusses the main concept, the practice of PR. This concept is defined by two other concepts, namely the models (purpose) and roles (activities) of the practice of PR. Each of these concepts are defined by a few constructs and are addressed in the discussion. The historical developments and the theoretical linkage between the models and the roles are discussed. Furthermore, it is noted that the practice of PR is studied from a strategic perspective, focussing on the important impact of macro environmental issues on the practice of PR.

**Chapter 4: The impact of the macro-environment on the practice of PR:  
Remote and Industry Environment**

Chapter 4 reviews literature pertaining to the impact of the macro-environment on the practice of PR. The macro-environment will be discussed in terms of world development as well as the role that business is fulfilling in society. The importance of PR associations in setting the standards for behaviour and level of education for the profession will also be briefly discussed.

**Chapter 5: The practice of PR in Africa**

Chapter 5 focuses on a theoretical understanding of Africa in the context of macro environmental issues, specifically world development and the impact of business on society. This is essential in order to be able to describe the practice of PR. Africa's position in terms of these issues has an impact on the social activities performed within businesses on this continent. Mention will be made of the professional PR associations and institutions that currently exist in Africa.

**Chapter 6: Research design and methodology**

This chapter explains the research methodology that was followed in this study. The discussion will focus on the research design, emphasising issues such as population, sample frame and the selection of the measuring instrument. The data analysis is also discussed by referring to the statistical techniques used in this study.

**Chapter 7: Research results and interpretation**

Chapter 7 focuses on the findings of this study. This includes the empirical findings as well as the hypotheses testing. The chapter therefore summarises the results, presents it in an understandable manner and provides an interpretation and discussion in order to enable appropriate conclusions.

**Chapter 8: Conclusions, implications, recommendations and limitations**

This chapter summarises the main findings and conclusions of the study. The implications of these findings as well as recommendations are summarised. Lastly the limitations are identified, and recommendations for future research are discussed.

**Figure 1.3 A summary of the total study**