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**THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN
RESOURCES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR**

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

In democratic states, government consists of a group of people elected into office to manage the affairs of the state on behalf of the citizens. In turn, governments create institutions and appoint public officials to manage and serve the public on their behalf. The activities undertaken in these institutions are under the watchful eye of the public and under the direct control and direction of the government. For this reason, bad or good conduct by appointed officials and their subordinates affect not only the images of governments, but the public trust as well.

In this Chapter, the reasons for undertaking this study are provided. The method of research employed is also explained. In order to avoid misinterpretation, this Chapter also provides a clarification of terminology. The reference technique used in this dissertation is briefly explained.

First, however, it is necessary to identify the pertinent problem addressed in this dissertation. This problem also serves the purpose to enhance the reasons for undertaking this study.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The significance of ethics in the public sector has been widely proclaimed in the past decade (e.g. Denhardt 1988: 99-157). Pertinent questions regarding ethics in the public sector are addressed. Although no scientifically exact answers are provided to ethical questions (ethics does not form part of the exact sciences) such questions form the basis for ethical debate at both the academic as well as practitioners' level.

A survey, among the United States of America's public, indicated that the public was well aware of ethics, that they associated ethics with aspects such as standards, rules of conduct, right and wrong, values, and honesty (Hill 1980: 293). Although this survey may not be relevant to the South African situation, it may be assumed that the South African public is aware of ethics, associating it with aspects such as corruption, nepotism, honesty, and maladministration in the public sector. This assumption is based on the on-going media reports on corruption in this sector (Horn 1995:1, Dhlamini 1995:1). Many letters to newspapers by individual members of the public also serve to indicate the level of awareness on ethics by the South African society (Mori 1995: 14).

In South Africa, although all the past and present Constitutions always had some ethical undertones in the preambles, ethics per se in the history of the South African public sector has been sparsely accentuated. The emphasis has always been on

certain normative guidelines operative in this sector. These guidelines included aspects such as political supremacy, efficiency, aspects for societal values, accountability, social equity, and religious doctrines (Hanekom and Thornhill 1983: 121-145). Books dealing exclusively with ethics in the public sector such as the one by Gildenhuys(1991) are scarce. Even the most recent publications in the "Discipline" do not deal exclusively with ethics (e.g. Bayat and Meyer 1994:216-290).

This state of affairs emphasises the need for research in the field of ethics, particularly with regard to ethics in the South African context. This research project is a theoretical contribution in the field of ethics and is intended to stimulate emperical research in this field.

Numerous questions may be asked concerning the perceptions and attitudes of those engaged in the public service in the light of what has been written above. For the purpose of this dissertation, however, the endeavour is to investigate and describe underlying principles of ethics and how they should be applied in the management of human resources in the public sector. To summerise, this research is worth undertaking for the following reasons:

First, the majority of literature on ethics in the public sector in South Africa only touches on ethical dilemmas encountered by public officials, unethical behaviour and their causes, and measures to prevent them (Van der Waldt and Helmbold 1995:157-174).

These sources are not works on ethics per se, but on selected aspects of public management which also include some facts about ethics .

Second, very little research has been undertaken in which theories and principles underlying ethics in the management of human resources in the South African public sector are described. This dearth in the corpus of ethical knowledge predisposes practitioners to uncertainties. In a state of uncertainty, situations dictate the courses of action, and there can be no guarantees that such actions will be in accordance with principles of conduct that are considered correct with. This dissertation is a contribution made to fill this gap. It is contended that knowledge of ethics and a commitment to upholding ethical norms and standards in the management of human resources in the public sector can contribute towards promoting ethical behaviour in the public sector. This contentment forms the basis of this research project.

1.2 Frame of reference

The focus of this study is human resource management in the public sector. The activities undertaken in this sector are open to public scrutiny, hence the need for such activities to be ethically justifiable. From a Business Economics point of view, the means of production of goods and services are described as availability of land, availability of capital, and availability and utilisation of human labour. Of these means of production, only human resources are capable of observable behaviour, because the other production factors are inanimate. In the light of this statement, it is clear that only

human resources are capable of ethical or unethical behaviour. For this reason, the management of human resources is selected as the object of study and analysed from an ethical point of view.

1.2.1 Time dimension

The advent of the democratic dispensation on 27 April 1994 in South Africa heralded expectations and changes to all South Africans. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993(Act 200 of 1993) was in place until 1996. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) was adopted on 8 May 1996. In terms of Section 195 (Act 108 of 1996) emphasis has been put on human resource management in the South African public sector. The time frame April 1994 to December 1998 will be used as a point of departure in this dissertation.

1.3 Research method used

A detailed literature study on ethics in the public sector is undertaken. Although the literature study is mainly descriptive, an attempt is made to deductively adapt theories and descriptions to the management of human resources in the South African public sector context.

1.4 Reference method

The Harvard reference method is used in this dissertation. The complete bibliographical particulars of the appropriate sources are supplied in the bibliography. The sources are listed alphabetically according to authors. These are further divided according to books, journals, newspapers and statutes.

1.5 Definitions and explanations of terms

Although most concepts used in this dissertation are explained and defined as they appear in the different chapters, it is necessary to define some of them in this chapter. These are regarded as key concepts in this dissertation.

1.5.1 Public Sector

According to Fox and Meyer (1995: 107) public sector refer to "...that portion of an economy whose activities (economic and non-economic) are under the control and direction of the state". The public sector is characterised by its service motive and activities in this sector take place in a political milieu. It includes governmental institutions as well as functionaries employed in these institutions at all levels of government.

1.5.2 Human resource management

In line with the vision and mission of the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Sector (RSA 1997), the term human resource management is used in this dissertation ahead of public personnel administration. The term captures human beings in the public sector as a resource to be managed. It is the subject of many role players in an institution, such as top management, human resource specialists and line managers. A full explanation of these role players is presented in Chapter three of this dissertation. For the purpose of this dissertation human resource management may be referred to as all decisions and actions by all levels of management that affects and influences the nature of the relationship between the organisation and its human asset (Beer *et al.* in Goss 1994: 13).

1.5.3 Ethics

Ethics is defined and explained by many authors in various fields of study. Most of the authors emphasise "right" and "wrong", "good" or "bad" and judgement on human behaviour (Lewis 1991: 3). For the purpose of this dissertation a more acceptable definition of ethics is that by Jennings. He states that "...ethical judgement is the exercise of a capacity to discriminate among available courses of action on the basis of interpretation of shared values embedded in an ongoing institutional practice and in a broader form of communal life" (quoted in Bowman 1991: 80). This definition

embraces situational, teleological and deontological theories of ethics. Attention will be given to the explanations of these latter concepts in the paragraphs below.

1.5.3.1 Teleological theory of ethics

Teleology is concerned not with the actions of people *per se*, but rather with their consequences. It is frequently referred to as 'ends-based ethics' or as 'consequentialism'. In teleological ethics, it is held that the ethical quality of an action must be determined in terms of its consequences. An action that maximises the possible good (e.g. affirmative action as a means to promote representivity) for the largest number will be considered morally superior to other courses of action. Conversely, an action that minimises harm to the majority of people will be morally better than options that have worse consequences.

A perusal of the many White Papers in the South African public sector since 1994 contain teleological content. They are meant to benefit the majority that was deprived of opportunities prior to the 1994 dispensation. From the above explanation, it can be stated that the underlying tenets of teleological ethics closely reflect those of a free-market ethos; namely, leveling the playing field to the benefit of the majority and constantly adjudicating alternative outcomes.

In practice two teleological sub-types can be discerned, namely, directive utilitarianism and situational utilitarianism. According to directive utilitarianism, it is held that clearly

defined ethical directives can be developed as guides for ethical behaviour in an institution. In an institutional context, these directives are synonymous with codes of conduct. Through the adoption of codes of conduct, it is assumed (true to teleology) that maximum benefit will accrue to the majority.

In situational utilitarianism, different perceptions are held. The view is that maximum benefit to the greatest number will accrue only if the decision maker selects an appropriate course relevant to the particular situation. The realities of the problem at the time and place determine the course of action.

1.5.3.2 Deontological theory of ethics

Deontology refers to a sense of duty or obligation (Beauchamp and Bowie 1983:23). It refers to ethics based on the act itself. Values such as honesty, fairness, justice, accountability, reasonableness, responsibility and equity reflect deontological ethics. These values form important principles as basis for action (RSA 1996:83). In public management, values such the ones mentioned above are given (Van der Waldt and Du Toit 1997:39). Accepting public employment necessarily means that one should be prepared to uphold these values. This applies particularly to managers of human resources in the public sector.

1.5.3.3 Theory of ethics

Theory is helpful in predicting and explaining phenomena (McCormick and Illgen 1981:229). It refers to a systematised set of ideas on reality (Cloete 1995:75). Theories of ethics are generalisations on reality preferences. They are based on specific *a priori* standards of evaluation. The standards explain what the ideal objectives should be whereby reality should be judged or changed.

Some practitioners are averse to theories. At times one hears of expressions such as "that is all right in theory, but it won't work in practice". What such practitioners do not realise, is that they cannot work without theory and that knowledge of the theories form the bases of their practice.

1.6 Summary and sequence of chapters

This dissertation is divided into six chapters which form a sequential whole. Chapter one serves as an introduction to the study. In this Chapter the research problem of the dissertation is identified and research method is explained. It is recognised that there is a dearth of adequate knowledge in the field of ethics particularly in the South African public sector context where it is needed the most. The on-going media reports on corruption, fraud, and theft in the public sector accentuates the need for research,

education and training in the field of ethics. As a point of departure, the time dimension of this research project is restricted to the period 1994 to 1998. This period is considered in South Africa as the transition period from the apartheid era to a democratic dispensation. It is asserted, in political circles, that the public sector has a vital role to play in this transitional period.

Both the teleological and the deontological theories of ethics are explained. Managers of human resources combine these theories in day-to-day practice, although most are not aware of the mental processes they use.

In Chapter two, the nature and scope of ethics is described. Ethics is by nature judgemental on human behaviour. As a result, such conduct excludes that of children who still lack the life experiences concerning right and wrong, proper and improper, good and bad. Principles, norms and values are fundamental to ethics, and are fully explained in this Chapter. It is argued, for example, that managers of human resources should strive for common values in their management style in order to be accommodative of the values of a diversified personnel corps.

Aspects that can cause unethical behaviour in the public sector during the period of transition are also discussed in Chapter two. Transition causes uncertainties and can have a destabilising effect on personnel. Such uncertainties can manifest in loss of morale and subsequent unethical behaviour such as inefficiency.

Chapter three deals with aspects of human resource management. It is argued, for example, that these aspects are the same in both the private and public sector, but that there are marked differences in the manner in which they are dealt with in practice. The differences are brought about by different environments-both internal and external-within which the two sectors operate. Ethics becomes paramount in the management of human resources in the public sector in view of the high public profile this sector enjoys in the community. Also, because of the fact that management of human resources in the public sector takes place in a political environment, it is directly influenced by politics.

Values are essential parts of ethics, and are discussed in Chapter four. The list is not exhaustive, but those values that are considered important in the management of human resources in the public sector are dealt with. Religious values are considered important constituents of ethics in the South African public sector context. Although evidence shows that an overwhelming majority of South Africans are Christians, other religions have a Constitutional right to exist side-by-side with Christianity. For this reason, managers of human resources should consider the values espoused by other religions among the personnel corps. In this Chapter, the values contained in Section 195 of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) are emphasised.

A concerted effort need to be devoted to promoting ethics in the management of human resources in the public sector. This aspect receives attention in Chapter five. The objective in South Africa is to transform the Public Service into an efficient and effective unit that will serve all the citizens impartially, regardless of colour, sex or creed. This is a mammoth task, considering the history of the South African Public Service that was politicised, partisan and bias in dealing with its clients. Training and retraining of public servants is paramount for the achievement of the above objective.

In this Chapter various means of promoting ethics in the management of human resources in the public sector are discussed. Promoting and maintaining ethics can serve as one of the means to achieving the ideals of a transformed Public Service. Leadership, communication and training are singled out as crucial aspects in this respect.

This dissertation concludes with Chapter six, in which proposals based on the previous chapters are made. It is evident from the conclusions and proposals in Chapter six, that not only those in the Public Service need to be trained and educated in ethics, but the general public as well need to be educated in ethics. It can be expected that an informed public will register its protest in the event of unethical behaviour in the public sector.

CHAPTER 2

NATURE AND SCOPE OF ETHICS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Ethics is by nature reflective and judgemental on human conduct. It is concerned with human conduct that is approved of or disapproved of in terms of right and wrong or good and bad. The term ethics and ethical are often used synonymous with morals and morality. The ethics or morality of a person or group consist in what a person or group think is fitting or not fitting, right or wrong, obligatory or not obligatory to do.

The scope of human conduct that can be judged, covers the whole range of adult experience. In the context of public administration, and more specifically human resource management, the range of adult experience covered, exclude the activities of children whose conducts are not based on prior experience. Ethics deal with what constitutes the primary criteria by which actions are to be evaluated as morally right or wrong.

The issue that will receive particular attention in this Chapter is ethics in public human resource management. It is an issue of particular importance in the South African public sector. The latter statement is based on the fact that, since the inception in 1994 of the new political dispensation in South Africa, the Public Service has been earmarked for major changes. The changes envisaged for the public service include the transformation of the Public Service, the restructuring of the Public Service, as well as the application of affirmative action. In view of the above-mentioned envisaged

changes, the role and impact of ethics is assessed in the context of public human resource management .

2.2 Ethics: Theoretical and philosophical perspectives

Theory of ethics is important for the understanding of human resource management. A theoretical perspective is helpful both for the explanation and prediction of what happens or may happen, as well as a description of relationships observed in association with what happens, why and how it happens. It is also worthwhile to apply a philosophical perspective to human resource management in the public sector. A philosophical perspective is helpful in an attempt to wisely and calmly fathom the intentions of a person's actions. Ethics is a branch of philosophy called moral philosophy (Sykes 1976: 829). Moral or morality is concerned with goodness, or with the distinction between right and wrong of human conduct. Accordingly, Cooper (1994: 379) argues that moral philosophy is helpful in dealing with values and ethical issues if and when they arise. Ethics as the science of ethical values is described in the subsection below.

2.2.1 Ethics as a science

The question whether or not ethics is a science is controversial in the sense that the term "science" is difficult to define. In its simplest definition science refers to a "...systematically formulated body of knowledge" (Sykes 1976: 1014). Isaak (1985: 28) agrees with this definition, but further states that science is concerned with the "method of obtaining knowledge". As a body of knowledge, science includes laws, facts, of physics, biology, economics, and refers to the world of experience, based on observation and experiment (Isaak 1985: 28). As a method of obtaining knowledge

science refers to a particular set of principles on how to obtain the facts, and are based on theory.

Ethical propositions state value judgements. They are neither true nor false but accentuates preferences, and are prescriptive by nature (Meehan 1996: 29). A scientific method of obtaining knowledge (i.e. Method based on a set of principles) about ethics may lead to the identification of the causes of various kinds of human behaviour or choices as well as showing which actions are approved of in terms of prevailing values (Meehan 1996: 28). The latter statement shows that it is possible to study ethics scientifically if certain assumptions are made and certain principles are followed (Isaak 1985: 28). The adjective "scientific" can be applied to both the principle (scientific method) and the facts obtained (scientific knowledge) (see also Isaak 1985: 28).

In the light of the above, it could be stated that ethics is a science. This argument is supported by the Colliers Encyclopaedia (1992:33), which states that "Ethics is the integrated science of valuation. Ethics as a science investigates the value of human life in a coherent, systematic and scientific manner. As a science, ethics is related to the biological and humanistic sciences for reliable knowledge of the facts of human nature and behaviour. Ethics is therefore an interdisciplinary science". It is a science in which actual human behaviour is analysed and judged according to prescribed norms and rules (Rae 1995: 15). Normative ethics therefore prescribes moral behaviour (Rae 1995: 15).

The study of normative ethics consists of two main divisions. First the deontological approach, in which the basic concepts are "right", referring to justice, fairness and reasonableness, "ought", referring to how things should be as opposed to how they are,

“duty”, which means deriving pride in a job well done, and “obligation” signifying that one is morally bound to behave in a specific way.

Second, the teleological approach in which the basic concepts are “goodness” and “value”, signifying the end purpose (New Encyclopaedia, 1982:977). These two approaches will be looked at closely in the following paragraphs.

□ **Deontological approach**

The deontological approach to the study of ethics emphasises the ethics of duty, uprightness and obligation. According to Cooper (1994:149) “...a deontological principle is a general law or rule that guides action...” This action implies the necessary conduct or state of being that is required for the “fulfillment of a value” (Cooper 1994:149). In the day to day performance of their duties public human resource managers are guided by policies, rules and regulations, such as codes of conduct that have to be observed and adhered to. It can therefore be inferred that government policies, rules, regulations, and codes of conduct relate to the deontological category of normative ethics.

□ **Teleological approach**

As opposed to the guiding role of the deontological concept, the teleological approach to the study of normative ethics concentrates on the moral worth of human behaviour. Teleologically, the emphasis is on the appraisal of the consequences of human action as measured against set norms. The teleological approach emphasises working towards a good purpose which is set as an ideal. In the context of public administration, the achievement of goals and the satisfaction of citizen preferences would serve as examples of this approach (Cooper 1994: 157-165).

With respect to the transformation of the public sector in South Africa, human resource management will be confronted by ethical problems of both deontological and teleological nature. In the restructuring of the public service the ethics of duty, uprightness and obligation on the public servants should be emphasised, while the moral worth of the decisions and actions of the public human resource manager will be judged on the consequences these will have on the South African society as a whole, measured against an ideal to be achieved in the future.

It can be stated that legal prescriptions such as laws, rules and regulations, could be helpful as deontological tools, and serve as measurements of values, standards, or ethical norms. Cooper (1994: 155) supports this statement, and state that legal prescriptions help in dealing " ...personally, courageously, responsibly, and creatively with the moral ambiguity that is the stuff of administrative life". In the changing South Africa, public human resources managers will be required to apply deontological principles on a daily basis and to exhibit sensitivities to results in both the transformation process of the public service as well as the delivery of services. This calls for vision, integrity, and innovativeness. In the transformation process, the South African government's ideal is to strive for a society in which violence will be eliminated, in which there will be no discrimination in whatever form and in which gender equality will be achieved and a host of other noteworthy goals. The above mentioned ideals should be paramount in the minds of visionary human resources managers in the public sector. It is suggested in the paragraphs below that such human resource functionaries should adopt an ethical philosophy of life.

2.2.2 Ethical philosophy of life

It is difficult to give a clear-cut definition of the concept philosophy, because there are various conceptions of what philosophy means. Throughout its varied and long history, philosophy has meant different things to different people. Some of the concerns of philosophical studies has been a search for the wisdom of life, an attempt to understand the universe as a whole, a generation and vigorous examination of moral responsibilities and social obligations (New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1982: 248). An ethical philosophy of life is in line with the conceptions of philosophy as "... an examination of moral responsibilities and social obligations". Ethical philosophy of life can also be understood in terms of normative ethics. "The philosophy of a period arises as a response to social need" (New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1982: 261), and in the changing South Africa the need should be for public human resource managers of integrity and sensitivity to ethics. Sensitivity to and positive attitudes towards ethics in human resource management in the public sector may serve to enhance the ethical conduct in the management of human resources.

In response to the need to make the public service representative of the South African community, it is being transformed through restructuring and rationalisation. The argument is that in the restructuring of the public service, aspects such as representativeness (RSA, 1994:40); affirmative action (RSA, 1994: 42); and merit, are issues confronting public human resource management functionaries. Section 195(1) (i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act108/96) states that "...public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad

representation". The spirit of representativeness is to legitimise the public service and drive it towards equitable service delivery (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service 1995: 52). Representativeness is broadly defined to include black people (including Indians and Coloureds), women of all races and persons with disabilities. Affirmative action (defined as laws, programmes, or activities designed to redress past imbalances) is adopted as a proactive approach to achieve representativeness (RSA 1995: 53).

Klingner and Nalbandian (1985: 10) describe personnel management practices based on abilities, skills and knowledge as the merit system. Cloete (1994: 167) describes merit as a personnel system that recognises suitable qualifications and experience as basis for appointment, remuneration and promotion in the public service.

It will be expected from public human resource managers to address the above aspects, and success or failure in this respect will be based on both deontological and teleological evaluations of their decisions and actions on the short, medium and long term as will be indicated in the following paragraphs. An ethical philosophy of life adopted in public human resource management should be based on principles, norms and values as guidelines for decisions and actions.

2.2.3 Principles, norms and values

To understand the nature and scope of ethics in the public sector, it is necessary to differentiate between the concepts of principles, norms and values. In the everyday language these three concepts are usually used as synonyms, thus necessitating a clearer definition for purposes of research.

□ Principles

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1987: 822) defines principle as "...a truth or belief that is accepted as a base for reasoning or action". Principles therefore serve as fundamental sources of reasoning and action. An individual's moral principles, for example, would serve as a personal code of conduct.

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, principles are important elements of science. In an attempt to create a science of public administration, early writers in the discipline, among them Dahl (1947:23), Simon (1947: 34), Urwick (1957: 38) emphasised efficiency and precision as guiding principles of administration. In the South African public administration, efficiency is one of the normative guidelines to be observed by public functionaries (Botes et al 1995: 175 - 176).

□ Norms

A norm is a rule or standard of behaviour shared by members of a social group. Norms may be internalised so that there is conformity even when there is no external reward attached to it. A norm has both a physical and abstract meaning. In the abstract sense a norm is value based and serve as a standard. A behavioural expectation held by a group of individuals or society for evaluating behaviour, the violation of which a person should pay a societal penalty may be regarded as a norm (Fox and Meyer, 1995: 86). In the abstract sense, norms cannot be separated from community values. For example, in a community that values democracy, the upholding of democratic principles such as openness, freedom of expression and movement would serve as behavioural norms, the violation of which could lead to societal censorship. In its

physical meaning a norm is used synonymous with standard (Botes 1982: 9 -10). A standard is a measure used to determine the degree of success in the accomplishment of a predetermined objective or goal (Cloete 1995: 51). In this sense a norm can be used as a control mechanism and where deviations are observed remedial steps can be taken (Botes et al. 1996:364).

□ **Values**

Values are conceptions of what is fundamentally good or desirable that an individual or group or community or society hold onto as guides through life (Fox and Meyer 1995: 134). Values may be explicit or implicit (Fox and Meyer 1995: 134). As an area of deontology, values may be explicit, requiring details for every action in public human resource management.

Teleologically values may be implicit. For example a strive for democratic values may entail a belief that it is better to be governed by persuasion rather than by force. Democratic values may also entail the love for truth, accountability and transparency, also a belief that the knowledgeable and those in position of power should use the power of their knowledge and position for the well-being of the society. Community values are liable to change because they are affected by variable factors such as technology, values of others and the educational level of a specific community. Values are also influenced by time, place and culture (Botes et al 1982: 9). Community values are also grounded on ethics, morals and religious convictions (Wiechers 1993: 250).

The values that a community strives for, do not necessarily justify the means to attain them. It may happen that some of the means used may be regarded as unethical. For example in South Africa, the way to democracy as a value, was littered with many

unethical incidences such as unlawfulness, necklacing, kangaroo courts, non-payment of services and violence.

2.2.4 Shared Values

In the process of transforming and restructuring the public sector in South Africa the question that arises, is what principles, norms and values should be pursued in order to ensure a stable country. The establishment of a democratic society and achievement of stability in the country should be supported by specific principles, norms and values. Shared values in public institutions provide a basis for good management. Principles and norms based on shared values, ensure obedience and compliance by institutional members, without being coerced to do so (Wiechers, 1993: 28). Among others, Mercer (1992: 62) identifies the following shared values which can make a difference in a public institution, namely, honesty, pride, integrity, responsibility, dedication, loyalty, flexibility (open to change), team work, hard work, innovativeness, and efficient use of time and resources. In reviewing the shared values of successful organisations, Mercer (1992: 63) concluded, that shared values define the fundamental character or culture of an institution. They define the attitude and behaviour of personnel that distinguish the institution from all others. Shared values create a special sense of identity for those in the institution, giving meaning to work as something more than simply earning a living (Mercer 1992: 63).

Shared values define the relation of the institutions with the outside world-notably the citizens in the community. Internal to the institution, shared values govern or determine "...the way we do things around here" (Mercer 1992: 63). The question is whether the advantages of shared values can be of benefit to the heterogeneous South African Society. South Africa is a multicultural country with diverse value systems differing

from community to community. A shared value system can only mean capitalising on commonalities between the various value systems. A common belief in value systems is required, and should be striven for in the public sector. The public sector, which is the domain of public human resource management can contribute immensely towards the attainment of this objective. Public human resource management can contribute, for example, by designing training programmes which encompass the various community norms and values accurately, honestly and purposefully (Wiechers, 1993: 28, Vil-Nkomo 1994: 2 - 14). The design of training programmes which should promote ethics within public institutions and thereby accommodate various norms and values of the different communities, would require public human resource managers of different cultural, educational and ethical backgrounds. This statement is important in the South African context. Instead of undermining value systems and cultures of other communities in public human resource management, these should be recognised and respected as building blocks upon which strength in diversity is derived. In the past South Africa was segregated along race and ethnic lines by legislation. In the transformation and restructuring of the public service, public human resource management ought to encompass the rich cultures of the different communities and ethnic groups. Culture is a source of power (Mabe 1988:12) and a disregard thereof can only be to the disadvantage of public human resource management. However, it should also be kept in mind that in public human resource management activities are carried out within certain constraints. These constraints are dealt with in the section below.

2.2.5 Bounded Ethics

According to Hayes and Reeves (1984:60) public functionaries responsible for public human resource management possess discretionary powers in the day to day

implementation of personnel policies. They contend that it is precisely the discretionary powers public functionaries possess which give rise to ethical dilemmas. Ethical dilemmas may arise in public human resource management because of the complexities of personnel policies, defective procedures and manuals and defective control (van der Waldt and Helmbold 1995: 161 - 162). Such deficiencies as outlined above may give rise to various interpretations by public functionaries which may result in unethical decisions and behaviour.

The ethical dimension of the situation could include, for example, standards, values and principles such as honesty, fairness, justice, integrity, social equity, competence, efficiency and responsiveness (Cooper 1994: 351; Hayes and Reeves, 1984: 361). Ethical situations have to be practised and understood within the limits of enabling legislation and financial constraints (Frederickson 1993: 249). The work of a public human resource manager is embedded in rules, regulations, guidelines, reports, which serve as guidelines to enhance ethics. It can therefore be said that public human resource managers generally practice ethics within specific limits (Frederickson 1993: 251).

Public human resource management takes place in an environment in which government policy rules (Frederickson 1993: 249). This statement is important in view of the transformation of the public sector in South Africa. For the decisions of public human resource managers to be regarded as deontologically correct, they should at all times be legally correct. However, the success of public human resource management will be teleologically judged, that is, the decisions will be judged by the consequences, depending on the results to be maximised. For example, whereas competency and efficiency should be striven for in the public service, in public human resource management transformation and restructuring of the public service and affirmative

action are important aspects to consider (see for example the White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service 1995). The ethical situation in which public human resource managers in a changing South Africa finds themselves can lead to questions of whether ethics is of practical value. This aspect receives attention in the paragraphs below.

2.2.6 Practical value of ethics

Public functionaries occupy strategic positions in the public sector. On the one hand they have to implement government policy to satisfy the respective political office-bearers. This requires that their actions should, at all times, be intra vires (Hanekom, et al., 1987: 151). On the other hand, public functionaries carry the responsibility of advancing the public good, and their actions in carrying out their responsibilities should be seen by the public as being "good", "right" and "positive" (Hanekom et al., 1987: 151). The important position of public human resource functionaries in particular, exposes them to ethical dilemmas. In order to assist public human resource functionaries, ethical codes of conduct (defined in Chapter 4) should be drawn to serve as guidelines for official conduct. The practical value of ethics especially in the form of ethical codes of conduct can, according to Hanekom et al. (1987: 163), be interpreted as serving at least four objectives, namely:

- First, to advance and continue the responsible conduct of public functionaries;
- Second, to advance public confidence in the trustworthiness of public functionaries;
- Third, to serve as guidelines to public functionaries in their relationship with fellow officials, elected public office-bearers and the public; and

- Fourth, to serve as guidelines in the exercise of discretionary powers by public functionaries.

It can be inferred from the four objectives mentioned above that ethics is of practical value in public human resource management and public institutions. Through observance of and determination to practice ethics it can be ensured that the conduct of public human resource functionaries are both fair and just.

2.2.7 Ethical ideals

The ethical ideals which can be identified and which form an integral part of public human resource management are, according to Thomas (1978:146 - 189), a higher form of security; service to society; and satisfaction of the worker, to name but a few. The ideals respectively imply that the public should, through the medium of public management, be made to feel satisfied. The actions of public human resource functionaries should at all times be seen to promote the general welfare and the public interest indiscriminately. Public human resource policies should guide human resource functionaries against unlawful and unethical behaviour. The success of the service rendered by the public sector depends to a large extent on the ethical norms, values and principles of the public functionaries. The legislature, both at the national and provincial spheres of government, should set an example for the public functionaries. For example, political office-bearers can set the example by adopting and implementing parliamentary practices that maximises accountability and transparency (discussed in Chapter 4). It can therefore be stated that should the legislator falter in its ethical actions it can be expected that public functionaries would as a result of that be found lacking in the maintenance of high ethical standards.

2.3 SCOPE OF ETHICS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The nature of ethics and the ethical ideals described in the sections above apply to public management in general. The domain of public management is the public sector comprising of a variety of institutions. In this section, the scope of ethics in public human resource management is described, however this is dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.

2.3.1 Public Human Resource Management

Public Human Resources Management is the part of the public institution that is concerned with the "people" dimension in the institution (De Cenzo and Robbins 1996: 8, Schwella et al. 1996:32). It is a staff, or support, function in the institution, and its role is to provide assistance in matters related to personnel to those involved in the provision of services. Every public institution is comprised of people. Achieving institutional goals depends on acquiring, developing, motivating and maintaining a committed personnel corps. De Cenzo and Robbins (1996: 8) suggest that to look at public human resource management specifically, it is worthwhile to divide it into four functions, namely; staffing, training and development, motivation, and maintenance. These aspects are discussed in the sections below.

2.3.1.1 Staffing

Starling (1986: 448) describes the concept staffing as "...the process of recruiting, selecting and advancing employees on the basis of their relative ability, knowledge and skill". Recruitment is defined by Megginson in Andrews (1988: 94) as "...the term

applied to the phase of personnel management that involves reaching out and attracting a supply of people from which to select qualified candidates for job vacancies". The selection process involves identifying the applicants who are best suited for appointment in specific posts (Cloete 1994: 178).

Cloete (1994: 165) points out that in the public sector, once legislation is passed, organisational arrangements completed, and money made available, then the staffing function can be undertaken. Employment in the public service is regulated by the Public Service Labour Relation Act, 1994 and Chapter 10 Section 196 (4)(d) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996. With the above Acts and the guidance and advices provided by the Public Service Commission on employment practices, it could be expected that malpractices and unethical conduct in the staffing activities would be eliminated. This is however not always the case.

Mphahlele (1995) investigating the appointment of officers in the management echelon of the education department of the Free State Provincial Administration found that:-

- there were many purposeful deviations from standard procedures of selection;
- many malafide mistakes, were committed;
- irregularities in the selection process;
- interferences in the process in various ways;
- unfair treatment and/or improper exclusion of and discrimination against some application and applicants; and
- improper inclusion of some applications and applicants.

The magnitude of unethical conduct in the staffing process was found to be of such a nature as to render the whole process and the subsequent appointments null and void.

Although the recommendations of the commission that the whole staffing process should be carried out again were never carried out, unethical conduct in the staffing process were revealed. This resulted in the Free State Department of Education being taken to court and subsequent resignation of some top personnel from the department.

2.3.1.2 Training and development

Robbins (1982: 198) describes training as "...a learning experience that seeks a relatively permanent change in an individual that will improve his/her ability to perform on the job". Development on the other hand is described as "... the systematic process of education, training and growing, by which a person learns and applies information, knowledge, skills, attitudes and perceptions" (Megginson 1981: 205). In both training and development similar methods are used to effect learning, but their time frames differ. Training focuses on individuals' current jobs, enhancing specific skills and abilities to immediately perform their jobs, while development focuses on future jobs in the institution (De Cenzo & Robbins 1996: 237).

Training does not take place in a vacuum. Whenever it is undertaken certain objectives have to be met, be they institutional, personnel, or operational (Fisher 1990:280). In the public service, training should be aimed at, among others, enhancing ethical service delivery (Mbere 1996:5), preparing accountability centres to ensure accountability for training done or left undone (Hilliard & Wissink 1996: 9; 12).

The promotion and maintenance of a high standard of professional ethics, and the provision of fair, equitable, impartial, and unbiased services (RSA 1996) imply that the providers of such services be well trained in public service ethics. De Cenzo and

Robbins (1996: 120) point out that it is possible to train employees in ethics and emphasises the point that the institution must ensure that it has:-

- a policy on ethics, in which it is described what the institution perceives as ethical behaviour and what it expects employees to do;
- that the policy is communicated and understood by the employees;
- that employees are trained to make ethical decisions;
- reinforces that all those who make decisions have to make ethical choices, and
- that ethical decision makers should be rewarded for "appropriate choices"

Bayat and Meyer (1994: 39-40) also emphasises training in ethics for the public administrators and point out that such training should include, among others, instructions in;

- systems of justice and equity in the context of especially different cultures as exist in South Africa;
- standards of objectivity, effectiveness, impartiality, integrity and probity in the conduct of public affairs (c/f ethical service delivery);
- standards of conduct that embody respect, fairness, and justice;
- standards of conduct that prohibit the abuse of public office for the holder's own interest; and
- modes of behaviour by public functionaries that reflect the need for responsiveness and loyalty.

From the above paragraphs it can be said that the training function in public human resource management can ensure that those who are involved in the provision of services receive training in ethics. Only when direct service providers are trained in ethics, can it be expected of them to provide ethical service delivery.

2.3.1.3 Motivation

One of the chief reasons people work is to fulfill needs. Intrinsic or extrinsic aside, one of the major need of employees is compensation and benefits. However, good compensation and benefits are relative, subject to the expectation of the individual worker. Accordingly, Victor Vroom (in De Cenzo & Robbins 1996: 299) proposes that motivation is a function of the value of the effort an individual put in the performance of a task and the resultant rewards. Another useful theory of motivation is the equity theory of Stacey Adams (in De Cenzo & Robbins 1996: 299). Equity refers to the quality of being just or fair (French 1994: 109). Determining what is fair or unfair treatment is an ongoing challenge in public human resource management.

The public human resource management function of motivation does not concern itself with motivation theories only, but includes, according to De Cenzo and Robbins (1996: 12) job and organisational design. Hosmer (1991: 180-185) argues that organisational redesign may pose ethical dilemmas in that it may result in:-

- changes in corporate strategy, whereby the organisation embarks on restructuring (discussed later in this chapter) to reduce expenses. Restructuring may result in early retirement both voluntary and enforced;
- changes in the organisation structure, whereby a flattened structure is created with fewer layers between senior managers and operating personnel at the functional level. This may have the effect of reduced supervision in which scope for unethical conduct is created;
- changes in the managerial system which may adversely affect the managerial function of control. Control systems, or evaluation methods, compare planned outcomes and

actual results, and where the control function is deficient there can be no appropriate remedial steps taken in cases of unethical conduct;

- changes in the leadership style which may adversely affect the morale of subordinates. When subordinates are used to a participatory leadership style for example, a change to an autocratic style may still achieve the required level of productivity because of fear of the leader (Andres 1988: 240), but remain demotivated, dissatisfied and uncommitted. Such workers may become disloyal and dishonest to the organisation.

2.3.1.4 Maintenance

The objectives of the maintenance function in public human resource management are, according to De Cenzo and Robbins (1996: 19) "...to put into place activities that will help retain productive employees". Such activities include employee health and safety in the workplace, union-management relations, assurance of quality of work life and social responsibility and communication programmes (Strauss & Sayles 1980: 470-495; Geber *et al* 1995: 281-302; and De Cenzo 1996:19). These activities have ethical undertones. For example it would be wrong for an institution to expose workers to occupational health hazards, without taking adequate health precautions. The legal framework (RSA 1996) makes provision for a Bill of Rights and the Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995) grants employees the right to organise and to strike. It is therefore incumbent on public human resource functionaries to honour these legal provisions.

2.4 ASPECTS THAT MAY CAUSE ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The Public Service is earmarked for major changes to make it more representative of the South African community. In the paragraphs below the envisaged changes are considered from an ethical viewpoint as they apply to public human resource management. A bloated SA public service is described first.

2.4.1 Historical overview of the Public Service

Prior to the 1994 general election the Public Service consisted of eleven administrations in the Republic of South Africa, the "TBVC states" and the "self-governing territories" (RSA 1995: 43). In creating a unified and integrated public service, the Ministry of Public Service and Administration is therefore faced with what is described as "a bloated public service" (Mittner 1995: 10-11).

The Ministry of the Public Service and Administration has a formidable task in creating a leaner and cost-effective public service. Its brief includes the integration of 38 state departments (750 000 officials) from the "old" South Africa, 76 departments (210 000 officials) from the former TBVC states and 62 departments (270 000 officials) from the former self-governing states (Mittner 1995: 10). A total of 1 230 000 officials and 176 departments that must be consolidated into a single new public service to serve the entire country. It is not surprising, therefore, in view of the above statistics, that the public service has to be transformed. Aspects of the transformation of the public service and the concomitant ethical considerations are described in the sections below.

2.4.2 Transformation of the Public Service

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1987:112:8) describes the term "transformation" as a complete change in form, appearance, or nature. The Government regards transformation "...as a dynamic, focused, and relatively short-term process" (RSA 1995: 11). The objective in the transformation of the public service is to make it a "coherent, representative, competent, and democratic instrument for implementing government policies and meeting the needs of all South Africans" (RSA 1995: 11). This statement implies that prior to 1995 the public service lacked all of the above-mentioned qualities to operate efficiently, effectively and impartially.

The Ministry of Public Service and Administration recognises that the transformation of the Public Service will be a complex and controversial process ((RSA 1995: 11). In this sense it can be stated that the Ministry recognises that certain individual and group rights will be infringed upon. However, the endeavour is to strive for a transformed public service which is transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of all (RSA 1995: 14). The envisaged public service should be guided by an ethos of service provided in an unbiased and impartial manner, and geared towards development and reduction of poverty. Accordingly the mission is to create a public service that is people centred and people driven, characterised by equity, timeousness and a strong code of ethics (RSA 1995: 14). Another aspect that may be of great concern is the rationalisation of the public service. This aspect is discussed next.

2.4.3 Rationalising the Public Service

Sykes (1976: 926) describes the term "rationalise" as an attempt at making "the industry (institution) more efficient by scientifically reducing or eliminating waste of labour, time or material". Rationalising the public service is therefore aimed at making it more efficient.

The rationalisation of the Public Service started while the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (200 of 1993) was still in force and section 237 made provision thereof. In the rationalisation process the rights of employees could be infringed upon and this was covered by Section 33 which provided that no right was absolute. In the light of Section 33 and 237 the Minister of the Public Service and Administration could rationalise the public service with due consideration of Section 27 which included unfair labour practice. The above provision has been retained in the final South Africa Constitution, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996). See Schedule 6 (RSA 1996: 123).

Beukes (1995:11) points out that rationalisation is accompanied by appropriate redundancy packages. Hosmer (1991: 21) points out an ethical dimension to rationalisation and argues that "there is an obvious human cost to the people forced to leave". He argues that the older employees get the option of early retirement, while the younger ones get a few months' severance pay and some outplacement counselling. In the rationalisation process, the agonising nature of the decisions public human resource managers have to make confronts them on an almost daily basis.

Admittedly, there are national norms and standards for the rationalisation process (RSA 1995: 44) but ethical decisions on the human cost of those forced to leave still have to

be made. It must be remembered that ethics means going beyond what the law stipulates in doing what is "right" and "proper" and "just" in the decisions and actions that affect other people (Hosmer 1991: v). Senior management in the public sector is earmarked for restructuring. This aspect is discussed in the paragraphs below.

2.4.4 Restructuring the public service

Restructuring in the public service is aimed specifically at the senior management echelon (RSA 1995: 44). It is not clear from the White Paper (RSA 1995: 44-45) whether the aims of the restructuring is to make top management "flatter" or "longer". Mittners' (1995: 10-11) analysis of this situation, however, points to a significant increase in the quota of senior managers in the provincial governments. In fact, he points to the fact that "the Intergovernmental Forum decided in May 1995 to adopt a new formula which allowed a 17,5% increase in top management in the provinces" (Mittner 1995: 10). This increase would result in a longer managerial structure with more layers as more top posts are created.

It must be pointed out that the many layers created in top management may promote better control and ethical conduct because of a smaller span of control, but it remains contrary to the principles of rationalisation. One other aspect of the transformation process is representativeness. This aspect is discussed in the section below.

2.4.5 Representativeness in the Public Service

Representativeness is considered one of the cornerstones of a non-sexist, non-racist and democratic society (RSA 1995: 52). The Interim Constitution emphasised the need for a "public service broadly representative of the South African Community" (section 212 (2)(b) and Principle XXX of schedule 4).

In the past, that is prior to the 1994 general election, employment practices in the public sector excluded many Blacks, Indians, Coloured, women and disabled people from many positions of influence in the public service. The results of this exclusion has been an enormous waste in human potential (RSA 1995: 52).

In attempting to make the public service more representative of the South African community, the Public Service Commission proposes to (RSA 1995: 52):-

- Introduce laws which make discrimination on the basis of factors such as race, gender, and disability illegal;
- introduce reforms in the procedures for recruitment, selection, and promotion of staff in order to promote greater equal opportunity; and
- to promote changes in attitudes throughout the institution, especially at management level, to ensure commitment for the success of the changes.

In pursues of the above-mentioned proposals the Public Service Commission proposes to introduce the aspect of affirmative action. This aspect is discussed in the section below.

2.4.6 Affirmative action

The South African public service is in a process of transforming from the known past to a democratic dispensation. Public human resource management stands in the midst of this transformation and is confronted with principles and philosophies of the past and new value systems of the present Public Service. One problematic aspect confronting public human resource management is the aspect of affirmative action. Many definitions and explanations of the concept affirmative action have been presented by various authors in public human resource management). Klingner and Nalbandian (1985: 62) describe affirmative action as a mediating variable that affects the way a public institution recruits, hires, and promotes employees. Starling (1986: 481) describe it as an aggressive recruiting and selection institutional plan to remedy the results of past discrimination. Vil-Nkomo (in Hanekom and Thornhill 1995: 136) describes affirmative action in the South African context. He contends that it is an attempt to undo the policies of "separate but equal", an attempt to redress socio-economic inequalities and to enhance the quick democratisation of the country.

An analysis of the above descriptions of the concept affirmative action indicates that the concept refers to preferential treatment of groups in the society which had previously been discriminated against. Through affirmative action public human resource management functionaries would be required to reduce under-representation and to rectify the underutilisation of groups which had previously been discriminated against in the public sector. The question that arises is whether affirmative action is morally justifiable? Some arguments concerning affirmative action are subsequently presented in the following paragraphs.

2.4.6.1 Affirmative action and equity

“Equity denotes the spirit and the habit of fairness and justice and right dealing” (Frederickson, in Gildenhuis, 1993: 224). Equity principles of fairness, justice and right dealing do not support enforced sacrifices on an individual or groups, to be justified by their inherent benefits for the majority (Gildenhuis, 1993: 224). From this last statement, it can be stated that equity principles are diametrically opposed to the affirmative action principle of preferential treatment in the distribution of social resources. The functionaries responsible for public human resource management should therefore weigh the impact of programmes such as affirmative action on the welfare of individuals in respect of equity principles of fairness and justice. The injustices of the past, such as constitutionalised and institutionalised discrimination on the basis of race, sex and colour are recognised in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, and a foundation for a democratic and open society is being laid (See for examples RSA 1996: 1). Functionaries responsible for public human resource management should therefore exercise care in the implementation of affirmative action and ascertain that democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights are enhanced. Failure to observe the above-mentioned values could strengthen the belief that affirmative action is reversed discrimination by those adversely affected by affirmative action. Affirmative action as reversed discrimination receives attention in the subsection below.

2.4.6.2 Affirmative action as reversed discrimination

Many authors, for example Hayes and Reeves (1984: 275) Sowell, (in Andrews 1992: 40) Andrews (1992: 39 42) write negatively about affirmative action and equate it with reverse discrimination. Reverse discrimination refers to taking discriminatory steps in

order to atone for the discriminatory wrongs of the past. In the context of public human resource management and redistribution of resources and benefits such as the allocation of jobs, affirmative action refers to preferential employment of the victims of historic discrimination.

In South Africa, because of the legacy of apartheid in which employment practices in the Public Service was based on race, colour and sex, affirmative action is meant to redress the imbalances caused by such employment practice. (see for examples White Paper on Public Sector Transformation 1995). One of the solutions for this problem is that functionaries responsible for public human resource management should display sensitivities in the implementation of affirmative action. This aspect receives attention in the subsection below.

2.4.6.3 Ethical sensitivity in the implementation of affirmative action

In the above subsection an argument against affirmative action has been presented. The dilemma confronting public human resource management in the transformation of the public service is that although affirmative action may be viewed negatively, some form of remedial action in public human resource management is demanded by political office-bearers to undo the wrongs of the past in the public service.

The suggestion in this dissertation is for those in public human resource management to be sensitive to ethics in the implementation of affirmative action programmes. Ethical sensitivity implies the awareness of the ethical dimensions of the situation confronting those in public human resource management and resultant ethical action suitable for the situation. Implementation of affirmative action programmes refers to

transforming plans into actions for the achievement of the objectives of affirmative action.

Sensitivities to right or wrong, good or bad about affirmative action requires a pragmatic approach. In such an approach the focus is centered upon the actual consequences of a concept and the resultant action (Fox & Meyer, 1995: 100). In this way those involved in public human resource management can steer public employment towards positively recruiting, selecting and advancing qualified members of the historically disadvantaged groups. A pragmatic approach to affirmative action does not mean a quota system unrelated to a person's qualifications and job competence (Williams & Norris, in Wessels, 1992: 42). On a more positive note regarding affirmative action, Stahl (1983: 86) is of the opinion that to achieve a truly representative public service, the sensible solution lies in a long-range as well as immediate goals. He states the following:-

- accelerating the pace of broad cultural changes, sufficient to improve across the board educational opportunity and extend the range of occupational choices open to women and minorities;
- making certain that artificial barriers to entrance and advancement based on ethnics or sex grounds are totally eliminated in all corners of public service;
- maintaining active recruitment in all corners of public service;
- giving the benefit of the doubt temporarily to persons identified with heretofore - discriminated - against groups - if and only if - competing candidates are equally qualified and show equal potential; and
- insisting that the same expectations and standard of performance apply to women and minority appointees as they do to all others.

Viewed as described in this section, affirmative action should be pursued with a positive attitude as a necessary remedial aspect of transformation in public human resource management. In their fields, public human resource managers occupy leadership positions. It is also vital that this aspect be considered from an ethical viewpoint.

2.4.7 Leadership style

There are as many definitions of the concept leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. Leadership has, variously been defined in terms of traits, behaviour influence, role relationships, patterns of interaction, position, knowledge (Fox, et al, 1991: 92). For the purpose of this dissertation an acceptable definition is that by Kroon, who conceives of leadership as the human factor that leads an institution towards definitive predetermined objectives through the co-operative efforts of all the people in the institution (1993: 17). This definition emphasises co-operative effort and the human factor which for the purpose of this chapter implies value-centeredness. (NB. Different leadership styles for the promotion of ethics in public human resource management is dealt with in more detail in chapter 5)

Value-centered leadership is not static, but an ever-present state of consciousness which combines the past, present and future into a dynamic integrated and unfolding reality (Christie, et al, 1993: 126). Stahl (1983: 435) realised the value of value-centered leadership much earlier when he stated that for governments to be effective in modern society, a value-oriented leadership style is a prerequisite.

Translated into public human resource management in the transforming public service, value-centeredness implies awareness of the different value systems of the members

of different communities within an institution and of society in general. This ever-present awareness and a commitment to upholding these values will guide public human resource management in integrating past personnel tendencies with present public human resource requirements for the realisation of the future stable and efficient public service. Value-centered leadership as a human factor which influences behaviour is embedded in ethics, because ethics is first, foremost and finally concerned with human conduct. As indicated earlier, the achievement of value-centered leadership in public human resource management may require education and training programmes which accentuates ethics.

Gouws and Schwella (1998: 106-107) are of the opinion that the leadership dilemma during transformation should be addressed by adopting a transformational leadership approach. According to them transformational leadership is needed to handle the challenges of transformation, empower subordinates and establish new organisational culture (Gouws and Schwella 1998: 111). This belief is rooted in the description of transformational leadership as being characterised by "...vision, planing, communication, and creative action...around a set of values and beliefs ..." (Anderson, in Gouws and Schwella 1998: 111).

Another dilemma faced by public human resource managers is ethics of management. This aspect is discussed next.

2.4.8 Ethics of Management

In South Africa, what is written in this dissertation as public human resource management has always been studied as part of the six generic administrative processes. It is referred to as personnel administration and forms part of the study of

Public Administration. In the light of the above, it is essential to review briefly the influence public administration has had on personnel administration and the necessity to change it. This change can pose dilemmas for present-day public human resource managers. A short review of public administration in the South context follows.

2.4.8.1 Background

According to Roux (in Botes et al. 1995: 184) administration pertains to those generically institutionalised group activities. The institutionalised group of activities include policy-making, organising, financing, personnel, control and procedures and methods (Cloete 1994: 91-217). In the study of Public Administration in South Africa the institutionalised group activities have always been referred to as the generic administrative process (Botes 1982: 101-120)

Although the administrative process approach in the study of Public Administration has persisted for a long time in South Africa, Marais (in Gildenhuys 1988: 169-188) pointed out its disadvantages and advocated for its abandonment on the basis of substantive shortcomings. In Bayat and Meyer (1994: 109) Marais referred to the administrative process approach as the study of public administration without ethics. Marais argued that even the normative guidelines of political deference, public responsibility, efficiency and economy, administrative law and the vaguely defined social values, were never integrated in the administrative approach. The administrative approach is further referred to as " a close-ended" and an extreme oversimplification (Marais in Bayat and Meyer 1994: 108). Because of this close-endedness, values are rigidly prescribed and ethics are laid down and prescribed by the government in the form of laws (Marais in Bayat and Meyer 1994: 109). In the South African Public Service the laying down of ethics by government in the form of laws was evident from

Chapter five of the Public Service Act of 1984, entitled "Misconduct" which according to Marais (in Bayat and Meyer 1994: 109) prohibited the application of normative guidelines other than respect for political supremacy.

A more open-ended approach that is developmental and accountable is advocated (RSA 1996: 83). Bayat and Meyer (1994: 88) appeal for the need for ethics in the teaching and practice of public management, especially in public human resource management. Subsequently, ethical dilemmas faced by present-day public human resource managers are discussed in the following paragraphs

2.4.8.2 Ethics of management of human resources

The White Paper on Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (RSA 1994: 4) set South Africa firmly on transformation and development. The transformation process must ensure that society "... develops strong and stable democratic institutions and practices characterised by representativeness and participation - and addresses the moral and ethical development of society". Development of human resources and the ethics attached to it, such as equal rights for all workers, the right to strike, the right to information about employers, and discrimination were discussed in the previous pages.

The spirit of the RDP is strongly evident in the mission and vision of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (RSA 1995: 14). Ethical challenges facing the management of human resources in the public sector are listed in pages 17 and 18 (RSA 1995). Among these are lack of representativeness, centralised control and top-

down management, lack of accountability and transparency, and professional ethos and work ethic (RSA 1995: 17-18).

Salim Latib (in Fitzgerald et al. 1997: 134-152) discusses the above ethics of management of human resources. He stresses, among others, that public service accountability should be grounded in the concept of "social utility, in which an institution or individual should serve a useful social function relative to its/his cost" (Salim Latib, in Fitzgerald 1997: 137). He further caution, that " in a situation where antidemocratic ethos has developed over a long period of time... the spirit which pervades the conduct of public affairs may be quite undemocratic and unaccountable" (1997: 151). It can be stated, in the light of what has been written above in section 2.4.8.1, that present day managers of public human resources are confronted by situations described by Salim Latib.

To address transformation, development and the ethics concomitant thereof, Gouws and Schwella (1998: 106), mentioned earlier on, would advocate for transformational leadership. On the other hand, Fox and Maas (1997: 31) would advise for managerial entrepreneurs . They explain that managerial entrepreneurs can face the challenge of empowering and developing others, and cope better than others with "growth in transition"

2.5 Summary

This section covered the nature and scope of ethics in public human resource management. The theoretical and philosophical perspective was described, so to was ethics as a science. The two approaches to the study of ethics, namely, the deontological and teleological approaches were explained. The concepts principles,

norms, and values were described in the context of public human resource management. It was pointed out that shared values in public institutions could provide a basis for good management.

The scope of ethics was explained in terms of public human resource management goals of staffing, training and development, motivation and maintenance. Emphasis on training in ethics as a prerequisite for satisfying the principles and values of chapter 10 of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) was pointed out.

Because the public service is in a process of transformation, ethics was discussed as it applies to restructuring, rationalisation, representativeness, affirmative action and leadership. Ethics of management was discussed as the last aspect in this section.

In the next chapter aspects of public human resource management and ethics are discussed.

CHAPTER 3

3. ASPECTS OF MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ETHICS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Most organisations exist to produce goods, or provide services to clients, efficiently and effectively. Some other objectives are to provide employment and satisfaction to employees, benefits to the public, and to make profit from the goods produced and sold. To achieve these objectives organisations combine financial resources, physical resources, and human resources into efficient production systems. However, for this system to function effectively, a well-developed personnel system is needed to create and use an effective work force.

It can be pointed out that financial and physical resources in an organisation derive their dynamic character from human resources. Human resources are the only resources in an organisation that act voluntarily and react when acted upon. This aspect complicates the management of human resources especially considering that it is not confined to the human resource manager alone, but involves line and top managers as well.

Most experts agree that the basic functions all managers perform are; planning, organising, leading and controlling. Some of the specific activities involved in each function include:

- Planning, a management function concerned with setting institutional goals and objectives.
- Organising, a management function concerned with what jobs are to be

performed, by whom, who makes the decisions and the grouping of employees.

- Leading, a management function concerned with directing the work of others.
- Controlling, a management function concerned with monitoring activities and taking remedial steps.

In performing these functions, managers need certain skills, such as diagnosing skills; communication skills, decision-making skills and interpersonal skills, among others.

Over and above these management functions, managers of human resources must perform certain operative functions in their fields, e.g. procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance, separation and labour relations. Ethics become a central feature in management functions, because where judgement of human behaviour is an issue, subjectivity cannot be ruled out. These aspects will be elaborated upon in the sections that follow.

3.2 WHAT IS MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES?

In order to understand what human resource management is, it is necessary that different definitions and explanations by authors in the field are offered. It will be clear from some of the definitions that the term "human resource management" and "personnel management" are used interchangeably. However this should not be a source of confusion, as clarification will be offered in the section under historical overview of human resource management. Some definitions of the term human resource management are offered in the following paragraphs.

Flippo (1984: 5), defines personnel management as "...the planning, directing, organising and controlling of the procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance and separation of human resource to the end that individual, organisational, and societal objectives are accomplished".

Beer et al. (in Goss 1994: 13), describe human resource management as involving "...all management decisions and actions that affect the nature of the relationship between the organisation and its employees, ...".

French (1990:8), describes human resource management as the term that is increasingly used to refer to the philosophies, policies, procedures and practices related to the management of people within an organisation. He argues that the term personnel management - means the same thing.

Holley and Jennings (in Gerber - et al. 1995: 9), define the term human resource management as referring "...to activities, policies, beliefs and the general function that relates to employees or the personnel department".

From the above definitions it emerges that management of human resource is an integral part of the day to day managerial functions. Traditionally this implies that the management of human resources involves planning, organising, leading and controlling (Stoner 1982: 16-17). The function pertains to the management of people, referred to as employees within an organisation or institution. Human beings within an institution may be regarded as a resource just like other resources (e.g. financial and physical resources). Human beings in an institution are animate, proactive as well as reactive, have feelings, emotions and attitudes, and are capable of independent thought unlike financial and physical resources. This latter aspect lends dynamism in the

management of human resource as an intricate balancing act between achievement of organisational objectives and satisfaction of employee needs and expectations.

Human beings within organisations react to decisions and actions by management, and some of these actions and reactions may be interpreted as ethical or unethical. In order to have a broader perspective of ethics in the development of human resource management its historical development is subsequently reviewed in the paragraphs below.

3.3 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Human labour is as old as mankind, dating back to the times of Adam and Eve. But the formalisation of this labour emerged fairly recently and can be traced back to the time of the industrial revolution. Modern personnel management dates back only to the 1940s (Flippo 1984: 24-35).

Over a century ago managers applied the principles of interchangeable parts, transfer of skills from human to machine, and operational specialisation to equipment, layout and the general plant. This approach is called the mechanical approach towards the utilisation of personnel (Flippo 1984: 24). Related to this approach is the scientific management approach which emphasised standardising work and training workers to conform to organisation demands (Nigro and Nigro 1986: 316, Klingner and Nalbandian 1985: 37). In essence these approaches disregarded the human element in organisations and humans were treated purely as means of production. This led to the emergence of labour organisations to address management's indifference to the requirements of its personnel.

Labour organisations grew at a very slow pace through the nineteenth and early twentieth century because of factors such as: periodic economic depression, the public attitude which was generally opposed to labour organisations, government attitude which reflected public attitude or vice-versa, and the aggressive efforts of most managements' endeavours in actively combating the efforts towards unionisation (Flippo 1984: 27-29). In an attempt to counter unionism, management adopted paternalistic or social welfare approaches to demonstrate to employees that there was little need for an outside force, the union. This approach was based on strong moral grounds and took the form of company services, schools, and company housing (Gerber et al. 1995: 33).

In the late 1920s up to late in the 1930s, experiments conducted at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electrical Company, had a substantial impact on the field of personnel management (Schneier and Beatty 1978:11). Briefly, these experiments were conducted to study the effects of physical factors such as lighting and ventilation on worker productivity. But as time went on, it became increasingly apparent that other factors such as emotional state of the worker, his/her relationship with others and the kind of attention he/she received from superiors affected productivity more. These findings served as the basis for what has since come to be called the human relations approach and has provided personnel managers with a major jurisdiction in the field of personnel management. Here, for the first time, was real evidence that factors in the realm of employee attitudes and motivation did make a difference insofar as performance, productivity, and profits were concerned.

In the public sector specifically, personnel systems adopted are the offshoots of the prevalent political system. Cloete (1993: 22) for example, identifies the following

personnel systems as a result of specific political environments; (see also Rosenbloom 1993: 199-210, Stahl 1983: 34-38; and Klingner and Nalbandian 1985: 9-12).

- the aristocratic system which is encountered in states where the population is stratified into classes and public offices are the preserve of the aristocracy. In this system unethical conduct in the form of discrimination is practised against non-aristocrats;
- the democratic system where public officials are elected as was done to some extent in the United States of America. The system could be viewed as ethical in the sense that transparency in the form of elections is evident;
- the spoils system where the political party in power views public offices as spoils of the political war to be divided among its supporters. The spoils system could serve a good purpose, like it did in the U.S.A. But it could be stated that this system may result in all kinds of unfair practices in the sense that supporters of other political parties are discriminated against in public employment; and
- the merit system where it is accepted that public offices will be filled by the best qualified candidate regardless of colour, sex or political affiliation. The merit system could be regarded as ethically justifiable in the sense that public discrimination is practised. However, Klingner and Nalbandian (1985: 12-18) caution against the dilemma between merit systems and political responsiveness (elaborated upon in chapter 5). In organisations, the human resource functions are performed by a variety

of actors, and this may be a source of both confusion and conflict. In order to understand the role of each actor, it is essential to clarify their functions.

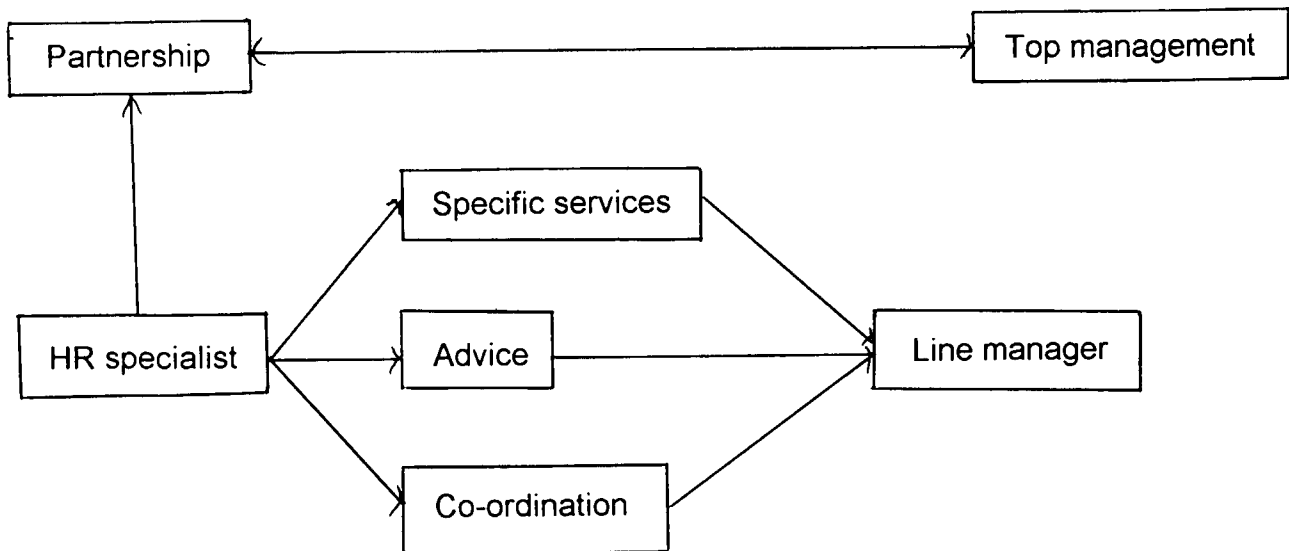
3.4 WHO PERFORMS THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTIONS?

French (1990:18) is of the opinion that all managers in most organisations, including first-line supervisors, are involved in human resource management. He points out that all managers participate in human resources functions such as staffing, performance appraisals, and compensation over and beyond their day-to-day functions. Pigors et al. (1969: 59) agree with the above statement and states that human resource management is the responsibility of top management, the responsibility of the human resource manager/specialist, and the responsibility of line managers. Although Ivancevich (1995: 11-13) agrees with the above, he never-the-less argues that two groups that are predominantly involved in human resource management activities, are the human resource managers/specialists and line managers.

From the foregoing, it should be clear that human resource management functions are not necessarily performed by human resource specialists alone. Human resource management strategies and decisions have to be integrated with, and be supportive to, the organisation's strategies and objectives. Swanepoel et al. (1998: 20) argues that for this purpose, the relationship between line managers and the human resource specialist is paramount. This aspect receives attention next.

3.4.1 Relationship between Human Resource Management and Line Management

According to Ivancevich (1995: 13) human resource management is a staff function, and supervision a line function. Swanepoel *et al.* (1998: 21) explain the two functions as follows: staff authority refers to the right to give advice and render services, while line authority refers to the right to give and enforce instructions. As a staff function, human resource management specialist render services, give advice and serve as partner and co-ordinator. Schematically, these may be represented as depicted in figure 3.1.



Source: Adapted from Byars and Rue 1994: 10

- Service

The objective of the service role is to support line functionaries in the efficient performance of their functions. These may include, among others, administering proficiency tests used for promotions, designing incentive pay, improving product quality and customer service., maintaining employee records, initial stages of employee orientation etc. (Milkovich and Boudreau 1994: 9, Byars and Rue 1994: 9). Although some of these services may be routine, some may be less so, for example, how to design effective training programmes, how to redesign work roles and organisations to fit changes in technology, or how to ensure that hiring and promotional decisions are free of discrimination (Milkovich and Boudreau 1994: 9). The competency with which these services are rendered may affect the efficiency of the institution

- Advice

Decisions on who to hire, promote, and train, how much to pay; how to link pay to performance; and to assist dissatisfied employees must be made with the objective of fairness in mind. Advising fair treatment and justice for employees is another role for the human resource specialist (Milkovich and Boudreau 1994: 10). A sense of inequity among employees may affect both their attitudes and behaviours and these may manifest in lack of commitment, absenteeism, loss of motivation, and lack of concern for the quality of service. By advocating fair, equitable treatment of employees, human

resource specialists provide a valuable service to other managers, especially line managers. Advice on fair disciplinary measures, the application of the principles of equal employment opportunities and affirmative action (Byars and Rue 1994:9), how attitudes affect job performance, and commitment and loyalty (Greenberg and Baron 1995: 162 - 95), perceived and real equitable treatment, provided by human resource specialist may go a long in the promotion of ethics in the public sector. It must be stated, however, that, as advisors, human resource specialists have no authority over line managers (Byars and Rue 1994: 9) and as a consequence there of, conflict may occur when line managers appear to ignore the suggestions and recommendations of the human resource specialists. To avoid this dilemma good relations between them has to be cultivated.

- Partnership

As partners, human resource specialists are part of the management team (Milkkovich and Boudreau 1994: 11; Ivancevich and Glueck 1983: 13). In this role they develop and implement human resource programmes that are linked with the organisations' objectives. As partners human resource specialists must have a hands - on knowledge of the objectives of the organisation. To this end human resource managers need to function successfully at three organisational levels:- operational, managerial, and strategic (long-term) (Schuler, in Ferris et al. 1995: 2). Human resource specialists contribute to the institution by providing cost-effective services and advices to employees and managers, and serving as partners. For this purpose they must be

proactive (Milkovich and Boudreau 1994: 11). In addition to reacting to problems when they occur, human resource specialists must anticipate and prevent issue from arising. In this context, it can be argued that human resources specialists are better placed for the promotion and maintenance of ethics within an institution.

- Coordinative function

The activities of the institution have to be coordinated to avoid duplication , and to ensure that personnel objectives, procedures and policies which have been approved are carried out by both line managers and personnel alike. Dessler (1994: 5) refer to this coordinative function as functional control. To ensure ethical conduct in the public service, a code of conduct is usually drawn as a guide to different relationships, for example, relationships with peers, with the public, and with political office-bearers. According to Byars an Rue (1994: 9) the coordination function of human resource specialists can involve performance appraisals and compensation matters.

It is clear from the foregoing that human resource management as a specialist staff function is expected to play an active role in the challenge of making an organisation both competitive and successful. Lobel (in Swanepoel et al 1998: 22) states that these specialists should recognise that, like line managers, they are accountable for results. Line managers are authorised to direct the work of subordinates and are responsible for accomplishing the institutions' goals (Desler 1994:4). For an institution to achieve its objectives effectively, the purpose of establishing an effective human resource

department has to be appreciated. This aspect is elaborated upon in the next paragraphs.

3.4.2 Purpose of the management of human resources

Werther and Davis (1996:8) state that, "... the purpose of human resource management is to improve the productive contribution of people to the organisation in ways that are strategically, ethically, and socially responsive". Ethics, then, becomes an integral part of human resource management. De Cenzo and Robbins (1996:120) support this statement and they state that "...human resource management faces many *ethical* dilemmas". It is not surprising, therefore, that the American Society for Human Resource Management has a code of ethics for all its members which is aimed at promoting and maintaining the highest standard of personal conduct and professional standards among its members (Ivancevich 1995: 12). The main concern is that only humans can and are able to behave and act ethically or unethically. Hence the management of people should be undertaken in such a way that their actions promote, and are consistent with ethical requirements (See for example Werther and Davis 1996: 9). In attaining the above purposes, human resource specialists have to cultivate a good working relationship hand in hand with line managers in the execution of their functional activities. This last statement suggests that there should be a close working relationship between the human resources specialist (staff function) and the line manager (line function) as explained in section 3.4.1. However the success of an institution depends to a large degree on the quality of its personnel, and this also

depend on how functional activities by human resources specialists are carried out. Functional activities in human resource management are discussed next.

3.5 FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE MANAGEMENT HUMAN RESOURCES

It was mentioned in the sections above that human resource management is part and parcel of general management activities in public institutions and include all management functions. Yet a comprehensive definition of human resource management also includes the operative functions in the field. Flippo (1984: 4) describes these as procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance and separation, these are subsequently discussed in the paragraphs below.

3.5.1 Human Resources Provisioning (Procurement)

People do not just find themselves working for organisations, they are recruited, subjected to selection criteria before being judged suitable to fill the vacant posts. Even before they are recruited, the organisational manpower requirements are determined and the existing posts are analysed. This process is referred to as human resource provisioning. The various steps in human resource provisioning are discussed next.

3.5.1.1 Job analysis

Andrews (1996: 71) describes job analysis as referring "...on the one hand to a process which determines what the job involves, that is, the tasks, job circumstances, duties and responsibilities involved in the specific work. On the other hand, job analysis refers to the process which determines what sort of individual can do a specific work, that is, the experience, training and skills which are required of a specific worker". Jackson and Musselman (in Gerber et al. 1995: 84) content that job analysis is "... the process of determining, by observation and study, pertinent information about the nature of a specific job". Graham and Bennet (1995:170) define job analysis as "... the process by which a description of the job is compiled".

From the above definitions, it can be concluded that job analysis involves a detailed study of the content of the job to provide a description of the skills, knowledge and personal qualities needed to fill that role. According to Hartley and Marshall (1995: 274) job analysis covers not only the scope of the job itself, but also the context in which it is done. They also point out pitfalls to be avoided, such as taking the easy-way out by looking at what the current jobholder does rather than what the job itself is and how it should be done. This could be the source of both inaccuracy and potential bias and could lead to stereotyping. According to Hodgets and Krock (in Cheminais et al. 1998: 120), job analysis provides the cornerstone of the employment function and links with the overall human resource plan, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.5.1.2 Human resource planning

Graham and Bennet (1995: 163) define human resource planning as "... an attempt to forecast how many and what kind of employees will be required in the future, and to what extent this demand is likely to be met". To this definition Werther and Davis (1996: 155) add that human resource planning is a systematic forecast of an organisation's future demand for the supply of employees. Milkovich and Boudreav (in Gerber et al. 1995: 94) argue that human resource planning has to be understood as "...the process that estimates the future demands for employees, both in quality and quantity, compares the expected demand with current work force, and determines the employee shortages and surpluses based on the organisations strategies and objectives".

These definitions indicate that human resource planning involves a series of activities which may be described as: analysing the existing human resources, forecasting future needs, and planning to provide for these needs. According to Cheminais et al. (1998: 4-5), human resource planning should be meshed with the strategic planning of public organisations. In this sense it will link with the broader strategies of the organisation and ensure the co-ordination of human resource management activities. With job analysis completed, and the human resource demand determined, the organisation is then in a position to embark on recruitment, an aspect which is discussed next.

3.5.1.3 Personnel recruitment

Rosenbloom (1993: 224) defines recruitment as the process of encouraging individuals to apply for vacant posts in an organisation. Megginson (1985:165) describes recruitment as "...the term applied to that phase of personnel management that

involves reaching out and attracting a supply of people from which to select qualified candidates for job vacancies”.

Andrews (1996: 94) describes recruitment as referring “...to the personnel function which is carried out to obtain sufficient applicants for vacant positions, so that a differentiation may be made between applicants who possess the qualifications required for a specific position and those who do not”. It can be concluded from the above definitions that recruitment serves as a means to selection. The purpose of recruitment is to attract a pool of candidates from which to select the qualified number to fill the vacant positions. Recruitment may be undertaken either passively or actively. Rosenbloom (1993: 224) points out that in general, passive recruitment failed to attract personnel with the necessary talent in the past, hence the resort to active recruitment. Recruitment sources may be both internal and external (Cheminais et al. 1998:132-133). Present employees often form the most important internal source of recruitment, while external sources may be the mass media, public and private sector agencies, educational institutions, labour unions, as well as professional and technical associations (Schwella et al. 1996: 40). Once candidates have been recruited, the selection process is undertaken.

3.5.1.4 Selection

Selection is defined by Livy (in Cheminais et al. 1998: 44) as “... a process of job matching, and must begin with a description of the jobs to be done and the identification of personal qualities necessary for the field of candidates by progressively eliminating those who do not measure up to the specification”. It can be inferred from this definition that selection involves a choice from the attracted pool of applicants of the most suitable candidate. Underlying this choice is the assumption that the

individual will be able to function successfully in the post (Cheminais et al. 1998: 44). From the above, it can also be concluded that selection is judgemental and subjective, and is thus subject to errors. This last statement necessitates that the candidate be placed on a probationary period to further determine the job matching process (Cloete 1993: 121). The selection process is conducted through the following stages (Cloete 1993: 115-121, Andrews 1996: 107-124, Schwella et al. 1996: 42-44).

□ Short-listing, which consist of the perusal of the application form, preliminary interviews, preliminary sifting and selection tests. At this stage all applications which do not meet the requirements of the post are discarded. Preliminary interviews are designed to gather more information about the candidates and to eliminate those whose personal dispositions are unacceptable (Cheminais et al. 1998: 44).

□ Personal interviews, which are normally conducted by a selection panel. At this stage the panel evaluates the candidates through structured, semi-structured or unstructured list of questions. Personal interviews serve as the final and conclusive measurement of acceptability or unacceptability of a candidate. However, despite its popularity, research shows that the selection interview is a poor selection instrument (Hartley and Marshall 1995: 278). According to Megginson (1985: 204) and Wherther and Davis (1996: 225) its popularity stems from its flexibility. It can be used for unskilled, skilled, managerial and staff employees. It also allows a two-way exchange of information in the sense that the interviewers learn about the candidate, and the candidate learns about the employer.

□ Placement and the probationary period serve as the last stage in the selection process. Once the applicant has been selected he/she is placed in the post applied for a period termed the probationary period. According to Andrews (1996:

126), the purpose of a probationary period is to observe the adaptation of the employee in his/her new position, and to evaluate the quality of his/her work.

The responsibilities of line and staff managers in human resource provisioning are depicted by Casio (1995: 49) as follows:

- line managers: responsible for providing data for job analysis and required minimum qualifications, interviewing candidates and making final decisions on entry-level hires and promotions;
- staff managers: responsible for job analysis, advertising of posts, written tests, compliance with legal requirements, background investigations, reference checks and physical examinations

There is a need for the above responsibilities to certify ethical requirements. Dessler (1994: 53-54) for example, argue that all forms of discrimination such as "male or female" wanted have to be avoided during recruitment. Educational requirements which virtually exclude certain groups or can be shown not to be job-related may be held illegal and unethical. Reference to physical characteristics, such as height, weight, colour and sex which may have adverse impact on certain ethnic groups, race or women may be held illegal and unethical. He also points out that reference to arrest records is invalid as a predictor of job performance and would therefore be unethical to exclude someone on this basis. Cascio (1991: 442) adds to the above list of ethical requirements, and contents that personal decisions to select, promote or to train are major events in individuals' careers, and have to be undertaken fairly, with concern for individual rights.

Once personnel has been recruited and selected, and are thus members of the organisation, there arise the need to train and develop them. This aspect receives attention in the paragraphs below.

3.5.2 Training and Development

Competent and motivated employees can be considered an important asset in any organisation. However, the ability to delivering services of high quality of such employees should not be taken for granted, and therefore employers should ensure that their employees are trained and developed on a continuous basis. Experts differentiate between education, training and development. Subsequently, some definitions are presented to highlight the differences between these concepts.

Megginson (1985:229) describes education as a process of "...learning several subjects and acquiring broad, generalised knowledge". Nel (in Gerber et al. 1995: 461) describes training as "...a deliberate effort oriented toward improvements relevant to future jobs". In contrast to the above two concepts, employee development is a broad term which relates to training, education and other intentional or unintentional learning and include general growth through learning (Swanepoel et al. 1998: 479).

It appears from the foregoing that a meaningful differentiation can be made between the three concepts. The emphasis in education is broad, generalised knowledge, whereas in training it is specific, aimed at a specific purpose. Development refers to growth through learning. In practice, though, the distinction is often blurred, mainly because efforts to upgrade present skills automatically improves performance in future jobs. As a result, because in practice it is always not easy to determine where training

ends and where development begins, these will be discussed simultaneously. Human resource training and development will now be discussed with reference to the following aspects induction training, technical training and development.

3.5.2.1 Induction training

Hall and Goodale (in Gerber *et al.* 1995: 156) define induction training as "... the process through which a new employee learns how to function efficiently within a new organisational culture by obtaining the information, values and behavioural skills associated with his or her new role in the organisation". It must be explained that "new employees" encompasses a new recruit, a transferred employee, and a promoted employee.

According to Strauss and Sayles (1980: 394) the aim of induction training is to familiarise the employee with the tasks he/she will be expected to perform, introduce him/her to fellow workers, provide information about company rules and personnel procedures, and provide them with ideas of how their jobs fit into the total operation. This process is aimed at inculcating positive work attitudes and improve productivity. It is realised that haste and insensitivity at this early stage may spawn unnecessary personnel problems later. Accordingly, induction training has to be well-planned and systematically executed. Such planned, systematic, and purposeful induction programmes usually have three components, namely (Botes 1994: 114, Cheminais *et al.* 1998: 69):

- The pre-commencement phase which actually starts with notification of appointment. Good first impressions have to be created from the start. For example,

the new recruit has to be given the feeling that the organisation is looking forward to his/her arrival. Cheminais *et al.* (1998:69) point to the importance of the information contained in the letter of appointment and mentions conditions of service, details relating to where, when, and to whom he/she should report.

□ The commencement phase, a stage at which the newcomer is welcomed to the organisation. This phase last from the time he/she reports for duty until he/she feels at ease in the post. The incumbent is familiarised with the organisation, its mission, vision, the department or section where he/she will be working, and introduced to superiors and colleagues.

□ The sustained induction phase is an ongoing process in which functional training takes place.

Sloane (in Cheminais 1998: 68) explains that the nature and extent of the induction programme is influenced by many factors and may differ from situation to situation. Some of the factors are: the number of employees to be inducted, their background in terms of education and experience, their level of appointment, that is, technical or managerial, available financial resources, and the time allocated by top management for induction. As stated before, induction training is aimed at familiarising the incumbent of the post with the organisational objectives. Such objectives need to be achieved efficiently and effectively. This, however, requires further training and depending on the level of appointment, such training may be divided into technical and management training.

Induction training is important from an ethical point of view. Swanepoel *et al.* (1998: 326) reiterate the importance of the expression "first impression last", and they point to

the dangers of negative disposition of an employee towards an institution during his/her first weeks or months. This may have a lasting influence on the employee's attitude towards the public institution in the long term. The opposite is also usually true. Both line and staff managers have leading roles to play at the induction phase. For example Dessler (1994: 8) points to the role of the line managers as that of "...orienting employees with details regarding the company and the job and instructing and training new employees. Staff managers, on the other hand, prepare training manuals and orientation documents and outlines. It is important to recognise that new employees need information on (i) institutional standards, traditions and policies of the institution; (ii) expected social behaviour within the institution; and (iii) information on the technical aspects of the job. This suggests, according to Cascio (1995: 267) two levels of orientation: institutional, by a human resource representative, and departmental, by a line manager.

3.5.2.2 Technical training

According to Bartol and Martin (1991: 420) technical training helps the incumbent of a position to learn various aspects of his/her job and provides specialised knowledge and skills that enhances productivity. Such training does not take place in a vacuum, but is a result of training needs analysis at both the operational and individual level (Fisher et al. 1990: 323-325). At these levels of needs assessment it is possible to determine the required skills (operational level) required to perform a job, and whether the incumbent of a post possess such skills (individual level).

Once training needs have been identified, the next step is to develop a training programme to achieve the objectives, and to select an appropriate training method. Fisher et al. (1990: 326) point out that the selection of a training method must be

consistent with learning principles. These he lists as :- condition of practice, knowledge of results, overcoming interference, transfer of training and adult learning principles. (For more on learning principles please refer:- (McCormic and Ilgen 1980: 229-233, Fisher et al. 1990: 327 - 331, Gerber et al. 1995: 482-486).

Various training methods for non-management employees are available in human resource management. These range from training within the organisation and outside the organisation (Marx 1986: 153-155). On-the-job training, which takes place while the employee is carrying out his/her work. According to Fisher et al. (1990:432) this is a cost-effective method in terms of facilities and the costs of a full-time trainer. Transfer of training to the job is maximised because the training setting is also the performance setting and, because trainees see the relevancy of training and the job, this serves to motivate them. Off-the-job training refers to a situation where employees are taken away from the workplace for training (Marx 1986: 154). Outside training is training arranged with outside organisations, such as universities, technikons, trade, and professional associations (McCormic and Ilgen 1980: 234).

Technical training is aimed at improving productivity and quality through the improvement of skills, but it is only one facet of the factors that influences productivity and quality. It would therefore be unethical to subject employees to such training if in fact it is factors such as motivation, job design, and organisational structures that affect productivity and quality adversely. In terms of ethics, Rosouw and Zager (1994: 333) point out that many employers have a tendency of describing some categories of employees as "functional illiterates". These are considered poor risk for technical training. They argue that recent research evidence opens new options for training current and potential employees whose talents would otherwise be wasted. The above

statement also suggest that millions of such employees were excluded from such training in the past. Within an institution, training should be offered to all employees.

The importance of training in the South African public sector was highlighted at the workshop on transforming training in the public sector held on 27-28 March 1996, at Midrand, Johannesburg. Some of the papers advocated for a paradigm shift in training in terms of content and method (Schwella 1996), practical approaches to public sector training based on competency (Ballard 1996), preparing personnel for diversity, clarification of authority and job specification, and the creation of training accountability centres (Hilliard and Wissink 1996).

The South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) is regarded as a single most important statutory body with respect to training in the public sector. It provides line-function and management training at all levels of the public service (Mbere 1996: 5, RSA 1997: 57). According to Human (1991: 333) people training is crucial in South Africa. Not only managers need to be trained, but subordinates as well, and she points out that the latter is a line responsibility. Such training should address values, attitudes, as well as behaviours at both managerial and operational level. Training alone is no guarantee that human beings will operate at the best of their ability in pursued of organisational goals. Development, discussed next, is another aspect which merits attention.

3.5.2.3 Development

Although managers also undergo training, certain literature on management often creates confusion by referring to this training as management development (e.g. Fisher et al. 1990: 331). Sometimes it is even referred to as organisational

development (Graham and Bennet 1995: 249), which refers to a planned attempt to improve the effectiveness of an organisation. The Glosary of Training Terms (in Graham and Bennet 1995: 249) defines management development as follows: "A systematic process of development of effective managers at all levels to meet the requirements of an organisation, involving an analysis of the present and future management requirements, assessing the existing and potential skills of managers and devising the best means for their development to meet these requirements".

As can be seen, the above definition describes development in terms of management only, and can be described as narrow. The assumption is that the development of managers will lead to institutional success in terms of effective and efficient delivery of goods and services. This can be misleading, as goods and services are delivered by subordinates who are affected by a variety of factors in their work situations such as peer group pressure, satisfaction dissatisfaction, work related attitudes, over and above management by highly developed managers. Development is for the people (Coetzee 1989:1) implies that in work situations all employees must be developed. The objective of development must be to raise the level of living standards (Streeten, in Coetzee 1999: 2) of all employees and not only of managers, and should provide all employees with the opportunity to develop their potential. This aspect is particularly pertinent in the South African public sector, especially when affirmative action employees are taken into account. Cheminais *et al.* (1998: 57) views affirmative action as a necessary step in the transformation of the public sector in South Africa, in the sense that it promotes representativeness and compatibility with the needs and culture of the public that it is suppose to serve. They further argue that such employees should be selected on the basis of potential rather than qualification and experience only, and should then be trained and developed to ensure that they are empowered to attain their full potential.

In the light of the above arguments, Coetzee's (1989:405-406) description of development is most appropriate. He states that "...development must contribute directly to the alleviation of poverty, must contribute to an increase in employment opportunities, and it must serve to lessen the gross inequality in income which normally exists". In a sense Lovell (1994: 11) supports this argument when he points out that human resource specialists should embrace the notion of human resource development, the need to change leadership styles in order to transform organisations and empower its employees, and work towards changing attitudes and behaviour within the culture in which people work. Notwithstanding the fact that institutions have ethical responsibilities (Wheelen and Hunger 1995: 73) of following the generally held beliefs about how people should act and behave in society, by developing all of its employees, the institution will be contributing, albeit in a small way, to the development of society at large. Another aspect meriting human resource management consideration is human resource motivation. This aspect will now be discussed.

3.5.3 Motivation

To understand what motivation is, some definitions are presented.

Bartol and Martin (1991:445) defines motivation as "...the force that energizes behaviour, gives direction to behaviour, and underlies the tendency to persist". Werther and Davis (1996: 501) describe it as "...a person's drive to take action because that person wants to do so". According to Megginson (1985: 341) managerial motivation is the process by which managers attempt to bring the best performance of their employees and attempt to direct their behaviour towards achieving personal and organisational goals. French (1990: 122) defines motivation "...as the desire and willingness of a person to expend effort to reach a particular goal or outcome".

From the above definitions it can be concluded that motivation pertains to an inner force, drive, desire, and willingness to work towards an objective. Megginson's definition links management to motivation and performance, and accordingly argues that it is the manager's job to motivate employees towards achieving both personal and organisational goals.

There is no single, generally accepted theory of what motivates people, hence the existence of several contemporary theories on motivation. French (1990: 122) argue that reviewing these theories can be helpful to human resource managers in the sense that enhancing motivation can lead to improved performance and greater organisational performance. Contemporary motivational theories are subsequently reviewed underneath (French 1990, Rosenbloom 1993, Dessler 1981).

- Maslow's needs hierarchy theory

According to Maslow's needs hierarchy, individuals are motivated by the desire to fulfill particular needs that are shared by all people. These include psychological needs, security or safety needs, belonging and affection needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs. According to Maslow, these needs emerge in a particular order and the needs at the lower level must be satisfied before higher order needs are satisfied.

- Herzberg motivation - hygiene theory

Herzberg developed a theory of motivation based on factors that produce job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. According to this theory, key factors in motivation and

satisfaction are identified as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and advancement. They are called motivators. The other group of factors, the hygiene factors, include company policy, supervision, salary, working conditions and interpersonal relations with supervisor. According to Herzberg if hygiene factors are absent or negative dissatisfaction results.

- Adam's Equity theory

Equity refers to the quality of being just or fair. According to this theory employees hold certain beliefs about the output they get from their jobs and the inputs they bring to bear in order to obtain certain outputs (McCormic and Ilgen 1981: 270). The outputs of a job include actual pay, fringe benefits, status, and other intrinsic benefits in the job.

- Vroom's Expectancy theory

According to this theory, motivation is a function of an individual's expectancy. Employees are decision makers and choose alternatives that are advantageous to them with certain expectations as outcomes or rewards (McCormic and Ilgen 1981: 279). In motivating personnel, human resource managers may consider certain aspects related to the work situation. These aspects are pay plans, incentives, benefits and security, and commitment and loyalty. These will subsequently be discussed in the paragraphs below.

3.5.3.1 Pay plans

In the public sector, human resource management is undertaken within a political milieu. As the result of the element of politics the adoption of some of the flexible

personnel practices of the private sector cannot be applied to the public sector (Nigro and Nigro 1986: 112). Stahl (1983: 313) points out that theoretically, the limit to what the government can spend in salaries and wages is determined by the state of the taxpayer's ability to pay tax. However, remuneration remains a dominant condition of service of public officials (Cloete 1993: 174) and to be perceived as ethical from both the equity and expectancy theories of motivation it has to be perceived as fair and just by its recipient. In the private sector flexible pay plans based on the principles of payment by results may be implemented. According to Graham and Bennet (1995: 291) payment by results requires that a standard be set for each job expressed either as a quantity produced per unit of time or as the time taken to do the job, and a bonus is payable when the standard is exceeded. Payment by results of course requires a steady flow of measurable work, the pace of which is within the control of the worker, aspects which are hard to come by in the public sector because most of the work is nonquantifiable. Steers *et al.* (1996:508) refer to the above tendency, as "...fascination with objective criterion" which may be unethical in public human resource management.

3.5.3.2 Incentives

According to Andrews (1996: 173) an incentive compensation system is designed to encourage human resources to greater productivity. French (1990: 463) agrees with Andrews, and he explains that incentive plans provide financial and non-financial rewards to employees who make substantial contributions to organisational effectiveness. Common to all incentive plans is to encourage personnel to achieve specific organisational goals such as increasing profit, lowering cost, raising productivity, improving product quality and rendering quality service. As Megginson (1985: 467) points out, time work or salary tends to perform the equity function, and

incentive wages, tends to perform the motivation function. In this sense, Steers *et al.* (1996: 509) argue for emphasis on efficiency rather than morality and equity.

A variety of incentive plans are available for both private and public sector employees at both production and management levels. These include according to Dessler (1981: 375-387), Stahl (1983: 320-323), and French (1990: 463-474), individual incentive plans, group incentive plans, merit-pay plans, and the bonus plan.

Another aspect to consider in motivation is benefits of employees. This aspect is dealt with next.

3.5.3.3 Benefits

In addition to compensation in the form of wages and salaries, it is normal practice for organisations to provide various services known as employee benefits. French (1990: 497-500) points out that employee benefits are important for two reasons, first, benefits are important to the well-being and security of the employee, second, benefits can be helpful in recruiting and retaining qualified employees. Andrews (1996: 274-287) discusses a variety of employee benefits such as insurance, payment during absence from work, and perquisites.

In these times of rapid change and slimmer organisations, the resultant effect may be the demise of traditional forms of career path (Burnes 1996: 86), with employees hopping from one job to the other. The emphasis then shifts to employability, and benefits as a means of retaining good employees may well loose out in the end. Burnes (1995: 87) further points out that highly marketable individuals see their careers in terms of many different jobs and organisations they have been associated

with. It is also doubtful in the light of Burnes argument, if employee benefits can serve as a motivational tool in addition to retentivity. The endeavour in human resource management is also to make employees committed to the organisation and its goals. This aspect receives attention below.

3.5.3.4 Commitment and loyalty

Coopey and Hartley (in Legge 1995: 180) define commitment as "...affective attachment and identification with the organisation". Porter et al. (in Legge 1995: 180) describe commitment as "... the relative strenght of the individual's involvement with, and in, a particular organiation."

It is clear from the two definitions above that commitment of employees to organisational values, beliefs, and culture depends on the individual employee him/herself. It can also be concluded that commitment is linked with attitudes and behaviour of the individual employee. Hollinshead and Leat (1995: 19-20) argue that human resource managers can enhance commitment of employees to organisations by "establishing systems of work which foster high commitment". They suggest a paradigm shift in job design that includes a broad definition of jobs, employee rotation, pay for skills mastered, emphasis on self or peer supervision, removal of status differentials, and allowing substantial employee influence and participation. Such paradigm shift in job design may result in job satisfaction and ultimately improved productivity. Failure to consider the above may result in unethical behaviours such as increased turnover, absenteeism, dissatisfaction and sabotage (Steers et al. 1996: 565). According to Lawler (in Steers et al. 1996: 571) commitment and loyalty of employees requires that an institution places information, power, knowledge, and reqards in the hands of individuals who actually performs the work. The above may be

understood as concerning open communication channels, assigning of responsibility, adequate training, and pay plans that are related to performance.

It is also important that human resource is maintained well in terms of safety and health. This aspect is discussed in the paragraphs below.

3.5.4 Human Resource Maintenance

Having procured, trained, developed, motivated and compensated employees, employers must endeavour to maintain the effective work force that has been assembled. Special effort must be made through communication and counselling to maintain employee attitudes and physical conditions (Flipppo 1984: 495).

French (1990: 620) points out that the health and safety management process is aimed at ensuring the physical well-being of employees. Andrews (1996: 359) support this statement, but adds that health should be understood as including both bodily and mental welfare.

Management involvement in health and safety and further ongoing development of the employees represents an organisation's response to a number of influences. French (1990: 620) lists these as government intervention, union pressure, the general public, but contents that the most basic is a sense of social and humanitarian responsibility which is an ethical responsibility on the part of employers.

According to Klingner and Nalbandian (1985: 280) research evidence supports the notion that healthy employees are happier and better workers. Inference can therefore be made from the last statement that productivity will be affected either positively or

negatively depending on the health of the workers. The same can be said about motivation. Megginson (1985: 411) concludes that there is, however, a need "to balance the human and material benefits" in health and safety management. The human and material benefits of health and safety have to be balanced against the costs involved, taking into consideration scarce resources.

As mentioned before, government intervenes in the work situation through legislation. This intervention is to protect both the employer and employee. It can thus be said that human resource management takes place within the legal framework imposed by government. This aspect is dealt with in the section below.

3.5.5 Human Resources and the Legal Framework

Human resource management does not take place in a vacuum. It takes place within a complexity of environments both within and outside the organisation. These environments have direct and indirect impacts on how human resource management is carried out. For example it will be futile on the part of human resource managers to plan for the recruitment and selection of highly skilled and qualified personnel if no such candidates are available in the labour market. Certain government legislation impose constraints on the activities of human resource managers and forces them to consider ethical requirements. Labour movements also have an influence on the treatment of their members within organisations.

Bearing the above in mind, and the fact that the responsibility for human resource management activities rests with all managers (Wherther and Davis 1996: 12) it is not surprising that this aspect of management has received and continues to receive, at

both academic and practitioner's level, locally and internationally, much attention (Hollinshead and Leat 1995: 3-39).

Through the enforcement of labour laws, governments have a direct and immediate impact on human resource managers' functions (Wherther and Davis 1996: 45). Because employers and employees are engaged in a power struggle which may result in unethical behaviours (Schwella et al 1996: 81) governments intervene through imposing of labour legislation which spells out the rights of each party (Botes 1994: 240-244; Gerber et al. 1995: 396 - 399). Bendix (1993: 17) views the establishment of this legal framework as being necessary for two reasons, namely: first, because of the inequality of the parties involved, and second, because the parties involved may engage in destructive and unethical practices to the detriment of society as a whole. (Legislation pertaining to the public sector are dealt with in chapter 5 of this dissertation).

The labour relationship may be described as a tripartite relationship involving the state, employers and employees. The role of the state may be described as "controversial" because its position is that of an equal partner and regulator (Bendix 1993: 10). However, this situation has to be accepted without question, because the state exists for the promotion of the general welfare of society (Botes et al. 1996: 3) it acts as a non-profit employer (Bendix 1993: 11), and prevents wrong practices and unethical conduct by all parties in the labour relationship.

To increase their bargaining power, employees form and join trade unions so that they can confront management as a united force (Bendix 1993: 77). This aspect has become necessary for employees to avoid unethical practices such as exploitations by

employers because in most instances the interests of employers and those of employees may not dovetail (Bendix 1993: 77).

The promotion of ethics in the management of people (human resource) remains paramount to human resource specialists. In the light of the above statement it is worthwhile to review in general what different authors have written on the subject..

3.6 ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Kerr (in Crainer 1995: 1011) makes the point that after the financial and other scandals of the 1980's, ethics has become a feature on management development programmes and an aspect of growing importance for all types of managers. He further states that managers have to be acquainted with ethical reasoning and that organisational structures and practices should be geared for the promotion of ethics. Stahl (1983: 382) argue that ethics are a part of competence and of democracy. Bendix (1993: 17) laments that "...too little attention is paid to a system of ethics as regulator of the labour relationship". Rosenbloom (1993: 520 - 524) reviews the managerial perspective to accountability and ethics and concludes that it emphasises, among other, responsibility, loyalty, discipline, and internal audit. French (1990: 269) argue that of all selection devices in human resource management, tests face the most intense ethical challenges. Because of the importance of ethics in human resource management, Andrews (1996: 34-40) lists a number of measures that can be applied in order to maintain the actions of public official on a high ethical plane. Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1997: 39) argue that in future greater demands in the workplace will place greater emphasis on ethical conduct.

It can be concluded from the above arguments that managerial ethics is, and will in the future be an important aspect of management. Human resource management, as management of an animate production factor, will, in the future, be in the forefront on ethics in organisations.

During the human resource provisioning, ethics could feature prominently during recruitment, testing, selection, and interviewing where nepotism could be experienced. With aspects such as affirmative action, representivity, and gender issues clouding personnel provisioning it can be expected that ethics will be dominant at this stage. Recruitment advertisements which make reference to certain personal characteristics or race should be avoided, as they can be interpreted as discriminatory. It is also doubtful whether it is possible to design a culture-free selection test, hence test results have to be interpreted with the culture of the candidate in mind. Mechanisms to avoid nepotism in selections have to be devised, for example, outsourcing such activities to neutral agencies such as consultants. In the South African public sector, it is essential to reconcile the principles of affirmative action (e.g. preferential treatment of previously disadvantaged groups) with those of equal employment opportunities (e.g. selections based on qualifications and experiences only). The ability to assess potential for development becomes crucial for public human resource managers in reconciling these principles. All categories of employees in the public sector need to be given the opportunity to develop to realise their full potential.

Motivation is aimed at improving productivity in an organisation through instilling commitment, loyalty and developing positive attitudes. These are linked to values such as organisational culture, organisational climate, and job design. These are important ethical values which merit strong consideration in motivating human resources (Jones 1994: 193). The development of positive work-related attitudes has to be approached

in a holistic manner. A mere concentration on developing positive attitudes while neglecting organisational culture, organisation climate, job design and management style, to name but a few, is likely to fall short of achieving the required commitment and loyalty from employees.

A subversion of legal prescriptions on health and safety of employees may be considered both illegal and unethical. Rosenbloom (1993: 577) explains that subversion can be the result of unilateral or transactional corruption for private gain, and can also be due to discontent with one's position in the work situation. Public human resource managers have to keep abreast of the latest amendments to legislation relevant to their field and advise line managers accordingly

3.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter human resource management has been defined and explained. Its historical development was discussed at length, and the various aspects covered in Human Resource Management such as human resource provisioning, human resource training, and development, motivation, maintenance, safety and health, and its legal frame fully discussed. Various authors were quoted in support of the fact that ethics are part of management, and the chapter concludes with an explanation of how ethical dilemmas may be experienced at the different functional activities covered in human resource management.

In the next chapter values and principles which underpin ethics in human resource management in the public sector are discussed.

CHAPTER 4

VALUES AND GUIDELINES THAT UNDERPIN ETHICS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

4.1 INTRODUCTION

One characteristic of the Discipline Public Administration is that it is value-laden. This implies that the Discipline and its activities will have relationships with other disciplines which deal with values in their contents. For example Public Administration borrows freely from established disciplines such as Psychology, Biology, Politics and Philosophy, to name but a few.

In order to understand what values are, some definitions are presented and explained in ways relevant to public administration. Likewise, by combining various contributions from various disciplines to the understanding and use of values it should be possible to develop a relatively comprehensive perception of the central role values play as stimulants of ethics in public human resource management .

4.2 DEFINITION OF VALUES

Values are defined and explained by many authors in the social sciences. Baier and Rescher (in Kruger 1987: 8) define a value as "... an attitude for or against an event or phenomenon, based on a belief that it benefits or penalises some individual, group, or institution". Mercer (1992: 58) defines a value as "...an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or result is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or result". Fox and Meyer (1995: 134) define value as "... a concept about what is fundamentally good or desirable that an individual hold onto as a guide through life".

Common to the above definitions is an emphasis on the desirable, attitudes for or against an event, action or conduct. It can therefore be concluded that values, have an influence on the choices of modes, means and ends. A value describes the quality of any object, phenomenon, or conduct which causes it to be viewed as desirable or necessary by an individual or a group. They are also psychological by nature or matters of beliefs and their measures are usually qualitative. Values influence the selection of actions of individuals or groups and are closely related to ethics. According to Wiechers, (1993: 250) values do not only refer to ethics, but are also grounded on morals and religious convictions.

From what has been written above, it can be inferred that values have a role to play in public human resource management. Decisions and actions by public human resource functionaries have to, for most of the time be based on the values they hold onto as guides in their decision making processes. Values could, however, present problems in a heterogeneous public personnel corps. This aspect is dealt with in the paragraphs below.

In a plural democratic society like South Africa, divergent individual and group values could be an issue in the management of human resources. Public human resource managers in the transforming South African public sector will for most of the time encounter divergent values emanating from a culturally diversified society. The South African society from which public personnel are recruited is heterogeneous in nature. It consists of members that are very different from one another, for example whites, blacks, Indians, and coloureds. Even among the different population groups one finds different ethnic groups such as the Afrikaners and English, among Whites, and Zulu's and Sothos, among blacks. These groups have different value systems which have to be reconciled in public institutions for them to can be described as being ethical.

Values lie at the heart of all public institutions. Likewise, managers of human resources may be affected by value judgements and it can be expected that they will try to understand the values held by groups or individuals within the institution. The obligations faced by public managers is then to endeavour not to substitute their personal values for individual or group values, but to try, at all times to put the values

which will benefit the institution as a whole, as a first priority. Examples of such values include, honesty, efficiency, loyalty and, responsibility. This challenge should be embraced by public human resource managers who should cultivate effective and efficient human resource management based on transparency accountability, fairness and professional ethics (RSA 1996: 83). Cultivating good human resource management that meets these requirements entails the utilisation of human potential through eliminating obstacles to personal development and job satisfaction. The search for productivity improvement in the public sector should entail a more sophisticated understanding of employee motivation and satisfaction. It is also important to recognise, as Klingner and Nalbandian (1985: 191) point out, that in labour-intensive work, such as the public sector, turnover and absenteeism can significantly affect productivity because of lost time and the costs in recruitment and selection. Good managers of human resource should be aware of the divergent values subordinates bring along to work and the faiths that enrich and inspire them.

The above-mentioned obligations facing public human resource managers naturally mean identifying shared individual or group values as basis for ethical actions. For the purposes of public human resource management, some of these values are described in this section. It will be noticed in the forth coming discussion, that although South Africa is predominantly a Christian country, other religions have to be considered as well. This is essential, because in almost all religions some kind of ethics is acknowledged and practiced. Differences and similarities abound in different religions,

and these may necessitate management of diversity in the management of human resources in the public sector. Ethics and religious values are discussed next

4.3 ETHICS AND RELIGIOUS VALUES

Ethics and religion have been closely connected in the history of man. As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, ethics is concerned with the right, the good, and the desirable in respect of human conduct. Religion is the conviction that "...what is highest in spirit is also deepest in nature" (Titus and Keeton 1966: 508). Religion attempts to relate man to ordinary values in human life.

In South Africa, freedom of association and religion is a constitutional right (RSA 1996: 7). Although according to Reynolds (1977: 293) the majority of South Africans are Christians, it is necessary to consider the values espoused by other religions. The different values espoused by Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity are discussed below. Although the list is not exhaustive, it represent dominant world religions according to Titus and Keeton (1966) and De Gruchy and Prozesky (1991). Reference to different religions is necessary in the South African context because, as Prozesky (1991: 1) has observed, it has a rich diversity of faiths and the knowledge and understanding of this fact is essential in the public sector.

4.3.1 Ethics of Hinduism

Hinduism is a religion practised mostly by Indians (Maxwell and Naidoo 1991: 43). According to Titus and Keeton (1966: 509) Hinduism includes different beliefs and types of conduct and in Hindu ethics individuals have to act on their own account and to control their future and to assist others. Hindus in positions of authority are expected to be kind and "selfless," that is, conduct themselves in a manner that benefit others. According to Titus and Keeton (1966: 512-513) among the lofty Hindu sentiments are some like the following: "let not any man do unto another any act which he wisheth not done to himself, knowing it to be painful to himself." This sentiment corresponds with the Christian doctrine of doing unto others as one would have them do unto him.

4.3.2 Ethics of Buddhism

Buddhism is also practised mainly by Indian people, it being an attempt to reform Hinduism (Titus and Keeton 1966: 513-514). Like Hinduism this religion emphasises that people are products of their past thoughts and deeds. Whatever a person sows, is what he reaps. With reference to human resource management, Williams (1980: 509) points out that "...using unethical means runs the high risk of contaminating or preventing the accomplishment of the very objectives we set out to achieve". Public human resource managers should therefore lead by examples, and endeavour, at all times, to be ethical.

4.3.3 Ethics of Confucianism

Hofmeyer (1991: 101) points out that Confucianism is a religion practised mostly by the Chinese people. In Confucian ethics the central concept is right relationship " ...for the achievement of harmony". According to Titus and Keeton (1966: 516) these relationships refer to the relations of ruler and subject, the relation of father and son, the relation of husband and wife, the relation of elder and younger brothers, and the relation of friend and friend. In communities where confucianism is practiced the basic institution is the family. In Confucian ethics, justice is attained when each person plays his/her part in the society, and there should be harmony in the various relationships. The basis of the relations is hierarchical (Hofmeyer 1991: 107). Which means that one member is dominant and the other submissive. Based on confucian ethics, it can be expected that public human resources manager would be dominant in their style of management and the subordinates should carry out instructions without questions. The ethical tone in an institution would be determined by public managers and subordinates would be expected to tow the line.

4.3.4 Ethics of Islam

According to Moosa (1991: 203) Islam means "...to surrender to God and to be unfettered", and a person who surrenders is called a Muslim. The familiar islamic greeting, salam (peace) implies that peace in the world can only be attained if humans

“surrender” themselves to God. Spreading the message of “surrender” depends on the authenticity and credibility of the transmitters. Moosa (1991: 214) points out that when a great number of reliable transmitters preach the same message it attains the highest quality of consecutive testimony and makes it inductively so certain that doubt is logically excluded.

In terms of ethics in a public institution, the source would be the law and the institutional code of ethics to which all members of the institution have to abide by. Down the hierarchy, public human resource specialists and line managers would serve as transmitters of ethics. However, in order to have a great number of reliable transmitters it would be wise to include subordinates to ensure that everybody in the institution is aware of the kind of behaviour expected.

4.3.5 Ethics of Judaism

Judaism may be ascribed to the early Hebrews. The main characteristics and points of emphasis in the ethics of Judaism are reflected in the Old Testament of the Bible (Exodus 20:1-17, Deuteronomy 5:6-22). Its persistent effort is to shape human character and behaviour. According to Hellig (1991:119) the primary objectives in the ethics of Judaism are the virtues of justice and love. He also points out that another important feature of the ethics of Judaism is emphasis on community and social-mindedness. In the context of the management of human resources, managers would be expected to be fair and just in dealing with subordinates. Social-mindedness can be

interpreted in terms of the development of the whole work force. Judaism is closely related to Christianity which is discussed below.

4.3.6 Christian Ethics

Christian ethics embodies the teachings of both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Exodus 20:1-17, Mark 12: 28-34, Matt.22: 34-40). Some of the central points of emphasis or distinguishing characteristics in Christian ethics may be listed as follows:- (Titus and Keeton 1966: 529-530).

First, Christian ethics places emphasis on man's motives, will, and desires - the inner character of man. The emphasis is on the individual as opposed to collectivities of Islam and Confucianism. Such ethics are the exact opposite of externally imposed ethics such as laws and codes of conduct. It appeals to a man's sense of duty, uprightness, and obligation as espoused by deontological ethics. In this sense an action may not be right simply on account of its effects as espoused by utilitarian ethics. According to Christian ethics actions that benefit the majority may still be judged wrong. For example a person who steals money in order to build a church, although his/her motive of building a church is noble, the act is ethically unacceptable, because stealing is considered a wrong act (Exodus 20:15).

Second, Christian ethics is an ethics of love. Titus and Keeton (1966: 529) point out that such ethics are non-reciprocal, which means that the person does not ask what

he/she is to receive in return. Love in Christian ethics designates an attitude and the divine law to love the neighbour applies universally among Christians (Uys and Smit 1987: 9-10). According to Mott (1982: 42) the ethics of love demands a compassionate response for the poor, the needy subordinates, and the recipients of one's services. Christian ethics, because of its emphasis on the individual, relates to Maslow hierarchy of needs in the motivation of personnel.

As can be seen from the discussions of the ethics of the various religions above, there is much in common between them. Wrongdoing is condemned by all religions, and man shall reap what he sows. The ethics of love is dominant, and this can also be inferred to the relationships in Confucianism. Selflessness by those in positions of authority is a central feature of the various religions (compare for example serving the public interest as opposed to serving self-interest).

With reference to public human resource management, the common features of the various religions are what public managers in general would like to see happen in public institutions. For example wrongdoing (unethical conduct) is a punishable offence, workers should be paid according to their performance (they reap what they sow); and concern for the well-being of others (selflessness) should be a dominant characteristic of managers of human resources in the public sector.

However there are also noticeable differences among the various religions. Christianity for example lays emphasis on the individuals, their inner motives and what they aspire

to. According to Maslow's theory of motivation (in McCormick & Ilgen 1980: 264) it would appear easier to deal with Christians in a work situation because of emphasis on individual needs and motives, although externally imposed constraints such as rules, regulations, and codes of conduct may be opposed. Islam and Confucianism emphasise collective action and the role of authority. In these two religions there is a distinct hierarchy of relationship of authority with one member dominant and the other member submissive. In work situations it would appear easier to impose external control measures such as codes of conduct on members of these religions because of their submissiveness to authority. Hinduism and Buddhism lays emphasis on exemplary behaviour. According to these religions, human resource managers should behave ethically themselves if they expect their followers to behave ethically.

According to Uys and Smit (1987:3) the importance of religious values is rooted in the fact that, human beings are social beings and as such are only happy within the bounds of social structures of which they are part. If individuals or groups feel that their religious values are being undermined or disregarded within an institution, it could make them unhappy. Managers of public human resources need to recognise the different religious doctrines of their personnel corps so as to try to be accommodative of the various religious value systems.

A public human resource manager for example could observe that a group of workers is occasionally absent from their work place. On investigation he/she may find out that this occurs on a particular day at a certain time before the lunch hour, and further that

the group belongs to a particular religion that prescribes prayer on that day and time. To be accommodative, the manager may decide that the lunch hour be taken just that fifteen minutes earlier and explain to the group that this is to accommodate their prayer time without causing disruption to the work flow. This action may have the effect of satisfying the needs of a specific group without an adverse effect on the rest of the work force. Such actions indicates pro-activeness and responsibility on the part of the manager. In addition to religious values, the phenomenon of responsibility is also regarded as a fundamental prerequisite for ethical behaviour. This aspect is discussed below

4.4 RESPONSIBILITY AS A VALUE

In the context of Public Administration the concept of responsibility is one that has a confusing wealth of different meanings and shades of meanings. According to Covey (1992: 71) responsibility consists of two words, namely, "response" and "ability," the ability to choose ones response to a stimulus. To act responsibly, therefore, means a person's conscious choice and depends on a person's decision and not his/her condition. However, authors in Public Administration wrote extensively on the concept responsibility and many attempted to alley its confusing meanings. For example one early author, Mosher, (1968: 7) distinguishes between objective and subjective responsibility. According to him, the so-called objective responsibility is the same as accountability or answerability wherein a public human resource manager would be responsible to someone outside of the self for some kind of performance. From a

classical viewpoint of institutions, objective responsibility would be essential for the hierarchical structure. Understood in the context of ethics in institutions, objective responsibility would be categorised as institutional ethics.

Subjective responsibility focuses on individuals. The emphasis in subjective responsibility is on identification, loyalty and conscience (Mosher, 1968: 8). According to the values espoused in deontological theory of ethics, subjective responsibility could be understood as corresponding to personal ethics.

From the exposition of the concept "responsibility" in the above paragraphs, it is no wonder why one sentence definition of responsibility is in most cases avoided by authors in public administration. Hence they hasten to qualify responsibility by describing the various facets within which the concept is used. Harmon (1995: 12-32) offers a solution to this confusion surrounding the concept. He argues that responsibility could be regarded as agency, accountability, and obligation. These aspects are briefly explained below.

4.4.1 Responsibility as agency

The term agency embodies the idea of freedom of the will (Harmon 1995: 6). According to Hattingh (1986: 95) agency may be defined as formal authorisation by an institution or a person in a higher hierarchical position to an institution or a person in a lower position to perform certain tasks on its / his behalf. To qualify as agents,

responsible managers should possess the power to cause events to happen through the voluntary exercising of their wills (Harmon 1995: 19). In Jean-Paul Saitre's (Harmon 1995: 6) phrase, public human resource managers should be "incontestable authors" of their actions. Niebuhr (1963: 49) pointed this out earlier when he stated that agency embodies the ancient symbolism of a person as the maker, that is one who is in charge of his/her own actions and fate.

The other aspect of responsibility as agency transforms it into a moral one (Harmon 1995: 20). This aspect is symbolised by what Niebuhr (1963: 56) called "...the image of a person as the provider of answers". In terms of this point of view public human resource managers as "answerers" are responsible for their actions to other members of their communities (Harmon 1995: 20).

From the paragraphs above, it can be inferred that public managers as agents should take responsibility for whatever happens within an institution. As agents of ethics within an institution, they should take the initiative in ensuring the existence of a code of conduct where such codes do not exist. And where codes of conduct do exist, it is the managers duty to ensure its application and where ambiguity arises, to provide clarification. Responsibility is sometimes understood as accountability. This aspect receives attention in the following paragraphs

4.4.2 Responsibility as accountability

Harmon (1995: 25) explains accountability as referring "...to an authoritative relationship in which one person is formally entitled to demand that another answer or provide an account of his or her actions". In this relationship, rewards or punishments may be meted out to the latter depending on whether those actions conform to the formers wishes. Niebuhr (1963: 63) points out that accountability was frequently defined by resorting to legal thinking, in the sense of one giving an account of his/her actions in a court of law. This interpretation is limited in scope in the sense that it limits accountability to legality of ones actions. Covey (1992: 71) offers a better explanation of responsibility as accountability. He states that the word responsibility is made up of response plus ability, the ability to respond to a stimulus. Between the stimulus and the response there is freedom to choose. In other words, one has the freedom to choose a response for which one will be accountable for.

In public human resource management, decisions and actions are taken within the constraints of policies and regulations. The policies and regulations determine the framework within which manager of human resources in the public sector operate. Although discretionary powers are accorded public human resource managers in carrying out their functions (Cohen and Golembiewski 1976: 170-171), accountability is demanded in order to promote a high standard of professional ethics (see also RSA

1996: sec 195 (l) (a) and (f)). Responsibility can also be linked to the concept of obligation.

4.4.3 Responsibility as obligation

According to Harmon (1995: 6), responsibility as obligation denotes the notion that "ethical action is determined by its correspondence to principles and standards deriving from sources external to the agent". Obligation emphasises moral meaning to responsibility by suggesting that one should, or should not, perform certain actions in certain ways. For example the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) sec 195 (l) (a) (c) (f) (g) and (l) support the promotion of professional ethics, development, accountability, transparency, and fairness in the practices of human resource management in the public sector.

Baier, (in Harmon 1995: 26), points out that obligation has a forward-looking dimension in the sense that the agent has the duty or obligation to bring about the desired future state of affairs. In this sense one could think of the envisaged future state of affairs of the public service that may be realised through the transformation of the public service in accordance with the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (RSA 1995).

Responsibility as a value in public human resource management also implies the obligations to fairness, reasonableness and justice. These concepts are discussed below as ethical guidelines in public human resource management.

4.5 FAIRNESS AND REASONABLENESS AS GUIDELINES

The main objective of government institutions and public human resource functionaries is the promotion of the general welfare of the community (Cloete 1994: 79). From the above statement it can be inferred that public officials should always be fair and reasonable in dealing with members of the public, regardless of sex, race, language, origin and religion of those members (Cloete in Du Toit and Van der Waldt 1997: 97). Cloete (1984: 28) explains that the pursuance of fairness and reasonableness will ensure that the actions of public officials are within the law and within the spirit of the law, in the sense that they will be above unethical conduct, and in support of promoting the general welfare of the community. Fair and reasonable treatment should not be reserved for the rich and educated members of the community because of their status in the community, but should extend to the poor, the destitute, and the uneducated without discrimination and favours.

It can be inferred from the above paragraph that the aspects of fairness and reasonableness are equally important in public human resource management in the sense of promoting and maintaining a high standard of professional ethics (RSA 1996:

83). These ethical guidelines are closely linked to justice, a concept which will be dealt with in the paragraphs below.

4.6 JUSTICE AS AN ETHICAL GUIDELINE

The concept of justice is closely linked to ethics, indicating the quality of being morally right, fair and proper (Dictionary of Contemporary English 1987: 570). Justice in public human resource management implies equitable treatment of subordinates and clients, and proper performance of lawful duties (Williams 1980: 502).

Wiechers (1985: 208) contends that in legal terms, justice as an ethical guideline necessarily means recourse to the rules of natural justice. He points out that although all rules are important, the rules of natural justice, that is, common-law rules which are applicable to administrative enquiries and hearings, occupy a position of special prominence because of their emphasis of the maxim :audi alteram partem". Translated literally this means: hear the other party's side or case.

Understood in the context of public human resource management, it means, for justice to prevail, subordinates should be given a chance to state their cases especially in cases of discipline. Expanding on this statement Williams, (1980: 510) argues that subordinates should be treated as ends and not simply as means. He points out that the on-the-job application of this precept is the development of the competence of

employees as ends in themselves, which contributes positively to their self-actualisation and the spirit of the institution (Williams 1980: 510). With regard to the concept that people should be regarded as ends, Kant (in Jones 1971: 82) argues that: "...man, and in general every rational being exists as an end in himself, not merely as a means for arbitrary use by this or that will: he must in all his actions, whether they are directed to himself or to other rational beings, always be viewed at the same time as an end". Jones (1971: 28) argues that in order for managers to treat subordinates as ends they must regard them as such. It can be concluded from this argument that treating subordinates as ends suggest a different approach to motivation. The emphasis should be on the subordinate to do his/her best in whatever they are engaged in, and not on the institutional goals per se. Justice implies that people have to be honest with themselves , their subordinates, the institution as well as members of communities. The concept of honesty is also fundamental to deontological theory of ethics and receives attention in the paragraphs below.

4.7 HONESTY AS AN ETHICAL GUIDELINE

What immediately comes to mind in the day-to-day consideration of the concept honesty, revolves around financial transactions, avoidance of bribery, reliability in keeping ones word, and fulfilling ones promises. Even though the aforementioned aspects form part of what is understood by honesty, Hill (1980: 300).points out that honesty, in a wider sense, has to be understood as an "illuminating agent, which throws light on the problems to be solved. It breeds faith and confidence". It can therefore be

inferred that public human resource managers need to be honest in dealing with their subordinates, the community and their colleagues in order to win their faith and confidence. In the following paragraphs, honesty as an ethical value in public human resource management is discussed under five subheadings. Although the list is not exhaustive, it is an effort to highlight the importance of the concept.

4.7.1 Honesty and lying

According to Hill (1980: 299) many people do not consider lying dishonest, especially mild forms of lying. He states that, to many people, the threshold of dishonesty begins with stealing, which to some, is not even considered very dishonest either. Consider for example a public human resource manager who calls in sick to get a day off and goes to do his/her private business. He/she lies and steals taxpayers money in that at the end of the month he/she gets fully paid. But because the public manager never literally put his/her hand in the money- till, the act is not always considered dishonest. Consider also the use of office telephones for long-distance personal calls. The list is endless. These are dishonest acts, and they amount to stealing tax-payers money although indirectly.

To all the above, Hill (1980: 300) makes the point that lying is grossly unethical because it expresses disregard and disrespect for the self and others. He also points out that "when a small lie starts from the top, it creates an avalanch of lying at the bottom". According to Williams (1980: 509) subordinates always adopt an attitude of

“where you lead me, I will follow” Accordingly, public human resource managers need to be honest and exemplary. Williams (1980: 509) further makes the point that honesty and truthfulness cannot be projected unless they are genuine. Prudent public human resource managers should understand this and should ask themselves the question of whether they can handle it if their subordinates follow their dishonest and lying examples.

Honesty can be better practised by professionals in the sense they adhere to a strict code of professional ethics. This aspect is discussed in the paragraphs below.

4.7.2 Honesty and professional ethics

The Dictionary of Contemporary English (1993: 826) describes a profession as “...a form of employment especially one that is possible only for an educated person and after training and that is respected in society as honourable”. Hanekom (1995: 197) points out some features which are characteristic of professional public officials, such as a conviction to serve society honestly and properly, the fulfillment of a code of professional conduct, and the violation of which will lead to exclusion from the profession. Professionals therefore dedicate themselves to an honest and proper service by adhering to professional ethics in order to advance the honour of the profession.

In South Africa, human resource management is offered as a course at tertiary institutions leading to professional qualification such as professional personnel practitioners and general managers. A qualification in Industrial Psychology entitles one to register with the South African Board for Personnel Practice before going into practice (Gerber *et al.* 1995:36). The practice of human resource management is also controlled by the Institute of Personnel Management, so as to ensure professional standards (Gerber *et al.* 1995:35).

From the above paragraphs it can be inferred that human resource management could be regarded as a profession, where a profession is defined as "...an occupation that properly involves a liberal education or its equivalent and mental rather than manual labour..." (Funk & Wagnalls in Thornhill and Hanekom 1995: 196-198). As a profession it can be expected that practitioners thereof should act in accordance with ethical principles to uphold the honour of the profession, and be honest in dealing with subordinates and the community at large.

Hanekom (1994: 200) points out that in the public sector, a variety of professions such as medical, engineering and human resource management are practiced. He also argues that these professionals function differently from private practitioners such as human resource management consultants because their loyalties should first be to the state as employer and only then towards their areas of specialisation. This brings about a fundamental difference in the functions of professional human resource managers in the public sector in the sense that they do not function under the principle of "time is

money" (Townley 1994: 64), as it is the case with private practitioners whereby the client is charged on the service provided and the time spent with the client. With the public as employer coming first, it can also be argued that there could exist some degree of slackness in upholding professional ethics, as evidenced by a high rate of corruption in the public sector (Leon 1996: 22). Corruption is discussed next.

4.7.3 Honesty and corruption

According to section 1 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1992 (Act 94 of 1992) corruption is an offence and accordingly:-

- "any person shall be deemed guilty of a corruptible offence whenever such a person corruptly accepts, obtains, or agrees to accept any gift as an inducement or reward for himself/herself or any person the result of such an action leading to favour or disfavour being shown to the party offering the inducement; and
- any person who corruptly gives or accepts any gift from a party as an inducement or reward for rendering services on behalf and in favour of the designated party shall be deemed of a corruptible offence".

The concept of corruption has many meanings and can include administrative misdemeanours such as bribery, theft, kickbacks, patronage, nepotism and countless forms of dishonesty and violence (Joubert 1979: 2; Dwivedi in Gildenhuis 1991: 45). Heidenheimer (in Gildenhuis 1991: 44) categorised the definitions of corruption into three main groups, namely:-

- public-office-centred definitions which explain corruption as deviations from the normal benefits attached to a person's office or status. Misuse of public resources and bribery, such as accepting money from job-applicants as a means of securing a post. In this case a public functionary is regarded corrupt in accepting money or other benefits for doing something that he / she non-the-less is duty bound to do;
- market-centred definitions, which explain corruption as an unlawful phenomenon to gain influence over public officials.

A central feature of the definitions of corruption is that there are always two parties involved, namely, the corrupter and the corrupted, and as defined in Act 94 of 1992, both shall be deemed guilty of an offence (Gildenhuis 1991: 45). Friedrich (1978: 120) points out that corruption "...is deviant behaviour associated with a particular motivation, namely of private gain at public expense. It may be a rapid promotion, an order, decoration and the gain may not be personal but benefit a family or other group ...a responsible functionary or office holder, is by monetary or other rewards, such as the expectations of a job in the future, induced to take actions which favour whoever provides the reward". Bailey (in Richter et al. 1990: 58) categorises corruption into two, namely, "clearly wrong" and "conditionally wrong". He categorises corruption under "clearly wrong" as behaviours and actions which are widely viewed as being so unethical that few people would attempt to justify them on moral grounds. Under "conditionally wrong" might be classified aspects such as lying (Bailey in Richter et al.

1990: 58) in which a person might ask the questions, under what conditions would lying be regarded as unethical? Or under what conditions is lying ethically permissible? Managers of human resources should be wary of such corrupt tendencies to avoid questionable actions.

Public human resource managers hold the keys to public employment and are therefore in delicate positions that can be corrupted by members of the public in the sense of being bribed for such employment. Members of the public who aspire to work in the public sector but lack the necessary qualifications and experiences may use devious means such as bribery to gain entry into public employment. Certain factors and conditions of which the following are examples may be conducive to corruption in the public sector:

4.7.3.1 Poor remuneration

According to Beardwell and Holden (1994: 547) adequate reward and motivation derive from such concepts as equity, fairness and comparability. Employees' perceptions of how fairly they are being treated by their institutions depends among others, on their perceived equity of rewards and their comparable worth. If public personnel perceive that equity, the dictum of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, does not prevail they will be demotivated and may seek to restore equilibrium through other means, such as exerting less effort in their work. If they perceive themselves as being

less compensated than their counterparts in the private sector they may resort to means such as accepting bribes to supplement their meagre salaries. A corruption syndrome may develop because of poor remuneration (Stahl 1983: 312).

4.7.3.2 Greed

Greed can be defined as a strong desire for personal gain often in a selfish or unfair way to other people (Dictionary of Contemporary English 1987: 458). Greed could seriously undermine efficiency and effectiveness in public human resource management resulting in human resources managers abusing their authority for personal gain. The following factors could exacerbate this form of self enrichment (Hilliard 1994: 217):

- First, over-emphasis of results which may result in use of unethical means.
- Second, impatient ambitions for promotion and other rewards such as monetary and recognition.
- Third, unguarded trust resulting in insufficient supervision thereby providing public officials with ample opportunity to engage in corruptible deeds.

4.7.3.3 Nepotism

The Dictionary of Contemporary English (1993: 697) defines nepotism in the narrow sense as "...the practice of giving ones relatives unfair advantages when one has

power, especially by giving them jobs". In this sense the dishonesty, hence unethical conduct in public human resource management is confined to bestowing favours to relatives in job situations. In the wider sense nepotism refers to any appointment that is made outside of the normally accepted rules and regulations pertaining to appointments. This would include, according to Bekker (1991: 55) appointing any person from outside the public services to a position which is advantageous to himself/herself. He states that such nepotism appointments place existing personnel in an unfair position and may result in their rights to promotion being prejudiced.

In the transformation phase of the public service public human resource managers could be exposed to many influences which could lead to malpractices such as nepotism. A clear understanding of government personnel policy should form a basis for honest action in this regard. Kotze (1985: 120) however maintains that misinterpretation of personnel policy could lead to confusion as this misinterpretation will not correlate with the objectives of other policies

4.7.3.4 Patronage

Patronage basically entails the assignment of government offices and appointments on the basis of political loyalty (Klingner and Nalbandian 1985: 33). In Jackson's view (in Klingner and Nalbandian 1985: 33) public jobs belong to the common people because of their simplicity. The authors point out that in its excesses, when patronage politics

turns into politics for personal gain, the system becomes known for the spoils of electoral victory.

Spoils, as a system in public human resource management, refers to a system in which the political party which gains power after an election regards public service posts as a booty to be distributed among its supporters (Cloete 1994: 167). As can be seen from the definitions, in both systems merit as a criteria in selection and appointment to public posts is disregarded. However, before discussing the merit system, it is worthwhile to discuss other values which underpin ethics in public human resource management. These are discussed before the merit system because they are more pronounced under this system.

Klingner and Nalbandian (1985: xviii) makes mention of the following values, namely, individual rights, administrative efficiency, political responsiveness, and social equity as meriting consideration in public human resource management. These values are discussed in the sections below.

4.8 INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AS A VALUE

South Africa has a history of human rights abuses, hence the institution of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The human rights abuses were not confined to the political sphere only, but were experienced also in employment settings, hence the appointment of the Wiehahn Commission (1971) which investigated all aspects of

labour legislation (Gerber et al. 1995: 551). Discrimination on the basis of race, sex or creed took the form of wage discrimination, employment discrimination, occupational or job discrimination, and human capital discrimination (Bendix 1993: 188). Wage discrimination refers to discriminatory wages being paid to different types of employee doing the same job. Employment discrimination refers to employment of fewer persons of particular group. Occupational discrimination pertains to job- reservation for particular race groups, while human capital discrimination refers to exclusion of certain groups on the basis of defective education and training.

The result of these unethical employment practices has been a racially distorted income distribution which ranks as the most unequal in the world (RSA 1995: 4). In recognition of the above abuses, South Africa has adopted a Bill of Rights which is constitutionally entrenched. Employer(s) and employee(s) rights both individually and collectively are entrenched in sections 22 and 23 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, (Act 108/1996).

According to the Public Service Labour Relations Act 1994, (Act 103 / 1993) some of the fundamental principles concerning the rights and privileges of state employees are:-

- all employees have the right to establish and to join or refrain from joining employee organisation of their own choice;

- no employee shall be intimidated to join or to refrain from joining an employee organisation;
- no employee shall be victimised or unfairly discriminated against on the grounds of race, colour, sex, or religion; and
- no unfair labour practice shall be perpetrated by any person.

Section 19 of Act 102 of 1993 makes provision for the right to strike, however this right is denied those rendering essential services. This category of employees refer to fundamental or indispensable government services which are of life-sustaining importance and which may not be interrupted in anyway, such as intensive care units in hospitals, fire brigade services and ambulance services (Botes 1994: 277).

Olivier (in Gildenhuis 1991: 38), quoting Paul Sieghart points out that people have rights simply because they are human, and that these rights are inalienable. If they cannot be claimed on legal grounds, they can be claimed on moral grounds. A denial of these rights causes suffering and may lead to conflict. Nino (1991: 25-29) supports this argument and he states that "...human rights derive from moral principles, or more precisely from a system of moral principles." Where the employee rights are constitutionally entrenched or promulgated in acts of Parliament these are the effects and not the *a priori* of constitutional entrenchment (see also Nino 1991: 16-29).

Nel and Bezuidenhout (1995: 3-4) support the above argument. They state: "The philosophical foundation of human rights is frequently found in the works of proponents of natural law. Proponents of natural law hold that there is a set of universal norms on which the validity of man-made laws and rules depends". The concept "universal norms" is controversial and can result in consensus not being reached among nations. But in 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a Declaration listing the basic rights to which citizens throughout the world were entitled to (Nel and Bezuidenhout 1995: 4). This was called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and was adopted on 10 December 1948 (Everyone's United Nations 1979: 235).

Presently, because South Africa is a member of the international community and of the United Nations, it has to abide by what is contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As far as labour is concerned, the stipulations of the International Labour Organisation such as equal treatment of women in work situations, elimination of discrimination, and abolition of child-labour (Nel and Bezuidenhout 1995: 5) should apply.

Considering what has been written above, it is no wonder strikes and work-stoppage are such important tools for workers in South Africa (City Press 18 January 1998 p. 4). With its history of discrimination, job reservation, wage discrimination, denial of workers rights, and human capital discrimination, the working class in South Africa suddenly finds itself legally free and entitled to rights that were formerly denied to them as a group. This invokes in them a sense of impatience and they engage in strikes as a

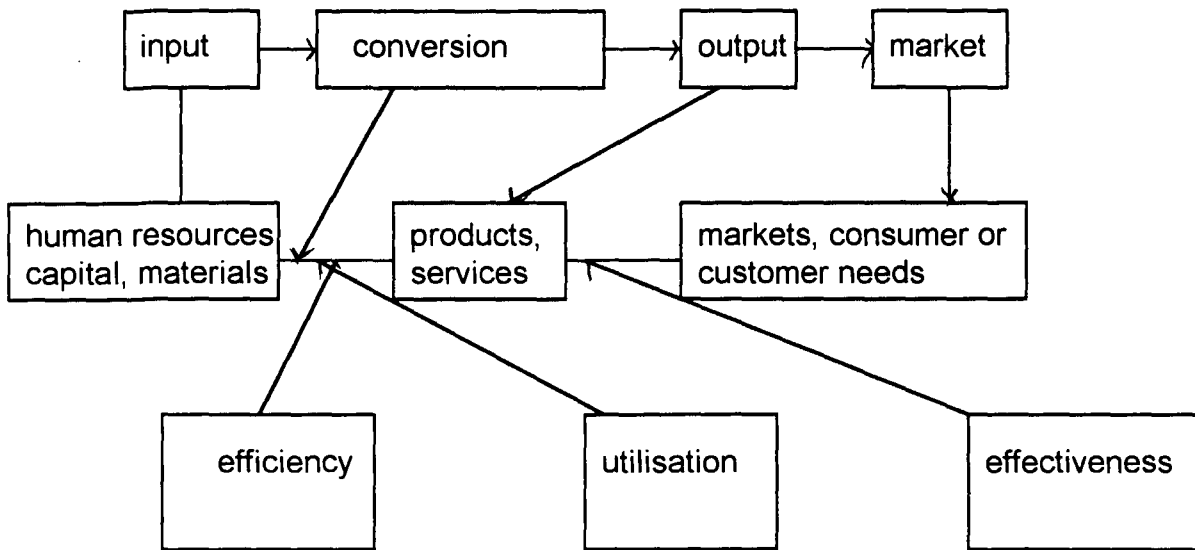
form of pressurising the employers to accede to their demands (Gerber et al 1995: 411). Strikes and work stoppages have an adverse effect on productivity. Efficiency as a value is discussed below.

4.9 ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY AS A VALUE

Efficiency as it is usually referred to in the public sector (Cloete 1994: 81-82; Botes et al 1996: 289-291) is a controversial concept or value. It is controversial in the sense that it cannot be precisely measured or quantified (Klingner and Nalbandian 1985: 194-195). However, efficiency as a value in public administration has persisted for a long time. One early author in Public Administration, Luther Gulick, quoted by Robert Dahl in Hawley and Weintraub (1966: 24) postulated that efficiency was "...axiom number one in the value scale of administration".

Efficiency is defined as the "...most effective way of achieving an objective with the most economical use of funds" (Botes et al. 1996: 290). In this definition, funds may be replaced by the word resources, in the sense that it is an encompassing term which refers to human, capital, and land resources as means of efficiency. The efficiency process may be explained by means of a sketch as depicted below.

The Efficiency Process



Source: Adapted from SAIPA 1996 Vol. 31 No. 4

Visser (1996: 241) points out that efficiency starts at the effectiveness end, both in the public and private sector. The questions asked in determining efficiency are : "Does a person do the right things? Are the outputs acceptable to the recipients the public service serves? Do the outputs have value? What should be done to improve services?"

According to the author the first thing to consider in improving efficiency is effectiveness. Then if one is doing the right things, the next step is to do those things right. He argues that efficiency should not be thought of mechanistically but as a state of mind in the sense that the willingness and desire of people to be efficient should be

taken into account. It should also be pointed out that efficiency is influenced by the motivation to work, the level of training and development of employees, performance appraisal system applicable in the institution, as well as safety and health or working conditions of employees (Klingner and Nalbandian 1985: 208-273).

It can be stated that efficiency as a value implies cost-effectiveness in attaining predetermined objectives. The objective is to raise the ratio in the input-output continuum through economical use of resources and to the satisfaction of the recipient of the outputs. Efficiency can then be calculated by using the formula:- $E = \frac{\text{Output}}{\text{input}}$ (where E = Efficiency) Klingner & Nalbandian 1985: 194). Client satisfaction presupposes a public service that is responsive to clients needs, a concept which receives attention in the following paragraphs.

4.10 RESPONSIVENESS AS A VALUE

According to Friedrich (in Cooper 1990: 145-146) the concept responsiveness connotes an inner attitude or disposition to act, where the action is based on technical knowledge and a positive sensitivity towards popular public sentiments. Tschudin and Marks-Maran (1993: 6) support this description and regard response as a challenge that a person is facing and is felt and interpreted according to values, beliefs, attitudes, experiences, memories and anticipations of such as person. As a value, responsiveness is based on the system of ethics, the response ethics (Niebuhr in Tschudin and Marks-Maran 1993: 5) and is closely linked to responsibility.

In a democratic setting, responsiveness refers to the prompt acquiescence by an institution to popular demands for change or satisfaction of needs (Straling 1986: 115). In a democracy the public freely communicate with government in the form of inquiries, criticisms, and suggestions (Friedrich in Cooper 1990: 147). But because of the magnitude of legislative work (Cloete 1991: 194) the public turns more and more to public officials. This puts the public officials in a dilemma concerning responsiveness in the sense that they have to respond to both the political office-bearer (political responsiveness: Klingner and Nalbandian 1985: 39-41) as well as to popular public sentiments (Cooper 1990: 146). An example of such a situation is to determine, what action to take when faced with criticism of affirmative action policies (a political directive) and efficient satisfaction of needs (a public demand for efficiency). Rosenbloom (1993: 242) points out that responsiveness relies heavily on political patronage in recruiting, selecting and promoting public employees. The people elect political officials who in turn appoint public officials who are sympathetic to the party's policies. He argues further that this promotes administrative responsiveness to elected officials and, by extension, to the public. It is questionable if such appointments can enhance efficiency in the public sector.

Niebuhr (in Tschudin and Marks-Maran 1993: 27) suggests that in order to reach a valid judgement a public manager should seek answers to two questions, namely:-

- What is happening and who is affected?
- What is the fitting answer to what is happening, and to the people affected?

To get answers to the first question public managers may refer to the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (RSA 1995). Public Managers could seek answers to questions such as:-

- What is happening to the subordinate as a public employee with rights and responsibilities? The transformation process may lead to job loses, demotivation, uncertainties and enforced retirement and deployments. Managers of human resources have to deal carefully with these issues so that they do not upset the remaining employees, but also not to be seen as discriminating against those who have to leave the institution.

What is the fitting answer:

- from the subordinate, do they expect to be informed through meetings, circulars or through their union representatives?
- from public managers, do they transform the public service for the sake of transformation without due regard to efficiency and responsibility? If they do not approve of the transformation what are their options?
- institutional organisation: how is it to be transformed? Should it be flattened with

few hierarchies or steep with more hierarchies? How best to effect control? How are new managers to be fitted in the institution? Should they understudy experienced public managers for a specified period or assume total control regardless of expertise?

- client or customer reactions and expectations: How will the public react to a transformed public service? What expectations could this transformation process raise to the clients? How are public managers to deal with them?

Answers to these questions appeal to personal ethics, institutional ethics, considerations for subordinates and client-orientation. As can be seen from the above questions, no easy answers can be provided, and, when applied to public human resource management, the response of human resource managers become critical. The critical challenges of responsiveness will determine the quality of the decisions and actions to be undertaken. These will be judged politically, institutionally, and from the standpoint of popular public demand (see also Rosenbloom 1993: 507)..

In an attempt to promote responsiveness it is sometimes argued that a representative public service is the answer to responsiveness (Starling 1986: 143). According to Starling (1986: 143) the assumption in this regard is that by hiring more members of certain groups, the representation of those groups' attitudes will be enhanced and by extension their responsiveness both politically and to group values.

Responsiveness is also closely associated with social equity, a concept which receives attention below

4.11 SOCIAL EQUITY AS A VALUE

The Collins English Dictionary (1995) describes equity as the quality of being impartial, fairness, a system of using principles of natural justice and fair conduct to reach a judgement. Equity therefore implies fair and impartial decisions and actions on the part of human resources managers.

Whenever equity is discussed within the context of human resources management, what immediately comes to mind is Adams equity theory of motivation (Lussier 1993: 187) which is based on the comparison of perceived inputs to outputs. Beardwell and Holden (1994: 508) states that equity becomes of particular concern to human resource managers for recruitment and selection purposes when they compare their institutions salary packages with those of their competitors. This comparison is seldom undertaken in public institutions because they are not in competition with each other.

Social equity on the other hand tampers with the above understanding of equity. According to Cooper (1990: 47) the assumption that equal treatment is fair treatment needs to be re-examined. He argues that if members of a population are varied in preferences, backgrounds and needs, then treating them as though they were the same is not fair. Klingner and Nalbandian (1985: 23) agree with this proposition, they state

that "...not only are public services and opportunities supposed to be fairly distributed, but people who have been deprived the opportunity to enter the individual competition for society's rewards should be compensated". This situation is especially applicable in the South African context, hence the institutionalisation of affirmative action and employment equity.

Inequity in public institutions has often been institutionalised especially under the banner of standardisation (Cooper 1990: 47). This has tended to reflect attributes of one population group, for example the culture and values of whites in the case of South Africa (Du Toit and van der Waldt 1997: 142).

The above description of social equity justifies the imposition of affirmative action in the public service in the sense that they both emphasise compensatory employment strategies regarding previously disadvantaged groups. The merit system under which these values and guidelines in promoting ethics may be successful is described in the next section. But first, a short description of the system approach.

4.12 MERIT: A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO PROMOTING ETHICS

Robbins (1990: 12) defines a system as "...a set of interrelated and interdependent parts arranged in a manner that produces a unified whole". A system takes in inputs, converts them, and produces outputs. Erasmus (in Bayat and Meyer 1994: 85) agrees

with this description. He states that it is a patterned relationships involving frequent interactions and substantial degree of interdependence.

Human resource management activities of staffing, training, motivation and retention (De Cenzo and Robbins 1996: 10-11) may be viewed as a system in the sense that the institution takes in employees (inputs) trains them (conversion) so as to make them efficient (output). Furthermore a system is open to the extent that it recognises interaction with its environment. Schematically the above may be represented as in the so-called basic open system and the detailed open system as indicated in the figures below.

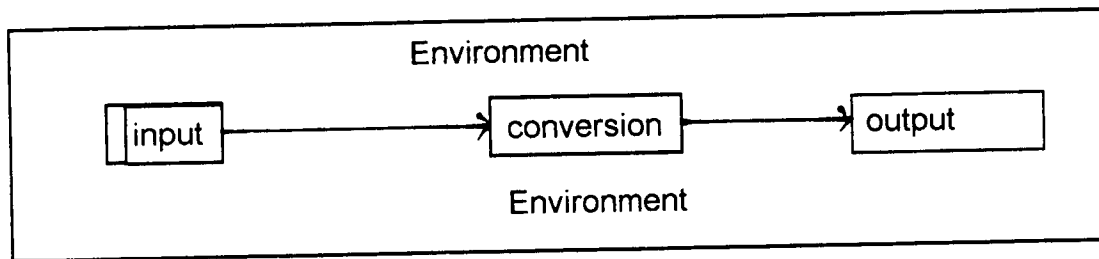


Fig. 3.1. Basic open system. Source : Robbins 1990: 13

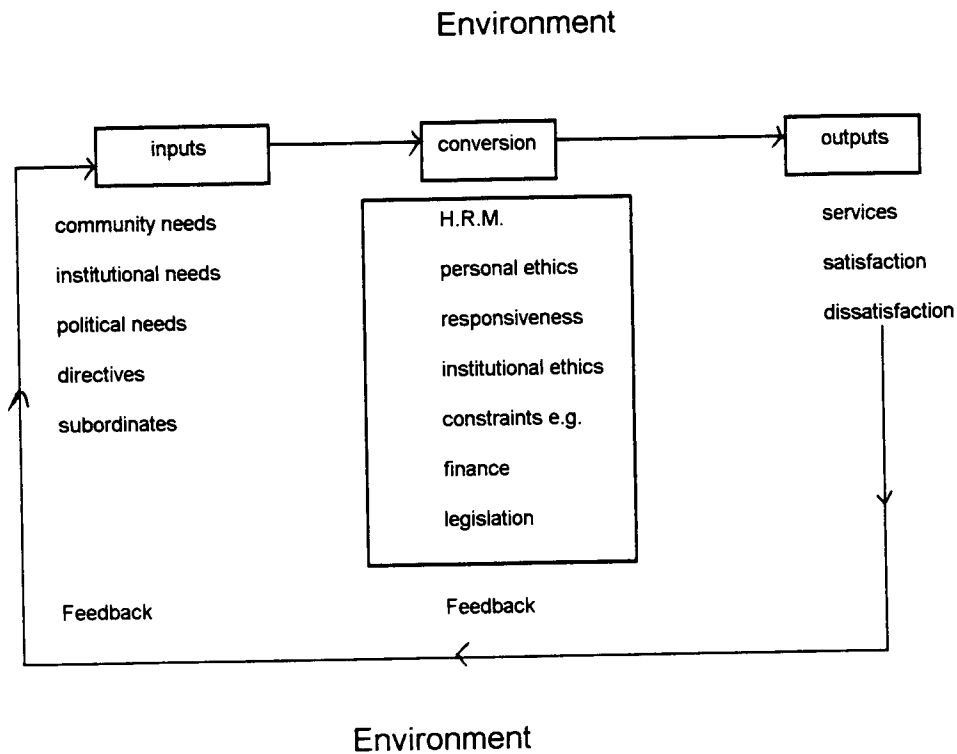


Fig. 3.2. Detailed open system . Adapted from: Botes et al 1996: 261

At the conversion (e.g. training & development) stage (refer fig. 3.2) human resource managers have to make decisions and ethical dilemmas may arise. These are influenced by personal values, institutional ethics, and the degree of responsiveness both politically and to popular public sentiments. An advantage of the system approach is the feedback mechanism. Through this mechanism the manager can always measure his/her ethical performance in terms of satisfaction/dissatisfaction to the ethical question that may arise. The feedback to the environment (which consists of the community workers, politicians, business, labour unions etc.) may serve as further

inputs in the form of queries, complaints and/or even compliments which further serves as a measure of ethical performance.

In human resource management, the merit system is one that is characterised by selections and promotions based on relevant qualifications, experiences and performances (Cloete 1993: 22). According to Klingner and Nalbandian (1985: 11) the merit system is based on certain ethical principles. Some of these are the following:

First, that selection and advancement should be determined solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge, and skills after a fair and open competition.

Second, that no employee shall be discriminated against on the basis of political affiliation, race, sex, religion or colour.

Third, that employees should maintain high standards of conduct, integrity and concern for the public interest.

Fourth, that employees should be used efficiently and effectively for the achievement of predetermined objectives.

Fifth, that employees should be retained in the institution on the basis of the adequacy of their performance, and

sixth, that employees should be provided with education and training in cases where such education and training would benefit both the institution and the individual.

It can be stated that the merit system of accentuating qualifications and experience during recruitment and selection (input into the institution) has to be tampered with by the introduction of identification of potential, and the need for representativeness. Cheminais *et al.* (1998: 57) support this statement. They state that suitability and potential in terms of representativeness and trainability should be strongly considered at entry to address educational disparities and lack of experience. The aspects of training, education, and development based on identified potential addresses the problems of affirmative action in the sense that if entry standards are lowered, for example from those with degree to those with matric, to accommodate the educationally disadvantaged, thus negatively affecting merit, then more attention should be paid to training and development. The feedback process is the most important as described earlier, and ensures the dynamism expected in human resource management.

4.13 SUMMARY

A discussion of public administration without reference to values misses an important component of the subject. Values underly public administrative activities, and from a generic administrative approach to the study of Public Administration, they form an

integral part of public human resource management. In this chapter some values and guidelines pertinent to public human resource management were discussed.

After a definition of the concept value was presented it was also important to discuss divergent values as they manifest in a plural society. Because South Africa is a religious country, no single religious values were emphasised above the others. This aspect necessitates that public human resource managers strive to find commonalities in the values espoused by the different religions so as not to offend some members of the personnel corps.

Responsibility as a value was fully explained. The explanation took the form of responsibility as agency, responsibility as accountability, and responsibility as obligation. Fairness and reasonableness as well as justice as ethical guidelines in public human resource management were also explained in detail. Honesty and lying, honesty and professional ethics, honesty and corruption, including some causes of corruption which manifest in public human resource management were described in detail. Individual rights and efficiency as values which underpin ethics were discussed in detail. The confusion surrounding the concept of efficiency in the public sector was resolved with reference to the productivity process by Visser. Responsiveness and social equity as values pertaining to public human resource management were dealt with.

A systems approach as a means of promoting ethics in public human resource management was explained in detail. This approach is combined with the ethical principles underlying the merit system in highlighting the advantages of such a combination.

In the next chapter the promotion and maintenance of ethics in public human resource management is discussed from diverse aspects such as environments, internal and external control mechanisms.

CHAPTER 5

PROMOTING AND MAINTAINING ETHICS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the performance of human resource functions public managers are influenced by a variety of factors. Besides the internal organisational factors which influence their work, the external factors have a decided influence on their activities. How these managers view and understand these factors impacts either positively or negatively on their activities. Because managers in general - and human resource managers in particular - are involved in decision-making, it can be expected that both these factors will influence their decisions and hence their actions. Promoting and maintaining ethics in public management cannot be left to individual managers' conscience. It requires that guidelines for ethical conduct be provided, possible potential areas of conflicts be identified and possible solutions to problems be suggested. In this chapter the constitutional framework for the promotion of ethics in public human resource management is described. Some internal factors which may hamper the promotion of ethics in an institution are identified, and how the traditional administrative process can be applied to promote ethics is described. Codes of conduct, leadership, human relations, training, administrative law are described as means for promoting ethics in public human resource management.

5.2 IMPACT OF THE CONSTITUTION AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS ON ETHICS

According to Botes (1995: 29) a constitution may be described as an embodiment of the will and wishes of the citizens. Botes *et al.* (1996: 30) describe it as a solemn treaty between individuals, groups, ethnic communities, religious denominations, private business and many other forms of social associations to acknowledge the state and the government as the organ charged with authoritative allocation of values. They point out that often provision is made in a Constitution for how administration should be exercised. Craythorne (1997: 1) compares a constitution to a door. He writes: "The constitutional door opens to provide rights and obligations and to define and circumscribe the structures and institutions for the nation". He argues that it closes to those who choose to violate the rights of others, twist structures and institutions for their own purposes. In other words the constitution sets out ethical guidelines for public human resource management and provides standards against which to measure performance and deviations. The constitutional and legal framework for the promotion of ethics in public management is discussed in this section.

According to section 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, (108 of 1996) the Constitutional act is the supreme law of the Republic and is binding to all legislative, executive and judicial organs of state at all levels of government. This brings about a fundamental adaptation to public management in the sense that political

supremacy is now vested in the Constitution (van der Waldt and Helmbold, 1995: 8). This means in effect that public management must function in accordance with the guidelines and restrictions of the Constitution and that public human resource managers must act within a strict framework of laws and regulations (Van der Waldt and Helmbold 1995: 10). By way of promoting and ensuring ethics in public management, chapter 10 of the Constitution outlines the basic values and principles governing public administration (RSA 1996: 83). Section 196 (1)(2) states that there shall be a single Public Service Commission for the Republic which shall be independent and impartial (Wessels 1996: 110). The Commission shall function without fear in the interest of the maintenance of effective and efficient public management and the promotion of a high standard of professional ethics in the public service. Unethical conducts in the form of injustices of the past are recognised early on in the Preamble, and The Bill of Rights is entrenched in Chapter 2 of the Constitution (Kant 1996: 55). To atone for unethical conduct of the past, affirmative action principles, although not referred to by name, finds reflection in the Constitution (RSA 1996 sec (9), Hugo 1996: 81). Section 195 (1) is particularly important in public management, and is analysed herein under. According to this section, ethics in public management may be promoted through adherence to democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution. Section 7 (I) refers to the Bill of Rights as the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa, and affirms democratic values as comprising, among others, human dignity, equality and freedom. Chapter 2, on rights, consists of 27 rights, and sections on application, limitation, conditions for suspensions, enforcement, and interpretation of the Bill of Rights. According to Venter (1997: 224)

human dignity is the most fundamental value and the other values derive from it. Section 10 of the Constitution emphasise this point, it states: "Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected". It can therefore be inferred from the above that public managers should take cognisance of democratic values in the performance of human resource functions in order to be in accordance with the Constitution and the promotion and maintenance of ethics in public management.

Section 195 (1)(a) - (i) outlines important principles governing public management for the promotion and maintenance of ethics. These are the following:-

- The promotion and maintenance of a high standard of professional ethics. According to Le Bris (1996: 12) ethics and professionalism complement one another. He points out that ethics stresses the importance of values, of the purpose of action (1996: 9). It aims at anticipating or resolving conflicts of interest and reminds the public manager that the end does not always justify the means. Professionalism, on the one hand, requires that a public manager fulfills his/her role efficiently and with competence and precision. He further points out that ethics is general and unifying, while professionalism gives pride to the specific vocation within the public service. According to Venter (1997: 230), promoting professional ethics in public management implies that instruments to measure standards should be developed. Le Bris (1996: 13) supports this point, and he considers the introduction of methods to assess customer satisfaction as a means to bring government back to its primary vocation of serving the

public. The Department of Public Service and Administration encourages development of such service standards (see Batho Pele White Paper 1997: 17). This white paper provide the most important and practice-oriented guidelines for the promotion of ethics in the public sector. These are set out in unambiguous terms, and fully explained. Broad implementations strategies are also spelt out.

- The promotion of efficient, economic and effective use of resources. The principle of efficiency in public management dates back many years. Dahl (1947: 24), quoting Luther Gulick, states that in the science of administration the basic good is efficiency, and conceived of it as being "... axiom number one in the value scale of administration". Botes et al (1996: 290) explain economy and effectiveness as the meeting point on the efficiency curve where both are maximised.

- Public management must be development-oriented. In his paper at the New Public Administration Initiative Conference, Cloete (1991: 76-77), pointed to the need for public management being development oriented. He stressed a new paradigm which not only stressed "the generic functions of public administration, but aimed at a more principled multi-disciplinary approach to issues of administrative development". Such an approach would emphasise, among others, capacity building, skills creation, empowerment of communities to enable them to participate and maintain sustainable development programmes.

- Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias. According to Kant (1996: 55) the 1996 Bill of Rights in the Republic of South Africa applies both vertically and horizontally. The horizontal application of rights affects all individuals equally and are therefore all entitled to equitable services without bias.
- People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making. Public management that ignores the needs of the people will soon find itself irrelevant and without the supports of the people it serves. Mokgoro (1991:31) support this point. He writes that in the past blacks never supported the bureaucracy because they perceived it as a controller rather than an initiator and facilitator of development.
- Public management must be accountable. Venter (1997: 230) makes the point that unaccountable public management would be unconstitutional and therefore open to legal attack. When the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (200 of 1993), came into force on 27 April 1994, South Africa was transformed into a democratic state. Hitchner and Harbold, (1996: 614 - 616) describe a democracy not only as a form of government, but also as a matter of values and virtues. From this description, Cloete (1996:21) argues that accountability in the Republic of South Africa, "...should therefore be viewed as a matter of ethics in addition to the devising and application of control measures". He further states that the citizens have a final say in the evaluation of the performance of public institutions and can therefore bring about public accountability in public human resource management. (1996: 23)

- The public must be provided with timely, accessible and accurate information by a transparent public management. An uninformed public cannot be expected to make accurate assessment of the quality of the services rendered. Thus secrecy and withholding of information from the public is discouraged. The principle of transparency further strengthens accountability and probity.
- Good human resource management and career development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated. According to the White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RSA 1994: 8) development of human resources aims at empowerment through education and training. The values derived from the Constitution, which underpin human resource management, are, fairness, equity, accessibility, transparency, accountability, participation and professionalism (RSA 1997: 10).
- Public management must be broadly representative of the South African people. The principle of representativeness seems not an immediate goal. This can be deduced from the requirement that employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past, must apply in order to achieve broad representation. Venter (1997: 230) support this view.

An analysis of the values and principles governing public management shows that ethics in public management may be promoted through adherence to these. To promote and ensure ethical ideals contained in the Constitution, statutory and regulatory frameworks for public human resource management are in place in the form of Acts, Bills, White Papers, Green Papers and Government Notices. For the purposes of this dissertation the following legislative measures will be discussed (Cheminais et al. 1998: 93-111).

- The Public Service Act, 1994 (103 of 1994), which aims at providing for the organisation and management of the public service, the regulation of conditions of employment, discipline, and discharge of members of the public service.
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (75 of 1997), which according to section 2, aims at enhancing economic development and social justice, and to give effect to the right to fair labour practices. According to section 3(1) the Act applies to all employees and employers except members of the National Defence Force, the National Intelligence Agency and the South African Secret Service.
- The Employment Equity Bill, 1997, which aims at achieving equity through the elimination of unfair discrimination, and the implementation of affirmative action measures to advance black people, women and people with disabilities. Unfair discrimination in the Bill includes "any distinction, exclusion or preference made on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy marital status, family

responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, belief, religion, age, culture, disability language and birth" (RSA 1997:10).

- Green Paper on Public Service Training and Education, Government Notice 422 of 1997, which aims at the cultivation of good human resource management and career-development practices for effective and efficient Public Service, and
- The Skills Development Bill, Government Notice 1296 of 1997, which aims at providing for a skills development strategy on a partnership between the public and private sector.

It is apparent from the above descriptions that the Constitution and other legislation provide broad frameworks for the promotion of ethics in the public sector. Statutory and regulatory provisions derive from the Constitutional requirement and are implemented by public managers.

As factors external to institutions, the constitutional and legal frameworks described above are not the only factors aimed at the promotion of ethics in the management of human resource in the public sector. Other factors external to public institutions which may promote or inhibit ethics, include, among others, political factors, economic factors, and cultural factors.

Political factors derive from the political system, which refers to the way in which society is governed (Hodge & Anthony in Fox et al 1991). How the political system may promote or inhibit ethics in public management is pointed out by Du Toit and van der Waldt (1997: 170), who argue that the political system of the past used public management to promote the ideals of apartheid.

Economic factors derive from the economic system which concerns the allocation of scarce resources, the creation and distribution of wealth (Fox et al 1991: 19). Kantor and Rees (1982: 36-45) point out that, although South Africa enjoyed economic prosperity in the 1960's and 1970's, its economic system was debatable on moral grounds. The result is great economic inequality among the South African population pointing to an imbalance in the distribution of wealth (RSA 1994). According to Straussman (1990:342) such conditions are fertile ground for unethical behaviour.

Culture consists of society's beliefs, attitude and interaction (Fox et al 1991: 20). According to Gollnick and Chinn (1994: 8) a society's value system is determined initially by its culture. South Africa is a multicultural community, with many different cultures varying in values and attitudes living and working side by side (Spoelstra and Pienaar 1996: 250). Ethical dilemmas in public management derive from managing diversity within the workplace.

Internal to the institution, there are other factors which influence ethical behaviour in the management of human resources. These are discussed next.

5.3 INTERNAL FACTORS WHICH PROMOTE ETHICS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The internal factors of public management refers to the factors internal to the institution itself. Du Toit and Van der Waldt (1997: 132-145) describe internal factors to a public institution and differentiates between formal and informal internal factors. Formal internal factors which may promote ethics in an institution are communication and the workplace itself. They argue that communication channels are vital for effective and efficient achievement of objectives. Where communication does not take place, information, ethical directives, and orders will not be conveyed to where they are needed and cooperation will be hampered. Bowen *et al.* (1990:370) point out that high-quality service delivery, requires understanding and cooperation across different departments and people. Daft (1995:451) makes the point that indoctrination as a form of downward communication is designed to motivate employees to adopt the institution's, ethics, mission, and cultural values. Thus according to Arnold and Feldman (1986:154) the ability to communicate effectively is critical for the promotion of ethics and successful management of human resources in the public sector.

Working environment reflects a certain image and the effect of the public's perception of the institution may have an influence on public managers and the public service in general. According to the International Labour Organisation (1970: 57) the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness requires a stimulating workplace which does not have a negative effect on the workers. A workplace that is dirty, unhygienic, noisy with poor lighting and ventilation will seriously affect the morale of the workers with disastrous consequences on ethical conduct such as inefficiency and ineffectiveness (Du Toit and Van der Waldt 1997: 140). Among others, informal internal factors consists of values, will and attitudes. The will of people in leadership positions, such as public human resource managers, can play a major role in determining the atmosphere and culture of the institution as well as the pursued of promoting ethics. Heckman and Huneryager (in Thornhill and Hanekom 1995: 217-218) point out that this will is expressed in the management approach followed, for example dictatorial, democratic, laissez-faire and a carrot-and-stick approach to management.

The attitude of public human resource managers towards their work, colleagues and the political views and directions of the government of the day can contribute immensely to promoting ethics in the public sector. To this end, Du Toit and Van der Waldt (1997: 144) point out that, because the Public Service of the past was dominated by Afrikaners, the attitude of some of them towards the real needs of other communities was one of "it' s not my problem". This kind of

attitude is hardly conducive to promoting ethics in public human resource management. Because attitudes are so important in promoting ethics, a broader explanation is warranted. McCormick and Ilgen (1981: 302) define an attitude as "...the affective orientation towards a particular attitude object". They explain that the attitude object may be very specific, such as money, or general such as an attitude towards ethics. Schiffman and Kanuk (1983: 199) agree with this definition. They describe attitudes as expressions of inner feelings that reflect whether a person is favourably or unfavourably predisposed to some "object". These feelings are manifested in some judgements about the goodness and badness of the attitude object from the individual's point of view.

If the attitude, "it's not my problem", were accepted as the true reflection of the prevalent attitude in public human resource management, then an attitudinal change is imperative for the promotion of ethics in public management. Bailey (in Martin 1965: 240) argues that promoting ethics requires that attitudes be supported by moral qualities, such as: patience, honesty, loyalty, cheerfulness, courtesy, humility, to name but a few. He also points out that optimism, courage and fairness tampered by charity are essential moral qualities. Jones (1995: 511) refers to attitudinal change as attitudinal structuring, a process designed to influence the attitudes of the opposing party and to encourage the perception that both parties stand to benefit out of the change. Changes in attitudes are essential for the promotion of ethics in public human resource management. Dufield and Eling (in Lovel 1994: 116) point out that the process may require

that public managers give different support to different members of staff to enable them to cope effectively with the change.

In the discussion above, factors internal to the institution which may promote ethics were discussed. However, certain enabling activities for the promotion of ethics in public human resource management have to be undertaken. These are discussed in the following paragraphs under administrative processes.

5.4 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES AND ETHICS

According to Cloete (1993: 25-39) the generic administrative functions refer to policy-making, organising, financing, personnel management, procedure and the exercising of control. He also refers to these six categories as enabling functions, and must always be undertaken to achieve a goal (1993: 25). It can therefore be said that if the goal is the promotion of ethics in public human resource management, these enabling functions should be undertaken. In an analytical model for input-conversion-output transformation, Adlem *et al.* (1987: 40) indicate that these enabling functions appear under conversion and are referred to as administrative activities. Du Toit *et al.* (1998: 74) also argue that to enable government institutions to deliver services, these enabling functions must be undertaken. How these six generic administrative functions may promote ethics in public human resource management is discussed in the paragraphs below.

5.4.1 Policy as a means of promoting ethics

Starling (Hanekom 1987: 7) defines policy as a program of goals, values and practices serving as "...a guide that delimits action". Anderson (1984: 3) defines policy as "a purposive course of action in dealing with a problem or matter of public concern". From these definitions it emerges then that policy serves as a guide to purposive course of action. Institutional policy therefore serves to guide the actions of institutional members. In this instance, Fox *et al* (1991: 36-40) point out that internal policies guide the internal operations of the institution towards ethical conduct. Cloete (1994: 92-97) distinguishes four levels of public policy, of which the administrative policy level is of particular interest for this dissertation. He states that administrative policy is concerned mainly with the practical steps to achieve an objective, and it is usually formulated by public managers. At this level an endeavour can be made to accentuate ethics in the policies of the institution, for example by incorporating the ideals of Chapter 10 of the Constitution. Cloete and Mokgoro (1995:106), for example, point to the need for training policy which encourage and facilitate development of democratic, non-racial and non-sexist values. To achieve this, and promote ethics in public human resource management, it may be necessary to adopt a "retain and retrain" policy. The assumption (Cloete and Mokgoro 1995:110) is that in order to ensure continuity, the existing public service should be

substantially restructured, while retraining and reorientation programmes for existing public service staff is being undertaken.

Meehan (1987:9-12) argues for the normative requirements for policy making to promote ethics. He states that, because policy making is concerned with directing human actions towards ethical behaviour, two issues need to be addressed in policy making. These are, the important dimensions of human life, and how the various configurations in which human life appear should be ordered in order to show preference. The above suggest (Meehan 1987:10) that the policy-making process should consist in identifying preferred outcomes within a given set of options, e.g. preferred ethical behaviour, determining situations that are normatively unacceptable, such as corruption and inefficiency, and determining human actions that are liable to produce normatively significant consequences, such as contained in a code of conduct.

The success of policy in promoting ethics may be subject to the manner in which an institution is organised. This aspect is dealt with next.

5.4.2 Organising for the promotion of ethics

Various organisation theories have been developed over a period of time. A few of these theories are subsequently discussed. The relevancy or irrelevancy of each organisation theory to public human resource management is pointed out from an ethical viewpoint

5.4.2.1 The scientific management approach

The scientific management approach to organising is the brainchild of Taylor (Robbins, 1990: 34). Other proponents of the scientific management approach are Gulick, Urnicks, Mooney, Riley (Fox et al 1991: 65). Organising along scientific management guidelines involves discovering the one best way for each job to be done to maximise efficiency (Robbins, 1990: 35). Human beings in organisations are assumed as given, hence no attempt is made of analysing and understanding interpersonal relationships. External factors impinging on the organisation are also not explored (Nigro, 1970: 89). Public human resource management organised along scientific management guidelines disregard the human element in organisations. Organisations are constituted by human, with different attitudes, values, beliefs and backgrounds. Although institutions (organisations) should not be structured around individuals (Kroontz and

Wehrich, 1988: 174) it is doubtful whether the scientific management approach to organising is appropriate for promoting ethics in an institution.

5.4.2.2 The bureaucratic theory

Max Weber, using the concept of an "ideal type" developed the bureaucratic theory in organisation structure (Nigro, 1970: 89). The ideal organisation structure is characterised by division of labour, a clear authority hierarchy, formal set of rules and procedure and impersonal relationships (Hanekom, 1987: 28, Robins 1990: 35; Fox, *et al*; 1991: 64-65). Public human resource management, organised according to the "ideal type" organisation structure, is inflexible, impersonal and could not be user-friendly. The endeavour in public human resource management should be to translate the commitment to efficiency, accountability, and transparency into a practical, user-friendly system (Naidoo, 1995:15). Impersonality, inflexibility, overemphasis of rules and regulations in public personnel management dampens human dynamism and initiatives. Gould (in Farazmand 1991: 469) points out that organising characterised by long-windedness, and organisational slowness could be fertile ground for corruption and therefore detrimental to promoting ethics within the institution.

5.4.2.3 The Systems approach

In the systems approach to organisational theory, organisations are conceived of as absorbers of input, processors of input and generators of output (Fox *et al* 1991:65). Conceived of as open systems organizations could be understood as consisting of, and under the influence of a variety of independent factors such as individuals, groups, attitudes, motives, informal and formal structures, interactions and authority. Robbins (1990: 42) argues that current discussions on organisational theory is incomplete if the environmental factors are not thoroughly assessed.

Organising according to the open-system approach has the advantages of feedback from the affected environment (Botes *et al* 1996: 261). Remedial steps could thus be introduced and wrongs corrected. The essence of an ethical model in organising in public human resource management is to have in the system an in-built information mechanism upon which remedial actions would be based (See: Scott 1981:103). Through the open-systems approach to organising, contingencies in the environment can always be accommodated, thereby avoiding broad-based generalisations about organisational practices. A contingency or situational approach to organising answers the question about situational ethics, and could be an effective approach of promoting ethics and enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in an institution. Other important factors

to consider in organising with the aim of promoting ethics are organisational culture and organisational socialisation (Jones 1995: 179; Noorderhaven 1995: 151; Moorhead and Griffin (1989: 497). Hellriegel et al (1992: 516) argue that failure to develop an ethical culture may diffuse responsibility and accountability for the consequences of unethical behaviour and thereby make such behaviour more likely to occur. Institutional socialisation is the process through which new employees are brought into the culture of the institution (Robbins 1990: 447), and, according to Jones (1995: 201) an institution is ethical to the extent that institutional members are ethical. Pheysey (1993: 18) supports this argument and states that "...people contribute out of a sense of commitment to institutions of which they feel themselves as true members". Promoting ethics in an institution is also subject, to what Hellriegel et al. (1992:736) refers to as the "people variable". It refers to how people in an institution are organised including their individual differences - personality, attitudes, perceptions, attributes, needs and motives. Finally public human resource managers need to take care of aspects of synergy and sub-systems in promoting ethics within the institution. According to Daft (1995:56), these refer to conceptions that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and the interdependence of the parts of the system respectively. Institutional units working together can achieve more than those units working alone. One can also imagine what would happen to the morale and subsequent unethical behaviour among personnel if a section or division were given preferential treatment, such as a raise in salary while other sections or divisions are denied same. Therefore, promoting ethics requires a holistic

approach in public human resource management. Bennet (1995:362) support this statement.

It is also important to discuss ways in which finances, such as salaries and other financial incentives may promote ethics in public human resource management. This aspect receives attention in the paragraphs below.

5.4.3 Financial planning for the promotion of ethics

No public institution can function without funds. The state receives funds from the general public in the form of taxes, tariffs, levies, fines and loans. The money received remains the property of the public until spent satisfactorily through the various government institutions on the many societal needs, desires and demands. Every administrative action in the public institution has a direct or indirect financial implication. It is for this very reason that institutional financial planning is important in the public sector.

According to Botes (1993: 210) public human resource constitutes the largest percentage of expenses in the budget of any public institution. Bryce (1992: 4) supports this viewpoint. Chruden and Sherman (1984: 407) argue that pay has a direct bearing on the employee standard of living, status, and recognition and if perceived as being equitable may serve to promote ethical conduct both on and off the job. Cascio (1992: 345) supports this argument about equitable employee

compensation structure. But, according to Mittner (1995: 10) the South African Public Service is bloated, expensive and inefficient and must be rationalised through, among other, retrenchments, layoffs and redeployments (RSA 1995: 43-47). However, the rationalisation process may create problems such as the loss of earning power, dislocation of families, loss of status and recognition, unemployment, low morale, and may be unaffordable from an economic viewpoint (Beurkes 1995: 11).

An analysis of the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (RSA 1997) shows no reference to remunerations or financial incentives to public servants. Although these aspects are covered in the revised Public Service Staff Code (RSA 1994) this is hardly soothing in view of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (RSA 1995) with rationalisation and retrenchments being the order of the day.

From the above arguments, it can be inferred that these problems may serve to destabilise the public service and thereby inhibit ethics in public human resource management. One of the solutions for this dilemma is training in financial management (specially for those earmarked for retrenchments), investments and business opportunities. Motivation and assurances concerning their careers may serve to dispel uncertainties on the remaining employees and thereby promote prospects for ethical conduct from them. It is also important to consider

procedures and methods followed in achieving goals efficiently for the promotion of ethics. This aspect is discussed next.

5.4.4 Work procedures and methods for the promotion of ethics

Goal-achievement is virtually impossible without work procedures and methods, and in the public sector these need to be standardised (Coetzee, 1988:62). Standardisation of work procedures and methods serves to eliminate confusion, ensures uniformity, serves as control mechanism, the ultimate goal of the public institution is never lost sight of, it is also possible to promote responsibility and accountability among employees (Botes, 1993:218). For the same reasons that apply for standardisation, it is necessary to have procedure and methods in writing. The preparation of work procedures and methods is crucial/critical in public human resource management, and may promote ethical behaviour or vice versa. Botes (1993:219) argues for example that :-

- i) there is a tendency of written manuals attaining assumed status of quasi-legislation and thereby be difficult to amend. The result is that they become dysfunctional and have to be circumvented, which is unethical (Straussman 1990:340);
- ii) rigid instructions provide for narrow interpretation and thereby inhibits innovativeness and experimentation, and these may adversely affect efficiency and quality of service, which would be unethical;

iii) those responsible for drawing up manuals tend to show off their verbal and semantic skills, thereby making it very difficult to understand, and thereby impact negatively on communication and cooperation.

iv)

In the public sector standardised rules, procedures and methods are drawn to promote efficiency, effectiveness, lawfulness, responsibility and accountability. Straussman (1990: 341) argues that situations where these aspects cannot be easily attached, such as the circumvention of rules and procedures may create environments where ethical shortcomings may flourish and have to be avoided. A recent example in which rules, regulations and procedures have been flouted is the North West Scandal (Nkomo and Mfoloe, 1998: 1-2). Because of tendering procedures not being followed the North West Department of Education has lost R74,4 million in fraud and actions bordering on theft.

Flouting of rules, regulations and procedures abound in the present South African Public Service. For example the appointment of the management echelon in the Free State Department of Education, which lead to the Mphahlele Commission of Enquiry (Horn 1995:1). The deputy speaker of parliament's licence scandal in Mpumalanga in which procedures for acquiring a drivers licence were flouted. The solution lies in training (Cloete and Mokgoro 1995:91-117; Mbere 1995:6-7;23) with emphasis on the public service ethos. Tampoe (in Lovel 1994:147) lists these ethos as:

- giving undivided allegiance to the government;
- putting official duty before private interest;
- honesty, and avoiding bringing discredit to the public service;
- keeping the confidence to which the public servant is a party, and
- dealing sympathetically, efficiently and promptly with the public.

Although procedures and methods are essential in ensuring that ethics in institutions is promoted, control still has to be implemented. This aspect receives attention in the paragraphs below.

5.4.5 Promoting ethics through control

Botes et al (1996: 361) describe control as "...taking steps in order to stay in control of affairs". Staying in control of affairs and ensuring ethical conduct is essential in the public sector. They argue for example, that to err is human and public human resource managers are exposed to many temptations such as: stealing money, embezzling funds, accepting bribes, and doing particular favours for particular people. And he concludes that since government action must take place strictly according to the law, control must be exercised over action taken to ensure its legitimacy. Esterhuyse (in Gildenhuis 1991: 12) describes legitimacy as related to the moral acceptability of public institutions.

Cloete (1994: 207-209) discusses five formal control measures usually instituted in the public sector to ensure among others, efficiency, effectiveness, high standard of ethics, legitimacy, and accountability. These are written reports, inspections and investigations, auditing, cost accounting and statistical returns. A striking disadvantage of these control measures is that they are instituted after an action has taken place (post facto control measures). What could be recommended are a - priori control measures such as procedural prescriptions and codes of conduct. Through prescribed procedures public servants will know exactly what to do and confusion may be avoided (See also Botes et al 1992: 229).

The importance of codes of conduct in promoting ethics in the public service should be emphasised. This aspect is discussed next.

5.5 CODES OF CONDUCT AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Bateman and Zeithaml (1993: 168) describe ethical codes as "...written statements of beliefs and policy which give explicit guidelines for employees to follow". They point out that ethical codes provide the most visible sign of commitment to ethical behaviour. Cooper (1990:137) argues that ethical codes are the major form of control. He points out that they seek to establish limits, requirements, boundaries, and standards. According to Bateman and Zeithaml (1993: 543) codes serve as feedforward control mechanism, are future oriented

and aim at preventing problems before they arise. A code of conduct exists for the South African Public Service (RSA 1997). Its main purpose is to act as a guide to public employees as to what is expected of them from an ethical point of view, and to promote exemplary conduct. Because of the importance of this document, some of the points that are relevant to promoting ethics are reproduced below.

5.5.1 Relationship with the legislature and the executive

"An employee:-

- puts the public interest first in the execution of his or her duties;
- loyally executes the policies of the Government of the day in the performance of his or her official duties as contained in all statutory and other prescripts".

5.5.2 Relationship with the public

"An employee:-

- will serve the public in an unbiased and impartial manner in order to create confidence in the Public Service;
- is polite, helpful and reasonably accessible in his or her dealings with the public,

at all times treating members of the public as customers who are entitled to receive high standards of service;

- does not unfairly discriminate against any member of the public on account of race, gender, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, political persuasion, conscience, belief, culture or language”.

5.5.3 Relationship among employees

“An employee -

- co-operates fully with other employees to advance the public interest;
- refrains from favouring relatives and friends in work-related activities and never abuses his or her authority or influences another employee, nor is influenced to abuse his or her authority;
- is committed to the optimal development, motivation and utilisation of his or her staff and the promotion of sound labour and interpersonal relations;
- deals fairly, professionally and equitably with other employees, irrespective of race, gender, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, political persuasion, conscience, belief, culture or language, and refrains

from party political activities in the workplace”

5.5.4 Performance of duties

“An employee:-

- strives to achieve the objectives of his or her institution cost-effectively and in the public’s interest;
- executes his or her duties in a professional and competent manner;
- is honest and accountable in dealing with public funds and uses the Public Service’s property and other resources effectively, efficiently, and only for authorised official purposes;
- promotes sound, efficient, effective, transparent and accountable administration;
- in the course of his or her official duties, shall report to the appropriate authorities, fraud, corruption, nepotism, maladministration and any other act which constitutes an offence, or which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- gives honest and impartial advice, based on all available relevant information, to higher authority when asked for assistance of this kind”.

It is apparent from the above excerpts that the code of conduct envisages certain behaviour from public servants. However a code of conduct is not a panacea for unethical conduct, and has both advantages and disadvantages.

5.5.5 Advantages of codes of conduct

Cooper (1990: 143) mentions the following advantages:

First, codes of conduct can project ideas, norms, and obligations better than legislation. Legislation "generally focus on conflict of interest and tend to be negative in its prescription". Codes of conduct can establish an ethical status to members of a profession.

Second, codes of conduct can be tailored to the typical situation of the profession. While legislation tends to be universalistic and more inclusive, codes can be more particularistic in their audience.

Third, if codes of conduct are not prepared by a few in isolation of the majority they can serve as a means of socialising members, clarifying and internalising the values of a professional group. Durkheim (Cooper 1990: 143) warns against codes that are prepared and imposed by a few, and suggests that they should evolve through the active participation of many.

5.5.6 Disadvantages of codes of conduct

Cooper (1990: 144) points to the following as disadvantages of codes of ethics.

First, a striking disadvantage of codes of ethics is the absence of an enforcement mechanism. As a form of external control, codes are generally weak because of lack of operational enforcement structure and procedures.

Second, even where enforcement mechanism do exists, these may be meaningless. He argues that most professional associations in the public sector do not license practitioners in their fields, as a result a wayward member's career is not likely to be significantly affected by the actions of a professional association.

However, regardless of these shortcomings, codes of conduct remain an important document for the promotion of ethics in public management. Clapper (1996: 23) for example, points out that codes of conduct channel the public human resource manager's personal morality and technical skills, codes assumes that public human resource managers have personal value systems that disposes him/her towards serving efficiently and ethically, they serve to steer the judgement and discretion of public managers in an effort to ensure efficient service delivery. De Baros (1990: 6) argues that codes of conduct serve

two purposes, namely to combat corruption and prevent maladministration. He describes corruption as the blatant dishonesty in the use of public money, and maladministration as a disfunctional condition where the tax-payer is a loser as a result of inefficiency but where there is not necessarily enrichment of the public official. Thakathi (1995: 14) also emphasises the role of codes in promoting ethics. He writes that codes indicate the belief that ethical management is essential for the achievement of the service objective. That they are a demonstration of the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty and fortitude in all public activities.

An analysis of the excerpts of the code of conduct shows that it is not a set of "don't", but lays emphasis on what a public employee shall do. In this sense the code is enriching in guiding action towards positivity. Another aspect which merits consideration in promoting ethics is leadership. This aspect is discussed next.

5.6 PROMOTING ETHICS THROUGH LEADERSHIP

Starling (1986: 418) defines leadership as "the process of influencing the activities of a group in efforts towards goal attainment in a given situation".

Cloete (1993: 199) defines it as consisting of "those functions which must be performed specifically to make employees work to the utmost of their physical and mental capacities". Among the functions he names motivation, communication, directing, and determining work programmes.

After an extensive investigation of leadership in South Africa, Schilbach (Gerber *et al* 1995: 343) defined leadership as "an interpersonal process through which a leader directs the activities of individuals or groups towards the purposeful pursuance of given objectives within a particular situation, by means of communication".

Central to these definitions is that:-

- leadership is a process and not a once off event. It takes place on a continuous basis and it is intentional;
- the intention in leadership is to influence the activities of employees through coordination and motivation, hence it is a purposive activity, aimed at achieving set goals;
- leadership requires both interpersonal and communication skills. A leader needs to be able to deal with and handle people and to communicate effectively with both colleagues and subordinates, recognising that communication is a two way process.

In their leadership roles, public human resource managers can adopt certain leadership styles or a combination of them. These are discussed below and assessed from ethical viewpoints.

5.6.1 Autocratic leadership

According to Bartol and Martin (1991: 485) an autocratic leader is one who makes unilateral decisions, dictates work methods, limits worker knowledge, and gives feedback that is punitive. He/she uses coercive power and invariably promotes unrest and dissatisfaction (George 1982: 29) in the sense that sooner or later the employees "revolt" by implementing a work slowdown. This type of leadership can hardly be described as ethical, in the sense that the quality and quantity of his/her results can long remain at a high level. Starling (1986: 423) points out that this type of leadership fails to size up the situation particularly the maturity level of subordinates - and may lead to loss of good employees through resignation. In a sense, autocratic leadership operates on the premises of "you must not" ethics (de Baros 1990:7) and fails to address ethics according to situations as they arise. This type of leadership may be suitable in situations where personnel is uneducated, obedient and apathetic to participation. Stahl (1983: 230) sums this up better. He states that "it is hard to see how one-man decision making, in contrast to group decision making, has worked to the betterment of human history".

5.6.2 Laissez-faire leadership

Sometimes referred to as the permissive leader (George 1982: 29) the laissez-faire leader gives complete freedom to subordinates, provides them with the necessary material, only answers questions when asked, avoids giving feedback, and literally provides no direction (Bartol and Martin 1991: 485). Rosenbloom and Goldman (1993: 153) point out that this leadership style can only be of importance where employees involvement in the institution is based primarily on a moral commitment to its goals. In terms of affecting ethics in public human resource management, this leadership style cannot, with reference to definitions above, promote ethics in an institution because it provides no direction to subordinates and does not influence activities towards set goals, such as promoting ethics.

5.6.3 Democratic leadership

Democratic leadership is a type that is characterised by participative decision making (Stahl 1983: 231), involvement of employees in determining work methods, the use of feedback as an opportunity for helpful coaching (Bartol and Martin 1991: 485), and employees that function effectively even during the leader's prolonged absences (George 1982: 29). Communication between the leader and subordinates is crucial particularly in the form of feedback.

In terms of how this leadership style may affect the promotion of ethics, may be deduced from its definition. The involvement of subordinates in setting objectives, (Megginson et al.1989:343) such as the promotion of ethics, presupposes a commitment to achieve these. The feedback and monitoring serves to measure the extent to which goals have been achieved.

From an analysis of leadership styles above it cannot be readily said that one particular type of leadership is best in all situations. What is best in one situation may be worse in another, although in general, the democratic type is probably the all-round best. For example in situations where close control must be maintained it may be best to adopt an autocratic style, whereas a laissez-faire style may be suitable if one leads a group of highly skilled self-starters, e.g. research scientists. In most work situations, public human resource managers will have to judge for themselves which type or combination is best suited for achieving objectives efficiently and effectively. As leaders in their fields, public human resource managers need to develop good human relations and communication skills. These aspects receives attention in the paragraphs below.

5.7 PROMOTING ETHICS THROUGH GOOD HUMAN RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

Marx (1986: 201) defines human relations as "...the interpersonal relations within specific enterprise which arise from the daily contact between people within the work situation and the way in which they behave towards one another". Lussier (1993:5) defines it as "...interaction among people." George (1982:102) describe human relations simply as applying the golden rule, that is, doing unto others as one would like them to do unto oneself. Or as an ethical approach to personnel problems in work situations.

Lussier's definition is broad and general, while George and Marx's are specific to work situations. George's description of human relations as an ethical approach to personnel problems is more appropriate in this context in the sense that it highlights the importance of ethical reflections in dealing with personnel problems. He goes further to explain that practising good human relations means getting employees to work together harmoniously, productively and cooperatively to achieve economic as well as social satisfaction. Lussier (1993: 5) supports this explanation by George and he states that to achieve this, a win-win situation has to be created in which both the satisfaction of employees needs and achieving organisational objectives are fused together as priorities in human resource management.

The beginning of success in this context is understanding oneself (George 1982: 105) and then the institution. Understanding lower management and employees is difficult, but as Marx (1986: 215) points out, the ethical example set by human resource managers is of vital importance and permeates the whole institution. The key is communication and may be regarded as the foundation of human relations. George (1982: 55) supports this observation, and calls it "the big job".

It can be seen from the above descriptions that sound human relations and communications are better achievable under a democratic style of leadership. It is also essential that public human resource managers be trained in public service ethics so that they can act from the basis of knowledge. Training in ethics is discussed next.

5.8 PROMOTING ETHICS THROUGH TRAINING

Training is defined in the Public Service Staff Code (1995) chapter L, section 3.1 (g) as "...all those planned and purposeful activities which improve knowledge, skills, insight, attitude, behaviour, values and working and thinking habits of public servants or prospective public servants in such a way that they are able to perform designated or intended tasks more efficiently". The need for training in the public service is manifold. For example, Cheminai *et al.* (1998: 190) point out, among others, that personnel come to workplaces with patterns of

behaviour, attitudes, views and prejudices which might not fit into their working circles. Such behaviour patterns and attitudes may be dysfunctional to the institution and need be changed through training. Beach (1985: 244) supports this point. He states that the objective of training programme is to try to create new attitudes or change existing ones. Chapter L sec 4.6 of the Public Service Staff Code (1995) on training recognises the diversity of the human resources utilised in the public service, and encourages that training programmes should be designed to allow for such diversity to promote a common culture to support unity at the workplace and the ethics of a single public service.

Promoting ethics through training in the public sector has been an ongoing endeavour. Kernaghan and Dwivedi (1983: 151) report on an international perspective in this regard. They point out that the International Association of Schools and Institute of Administration (IASIA) devoted considerable portion of its activities on examining values and ethics on training programmes and concluded that these could not be ignored by nations concerned with quality of the public service. This conclusion was reached despite the fact that participants in group deliberations came from greatly contrasting political and cultural systems (Kernaghan and Dwivedi 1983: 151). Hanekom (1984: 63) supports this conclusion. He states that all employees be trained in public service ethics and in the necessity to abide by prescribed codes of conduct.

The Green Paper on Public Service Training and Education (Government Notice No. 17852: 35) envisages a Public Service staffed by dedicated and productive public servants whose performance is maximised. Carsten (1996 : 1) points out that the civil service is currently in a state of flux, and an ideal opportunity is presenting itself for training in public service ethics. He argues that new training methodology is essential to break from past practices of maladministration and corruption. The principles of "Batho Pele" require that the behaviour of all public servants should be raised to the level of the best through training in public service ethics (RSA 1997: 18). Promoting and upholding ethics in public human resource management requires that administrative action be just. This aspect receives attention below.

5.9 JUST ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION: A way to further ethics in public human resource management

According to Bekker (1997: 236) just administrative action implies, among others, first, that everyone has the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and particularly fair, and second, that everyone whose rights has been infringed upon by administrative action has the right to be given written reasons for the infringement. Thakathi (1995:14) argues that public management must take place legally with all actions of public officials occurring within the framework of the existing legislation.

An analysis of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (RSA 1997: 17-24) shows that just administrative action entails among others:

- setting service standard in public management and a concerted endeavour to meet these in service delivery. Standards are yardsticks against which to measure performance. According to Botes (1994:178) standards may be both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Qualitative standards express the degree to which something, such as an action, is acceptable or unacceptable.

Ethics does not take place in a vacuum, but concerns judgement on human conduct. Ethical standards concern the degree to which human conduct is perceived to be in the public interest, in terms of good or bad, right or wrong, proper or improper, approved of or disapproved of, and acceptable or unacceptable. Setting ethical standards requires that they be set at a level which is demanding but realistic (RSA 1997:17). In other words, although these ethical standard should be demanding in terms of effort, dedication, and commitment, they must be within the mental and physical capabilities of a trained public official (Botes 1994:180);

- showing courtesy towards the public, which goes beyond giving a smile, say please and thank you. Such courtesy should convince the member of the public that he/she is being treated "as a customer who is entitled to receive the highest standard of service;

- increasing transparency with the public so as to build confidence and trust between the public sector and the public they serve. Just administrative action requires that action be open to public scrutiny. This is what Cloete (1994:80) refers to as probity. He writes that public officials should conduct themselves in such a manner that they will be able to withstand any test of public scrutiny. In other words, when the need arises to pass ethical judgement on the public officials behaviour, his/her behaviour should be able to withstand the test.

According to the Batho Pele White Paper (RSA 1997:20) transparency is the hallmark of a democratic government, and is fundamental to the public service. Promoting ethics in the public service requires that administrative actions be undertaken openly. Administrative secrecy provides an opportunity to cover up unethical conduct (Rourke in Hanekom et al. 1986:154). Warren (in Hanekom et al. 1986:154) point out that secrecy is an ally of corruption and that is why corruption is always practised in secret;

- a willingness to remedy mistakes and failures if and when these occur. This requires a new approach in handling complaints in line with accessibility, speed, fairness, responsiveness and training.

Thakathi (1991: 14) further points out that just administrative action requires that public human resource managers be sensitive to public needs. Promoting ethics

in public management also requires upholding democratic values. This as is described next.

5.10 PROMOTING ETHICS BY UPHOLDING DEMOCRATIC VALUES

According to Botes et al (1996: 23) a prominent characteristic of a democracy is the principle of free general elections without coercion. Du Toit and van Der Waldt (1997: 56) support this view, and further state that participation by the citizen must be such that it results in efficient and effective government. Cheminais et al (1998: 113) point out that to ensure that the views of all interested parties are taken into account in a democracy, public institution should be organised in a manner that fosters transparent deliberation, consultation, and discipline. To attain the objectives of democracy and promote ethics in public management, certain democratic values have to be observed and implemented. Schwella et al (1996: 15) point to the following values, namely, representation, legitimacy, transparency, responsiveness and accountability. Cheminais et al (1998: 113) write as follows concerning these democratic values:

- Representation

Public management work involves an important and complicated interface with the political process. As a result, because the public chooses political representatives, public institutions must reflect the composition of the population on both management position and in occupational group. The rationale is that a representative public service will have empathy with those they serve and view problems from their perspective.

- Responsiveness

Responsiveness as a value rests on the belief that elected representative must answer to the will of the electorate, and that public institutions and public human resource managers be sensitive to the real needs of the client. Public human resource managers should at all times be accountable to both the political office-bearers and the public.

- Legitimacy

According to Fox and Meyer (1996:73) legitimacy denotes the feeling among citizens that government actions are legally and morally correct and acceptable. Cheminaiis et al (1998: 114) point to the fact that public human

resource managers have a legitimacy which arises from their professional status and organisational positions, and their actions should be according to legal and moral conduct.

- **Transparency**

Schwella (1996: 16) makes a point that transparency concerns itself with the extent to which the actions of public human resource managers are open to public scrutiny. To this end the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (RSA 1997:20) envisages an annual report to citizens published by each national and provincial department.

In promoting and maintaining ethics, it is also essential to consider some causes of unethical behaviour so that public human resource managers can guard against them. These are discussed in the paragraph below.

5.11 CAUSES OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

There are many factors that could influence public human resource functionaries to behave unethically. Bayat and Meyer (1994: 216-223) discuss, among others the following:-

- greed, which they describe as a "avarice and the concomitant striving for personal gain". Because of greed, public functionaries may seek private gain at public expense thereby enrich themselves materially;
- presence of an ethos of corruption in which public functionaries are "wittingly or unwittingly drawn into corruption due to ignorance, or perhaps because they are poorly remunerated". (See also Gildenhuis 1991: 60);
- differing ethical standards and norms prevalent in an institution because of the heterogeneity of the personnel corps could lead to "ethical dilemmas such as moral ambiguity or dualism". In this instance public human resource managers may find themselves in conflicting situations in which emphasis of the views and values of other groups takes precedent.

Van der Waldt and Helmbold (1995: 161-162) discuss deficient control and accountability, complex legislation, inadequate procedure and manuals, deficient management and organisation as some of the factors which may cause unethical behaviour. Some of these were discussed earlier on in this chapter.

Bateman and Zeithaml (1993: 168) make mention of the following as causes of unethical behaviour, namely:-

- i excessive emphasis on short-term gains over long-term considerations;
- ii failure to establish and adhere to a written code of ethics;
- iii looking for simple solutions to ethical problems;

- iv unwillingness on the part of public human resource managers to take an ethical stand that may impose financial costs;
- v looking at ethics solely as a legal issue and not being prepared to go beyond what the law prescribes; and
- vi a lack of clear procedures for handling ethical problems.

Promoting and maintaining ethics in public human resource management is not easy. Among others, it requires that decision makers define an ethical issue clearly, identify the relevant values in the situation, and carefully weigh the conflicting values. (See for example Bateman and Zeithaml 1993: 170-171). An awareness of the factors discussed above could be of assistant in promoting ethics for public human resource managers.

5.12 SUMMARY

Public human resource management does not take place in a vacuum. It takes place within certain environments. These environments influences the actions of public functionaries responsible for public human resource management. The environments may be divided into external and internal environments.

In promoting and maintaining ethics in public human resource management it is important to consider how, from an ethical perspective, these environments influences the decisions and actions of public functionaries. External

environments discussed in this chapter include, among others, economic environment, political environment, cultural environment, and the social environment.

The generic administrative process of policy, organisation, finance, procedures and method are discussed as internal environments in public human resource management. How these internal environments influence the decisions and actions of public functionaries responsible for public human resource management is discussed from an ethical view point. The aspect of accountability as a means of promoting and maintaining ethics is also discussed in detail.

Establishment of a written code of ethics for the promotion of ethics is discussed as an external control mechanism. Both the advantages and disadvantages of codes of ethics are explained.

Factors which may elicit unethical behaviour in public human resource management are listed and discussed. Leadership, human relations and communication are discussed as aspects which promote ethics.

In the next chapter conclusions and proposals based on the first five chapters are made .

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

6. INTRODUCTION

Ethics is an all-embracing concept concerning human behaviour. In work situations, ethical behaviour is important in the sense that it can affect the productivity of an organisation as well as the quality of the goods produced and services rendered. In the public sector, ethical behaviour is even more important in view of the high public profile of the activities of this sector. In the light of this, it is necessary to review what has been written in the previous chapters and weigh the accumulated evidence against the hypothesis stated in Chapter one. This leads to the drawing of some salient conclusions and proposals in the endeavour to promote ethics in human resource management in the public sector. In testing the hypothesis, the chapters in this dissertation will be revisited seriatim.

6.1 Testing the hypothesis

It has been noted in Chapter one that incidents of unethical behaviour in the South African public sector is high. It has also been stated in Chapter five that

perceptions and attitudes held by public managers towards both internal and external factors to their institutions, affect activities either positively or negatively. This indicates that the hypothesis stated, that perceptions and attitudes on ethics in human resource management in the public sector influences behaviour should be accepted. Literature evidence indicates that the truthfulness of the hypothesis can be explained in four different ways. These will subsequently be elucidated below.

6.1.1 Theories of ethics

Literature study indicates that theories of ethics can be divided into two broad types, namely, teleological and deontological theories. The teleological type could be categorised into two sub-types, namely, the directive utilitarianism (e.g. the law and codes of conduct) and the situational sub-type (e.g. where the decision is dictated to by prevailing circumstances, such as pressure from the union). Deontological theories pertains to values such as accountability, transparency, fairness, efficiency, responsiveness, to name but a few.

In the performance of their duties, managers of human resources are confronted by ethical dilemmas that can be classified within the above-mentioned categories. How managers perceive the dilemmas and their attitudes towards them determines their decisions and ultimately their actions. Research evidence in this study reveal that codes of conduct play an important role as guides for

action in the public sector. However, for codes of conduct to be well received, there should be wide consultation (e.g. with labour unions) when they are drawn, and the need for enforcement mechanisms in cases of violation of codes. In decision making, managers of human resources combine both ethical theories to address ethical situations, although many are not aware of the mental process they use.

From the findings of this dissertation, it can be stated that codes of conduct can enjoy better support if not drawn by a few people in isolation (e.g. management) but democratically agreed upon or collaboratively derived (e.g. by involving labour union members). The absence of enforcement mechanisms renders codes of conduct weak. From the last statement, it can be suggested that some form of sanctions should be attached to the violation of codes of conduct .

6.1.2 Human resource management

Different role players are involved in the management of human resources. Clarification of roles of the players is presented in Chapter three. It is pointed out, for example, that there is potential for conflict between human resource specialists, and line managers. Line managers are prone to disregarding advice provided to them by staff managers. In any institution, cordial relations between the two categories of functions should be created and maintained to prevent unnecessary conflicts. In this way, line managers will be able to accept advices

without reservations in the full knowledge that staff functionaries have no authority over them.

6.1.3 Values

Values are integral parts of ethics. In Chapter four, some of the values that underpin ethics in human resource management in the public sector have been discussed. These include, among others, religious values, responsibility, fairness and reasonableness, individual rights, efficiency, responsiveness, equity and merit. In theories of ethics, values are described in deontological theory .

In the South African context of human resource management in the public sector, consideration of different value systems is essential. The reason for this is the fact that South Africa is a heterogeneous society. This implies that the society is multicultural with different cultural groups or ethnic groups maintaining their cultural identities and value systems. Managing in such an environment requires the skills of managing diversity. Management of diversity requires from managers to draw strength from the diverse value systems prevalent in the different public institutions without undermining the values of either group or ethnic groups.

From the reason advanced, it follows that human resource managers in the public sector have to consider the values held by the different members of their personnel corps. The attitude managers of human resources hold towards the different value systems will determine how they treat their subordinates and the public. This statement is critical in the sense that, should a manager be negatively pre-disposed towards one group, he/she is likely to treat it adversely. Such treatment could be interpreted as discrimination. In South Africa, with its history of individual right abuses which extended into work places, human resource managers' actions should be characterised by caution concerning value systems. Their actions should also be characterised by fairness and impartiality.

It was found that there is not enough evidence to support the assumption that representativeness promotes responsiveness, although it is so assumed in some literature. Since the focus of this dissertation was confined to theories and principles of ethics, it could be of interest if the relationship between these two values is subjected to further research in order to establish whether a representative public service is in reality responsive to public demands. It should also be investigated if a representative public service satisfies the values of efficiency and effectiveness. Democratic values should also be researched *vis-a-vis* bureaucratic values. In practice, democratic values of participation and involvement are in contrast to bureaucratic values of top-down decision making and authority. Also, where as democracy enshrines the values of equality,

bureaucracy enshrines the values of hierarchy, with those at the top enjoying far greater power than those at the bottom. In this dissertation, political responsiveness is confirmed. It is pointed out that this aspect relies on patronage in recruiting, selecting, and promotion of personnel. With the result that appointed public officials are usually those that are sympathetic to the ruling party's policies. Concerning the values of efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness to popular public sentiments, it can be suggested that these be the subjects of empirical research, which have not been looked at scientifically in the context of this dissertation. It can also be suggested that the bureaucratic nature of public institutions, which is characterised by top-down decision making and authority, be adapted to accommodate democratic values of participation and involvement.

6.1.4 Promotion of ethics

The promotion of ethics in human resource management in the public sector raises questions of whether ethics can be taught, whether it is possible to train people in ethics, and whether such education and training can contribute to the enhancement of quality, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Literature evidence is inconclusive on the above questions. However, in the South African public sector, there is a host of white papers which provide guidelines on the promotion of ethics. The most important guidelines are those in The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White

Paper 1997). The principles of Batho Pele are set out in simple terms and a broad implementation strategy is suggested.

In Chapter five of this dissertation, it is argued that ethics in human resource management in the public sector should be maintained and promoted. Beside the legal framework provided, aspects such as leadership, communication, human relations, training, just administrative action, upholding democratic values, and the generic administrative processes are discussed in detail. With unethical behaviour so prevalent in the public sector, the deliberate promotion of ethics can serve as one of the means to curb this phenomenon .

6.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PROMOTION OF ETHICS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

It is certain that many factors contribute to occurrences of unethical behaviour in the public sector. Curbing such behaviour cannot be left to the government alone, although it has indicated its seriousness in dealing with corruption in the public sector. Several white papers exist in which guidelines for ethical behaviours are provided, but to date these have had no significant effects. Findings from this study lead to the following conclusions and suggestions.

- Codes of conduct are perceived to be more important as ethical guides than acts and regulations. This is confirmed by the fact that the advantages of codes of

conduct outweigh those of legislation as guides to ethical conduct. However, two aspects were apparent concerning codes of conduct, namely, that public managers should not compile such codes in isolation but through participation, and to make them effective, some form of enforcement mechanism is essential.

- Managers of human resources should be imaginative and innovative in order to reconcile the different religious values, value-systems and cultures of the different communities and personnel corps. This finding implies that no values espoused by one group should enjoy priority over values espoused by other groups.
- In the transformation of the Public Service, the aspect of affirmative action should be approached cautiously. This statement implies that unplanned implementation of affirmative action that does not take into consideration merit and efficiency, may have the effect of demoralising some employees and thereby affect their performance and service- delivery.
- Ethics in the management of human resources depends on everybody making a concerted effort to promote and uphold ethical conduct. This study reveals that the will to expose unethical conduct such as corruption by colleagues, is not something that should be taken for granted. It appears from the study that unethical conduct by colleagues will not be revealed as long as a public manager is not directly involved. This may explain the reasons for the occurrence

of corruption in the South African public sector in that public managers are reluctant to blow the whistle on each other.

- Findings in this dissertation also lead to the suggestion that strong leadership is needed and that it should be backed up by management practices that reflect:
 - no tolerance for unethical conduct;
 - training in ethics;
 - clear disciplinary measures for ethical offences regardless of status or position;and
- analysis and evaluation of training courses to ensure their relevancy to work situations and serving of a society in transition. Training and development should aim at improving skills, attitudes, ethics and be beneficial to both the individual, institution and the community at large.

- It has already been pointed out that the relationship between responsiveness and the values of efficiency and effectiveness should be the subject of further research. In the South African context, it is hoped that a transformed and representative Public Service will be able to satisfy these values. However, it should be borne in mind that efficiency and effectiveness are influenced by a variety of factors, such as the level of training, motivation, management style and the commitment displayed by an employee to his/her work. In assessing these values *vis-a-vis* responsiveness, these factors should be taken into account. Presently, the South African Public service is in transition, with many in

this sector still trying to find their footings. Empirical research undertaken in this transition period to establish the relationship between the above values may not yield the same results than when undertaken in a more stable public service.

- The democratisation of public institutions necessarily implies tampering with their bureaucratic nature. The long winded manner of doing things prevalent in a bureaucracy should be substituted by innovativeness, experimentation and creativity. Turning public institutions into organisations with clear vision, mission, flexible flat structures, and participatory type of decision making may serve to achieve the above objectives, and to promote ethics. This is based on the fact that such organisations have the effect of promoting a sense of ownership among all concerned, a sense of commitment and loyalty, and therefore responsibility and accountability.

These aspects should be enhanced by a code of conduct that has clearly defined enforcement mechanisms.

6.3 Proposals

It is inconceivable that an acceptable level of ethics in the public sector can be attained while the majority of the people in the society are apathetic towards ethics. To bridge this gap, it is proposed in this dissertation that aspects of ethics be included in the school curricula. Ethics need not be a formal school

subject, but ethical aspects can be integrated into different school subjects such as Business Economics, Economics, and Accountancy, to name but a few. Many subjects offered at tertiary level, among them, Public Administration, Human Resource Management, Business Administration, can accommodate aspects of ethics. At this level, knowledge of ethics should be intensified regardless of the study direction a student follows. In this way, professional codes of conduct will assume special status when a student eventually qualifies as a professional. Assuming that unethical behaviour in the form of corruption is prevalent among people in higher positions, empowering them on ethics throughout their educational careers can contribute to the promotion of ethics in their work life .

Education in aspects of ethics is a long term endeavour and its sustainability should be manifested in further training in ethics. This statement suggests that, where as teaching approaches should aim at enhancing the ability to link theory to practice, training of public officials should emphasise innovativeness and the importance of values. This type of training is a departure from training public officials to fulfill roles as instruments of state power and controllers of the public, into being service providers. This shift essentially indicates that the Public Service shifts from being servant of the government to servant of the people. It also put public officials in a position to assess the environment within which services are provided in terms of social events such as poverty and violence and empower them to take action based on real life situations.

Many organisations have mission statements that reflect how they intend conducting business with their clients. These mission statements embody core values that need to be communicated throughout the organisation, and not just be the preserves of high ranking officials such as the Chief Executive Officers and their immediate subordinates. People involved in the day-to-day operations of the organisation should be well conversant with the mission statement in order to put it into effect.

6.4 Possible research projects that may emanate from this dissertation

Chapter Ten, section 195 of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) outlines the basic values and principles governing public administration in South Africa. There is also a code of conduct for public servants to guide their conduct in dealing with members of the public. In addition, the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997 (Batho Pele White Paper 1997: 15-23) identifies eight broad principles for application by national and provincial departments to ensure promotion of ethics in the public sector. In the light of the above, it is evident that ethics in the public sector should receive much more attention than ever before.

Important questions that stem from this research project are:-

- Whether ethics can be taught to employees and, if so, how such training should be undertaken?
- the extent to which such training endeavours might enhance quality, efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery? and
- what mechanisms could be used to enforce codes of conduct?

The endeavour to promote ethics in the public sector should be backed up by a measure against set standards. To this end, the Batho Pele White Paper advocated for setting standards through consultation.

The above represents but a few questions and issues relevant to this dissertation that may be considered for research.

6.5 Summary

Theories are important tools for explaining and predicting phenomena. In this dissertation theories of ethics in the management of human resources in the public sector have been discussed. These formed the core of the discussions in the entire dissertation.

Chapter three dealt with aspects which are normally undertaken in human resource management. Suggestions on how to overcome conflict between staff functionaries

and line functionaries have been discussed in detail. This aspect is essential in order to promote cordial relations between the two categories.

Values are central to ethics, and for this reason have been accorded a chapter, that is, Chapter four. The values discussed include, among others, religious values, personal values, institutional values, as well as public administration values enshrined in the constitution.

The promotion of ethics in the public sector is fundamental to quality service delivery and the of combating corruption. For this purpose, Chapter five is devoted to the discussion of means of promoting and maintaining ethics in the management of human resources in the public sector. Various aspects are discussed in this respect, and the chapter concludes by highlighting on aspects may that cause unethical behaviour.

The conclusions and proposals contained in this dissertation are made in the light of what is contained in the text. Although the emphasis in this dissertation has been on the management of human resources in the public sector, it is hoped that the arguments presented and the proposals made will be equally applicable to public management in general.

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SUMMARY

The public sector is a sector characterised by its own value system. Values such as accountability, transparency, efficiency, equity, to name but a few, have to be taken into account by all those engaged in this sector. On the other hand, values are integral parts of ethics, thus necessitating that those engaged in the public sector should be well versed in ethics.

In this dissertation, the author argues that theoretical principles of ethics should form the basis of all activities in human resource management in the public sector. Emphasis on human resource management is deliberate, since only human beings are capable of ethical or unethical behaviour. Managers of human resources in the public sector should be adequately trained in ethics in order for them to train their subordinates, and thereby curb unethical behaviour. Theories are helpful in predicting and explaining phenomena, such as why people behave the way they do. Principles, on the other hand, serve as fundamental basis for reasoning or action. Both the teleological and deontological theories of ethics are discussed in this dissertation. The two sub-types of teleological theory, that is, the directive utilitarianism and the situational sub-type are discussed, and practical examples provided. Deontological theory pertains to values, and it is also discussed with examples.

Human resource management activities, such as human resource provisioning, utilisation, motivation, and maintenance are discussed from an ethical point of view. The roles of different role players in human resource management are explained, and so too is the necessity for ethics from each role player. Although no claim is made of being exhaustive on values, some important ones in human resource management in the public sector are discussed at length.

The promotion of ethics is fundamental to the endeavour to curb unethical behaviour such as corruption, fraud, maladministration and theft. Different ways for the promotion of ethics in human resource management are suggested in this dissertation. Among these, leadership and training are singled out as being particularly important, because leaders determine the culture, climate, and the direction of institutions. While acknowledging that training has always been undertaken in human resource management in the public sector, training in ethics requires a paradigm shift. New training methodologies, designed to develop new attitudes and change old ones should be developed. Especially now that the South African Public Service is in a state of flux, it present an ideal opportunity for training in public service ethics.

Suggestions for the promotion of ethics are dealt with in the last part of this dissertation. It is suggested, for example, that some form of enforcement mechanism for codes of conduct be introduced to enhance effectiveness. The democratisation of public institutions, which tampers with their bureaucratic nature, should be speeded up in order for

participatory decision making to take place. Leadership that reflects innovation and imagination, driven by a vision and experimentation should be encouraged. The development of an ethics culture that goes beyond the confines of the institutions into the community should be entertained. The introduction of aspects of ethics in relevant subjects at tertiary should be looked into. Also suggested, are possible research projects that may emanate from this research project.

OPSOMMING

'n Uitstaande kenmerk van die openbare sektor is dat dit oor 'n eie waardestelsel beskik. Werknemers in hierdie sektor moet waardes in ag neem soos onder meer aanspreeklikheid, deursigtigheid, doeltreffendheid en gelykheid in die funksionering van hierdie sektor.

Waardes vorm 'n integrale onderdeel van etiek. Derhalwe moet werknemers van hierdie sektor deeglik bekend wees met etiese reëls.

In hierdie verhandeling poog die skrywer om aan te dui dat die teoretiese grondbeginsels van etiek die basis behoort te vorm van alle aktiwiteite rakende menslike hulpbronbestuur in die openbare sektor. Die klem word doelbewus op menslike hulpbronbestuur geplaas, aangesien dit slegs die menslike wesens is wat tot onetiese optredes in staat is.

Bestuurders van menslike hulpbronne in hierdie sektor moet deeglike opleiding in etiek ontvang. Deeglike opleiding deur bestuurders aan ondergeskiktes ten einde onetiese optrede te beperk is noodsklik.

Teorië is nuttig in die voorspelling en verklaring van gedragsverskynsels. Beginsels dien egter as beweegredes vir optredes of redenasies van persone. Beide die teologiese en deontologiese teorië van etiek word in hierdie verhandeling behandel. Die twee elemente van die teologiese teorie, te wete, direkte utilitarianisme en die situasionele teorië word bespreek. Praktiese voorbeelde word ook verskaf. Die deontologiese teorie handel oor waardesisteme, en word ook deur middel van voorbeelde bespreek.

'n vertrekpunt wat op etiek gebaseer is, word gevolg insoverre dit menslike hulpbronbestuurs aktiwiteite soos voorsiening, benutting, motivering en onderhoud van die werksmag aangaan. Die onderskeie rolle van die rolspelers in menslike hulpbronbestuur word verduidelik, asook die noodsaaklikheid van etiek by hierdie rolspelers. Alhoewel geen aanspraak op volledigheid rondom waardebeskouings gemaak word nie, word sekere belangrike waardes in menslike hulpbronbestuur volledig bespreek.

In 'n poging om onetiese optredes soos korrupsie, bedrog en wanadministrasie, te bekamp, speel die bevordering van etiek 'n fundamentele rol. Verskillende werkswyse hieroor word ook behandel, soos onder meer leierskap en opleiding, wat in hierdie verhandeling as besonder belangrik ge-identifiseer word.

Die belangrikheid van die twee elemente blyk daaruit dat die leiers van 'n instansie die kultuur, klimaat en die rigting daarvan bepaal. Terwyl dit erken word dat opleiding nog altyd onderneem is in menslike hulpbronbestuur in die openbare sektor, word die stelling gemaak dat opleiding op die gebied van die etiek 'n klemverskuiwing vereis. Nuwe opleidingsmetodologieë, gemik om nuwe opvattinge, sowel as om die bestaande opvattinge te wysig, moet ontwikkel word. Veral op die huidige tydstryk, waar die

openbare sektor 'n stadium van verandering ondergaan, is dit 'n ideale geleentheid om hierdie soort van opleiding te implementeer.

In die laaste gedeelte van hierdie verhandeling word voorgestel dat etiek meer op die voorgrond geskuif behoort te word. Dit word byvoorbeeld aan die hand gedoen dat afdwingingmeganismes vir gedragskodes ingestel word.

Die demokratisering van die openbare sektor, wat oënskynlik in teenstelling is met sy burokrtiese aard, moet versnel word ten einde gesamentlikke besluitneming te fasiliteer. Innoverende leierskap, oorgedrewe deur visie en eksperimentasie, moet aangemoedig word. Die ontwikkeling van 'n kultuur wat wyer strek as die samelewings instelling behoort ondersoek te word. Die bekendstelling van etiese aspekte in relevante vakgebiede op tersiêre vlak moet ondersoek word. Moontlike navorsingsprojekte wat kan voortvloei uit hierdie verhandeling word ook voorgestel.