

**Transformation of the Public Service under Fiscal and Constitutional Constraints: An Analysis of the Relationship between Human Resource Development and Representativeness.**



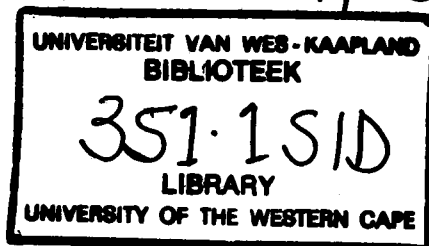
**A Dissertation, submitted to the School of Government, Faculty of Economic Management Sciences, University of the Western Cape, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters in Administration.**

**SEPTEMBER 1998**



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THESIS



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Most importantly, I would like to express my gratitude to my family for their support and encouragement.



## DECLARATION

I declare that this Masters Dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Masters in Administration at the University of the Western Cape.

I further testify that it has not been submitted for any other degree or at any other University, or institution of Higher Learning.

SIZWE C. SIDLOYI



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## ABSTRACT

The essence of the study is to examine progress in the transformation of public service under fiscal and constitutional constraints. The thesis focuses on the implementation of affirmative action and human resource development programmes.

The emphasis is on linking the transformation of the public service with the attainment of RDP goals and objectives. The reform of the public service should create opportunities for the employment of new staff to improve the representativeness of the civil service, whilst at the same time increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of government, and generating significant savings to help reduce the fiscal deficit and release resource for productive investment.

Budget constraints require that the administrative reform succeeds in releasing resources. This is necessary so that resources may be channelled towards activities such as affirmative action, human resource development and training.

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## ACRONYMS

AA	Affirmative Action
ANC	African National Congress
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HRD	Human Resource Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MERG	Macro-Economic Research Group
NIEP	National Institute for Economic Policy
PSC	Public Service Commission
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAIPA	South African Institute for Public Administration
WPTPS	White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service
WPPSTE	White Paper on Public Service Training and Education



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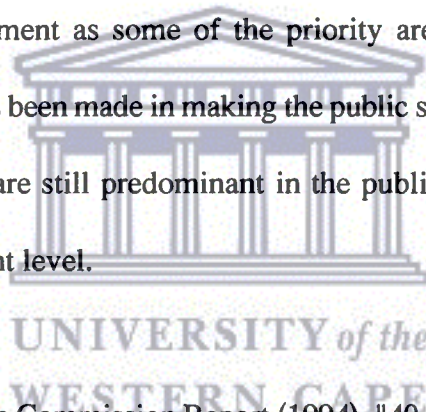
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# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service ( WPTPS), published on the 24 November 1995, states that: “the Government of National Unity is committed to continually improving the lives of the people of South Africa through a transformed public service which is representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of all”(South Africa, 1995, p14). Thus the White Paper has identified representativeness, transforming service delivery, rationalisation and restructuring, and human resource development as some of the priority areas for the transformation process. Although progress has been made in making the public service more representative, gender and racial disparities are still predominant in the public service especially at the middle and senior management level.



According to the Public Service Commission Report (1994), "40 % of the 1,2 million people employed in the public service are white with the top managerial positions overwhelmingly filled by white men, who constitute only 7 % of the population. Black women are only beginning to have access to top executive positions." However, attempts are being made at departmental level to change the racial and gender composition of various departments. In monitoring progress in redressing the imbalances in public sector employment, the Director-General of Health, for example, is of the view that the over representation of whites (85 %) in 1994 and the under representation of women(3%) in the management echelon is crucial

to use as a benchmark against which government progress in representing all South Africans can be measured.

Paragraph 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa adopted in May 1996 states that the public service: "shall promote an efficient public administration broadly representative of the South African community." In the same vein the policy objective of the Reconstruction and Development Programme states that: "...by the turn of the century, the composition of the public sector, including parastatals, must have changed to reflect the national distribution of race and gender. Such progress will enhance the full utilisation of the country's labour power and productivity" (South Africa, 1996, p.125).

(The scope for restructuring the public service is wide and covers not merely changes in the composition of the public service, but investment in human resources. The legacy of apartheid education led to a serious shortfall in the development of human resource capacity in the public service necessary to meet the demands of redistribution and development.)

This is evident, for example, in the survey conducted by the National Institute for Economic Policy (NIEP) on the skills profile of officials of the departments of Economic Affairs and Finance of the various Self-Governing Territories and former TBVC states. The survey revealed that there was a particular shortage of people with economic and accounting skills. And the Auditor-General's Report (Kluever, 1996, p.99) released in December 1996 has shown that there is generally a lack of capacity in these areas in almost all provinces and

national departments. This may be one reason why, under the previous administration, most of the work in these departments was done by officials seconded by the central government.

(The lack of skills from the historically disadvantaged communities poses a challenge for reconstruction and development.) The restructuring of the public service has enormous budgetary implications. At the same time, the Government is committed to fiscal discipline and a reduction in the size of the Public Service. This implies that the inflow of new staff into the Public Service is necessary to achieve representativeness, and the human resource development necessary for this process to be meaningful, will not be able to command the necessary financial resource. It should be recognised that many of the costs of transformation are short term, for example, the amount being spent on rationalisation and restructuring and the training of people from historically disadvantaged communities.

Some commentators have argued that the Government is sacrificing, at least for the time being, the ongoing and essential process of transformation, on the altar of achieving immediate reductions in public service spending. The gains from a representative public service with the appropriate skills for community development and the RDP have therefore been postponed, ultimately in favour of arguments for reduction of the Government deficit. This in turn implies an acceptance of arguments that the private sector has the leading role in economic development, rather than the Government through the public service and implementation of the RDP. Discussion of the implications of the resource allocation decisions with respect to the public service cannot be separated from assessment of the wider policy stance adopted by Government.

In the past, training for blacks received low priority in terms of the budget, hence changes in public expenditure are likely to increase. This study attempts to evaluate progress made with regard to the implementation of affirmative action and human resource development programmes, with the aim of investigating the extent to which improvements in productivity and efficiency have resulted so far from the restructuring and rationalisation process.

### **Research Questions**

A number of research questions will be investigated by this study. These include:

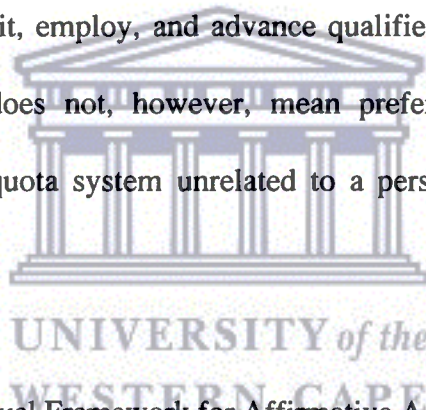
1. Why is representativeness important?
2. Why affirmative action is necessary to promote representativeness?
3. Why is human resource development desperately needed?
4. What would be the benefits of a human resource development policy for the public service?
5. How does affirmative action and human resource development become an aspect of integrating hitherto disadvantaged groups for effective participation in government structures?
6. What are the probable costs to the state?
7. How rightsizing as an instrument can be utilised to reduce the size of the public service?
8. To what extent have budgetary and other constraints have been responsible for slow pace of implementation of the transformation process?
9. What are the possible guidelines for the size of the public service?

## Guiding Assumptions

1. The rationalisation and restructuring of the public service will lead to efficiency and productivity gains, and this will reduce government consumption expenditure and release resources for productive investment.
2. A skilled administrative personnel is critical to the reconstruction and development of the country.

## Delimitation of Key Terms

William and Norries define **Affirmative Action** as follows: "Affirmative action means taking positive steps to recruit, employ, and advance qualified members of historically disadvantaged groups. It does not, however, mean preferential treatment, reverse discrimination, or use of a quota system unrelated to a person's qualifications or job competence (1992, p.46).

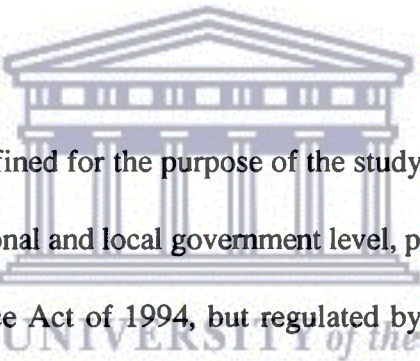


The Green Paper on a Conceptual Framework for Affirmative Action and the Management of Diversity in the Public Service, 1997 defines **Affirmative Action** as a strategy for ameliorating the conditions of individuals and groups in the workplace and for the achievement of employment equity through redressing imbalances in:

- organisational culture;
- staff composition;
- human resource management practices and
- service provisioning.

Affirmative action is to be achieved through the creation of laws, programmes and activities designed to eradicate unfairness and discrimination in the workplace as it pertains to disabled persons, women and black people.

**Human resources** generally refers to the total quantitative and qualitative human assets in a society. Development of persons to their maximum potential and talent is the gist of the Human Resource Development (HRD) concept. The term HRD encompasses three areas of training, education and development. It means: (1) a series of organised activities, (2) conducted within a specified time and (3) designed to produce behavioural change (Nadler, 1979, p.3).



The **Public Service** will be defined for the purpose of the study as constituting the public administration at national, regional and local government level, plus those areas that are not governed by the Public Service Act of 1994, but regulated by other legislation such as health, education, South African Police Service and South African National Defence Force and intelligence services.

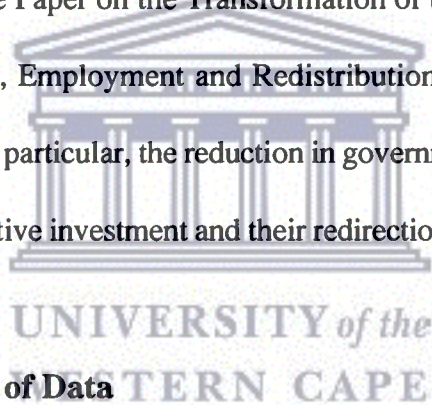
**Black** refers to Africans, Indians and Coloureds, except in the case of direct quotations from data sources and literature.



## **Aims and Objectives**

The purpose of this research study is to:

1. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of affirmative action and human resource development programmes in the public service.
2. Assess the productivity and efficiency gains made from the rationalisation and restructuring process.
3. Make recommendations for a focused strategy on affirmative action as part of a broader strategy of human resource development to equip the historically disadvantaged communities with competitive skills for the implementation of the objectives of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service and the Government's Growth, Employment and Redistribution macroeconomic-strategy (South Africa, 1996) in particular, the reduction in government consumption, release of resources for productive investment and their redirection to areas of greatest need.



## **Methodology and Sources of Data**

A comparative study\analysis of international experiences will also be undertaken. In addition, the study will rely on domestic literature in the form of government publications, reports, academic papers, conference or seminar papers, newspaper reports etc. Primary data from the Public Service Commission and other state departments on the number of public sector employees, wages and salaries will also be used.

Empirical research on central government departments will also be undertaken as part of the data and literature searches. The analysis will focus on employment trends in the top and

middle management positions. By this we mean occupational categories from Director-General to Director. The analysis will be broken down according to race and gender.

### **Organisation of the Thesis**

The Research paper is structured as follows:

**Chapter two** provides a literature review on progress made on affirmative action in the public service. A comparative study of international experience will also be undertaken with the aim of drawing lessons from countries that have gone through a similar process of restructuring their public service. The chapter will also look at different perspectives on affirmative action.

**Chapter three** focuses on the political economy framework for affirmative action by looking at the public sector parameters, and political, constitutional and budgetary constraints and how to overcome them.

**Chapter four** is the core of the study. This chapter deals with a statistical analysis of affirmative action and human resource development programmes. The assessment of the results will examine the extent to which productivity and efficiency gains have been forthcoming from the restructuring and rationalisation process of the public service.

**Chapter five** concludes the study by making policy recommendations, future projections and suggesting guidelines on the future size of the public service.



## CHAPTER 2

### Representative Bureaucracy in Perspective

#### Meaning of Affirmative Action

There are many definitions of affirmative action. According to Eide (1992, p.9):

“Affirmative action is preference, by way of special measures, for certain groups of members of such groups (typically defined by race, ethnic identity or gender) for the purpose of securing adequate advancement of such groups or their individual members in order to ensure equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Glueck (1982, p.220) defines affirmative action as a "...set of activities employers use to assure that current decisions and practices enhance the employment, upgrading and retention of members of protected groups. Such actions are distinguished from merely refraining from practices that discriminate."

Maphai (1989) refers to affirmative action as "...a variety of programmes and measures, characterised by attempts to redress historical gender and racial inequalities. In the context of the civil service, affirmative action would involve the disadvantaged (blacks and females) receiving preferential admission to certain positions" (cited in Hugo, 1992, p.72).

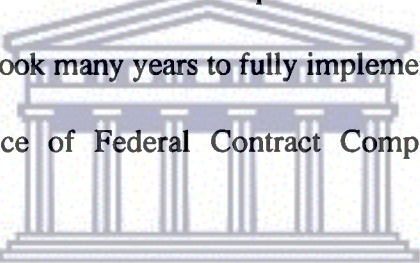
The Australian Government Green Paper on Equal Employment Opportunity (1984) defines affirmative action as: "...a systematic means, determined by the employer in consultation with senior management, employees and unions, of achieving equal employment opportunity (EEO)... affirmative action is compatible with appointment and promotion on the basis of the principle of merit, skills and qualifications."

The Australian government's definition does not draw a distinction between affirmative action and equal employment opportunities. It uses the two concepts interchangeably. There is, however, distinction between the two concepts. Equal employment opportunities refer to equality of treatment while affirmative action means preferential treatment of certain groups. According to Yvonne Andrews (1992), affirmative action prohibits discrimination and requires employers to take the necessary steps to reduce under representation and to identify and rectify the underutilization of protected groups.

Equal employment opportunities on the other hand express concern for the protection of all applicants or employees which means that hiring quotas could be unrealistic because it would impose a fixed number or percentage from a protected group to be appointed or promoted regardless of minimum qualifications and or other prescribed requirements (Andrews cited in SAIPA, 1992, p.37). However, some countries that have opted for equal opportunities rather than affirmative action, such as the United Kingdom, do permit some measure of positive action in favour of underrepresented groups.

## **Origins of Representative Bureaucracy**

The policy of affirmative action originated in the United States of America. The policy was brought about by the struggles of the Civil Rights movement against racial and gender discrimination. Minorities in America were excluded from all but low level jobs until the early sixties when Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act, 1964 covering employment opportunities, federal contracts, voting and public accommodation (Andrews, 1992, p.36). Hugo (1986) argues that official action to redress racial discrimination in the United States of America dates back to 1941 when President Roosevelt prohibited the refusal of employment opportunities on the basis of race, creed, colour or national origin by employers who held Defence Department contracts. The scope broadened to include all employers receiving federal funds. But it took many years to fully implement this. The United States Department of Labour's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs defined affirmative action as:



“Those results oriented actions which a contractor by virtue of its contracts must ensure equal employment opportunity. Where appropriate, it includes goals to correct under-utilization, correction of problem areas. It may also include relief such as back-pay, retroactive seniority, make-up goals and time-tables, etc.” (quoted in Blanchard and Crosby, 1989, p.10).

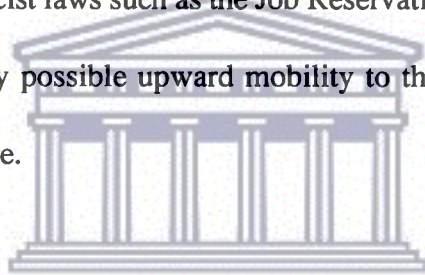
## **South African Context**

### **Historical Justification**

The implementation of affirmative action as a policy mechanism in South Africa is not a new phenomenon. Hugo (1989) in Mokgoro (1992, p.2) argues that a new Department of

Labour was formed in 1924 to create job opportunities for whites in areas in which they would be protected from black competition. He observed that these policies had a measure of success, policies of racial preference in jobs were combined with education and training programmes which benefitted whites so that they could play a meaningful role in a society rapidly transforming away from rural-based economy. This led to whites having advantages over blacks who were denied educational opportunities and support.

The initiatives were taken further by the National Party government, when it came to power in 1948, it introduced affirmative action programmes in favour of the Afrikaners. They used legislation as an instrument, racist laws such as the Job Reservation Act and influx control. Black people were denied any possible upward mobility to the highest echelons in any government or private structure.



### **Arguments Against Affirmative Action: A Critique**

There are three main arguments against affirmative action programmes. The first is that the implementation of affirmative action leads to the lowering of standards. The second is based on the merit principle. The main thrust of this argument is that affirmative action is reverse discrimination because black people receive preferential treatment over others. They get jobs because of the colour of their skin and not according to merit. The third is the economics arguments. Critics of affirmative action argue that it will destroy the economy because less qualified people will be employed. Let us examine the merits and demerits of each argument.

## **Lowering of Standards**

According to Viljoen (1992, p.2), the advocates of affirmative action believe that a lowering of employment standards is necessary and desirable to compensate for unfair actions of the past. Opponents of affirmative action however, declare that a lowering of employment standards is inadvisable, since this will lead to a lowering of professional quality of the personnel corps and result in inferior service to the public. The validity of an employment standard in itself gives rise to the increasing use of psychological tests, which include aptitude, interest, intellectual ability, to select potential employees. Although it should be emphasised that testing as such is acceptable, the validity of such tests as predictors of success in the job situation is questionable. The employer will therefore still have to prove that there is a relation between good performance in the selection tests and job achievement.

The argument about "standards" implies that the white male dominated public service operated standards which were of the best quality. This is questionable when observing the gross inefficiency and waste which characterised the apartheid civil service. Unless a comprehensive performance appraisal is done of the apartheid civil service, there is no evidence to suggest that the operational standards set were of the best quality and will therefore be compromised by a policy of affirmative action.

In any case, affirmative action in South Africa does not have to mean employing less qualified individuals. The so-called standards that were operational in the apartheid civil service were informed and defined by the delivery of services to a white minority and the administration of apartheid laws. There is no evidence to suggest that these "standards" are



neutral and therefore, relevant for the delivery of services to the black majority in South Africa and the implementation of laws relating to the new South Africa and the Reconstruction and Development Programme in particular. In fact it is highly likely that many white civil servants from the old order may find it difficult to re-establish their legitimacy in the eyes of those whom they serve. This calls for a new approach which puts pressure on the Public Service to change systems, procedures, attitudes and behaviour and reorientate them in the customer's favour, an approach which puts the people first.

### **Merit Principle**

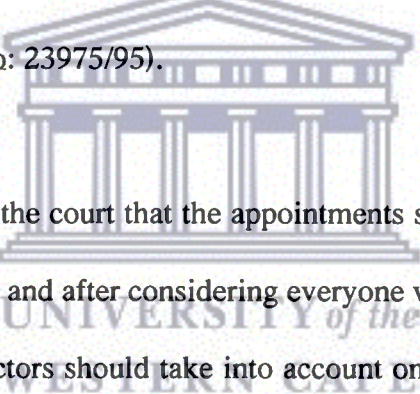
Another criticism against affirmative action is that it is "unfair" to white males in that it gives blacks and females a preference based solely on their race and gender. This is seen as "reverse discrimination" against those who were not necessarily the cause of the past discrimination and therefore are "innocent victims" - but how are they innocent victims? Clark argues that any talk of "fairness" must look not only to the immediate loss of an employment opportunity for the white males, but to the total employment and social content in which affirmative action is being implemented. White males, unless they are young entrants into the labour market, are certainly aware that race and gender discrimination against others has historically (and even currently) given them a race and gender discrimination advantage.

There are hardly any reports of white males inquiring as to whether they were getting an employment advantage on the basis of the race and sex and then rejecting that advantage. The term "innocent" may mean that they did not have the power to authorise the

discrimination against others, but they were willing recipients of the indirect and "unfair" advantage that they did receive (Clark, 1991, p.16). Sikhosana (1993, p.6) points out that, to view affirmative action as "discrimination in reverse" could be valid in instances where no discrimination existed or exists against members of those groups to whom the policy is now being applied. Affirmative action is based on the premise that discrimination against the target groups has existed or does exist. It intends to bring about equality, not discrimination by one group over another.

Nzimande (1991, pp.236-253) identifies three ways in which whites resist African occupational upward mobility. The first is explicitly racist, and is based on the belief that African people are innately incapable of managerial and mental work. The second way in which racism manifests itself is more sophisticated. The main argument of many white managers is that African managers do not advance rapidly because their cultural background does not adequately prepare them for managerial positions in the corporate world. The third manifestation of white resistance is through the ideology of meritocracy (cited in Sikhosana, 1993, p.9). The main thrust of this argument is that, skills, experience and merit should take credence above all other considerations. This argument does not take into account the fact that the majority of South Africans were denied access to better education and other opportunities by the previous government. Affirmative action is seen as reverse discrimination, and not a mechanism to redress the historical imbalances. What the proponents of this argument tend to forget is that whatever skills they have, they acquired them because the apartheid system favoured white South Africans particularly Afrikaners.

The recent example is the affirmative action court case against the Department of Justice brought to the Pretoria High Court in 1996 by its white male employees who were not appointed for the posts they applied for. Instead, the posts were given to women, blacks and the disabled people, and other groups formerly discriminated against. The men claimed that they have been discriminated against on the account of their race and gender. The men argued that the codes in the Public Service Act of 1994, aimed at making the public service more representative were invalid because they improperly discriminated against white men. To them this breached their constitutional rights and they asked the court to declare these codes unlawful. And they further asked the court to declare the appointments and government's approach to the filling of the Department of Justice vacancies invalid (High Court of South Africa, Case No: 23975/95).



The complainants appealed to the court that the appointments should be made strictly in terms of the Public Service Act, and after considering everyone who applied, regardless of their race or gender. The selectors should take into account only qualifications, level of training, merit, efficiency and suitability of applicants. Judge Swart who presided over the case declared that the government had acted unconstitutionally, violating the rights of the complainants and making them the victims of unfair discrimination. Despite the men's qualifications and experience, the only candidates invited to be interviewed for one of the posts of deputy state attorney from within the ranks of the department, were three women. Judge Swart commented that this situation created a picture "Which on the basis of logic, merit, efficiency and sensible administration is astonishing". The Judge said that under the Constitution, the public service was obliged to provide an efficient service, as well as

becoming broadly representative of the South African community. Neither of these aims could be achieved at the expense of each other. The efficiency of the public administration cannot be compromised by a broadly representative public administration, it follows as a matter of logic and experience. He said the codes aimed at making the public service more representative were not “rationally designed” to achieve the proper ends, but were haphazard, random and over hasty.

The judge’s decision did not take into account some of the most complex issues raised by affirmative action, such as what counts as qualification. For example, if someone has six years’ experience but speaks only one language, and another has two years’ experience but speaks five languages, how are they to be compared? Does the implementation of affirmative action necessarily compromise efficiency in the public service? Does Judge Swart’s decision imply that the public service was efficient before the advent of affirmative action? These are some of the questions that should have informed the court’s decision. Given the limitation clause in the Bill of Rights in the Interim Constitution, with respect to measures to redress past imbalances, Swart’s decision could be questioned on legal as well as ethical grounds, and even on constitutional grounds. Representative bureaucracy is enshrined alongside the merit principle in the 1996 constitution, the judge did not show how the Representative Bureaucracy violated merit.

White managers often argue that "black advancement" promotes or places blacks in positions which they do not deserve or for which they are unqualified. Any affirmative action programme has to be accompanied by a process of human resource development to

offset the problem of quality. Maphai (1992, p.74) argues that whilst affirmative action aims to raise the level of qualifications so that underprivileged groups can compete on merit, it is difficult to delineate what counts as qualification. In South Africa, where standards and qualifications are equated with white or western values, these can be used as a convenient means of exclusion rather than of providing services of real value.

The argument that the removal of apartheid laws and free market forces will eliminate inequalities in the labour market is according to Sikhosana problematic in contexts where racial inequalities are statutory or institutionalised in other ways. Equality of treatment, however, is unlikely to reduce disadvantage, it will merely maintain it. Black people did not enjoy the same privileges given to white people under the system of apartheid. Blacks were given inferior education and were not given the same job opportunities, certain jobs were reserved for whites. Affirmative action is a corrective action whose main objective is to redress the historical imbalances caused by the system of apartheid by giving blacks opportunities denied to them by the apartheid government. Equal opportunity will only be realised once the playing field has been levelled.

Without redressing the imbalances of the past by empowering black people by giving them skills previously denied to them equal opportunity will only benefit white people who already possess the skills at the expense of their black counterparts. Furthermore, anti-discrimination warranties are not sufficient because of the historic and systematic implementation of discriminatory practices. Whilst equal employment opportunity is

necessary, additional measures are needed to compensate for the effects of past discrimination (Saranski, 1991; Hugo 1986 cited in Sikhosana, 1993, p.10).

### **Economics-Based Argument**

According to Innes (1993, p.4): "most economists shudder at the 'necessary' costs affirmative action will load on the economy as organisations struggle to compensate for the inefficiencies that are likely to flow from some affirmative action initiatives". Slovo contends that: "affirmative action did help catapult the Afrikaner into big time financial, mining and industrial ventures". He also states that this group is guilty of hypocrisy today, because in the past, issues such as the lowering of standards or state-directed redistribution of wealth never concerned them (Griffiths, 1993, p.15).

Schmidt and Hunter have assessed the costs of affirmative action in the United States. They argue that monies expended to meet the costs of affirmative action cannot be spent on research and development and plant modernisation. The effect is accumulative: the growth path of the economy diverges, permanently and increasingly, from its potential. Thus they estimate that an extra \$113 billion in direct and indirect costs have been inflicted on the US economy annually because of affirmative action since 1980. A standard calculation converts this into an estimate of Gross National Product (GNP) shortfall because of affirmative action: about 1,5 percentage points by 1992 (cited in Brimelow, undated, p.25).

This brings us to another point. Is affirmative action a cost or an investment? According to Charlton and Van Niekerk (1994, p.6): "South Africa is ranked last amongst thirty eight

upper middle income countries in terms of its ability to utilise its human resources. The utilisation and leadership of an organisation's human capital is the critical ingredient for success. South Africa suffers from the inability to develop people". They argue that South Africa has the highest proportion of illiterate people in the world, a productivity growth rate which is almost negligible, a huge brain drain of skilled people. The educational system that is the worst in meeting the needs of a competitive economy. This refers not only to the quantity of people with appropriate higher educational but also the quality of people (their competence) arriving on the job.

Affirmative action is one valuable vehicle to develop people. Education and training is the best investment an organisation can make (Ibid, p.8). Affirmative Action is not only morally correct to do. Black people need to be given equal opportunities in education, training, job opportunities and resources. This is in fact an imperative if the country is to survive and prosper. Mpufane (1992, p.26) argues that: "Black people's access to land, capital, labour mobility and good education and training is the basis for South Africa's future prosperity. The advancement of societies previously excluded from the mainstream economy is therefore inevitable. Statistics show that by the year 2000 South Africa's population will be standing at about 48 million people of which blacks will be in the region of 40 million. Looking at statistics relating to South Africa's skills distribution among its population gives a shocking state of affairs. Black people represent only 7,4 percent of the total accounting profession, 8,1 percent of the medical profession, 2,9 percent of the architects, 17,5 percent of all technicians, 5,5 percent of all scientists and 6 percent of the law profession".

The only two professions where blacks exceed other population groups are education (63 percent) and nursing (60 percent). The solution lies more in the provision of relevant training in all facets of the public service. The public service will be drastically affected by demands to advance black employees - with proactive, relevant and meaningful affirmative action programmes to empower them through government managerial skills and knowledge which give them a good footing for effective governance and economic participation. According to Mpufane 1992, adopting affirmative action programmes will level the ground for fair competition, without discrediting the white population's strides and aspirations.

### **Human Resource Development**

It is for this reason that a Commonwealth Expert Group Report(1991) called for a R60 million short-term training programme for South Africa's crucial transition period on the way to becoming a non-racial, democratic country. The Group drew up a strategy for development which emphasized developing skills and institutions in such priority areas as central, local government and technical services. They saw these areas as strategically relevant to social transformation during the transition period.

Some 18 000 people from the present historically disadvantaged majority would be trained under the R60 million plan. Of this, R3,6 million would be for high-level training to enable black South Africans to take key positions in public administration. The Group termed this a 'crash' programme for breaking down the apartheid structures of government. The occupation of these posts by black South Africans would play a crucial administrative and



catalytic role in transforming and replacing existing central and local government structures, the report said.

The report suggested that specific targets be set for black advancement in public administration during the transition period, especially in top management positions. A realistic target would be 600 of the 3000 top civil service positions. The Group also proposed a strategy for post-apartheid South Africa. It recommended a broad-based approach to human resource development to redress the wide-spread poverty, deprivation and skills loss created under apartheid rural and urban areas.

### **Gender Discrimination**

Ncholo asserts that women are victims of discrimination and exclusion from a variety of sectors in society. Out of all these groups, the most hard-hit are the black, especially women who happen to be at the lowest stratum. They are being discriminated against on two levels, firstly as blacks and secondly as women, while their white counterparts would mainly suffer for their gender only (Ncholo, 1994, p.96). Opportunities to enter more skilled, better paying jobs, will contribute to social development for black families and in black communities. As women are a large proportion of the society, their access to key civil service jobs is essential if the public service is to be responsive to the needs of women and successfully meet their needs. Gaining access to male dominated sectors is not easy for women. Systematic discrimination in both social and training policies is widespread and so deeply ingrained that it is seldom conscious (Madonsela and Nxesi, 1994, p.44).

Pronouncements on constitutional provisions do not automatically translate into gender equality, as is the case in Zimbabwe. Bennell and Strachan (1992, p.36) observed:

"In Zimbabwe, remarkably little progress has been made in advancing the occupational status of black women since independence. Black occupational advancement has, therefore, overwhelmingly benefitted black men. "They argue that the lesson here is that strong affirmative action in favour of black women, particularly where government is the employer, should be vigorously pursued from the very outset in post-apartheid South Africa.

Muthien (1995, p.16) argues that : "...the present managerial echelon of the public service, as well as key occupational categories, are at present severely skewed towards males." She contends that, this will have to be systematically reversed if the constitutional promise of gender equality is to be fulfilled. Section 4 (7) of the Public Service Labour Relations Act states that: "No employees shall be victimised or unfairly discriminated against on grounds of race, colour, sex..."

Gender equality policies must be pursued and implemented in line with the Constitution. There are critical areas that need attention. The first is the continued discrimination practices and factors that still impede the development of women in the public service. Muthien cites maternity leave as an example. She argues that maternity leave is only granted for a maximum of two confinements. Eighty four days are granted to a female officer or employee with salary payment for the period of confinement, but only after twelve months of service. This constrains newly appointed women in the public service.

Currently, women contribute less to the Government Service Pension Fund than men. This means they receive less when they retire. If a woman should retire before completing ten years pensionable service, she qualifies for a gratuity calculated at 11,5 percent of her final salary while a man in the same position gets 15,5 percent (Ibid). These are some of the problems the government must eradicate to achieve gender equality in the public service. Affirmative action and human resource development programmes must aim at removing all impediments to socio-economic advancement by strategies which empower the historically disadvantaged communities especially women.

In his State of the Nation address to Parliament on 24 May 1994, the President set out certain projects which would launch the delivery of the RDP in the first hundred days. The Task Teams in consultation with national Departments and the Provincial Administrations then identified specific projects which could be initiated within the hundred days while at the same time launching the key programmes set out above. The projects chosen were required to conform with the following criteria: "...Affirmative Action with respect to gender and race."

The Government of National Unity aims not only to stamp out racism wherever it persists, but to establish a proactive, sensible affirmative action programme. All levels of Government will be expected to implement a policy of affirmative action to ensure that the public service is representative of all the people of South Africa, in racial, gender and geographical terms. Such a policy will be negotiated with trade union representatives of public sector employees.

Fair employment conditions, codes of conduct and prohibition on racism and sexism in the workplace are also envisaged. An all-embracing, integrated framework for affirmative action is also being established so as to assist both public and private sector organisations. This approach will extend beyond employment opportunities, into many other aspects of socio-economic life, including gender and geographical inequalities.



## CHAPTER 3

### Right-Sizing of the Public Service

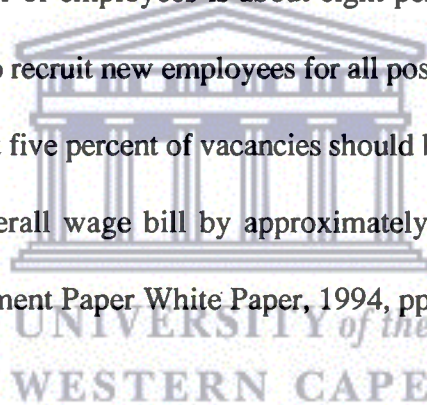
#### Scope for Restructuring

One of the determinants of the success of the restructuring process is what is done about the size of the current civil service. This poses a challenge for the implementation of affirmative action programmes and the rationalisation process. The implementation of affirmative action will inevitably lead to the employment of more people from the historically disadvantaged communities. At the same time, however, the Government is committed to reducing the size of the public service. This is the key challenge facing the rationalisation process. The government has embarked upon a concerted and comprehensive process of restructuring and rationalisation with the objective of creating a unified and integrated service as well as a leaner and more cost-effective service.

The Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy which was published by the government in 1996, calls among other things, for the reduction in government consumption expenditure and the release of resources for productive investment and their redirection to areas of greatest need. This means that state institutions must be reorientated to optimise access to their services by all citizens, within the context of fiscal constraints and the fulfilment of competing needs.

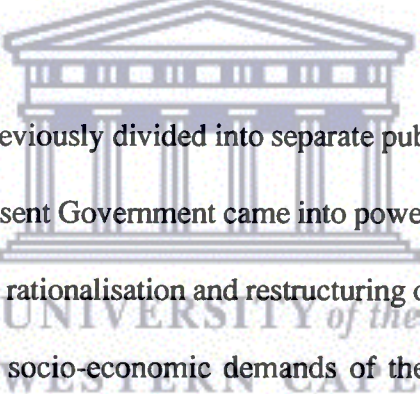
Chapter 3, page 8 of GEAR makes reference to focus on cost-effective service after the completion of the integration of the public service at national and provincial levels.

The careful management of the overall government wage bill is central to the government's fiscal strategy. The government believes that in implementing the three-year public service salary adjustment and right-sizing programme, affordability considerations, maintenance of public services and macro-economic consistency are paramount. In general, government at all levels will take steps to reduce consumption expenditure while increasing capital expenditure. Today, as a result of past policies, approximately sixty percent of consumption expenditure is for remuneration. As outlined in the RDP White Paper, initially Government intended to keep the size of the public service constant (or at worst growth would be contained to one percent in 1994\95), but without compromising affirmative action goals. At present the rate of turnover of employees is about eight percent per annum. It is the intention of Government not to recruit new employees for all positions that become vacant. It is anticipated that only about five percent of vacancies should be filled and thus it should be possible to reduce the overall wage bill by approximately three percent per annum (Reconstruction and Development Paper White Paper, 1994, pp. 1-2).



To obtain this objective the government intends to reduce the wage bill as a proportion of public service consumption expenditure. The rationale for reducing the wage bill and creating a learner public service is not merely to save money, but also to release resources for productive investment in line with the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy. The Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy represents a shift from the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The macro-economic strategy advocates cuts in social services such as health, welfare, housing and education.

This is in contrast to the RDP which proposes a strong public sector, that plays a leading role in the socio-economic development of the country. According to the Draft Chapter of the Public Service Staff Code(1997), the government firmly believes that a leaner public service is perfectly consistent with improved levels of service provision. Right-sizing is a mechanism for reducing the size of the public service. This is a key strategy designed to achieve the optimal allocation of human and other resources throughout the service as a whole. This means that a comprehensive review of personnel requirements and staffing structures in all departments and provinces will therefore have to be carried out with a view to realigning them more closely towards the delivery of services to clients and to meeting the outputs required by the Reconstruction and Development Programme.



The RSA Public Service was previously divided into separate public services, consisting of 176 departments. When the present Government came into power, on April 1994, it had to urgently embark on a process of rationalisation and restructuring of the RSA Public Service, in order to conform with the socio-economic demands of the new South Africa. This process led to the creation of 32 departments at national level and 9 new provincial administrations with effect from July 1994. After this initial phase, the organisational reform of every department at national level and provincial administrations followed. This meant that government functions, for which provincial administrations had executive powers were transferred from national level to the provincial level with concomitant posts and resources. This was followed by a process of restructuring to transform departments and provincial administrations into effective organisations. Since October 1995, Cabinet has taken various decisions in respect of right-sizing the Public Service. In terms of a Cabinet

decision in June 1996, right-sizing targets had to be established in consultation with departments and provincial administrations, primarily with a view to effecting savings to supplement the shortfall in funding the improvement of conditions of service package for public servants. The focus of this exercise was the abolition of funded vacancies. In the financial year 1996/97 18 246 posts to the value of R0,665 billion have been secured for this purpose.

The national departments and provincial administrations offered a further 6 998 posts for abolition in 1997/98, to the value of R323 million. This included 1 015 voluntary severance package posts to the value of R37 61 million. The other posts abolished were funded vacancies. The R662 28 million saved in the 1996/97 financial year was utilised to partly offset the shortfall of R1,1billion required for the improvement of conditions of service in that year financial year. Another R297. 45 million (cost of nine months) was saved through restructuring of pension benefits. The R323. 042 million which was saved by abolishing funded vacancies as part of the right-sizing exercise, will be added to the R6,5 billion set aside for the new pay packages in respect of the 1997\98 years.

In order to reduce the public service's staff complement and to generate savings to fund improvements in conditions of service, a voluntary severance package was introduced with effect from 1 May 1996. The other objective of the package was to create room for the absorption of supernumerary officials. For the 40 000 packages paid out to the end of February 1997, the cost was R1 776 080 091. Departments and administrations were required to fund the packages from savings.



Together with the implementation of the voluntary severance package, a moratorium on employer initiated retrenchments was instituted. This was done because of resistance from the unions to use this mechanism for right-sizing purposes and also because the present retrenchment package was unaffordable.

### **Assessment of the Right-Sizing Initiative**

The government initially envisaged that the right-sizing process would entail a fundamental review on a programme by programme basis as reflected in the budget, of minimum number of the minimum number of staff which would be adequate to deliver that particular programme. Such a review would have covered all national departments and provincial administrations having regard to declared government policy and priorities, appropriate service delivery levels, the budgetary ceiling set by Cabinet and the Cabinet directive concerning the right-sizing of the Public Service. For this purpose, a management system was developed which provided for the determination by Cabinet of right-sizing targets per government function. It was envisaged that certain functions would be managed down to lower levels; and higher priority functions would be allowed to grow by a certain percentage. Those departments and administrations who would have been instructed to reduce their staffing levels, would have been required to utilise a combination of the following mechanisms to attain their staffing targets; attrition and the abolition of funded vacancies; granting of voluntary severance packages; and redeployment of supernumerary personnel. Based on this system, the employee organisations agreed to the right-sizing of the public service and agreed to a provision that savings which are generated as a result of the right-sizing process could be added to the amounts set aside for improvement in

conditions of service for the 1997/98 and 1998/99 financial year. The above-mentioned right-sizing system could unfortunately never be implemented fully, primarily because of unresolved differences on the appropriate staffing levels (targets) per function. In the end the Department of Public Service and Administration together with all stake holders decided that “down-sizing”, in the form of abolition of funded vacancies could only take place with the agreement of the relevant heads of department. This led to only 18 140 funded vacancies being abolished in the 1996\97 financial year and 6 998 in the 1997\98 financial year. No all inclusive right-sizing targets could be implemented as planned.

In effect, the right-sizing process thus far has only focused on the generation of savings to be added to the amounts set aside for improvements in conditions of service. Another drawback of the right-sizing exercise was that those departments\administrations which cooperated with the right-sizing teams, were hit hardest. Those who did not cooperate, got away with it. One of the lessons learnt from the right-sizing exercise is that political commitment and continuous political involvement are required if right-sizing is to succeed. The Government’s bid to trim the public service has resulted in only R323 million being saved from voluntary severance packages, almost R4,5 billion less than had been projected. The target was to trim the public service by 300 000 over three years. It was estimated that about R6 billion would be saved this year if 100 000 public servants took up the offer of voluntary severance packages before June 1997, but the Government has fallen short of the annual target by 50 000 (ibid).

What further complicates the right-sizing initiative is the need to make the public service more representative by recruiting people from the historically disadvantaged communities and still keep the state slim. The employment of new staff and the safeguarding of the jobs and pensions of the existing civil servants would lead to state institutions which are overstaffed, and to high expenditure on civil service salaries (Ibid, p.268). In 1995, public service remuneration constituted 54 % of state current spending, excluding interest on government debt. The Public service wage and salary bill is the main item of government consumption expenditure and this comprises 21 % of the gross domestic product.

The government wants to reduce expenditure over a period of five years from 21 % of GDP to 17 %, and at the same time comply with section 212 (2) (b) of the constitution which requires the public service to reflect the total population without threatening the job security of existing civil servants, at least during the transition period. The implementation of affirmative action programmes without rationalising and cutting down the current number of public servants may increase state spending in terms of public sector salaries, wages and bonuses. And this will either increase the tax burden or government will be compelled to increase the public sector deficit by borrowing money to finance affirmative action programmes. Hence there is a basic contradiction between the need for fiscal restraint and affirmative action.

## Progress Towards Representative Bureaucracy

The Constitution directs that the public service shall be broadly representative of the South African community. The statistical data which follows reflects progress in this regard since the advent of the Government of National Unity (GNU).

### The Status of Representativeness in the Management Echelon

It is difficult to draw comparisons with the past because of the absence of a unified database for the eleven different public services which have now been combined. However, the profile of the management echelon of the public service of the former Republic of South Africa (RSA) provides a benchmark to contextualise the changes which have taken place. Table 1 below clearly shows that the management echelon was dominated by Whites, who made up 94 percent compared with 6 percent Black (African, Indian or Coloured). All the Directors-General were white. The dominance of males in the public service of the former RSA is evident. Less than five percent of the management echelon were females and there were no females at all at the level of Director-General or Deputy Director-General.

Table 1: Profile of the public service of the former Republic of South Africa - by population group and gender in 1994.

	African	Indian	Coloured	White	TOTAL	Male	Female
Director-General	0	0	0	26	26	26	0
Percentage	0	0	0	100	100	100	0
Deputy Director-General	0	1	1	68	70	70	0
Percentage	0	1	1	98	100	100	0
Chief Director	16	9	4	383	412	400	12
Percentage	4	2	1	93	100	97	3
Director	16	38	9	1036	1099	1036	63

Percentage	1	4	1	94	100	94	6
TOTAL	32	480	14	1513	1607	1532	75
Percentage	2	3	1	94	100	95	5

Source: Department of Public Service and Administration, 1996.

### Management Echelon of the Public Service Overall

The organisational rationalisation of the public service is nearing finalisation and the filling of posts in the rationalised establishments is progressing. By 31 January 1995, 64 % of the posts in the management echelon throughout the public service had been filled, compared with 61 % at 31 December 1995. A comparison between the composition of the management echelon of the public service of the former RSA, as shown in Table 1 above, and the filling of management echelon posts in the newly created or rationalised structures (Table 2 below) indicates that meaningful changes have taken place. Although Whites continue to fill the majority (63 %) of management echelon posts in the public service as a whole, Blacks now fill a significant number (37 %), with the highest incidence of Blacks (20 out of 38 posts) at the level of Director-General. It is of interest that only 52 women hold ranks of Chief Director and higher, compared with 514 men.

**Table 2: Filling of posts in the management echelon of the public service (including provinces and service departments) from the advent of the Government of National Unity up to 31 January 1996 - by population group and gender.**

	African	Indian	Coloured	White	TOTAL	Male	Female
Director-General	14	3	3	18	38	36	2
Percentage	37	8	8	47	100	95	5
Superintendent- General	3	0	2	5	10	10	0
Percentage	30	0	20	50	100	100	0

Deputy Director- General	46	9	7	68	130	117	13
Percentage	35	7	5	52	100	90	10
Chief Director	135	18	13	222	388	351	37
Percentage	35	5	3	57	100	90	10
Director	393	45	31	902	1371	1223	148
Percentage	29	4	3	63	100	89	11
TOTAL	591	75	56	1215	1937	1736	201
Percentage	31	4	3	63	100	90	10

Source: Department of Public Service and Administration, 1996.

### Management Echelon (excluding service departments)

The service departments (the South African National Defence Force, South African Police Service, Correctional Services, National Intelligence Service and the Secret Services) tend to employ a higher proportion of both Whites and males in the management echelon. Once these are excluded, as in Table 3 below, a better indication of the progress of representativeness emerges. Whites fill a smaller majority (52 %) of all the management echelon posts, while Blacks fill 48 %. Furthermore, Whites fill less than 50 % of the posts above the level of Chief Director. Fifteen percent of the management echelon are females, with the highest incidence (16 %) at the level of Director.

**Table3: Filling of posts in the management echelon of the public service (including provinces but excluding service departments) from the advent of the Government of National Unity up to 31 January 1996 - by population group and gender.**

	African	Asian/Indian	Coloured	White	TOTAL	Male	Female
Director-General	13	3	3	14	33	31	2
Percentage	39	9	9	42	100	94	6
Superintendent- General	3	0	2	4	9	9	0

Percentage	33	0	22	45	100	100	0
Deputy Director- General	40	7	6	42	95	82	13
Percentage	42	7	6	44	100	86	14
Chief Director	106	15	10	112	243	209	34
Percentage	44	6	4	46	100	86	14
Director	301	39	24	451	815	686	129
Percentage	37	5	3	55	100	84	16
TOTAL	463	64	45	623	1195	1017	178
Percentage	39	5	4	52	100	85	15

Source: Department of Public Service and Administration, 1996.

### Management Echelon of the National Departments

An analysis of the posts filled in the management echelon of the national departments only (excluding the service departments), shown in Table 4 below, reveals that Whites fill 63 % of the posts. 46 % of the Directors-General are Black, compared with 53 % in the public service as a whole. It is also noteworthy that the departments at national level have appointed women to 15 % of the posts in the management echelon, compared with ten percent for the management echelon of the public service as a whole.

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**Table 4: Filling of posts in the national departments of the public service (excluding service departments) from the advent of the Government of National Unity up to 31 January 1996.**

	African	Indian	Coloured	White	TOTAL	Male	Female
Director-General	6	3	2	13	24	22	2
Percentage	25	13	8	54	100	92	8
Deputy Director- General	10	3	5	19	37	31	6
Percentage	27	8	14	51	100	84	16
Chief Director	37	9	2	56	104	89	15
Percentage	36	9	2	54	100	86	14
Director	86	16	10	236	348	294	54

Percentage	25	5	3	68	100	84	16
TOTAL	139	31	19	324	513	435	78
Percentage	27	6	4	63	100	85	15

Source: Department of Public Service and Administration, 1996.

## **Constitutional Provisions and the Rationalisation Process**

The restructuring of the public service required a fundamental change in its composition, a massive reorientation of principles and ethos, and a large-scale rationalisation programme.

The rationalisation of the public administration in terms of the provisions of the Interim constitution, 1993 required:

- ◆ that the public service and 11 separate administrations of the former homelands and self-governing territories had to be amalgamated into a single public service;
- ◆ the public service should be governed by uniform laws and regulations;
- ◆ the creation of organisational structures for the new departments and administration;
- ◆ the absorption, transfer and placement of staff into the posts created in the new organisational structures in terms of special measures issued by the public service commission;
- ◆ instituting redundancy measures to deal with excess staff whilst maintaining fair labour practices;
- ◆ downsizing the public service through early retirements to create a leaner civil service as well as to create capacity for representativity; and
- ◆ the development of a policy framework on affirmative action and the filling of 11 000 posts to improve representativity (Muthien, 1995, p.10).



There is a wide held belief that public service jobs are protected by section 236 (2) of the interim constitution which stipulates that: "...a person who immediately before the commencement of this interim constitution was employed by an institution referred to in subsection (1) shall continue in such employment subject to and in accordance with this constitution and other applicable laws regulating such employment." But only if the job or post still exist after rationalisation. This is a difficult situation the Ministry of Public Service and Administration has to deal with.

Section 237 (1) (a) provides for the rationalisation of the public service, it states that: "all institutions referred to in section 236 (1) ...shall as soon as is possible after the commencement of this Constitution be rationalised with a view to establishing within the public service contemplated in section 212 (1) i) an effective administration at the national level of government to deal with matters within the jurisdiction of the national government referred to in section 235 (5) (a) and ii) an effective administration for each province to deal with matters within the jurisdiction of each provincial government referred to in section 235 (5) (b).

Section 33 of the constitution gives the Minister the right to restructure and rationalise the public service in line with the objectives of the Reconstruction and Development Programme and the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service. The rationalisation process has to take into account the right to fair labour practices contained in section 27, that rationalisation has to be accompanied by redundancy packages. Mittner (1995, p.11) warns that: "economic realities will increasingly impose pressure on

government for a smaller public service. South Africa's small tax base simply cannot afford a large, inefficient and ever-growing public service...".

The system has been abused by people who take the voluntary severance package and come back to the Public Service as consultants. Another problem is the moratorium placed on employer initiated retrenchments, particularly in the provinces whose budgets can longer sustain the number of personnel they currently employ. This becomes a serious problem given the fact that the current personnel reduction policy is based on voluntarism, attrition and abolishing of vacant posts. The rationalisation process has therefore been characterised by major and technical complexities of the steps to be taken to bring about what the Interim Constitution required, that is making the Public Service more representative.

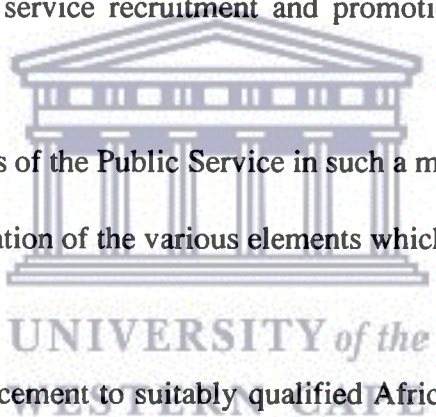
### **Implementation of Affirmative Action in other African Countries**

#### **Zimbabwe**

According to Ibbo Mandaza (undated, pp.1-9), the term affirmative action was never used in other parts of Africa. Africanisation and indigenisation, remained the instruments through which these states hoped to overcome the inequalities of the colonial past. Mandaza identifies three major policy instruments which facilitated the Africanisation programme in the public sector of Zimbabwe. The first was the Presidential Directive (PD), which was taken from the section of the Lancaster House Agreement (or Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe 1980) and this implied affirmative action in the public service. The section stipulates that: "The President may give general directions of policy to the Public Service Commission with the objective of achieving a suitable representative of the various elements

of the population in the Public Service..." (Constitution of Zimbabwe: Chapter VII (75) (2) amended in 1985). In South Africa section 236 of the Interim Constitution is the equivalent of the Presidential Directive of the government of Zimbabwe in the sense that it also provides for making the public service more representative by applying constitutional provisions. Like the Lancaster House Agreement, section 236 is also a product of a negotiated settlement which seeks to accommodate white public servants into the new political dispensation.

The Presidential Directive in Zimbabwe went further; it looked at existing rules and regulations governing public service recruitment and promotion. The Public Service Commission was required to:

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- i) recruit staff to all grades of the Public Service in such a manner as will bring about the balanced representation of the various elements which make up the population of Zimbabwe.
  - ii) give more rapid advancement to suitably qualified Africans in appointments and promotion to senior posts in the Public Service.
  - iii) have due regard to the maintenance of a high state of efficiency within the Public service, and the need to satisfy the career aspirations of existing public servants.
  - iv) make an annual report on progress (quoted in Mandaza, Undated, p.1m-12).

Makumbe (1993, p.49) observes that the rapid entry of Africans into the public service facilitated by the Presidential Directive, made possible the appointment, in May 1980, of the first batch of African permanent secretaries, directors, ambassadors and heads of parastatals,

army, etc. The move greatly disturbed white civil servants, most of whom took advantage of the Early Retirement Incentive Scheme and resigned from the Public Service. Some of them emigrated to South Africa and other countries, but others joined the private sector. There were obvious problems associated with the restructuring of the public service in Zimbabwe, particularly in relation to the shortage of skills, caused by the departure of white civil servants. This left a vacuum because, there were few black candidates who had the necessary skills. An important lesson to be learnt, therefore, from the Zimbabwean experience is that affirmative action programmes must be accompanied by training programmes based on human resource development.

Brian Raftopoulos (in Mandaza, 1986, p.311) observed in his account of human resources development and labour utilisation that:

"This process of Africanization has not, however, been without its problems and there have been some very serious incidents of corruption, incompetence and inefficiency. Such problems, however, need to be analysed within the context of a vastly expanded public service, dealing with the needs of an expanding population and in the process of attempting to develop skills, structures and experience necessary to cope with the new demands" (cited in Makumbe, 1996, p.52).

The second policy instrument identified by Mandaza whereby the new state was to Africanise more quickly and thereby gain control of the public sector in general, was the creation of new ministries or departments alongside the old ones. This was done according to Mandaza, to counteract those old ones whose senior civil servants resisted change to the

new order and its demands. Although this policy succeeded in promoting representativeness in the public service, it also had a number of unintended consequences. The number of civil servants increased from 68 495 in 1979 to 92 129 in 1986. By 1989, Zimbabwe had 52 ministers and deputy ministers, 23 ministries and 34 parastatal bodies (Makumbe, 1996). The third policy was the establishment of the National Manpower Survey, whose aim was to keep a skills profile of all able-bodied persons in Zimbabwe, and establish a comprehensive basis for human resources planning and management in the country (Mandaza, 1980).

### **Namibia**

The Namibian constitution has created a legal framework for the implementation of affirmative action programmes. Article 10 of the Namibian constitution stipulates that, all persons are equal before the law and no persons may be discriminated against on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or socio-economic status. Article 23 of the constitution empowers the state to redress the social, economic and historical imbalances created by the colonial legacy. The article introduces the following provisions:

- i) Nothing contained in Article 10 hereof shall prevent Parliament from enacting legislation providing directly or indirectly for the advancement of persons within Namibia who have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discriminatory laws or practices, or for the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at social, economic and educational imbalances in Namibian society arising out of past discriminatory laws or practices, or for achieving a

balanced structuring of the public service, the police force, the defense and prison services.

- ii) In the enactment of legislation and the application of any policies and practices contemplated by sub-Article (2) hereof, it shall be permissible to have regard to the fact that women in Namibia have traditionally suffered special discrimination and they need to be encouraged and enabled to play a full, equal and effective role in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the nation (Thompson, p.41).

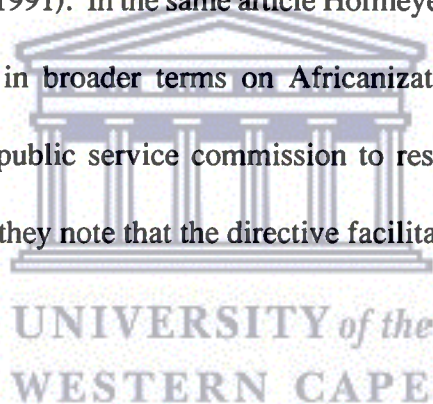
Article 113 of the constitution provided for the establishment of the Public Service Commission. The function of the Public Service Commission was to come up with practical measures on changing the unrepresentative nature of the civil service. Some of the practical measures taken by the Public Service Commission were:

- All vacant promotion posts in the public service were advertised sometimes with relaxed requirements (Gawanas, 1991, p.5). This enabled the historically disadvantaged communities both in lower levels of the public service as well as those outside the sector, to apply and compete for promotion posts which were always filled within the service in terms of the career system.
- The Public Service Commission gave priority at the candidature of the disadvantaged applicants for the filling of any post. Only when it is not possible to do that, were other applicants considered. Gawanas notes that independence created high expectations amongst the disadvantaged majority. The government or public sector has become the figure of hope for a great many people as it is the largest single employer (Ibid).

But progress on affirmative action was achieved in Namibia at the cost of a significant and costly increase in the size of the public service (from 42, 500 at independence to 62, 500 in 1996).

### **Lessons for South Africa**

There is no doubt that in both countries, that is, Zimbabwe and Namibia affirmative action programmes managed to change the unrepresentative nature of their civil services. Fitzgerald notes that: "There were two imperatives: a political one to redress past racial imbalances and a technical one to ensure a stable supply of indigenous skills (cited in *Finance Week*, August 22-28, 1991). In the same article Hofmeyer and Whata point out that Zimbabwe "never legislated in broader terms on Africanization". There was only a Presidential Directive to the public service commission to restructure the civil service. Through its political message, they note that the directive facilitated black advancement in society as a whole.



They also found out in the private sector that the attitude and policy of top management was "decisive in the process of training, developing and promoting black management. If top management decides it will happen, it will happen". They discovered that the skills shortage led to over-promotion of both blacks and whites in the private sector and public sector. The expansion of the civil service without taking into consideration the economic capacity of the country can be a drain on the economy. The statutory provisions paves the way for the implementation of affirmative action programmes. But expansion according to Mokgoro (1993) should be guided by the need for efficient and effective service delivery and socio-

economic transformation. There are areas where the public service needs to be expanded with the aim of making services accessible to those who were historically disadvantaged, and live below the poverty line. This can be done by providing both social and physical infrastructure especially in rural areas where services are almost non-existent, but this should be done in the context of fiscal restraint and competing needs.

Human resource development based affirmative action policies will go a long way to avoid the problem of inefficiency and poor quality service delivery that has affected other developing countries. According to Mokgoro (1993, p.22): "It has been argued that there was an imperative...(in Zimbabwe) to expand the size of the civil service in order to improve the quantity and quality of services to the disadvantaged majority." But both the quality and quantity of services does not depend on the size of the civil service. A slim civil service can perform the same function without compromising the quality and quantity of services delivered. The option that was supposed to have been pursued by the Zimbabwean government was to "right-size" the civil service and, that is, other by re-deploying or hiring staff only for the areas where most needed. Agere (1990) points out that a number of criticisms have been leveled against the Presidential Directive by both civil servants and academics. These criticisms include:

- the directive went overboard as it gave whites the impression that they were not to be accommodated under the new dispensation;
- little consideration was given to the impact white exodus would have on ministries requiring technical specialization;



- implementation was not based on any planning mechanism. Decisions on qualifications and were too arbitrary;
- no visible management skills and management systems have been created, and thus, there is still a serious shortage of trained and experienced personnel;
- not much on-the-job training for new recruits took place;
- incompetence, maladministration, corruption and nepotism among some civil servants became evident;
- excessive centralisation resulted;
- politicians' interference in the operations of the civil service became excessive. Ministers recommended candidates who were their friends or relatives or who were from the same ethnic or regional group.

It has been proven both in Namibia and Zimbabwe that constitutional provisions are essential for affirmative action programmes. They commit the government to redress the historical imbalances. Ingram and Schneider (1988, p.9) go further by arguing that:

"statutory designs structure the implementation process by choosing agents and targets, developing tools and rules, or by assigning these responsibilities to implementing agencies, or by leaving these decisions unspecified".

Statutes should spell out clear goals and objectives. They also make provision for adequate mechanisms of control and resources to implementing agencies, including incentives and jurisdictional authority. Although the statutory provisions accelerated the advancement of blacks in the civil service of Zimbabwe, gender inequality was hardly addressed, the programmes benefitted mostly black males. The lesson that can be learnt from both the

Zimbabwean and Namibian experience is that without the gender sensitisation programmes and other redress mechanisms, the access of women to opportunities in the public service would be difficult if not impossible. It is in this context that the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service makes provision for recruitment of at least 30 per cent of women in middle and senior management echelons within four years. In addition, each department at national and provincial level will be required to draw up affirmative action plans, designed to meet the specific needs of black people, women and people with disabilities. The Zimbabwean and Namibian cases also point to this problem that affirmative action can lead to a major growth in the size of the Public Service. The challenge for South Africa is how to promote affirmative action without increasing the overall size of the public service.



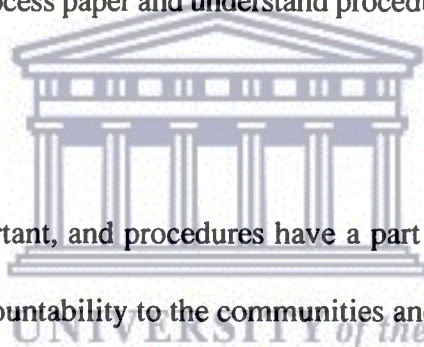
## CHAPTER 4

### Statistical Analysis of Transformation of the Public Service

The ANC-led GNU inherited a civil service which had increased substantially under the previous regime in order to administer the oppressive apartheid policies and due to the flawed rationale of the tri-cameral Parliament which excluded African people and confined them to the homelands and self-governing territories. This had important fiscal implications, and by 1994 the Public Service accounted for 54 percent of the total Government budget, according to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki (*Financial Mail*, 11 November 1994). It is important to recognise in debates over the size and transformation of the Public Service, that the previous Government pursued state led industrialisation and employment to the benefit of the white population and Afrikaners in particular. One result of these policies is that a reported one in two Afrikaners work for the public service (*Finance Week*, 7 September 1995) while, in contrast, approximately 50 percent of the black population are without employment.

Moreover, in the run up to the April 1994 election civil servants were awarded a pay increase far above the rate of inflation (of 20 percent) while rapid promotions and payouts occurred, especially in the soon to be abolished TBVC and SGT administrations. Therefore for both long and short term reasons, the new Government faced the problem of reforming a bloated public service which was sapping national resources.

In addition to the objective of reforming the Public Service for it to be an efficient structure for the provision of services under the new dispensation, the Government also aims to make the Public Service representative of the South African population at all levels. It is important to recognise that the two objectives of representivity and efficiency are integrally linked, and that the new role for the Public Service requires fundamentally different criteria for measuring the ability and suitability of its employees. The focus for employment and staff development needs to include the ability to respond to and understand the needs of the communities being served. This in turn requires language knowledge, experience in community based work, motivation, and experience of democratic organisation and mobilisation. The ability to process paper and understand procedures are therefore no longer paramount.



While accountability is important, and procedures have a part to play in ensuring it, the emphasis needs to shift to accountability to the communities and elected structures, rather than to the bureaucracy. Procedures in themselves are of little value in achieving the new objectives of service provision to disadvantaged communities. This is a crucial consideration in the debate over affirmative action and appointment on the basis of merit. A redefinition of skills in the way described implies that appointment on suitability and merit is a fundamental part of affirmative action. And, on this basis, many of the apartheid functionaries will be ill equipped for their new job definitions, and should be passed over on the basis of merit for appropriately qualified and experienced members of the disadvantaged majority. But this will also depend on the nature of the skills required to do a particular job.

Some ranks need specialised professional and technical skills, and in such cases the skills of old public servants will have to be retained. The provision for a unified public service in the 1994 Public Service Act was only an initial step, and it did not address the dual objectives described above. This chapter seeks to identify what broader progress has been made. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to understand the full nature of task facing the Government after the unification of the Public Service and the recent history of Public Service appointments and remuneration in order to properly evaluate progress.

### **The Changing Size and Remuneration of the Public Service**

The Government wage bill has been increasing in real terms over a period of at least 30 years, and especially so during the 1980s. General government remuneration of employees increased from 7.9 percent of GNP in 1960 to 8.1 percent in 1980 to 13.6 percent in 1994 (Task Team Report: Public Service, 1995). This has been due both to increased employment and increased salaries. Public authorities increased employment by 36.1 percent between 1975 and 1992, six times as much as the private sector (MERG, 1993:23), and employment creation in the Public Service increased in the last years of apartheid while it fell in the private sector. By 1994 general Government's share in formal non-agricultural employment had risen to 29 percent. South Africa also devotes a very high proportion of its budget to wages and salaries as against the provision of services. The trend in Government spending and net lending to GDP, illustrated below therefore largely reflects the pattern of employment creation, and the huge salary gap between the highest and lowest paid workers in the Public Service.

**Table 5: Central Government expenditure and net lending, as percentage of GDP**

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
South Africa	31.0	29.6	31.3	31.1		
Zimbabwe	46.0	45.4	45.5			
Kenya	28.6	32.7	29.9	31.4	27.0	30.5
Brazil	35.4	38.4	36.3	26.5	29.5	
Chile	26.4	19.7	20.0	21.2	21.1	21.7
Malaysia	26.0	26.2	28.5	28.0	28.1	25.9
Thailand	16.5	15.1	14.8	15.1	15.8	

Source: IMF, *International Statistics Yearbook, 1995*.

From Table 5 above, while Government expenditure accounts for a significant proportion of South African GDP, it is comparable with countries at a similar level of development or those facing similar problems. In particular it is important to note that a rapidly industrialising country such as Malaysia also has a sizeable government sector. By this measure, South Africa's Government is also smaller proportionally than that of Zimbabwe, which has faced a similar transformation process, and Brazil, of a similar level of economic development. This illustrates that, while debates over the size of government occupy economists for much of their time, the ends to which the Public Service works and its effectiveness in achieving them are probably more important than size, *per se*. Table 6 below illustrates the significance of Public Service remuneration relative to Government expenditure and GDP in recent years. It is important to note that this does not include related items such as the R6,9bn allocation to the Government pension funds prior to the election.

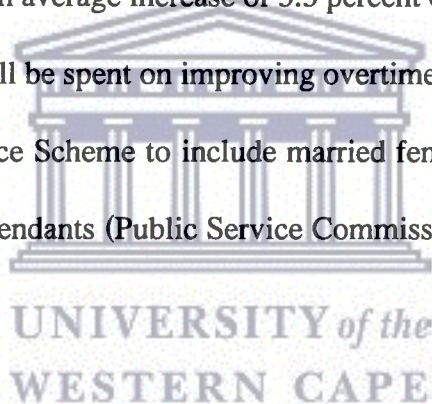
**Table 6: Expenditure on the Public Service**

R million	Revised estimates			Projected
	1992\3	1993\4	1994\5	1995\6
Remuneration of PS employees	42416.6	47733.5	56460.7	58298.9
Total estimated Govt. exp.	118096.9	131410.4	148231.1	156912.0
Remuneration as % of Govt. exp.	35.9%	36.3%	38.1%	37.2%
Remuneration as % GDP	12.4%	12.5%	13.1%	

*Source: Department of Finance, Budget Review, 1995.*

As can be seen, the trend of increasing employment and salaries continued right up to and after the democratic transition. The Public Sector as a whole increased to 1.8 million by the end of 1994 (CSS, 1995), while the ratio of the best to worst paid was reported to be 25:1 in South Africa as compared with around 13:1 in USA, Germany, Canada and India (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 1994). The new Government has made significant progress in addressing the fiscal implications, while narrowing the wage differential between the highest and lowest paid. Remuneration of Public Service employees is projected to fall to 37 percent of the total Government budget for 1995\6 as a result both of rationalisation of the previous administrations, and the 1995 wage agreement (Budget Review, 1995). A programme was announced in October 1994 to cut the Public Service by 200 000, and employment in Public Authorities is estimated to have decreased at an annualised rate of 1 percent in the first quarter of 1995 (SARB, 1995) and to around 1,2 million by mid-1995 (excluding parastatals). Much of this drastic reduction is due to the rationalisation of the multitude of different administrations, while there may still be TBVC and SGT employees without a job under the new rationalised structure, although being paid a salary.

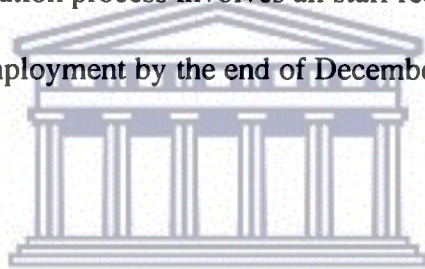
Furthermore, not all departments and provinces have completed the rationalisation, and only when the process is complete will the size of the unified Public Service be clear. The wage package negotiated in 1995 embarked on a process of narrowing the differential between the best and worst paid, with high increases for the lowest paid. The first five notches received a minimum wage of R13 200 per annum, which involved an increase of 22 percent for the first salary notch, with relatively high increases for the next four notches. The increases were scaled down sharply, to 5 percent (significantly below the rate of inflation), from the salary level of R24 630 per annum, and further scaled down to 4 percent at R126 411 per annum, with no increases for the highest paid. The total cost of the wage increase package amounted to R3,1 billion, or an average increase of 5.5 percent over the 1994\5 wage bill. An additional R331 million will be spent on improving overtime pay and on the extension of the Home Owner Allowance Scheme to include married female personnel, as well as single employees without dependants (Public Service Commission Report, 17 September 1995).



The Government therefore reduced wages in real terms, enabling it to project a fall in the share of remuneration in Government expenditure, while reducing the overall wage differential. This process will continue further under the expected three year improvement of conditions of service plan which will achieve a minimum wage of R1 500 per month (in real terms) by 1997, with very low increases for the higher salary levels, and managerial level staff receiving no increase. However, early retirement and retrenchment of staff redundant in the rationalised Public Service structure have been, and will be, a major further fiscal burden, as discussed in more detail below.



The continued employment of staff of the former homeland administrations, despite many of them not having a position in the new unified structures, will also add to the wage bill significantly in the 1995\6 financial year. While the transformation of the Public Service is clearly a national issue, the above aggregate statistics conceal sharply differing situations at the Provincial level. The problems are most difficult in the Provinces incorporating former 'homelands' and self-governing territories. For example, the Eastern Cape has to create a new unified provincial administration with 10 departments from the former Ciskei administration of 19 departments and 20 000 staff, the former Transkei administration of 20 departments and 55 000 staff, and 65 000 staff from the former Cape Provincial administration. The rationalisation process involves all staff reapplying for their jobs and a substantial cut in overall employment by the end of December 1995 (Business Day, 24 July 1995).

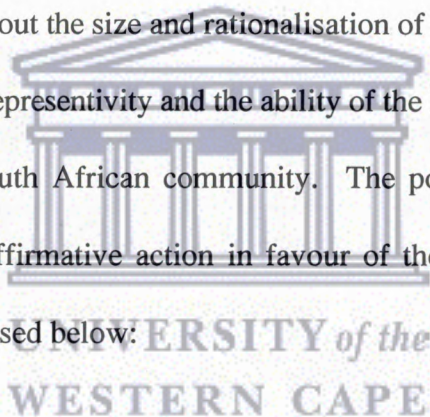


These issues are reflected in the proportion of Provincial budgets accounted for by salaries. While the Public Service Commission guideline is that 35 percent of the budget should be used for remuneration, in the Eastern Cape and Northern Province 90 percent of the budget is taken by Public Service salaries, while in Gauteng it is 60 percent (Finance Week 7 September 1995). Another consequence of the adjustment process has been increased opportunities for corruption. In the Eastern Cape it has been reported that 200 public servants are being investigated for irregular promotions and salary hikes (Business Day, 24 July 1995), while this was highlighted further under the Browde Commission of Inquiry.

Given the major costs associated with early retirements and retrenchments, natural attrition is an important element both in the rationalisation of the Public Service, and in moving to greater representivity. Estimates of attrition differ, with Minister without Portfolio, Jay Naidoo reportedly predicting rates between 3 and 8 percent (Financial Mail, 30 September 1994; Business Day, 13 November 1994). The Department of Finance has reported that it is experiencing an actual attrition rate of 11.4 percent (Department of Finance correspondence, 15 November 1995).

### Transformation and Representativeness

As argued above, the debate about the size and rationalisation of the Public Service cannot be divorced from the issue of representivity and the ability of the Public Service to respond to the needs of the wider South African community. The position faced by the new Government, after years of affirmative action in favour of the white and in particular Afrikaner minority is summarised below:

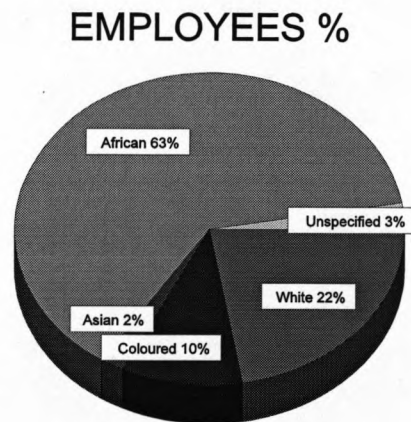


**Table7: Composition of the Public Service by race, end 1994**

	National		Provincial:		Total:	
African	221 747	39.9%	586 897	81.8%	808 644	63.5%
Coloured	88 601	15.9%	33 727	4.7%	122 328	9.6%
Indian	23 178	4.2%	1 284	0.2%	24 462	1.9%
White	220 953	39.7%	56 191	7.8%	277 144	21.8%
Unspecified	1 838	0.3%	39 085	5.4%	40 923	3.2%
Total:	556 317	100.0%	717 184	100.0%	1273 501	100.0%

Source: Department of Public Service and Administration, 1996.

## All Public Service employees, by race, end 1994.

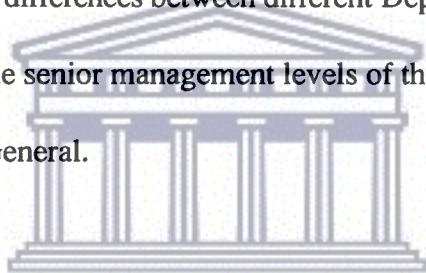


*Source: CSS, 1995.*

Data for the whole of the Public Service reveal that Africans comprise 63 percent of employees. This is significantly below their share of the population as a whole, however it hides significant discrepancies in the Provincial and national levels of the Public Service, and even more strikingly at senior management levels. At national level Africans account for only 40 percent of employees, which reflects the homeland policy of decentralised control, and the concentration of African staff in low paid jobs under the apartheid regime. This is further emphasised by statistics on senior management at the national level of the Public Service (Figure 4, below), where whites account for 87 percent of the total. Senior management has also been completely dominated by men, just 2.7 percent of senior managers at the national level are women. The process of moving towards representivity has included advertising 11 000 posts for which there have been over 1 million applicants, however selection is largely the responsibility of individual Government departments and the provincial Public Service Commissions. As of 31 May 1995, of the 11 000 posts, 1 721

were filled, of which 1 155 were filled so as to promote representivity, of which 682 were filled by women (PSC correspondence, 17 September 1995). The slow progress in making appointments and the proportion used 'to promote representivity' raise questions about the commitment of different structures to achieving representivity and the skills and experience which they value.

It also raises the importance of human resource development as an integral part of a meaningful affirmative action programme. The advertisement of the posts and selection has been widely criticised for the way it has been carried out and the absence of a coherent strategy. These issues, and the differences between different Departments will be analysed in more depth by examining the senior management levels of the Public Service: from the level of Director to Director-General.

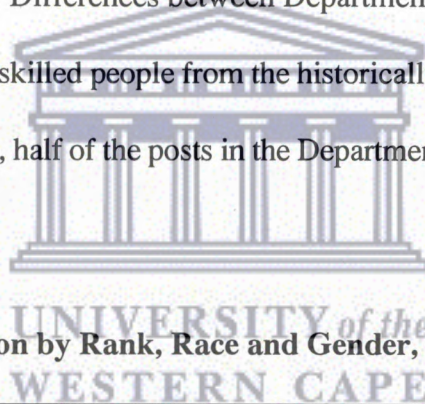


### **Transformation of Senior Management**

It is useful to evaluate progress at this level for two main reasons: transformation of senior management is being addressed as a high priority and more information is available on the rate of progress, it is also of particular importance as the profile and orientation of the leadership cadre will to a large extent determine the orientation of the Public Service as a whole. As of April 1994, senior management accounted for 0.27 percent of Public Service employment, and had salaries greater than R10 534/month (Task Team Report: Public Service). While Table 7 above gave some insight as to the position at the end of 1994, it is also useful to have a longer term perspective. In 1992, senior management was overwhelmingly white, according to the South African Institute of Race Relations, whites

held 95 percent of senior management positions, Coloureds and Indians 4.5 percent, and Africans just 0.5 percent (SAIRR 1992, quoted in MERG).

Under the rationalisation process, each Department is responsible for drawing up an affirmative action program, and for furthering representivity as part of the formation of unified Public Service structures. Considerable progress has been made in this regard, although whites still account for 61 percent of all positions. Furthermore, some Departments, such as Welfare had yet to report on their filling of the rationalised posts, and may be expected to include a higher proportion of whites resulting from the low level of commitment to representivity. Differences between Departments indicate the weaknesses of arguments about the lack of skilled people from the historically disadvantaged groups to take up positions. For example, half of the posts in the Department of Health had been filled by Africans.



**Table 8: Management Echelon by Rank, Race and Gender, as of 31 March 1998.**

Rank	African			White			Asian			Coloured			Total		
	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot
D	679	176	855	1214	146	1360	107	15	122	77	19	96	2077	356	2433
CD	186	41	227	348	32	380	28	6	34	24	8	32	586	87	673
DDG	70	11	81	72	5	77	9	2	11	6	1	7	157	19	176
DG	25	5	30	15	1	16	3	0	3	6	1	7	49	7	56
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>1193</b>	<b>1649</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>1833</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>2869</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>3338</b>

Source: Department of Public Service and Administration, August 1998.

Gauteng has also made significant progress. Gauteng Public Service Commission has replaced over half of the top management of the former Transvaal Provincial Administration and have cut overall staff by 10 percent (*Finance Week*, 7 September 1995). 49 percent of senior management are black and 23 percent are women.

While Gauteng PSC also asserted that this process was achieved without affirmative action, on a merit basis alone, we have argued that this is a false distinction. Moreover Gauteng embarked on an intensive management training programme as an integral part of creating the Provincial administration which emphasises the importance of staff development in achieving greater representivity. Gauteng also does not face the problems of Provinces which incorporate one or more former homelands, and self-governing territories, such as the Eastern Cape. These problems led to all Provinces (except Gauteng) motivating for a 17 percent increase in the top posts in Provincial Administrations (a 6 percent increase in the top posts of the Public Service as a whole), approved in June 1995, in order to increase flexibility for those Provinces incorporating more than one former administration, and thereby easing the burden of paying retrenchment packages (Sunday Times, 25 June 1995).

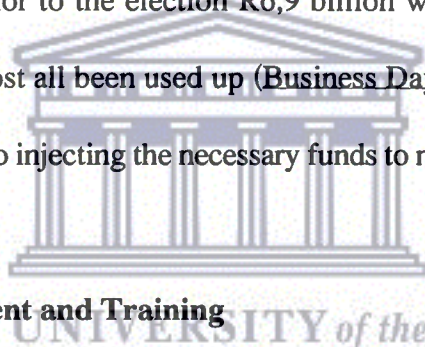
#### **Fiscal Constraints: the Costs of Retrenchment and Early Retirement**

In achieving both rationalisation of the Public Service and greater representivity, the pace of change depends on cutting white male employees. In this, the Government has been bound by the agreement reached in the negotiations of the Interim Constitution prior to the election of the GNU. This agreement guaranteed the jobs of existing public employees, such that they could not be dismissed except for a breach of the regulations governing the Public Service. In the period before May 1996 when a moratorium on compulsory retrenchment was introduced. This does not preclude the retrenchment of civil servants who are effectively redundant after the rationalisation process is completed (Public Service Act, 1994), however it does raise the costs of transforming the Public Service, as it entails that retrenchment packages must be paid.

It also places civil servants, particularly those in senior managerial positions, in a strong bargaining position and there have been reports of sizeable 'golden handshakes' being paid in the form of a voluntary severance package. The provisions also increase the impact of improper promotions and salary increases awarded in the run up to the elections. The basic retrenchment package was also very costly. Serving officials who no longer have a post in the unified administration may apply for posts elsewhere in the Public Service, and for a period of six months while they are making use of this opportunity they will be carried as additional to the fixed establishments of Department or Provincial administrations. After this period, Departments may retrench the employee under the provisions of section 17 (2) (b) of the Public Service Act, 1994. This implies that for a significant period, Public Service officials, generally those whose skills and experience are not appropriate to the new unified administration, are paid while they do not work. This effectively raises their retrenchment package. In order to facilitate rationalisation and representivity, the Government has also offered the option of early retirement to public servants over 50 years old or with more than 30 years of service. The retirements are dealt with as per normal retirements, which means the employee receives a *pro rata* service bonus, leave gratuity, general gratuity and a monthly payment. 852 civil servants took early retirement in 1994, 440 in 1995 (by May), totalling 1 292, while the total was 573 if police and education are excluded. The estimated Pension Fund payout resulting from these early retirements was R225 million (The Star, 24 May 1995).

The Public Service Act of 1994 provided for the 11 former public services to be rationalised into one unified Public Service which included implementing uniform salaries, salary scales,

allowances and related measures. Salary scales and allowances lower than those generally prevailing were raised to that level, while pensionable salary scales and salary notches which were higher than those generally prevailing were protected in terms of the Constitution. Allowances more favourable than those generally prevailing were phased out completely by 31 March 1995. The process was therefore asymmetric, and entrenched the pensionable discrepancies, effectively enabling the privilege of some to be extended for the duration of their pension in the form of higher payouts based on their higher than prevailing salary scales and notches. The implications of early retirements therefore extend beyond the immediate financial impact noted above. They imply further stress on the Government Pension Funds over time. Prior to the election R6,9 billion was allocated to top up the pension funds, which has almost all been used up (Business Day, 9 November 1995), and the Government is committed to injecting the necessary funds to maintain the pension funds.



### **Human Resource Development and Training**

The development of South Africa's human resources is one of the five key programmes of the RDP. Training and development of human resources is essential to the successful reform of the public service, and is one of the central planks of the RDP. Section 13.2 of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service states that training and education will assist the government to develop the professional capacities of public servants and to promote institutional change. Training can contribute to the strategic goals of the state in a number ways:



- training can help to equip all public servants with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to carry out their jobs effectively in pursuit of the new vision and mission for the public service;
- training will form an integral part of the process of increasing the representativeness of the public service;
- training can enable public servants to acquire a new development oriented professionalism; it will entail the development of a new work ethic, knowledge and skills with which to implement the RDP;
- training should also thus become a key component of the institution-building process, and it must be integrated into the overall strategic plans of public sector organisations; and
- appropriate training can assist public servants in developing a better understanding of the needs of the communities they are serving, as well as capacity to respond to these needs.

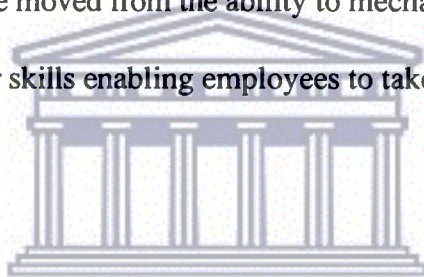


Investment in people will benefit the state in the long-run because it will lead to increased productivity, efficiency and the broadening of the tax base. In the specific case of the Public Service training is essential for:

- the meaningful achievement of affirmative action goals, and
- the reform of the civil service in order for it to be an effective mechanism of a Government attempting to transform an economy.

While the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service provides great detail on training needs, targets are required which are specified within a coherent framework, are

quantified and costed, and have timeframes for their achievement. This enables proper monitoring and evaluation of progress. In-house, short term training courses should be offered to cover both induction and proficiency training. These should be targeted at facilitating entry into particular categories of posts for historically disadvantaged groups as part of improving the representivity of the Public Service. The design of a national training policy must be closely linked with establishing a database of skills of both existing public service employees and those entering the public service. Training must also relate to the redefinition of job descriptions and the establishment of an effective performance appraisal system, which reflect the development of skills appropriate to the new role of the public sector. The emphasis should be moved from the ability to mechanically follow procedures and implement tasks to broader skills enabling employees to take greater responsibility for their job.



The budget should have been an important mechanism for reprioritisation of resources if the Public Service Commission is to fulfil its commitment to develop training at a national level to support the restructuring of the Public Service. The White Paper on Public Service Training and Education's (WPPSTE) vision is to: "To contribute towards the development of a dedicated, productive and people-centred public service staffed by public servants whose performance is maximised and whose potential is fully developed through the comprehensive provision of appropriate, adequate and accessible training and education at all levels."

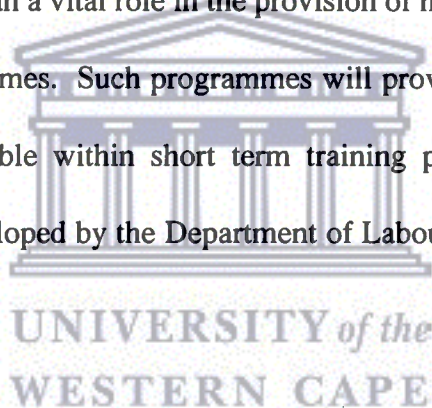
It is stated that if training and education is properly conceived and structured, this can:

- form an integral part of the process of increasing the representivity of the public service in terms of race, gender and disability by facilitating respect for and accommodation of diversity in the workplace.
- assist public servants in develop a better understanding of the needs of the communities which they are serving, as well as a capacity to respond to these needs(WPPSTE, 1997:31-32).

The White Paper on Public Service Training and Education is in line with the RDP's objective of developing the country's human resources. The government has adopted the view that all public servants, from most senior to junior require on-going training as an integral part of their professional life. The training of senior and middle management must linked to the processes and policy-making challenges defined by the RDP. The training of workers must be linked to the new emphasis on customer care and service delivery, the development of career paths and the reorganisation of grading systems within the public service. Among lower level workers, this will necessitate the writing of job-descriptions to meet the new skills and knowledge requirements of the RDP.

The responsibility for the training of approximately 1,2 million public servants extends to each department, the provinces and to each public servant. Structurally and organisationally, provision must be made at the national, provincial and departmental levels according to the prevailing and envisaged needs. These needs derive from backlogs of the past, challenges posed by restructuring, affirmative action, new appointees and other requirements of the RDP.

One of the strengths of the WPPSTE is its proposal on the integration of public service training and education into National Qualifications Framework and South African Qualifications Framework and the Department of Labour's Skills Development Strategy. These initiatives form part of a broader national strategy to contribute to the transformation of the public service through training and development interventions. Capacity-building is essential to ensuring the effective participation in the implementation of the RDP. For this reason, a national network of institutions, including universities, technikons, private and public sector training facilities, the labour movement and NGOs must be established. While tertiary institutions make important contributions in all spheres of education and training, it is certain that they will play an a vital role in the provision of more long-term, formative training and learning programmes. Such programmes will provide more solid, all round skills, that is normally possible within short term training programmes. The Skills Development Bill(1997) developed by the Department of Labour provides guidelines for capacity development.



The main objectives of the Bill are:

- to provide for a skills development strategy which is flexible, accessible, decentralised, demand-led and based on partnerships between public and private sectors;
- to improve the competency levels of the workforce in order to promote the level of responsibility of employees and to enable employers to achieve rising levels of productivity and competitiveness; and

- to enable persons to enter and remain in employment or become self-employed and enjoy a rising standard of living.

In addition to the aforementioned initiatives to develop human resources, the Department of Public Service and Administration released a draft White Paper on a New Employment Policy for the Public Service(1997). The draft White Paper proposes the assessment of human resource requirements based on the department's short, medium and long-term operational objectives as set out in its strategic plan.

The assessment of human resource requirements will identify not only the numbers of staff and skills required, but also targets within these for meeting the goals of employment equity, in relation to race, gender and disability.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Restructuring and Rationalisation of Programmes and Personnel**

One of the main purposes of the rationalisation and restructuring exercise was the promotion of more efficient delivery of services required to meet basic needs, and measures to ensure representivity of the Public Service itself. The strategies and implementation steps identified in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service must be evaluated against this. The process of restructuring and rationalisation is crucial for unlocking resources for productive investment, releasing staff for employment by provincial administrations and addressing the inefficiencies of the previous administration. The reorientation of the civil service in the new political dispensation should be part of an ongoing process which should include performance monitoring of public sector employees against RDP objectives, and accountability for poor performance.

The demand for personnel by Provincial Structures should drive the reduction in size of the national government administration. With the establishment of Provincial Structures, the national government administration should shrink, by around 30 percent by 2001, and 50 percent by 2005. Target rates of growth of productivity and efficiency savings should be aimed at releasing resources for new priorities. This may be achieved by:

- longer hours of effort by personnel
- improved work practices
- removal of whole tiers of reporting

- removal of duplication
- greater use of modern technology

These processes to improve productivity will only be undertaken if the appropriate incentives exist. This implies decentralising decision making and responsibility, while at the same time increasing accountability for performance against specified objectives. Departments must be explicitly responsible for implementing affirmative actions. A performance appraisal process is required in terms of newly defined job descriptions. There should be a move away from the definition of skills in technical\bureaucratic terms to an emphasis on vision and an understanding of issues related to a given job, especially at managerial levels.



### **Meeting Basic Needs**

The transformation and reorientation of the Public Service to meet basic needs involves critically assessing ongoing programmes and areas of need. Correcting the apartheid bias of providing high quality, accessible services to white areas will require a radical appraisal of resource use against need. The financial requirements of service provision must be mapped out on the basis of a coherent framework. This involves modelling different scenarios and projecting costs and staffing needs. At present the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service stipulates that resources must be redirected to ensure optimal service provision, particularly for disadvantaged groups and areas but it should further provide the basis for evaluation of existing and proposed programmes and projects in terms of RDP priorities.

As part of this, Departments should adopt a zero base for assessing programmes, that is evaluating resource use against need, rather than an incremental approach which will maintain disparities, and explicitly take into account distributional effects of programmes. Resources must be reprioritised to ensure that the public sector serves all of South Africa in such a way as to provide the basis for a satisfactory life for all.

### **Representativeness and Transformation**

Achieving representivity should be written into the contracts of directors-general, such that they may be held accountable for their performance in this respect. Furthermore they should be provided with the necessary support, such as by the establishment of a unit specifically responsible for affirmative action programmes in the Department of the Public Service and Administration. For affirmative action to be implemented, explicit provision should have been made for this programme in the 1997\98 budget. The affirmative action process should be prioritised across the Public Service, and led by central government. Explicit targets and a monitoring system should be established in order to assess progress in this area. Expenditure estimates must also be an explicit part of the programme, for it to be implementable. For the transformation process to be meaningful it must be planned in the context of a wider human resource development strategy.

There should be a calculation of the financial implications of different transformation strategies based on projections. The financial implications of each of the steps to be implemented under the White Paper should be costed, such that resource use decisions are



made explicit. However, some of the costs likely to be incurred during the process of transformation are as follows:

- the setting up of transformation teams in departments, and provincial administrations will incur some costs, although it is intended that most units will be staffed through the redeployment of existing personnel;
- the redeployment of public officials will require support to cover the costs of relocation and investment in new infrastructure and equipment;
- the programme of affirmative action will require funding for early retirement packages, for relocation of staff, and for training and for retraining;
- the upgrading of training institutions will require investments in terms of infrastructure, personnel, and equipment; the conducting of training programmes, likewise, will incur both direct and indirect costs;
- the installation of new information systems will require investment in equipment and in the training of users, as well as some running and maintenance costs (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995, p.32).

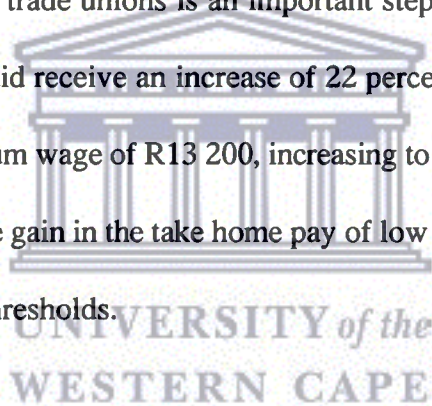
### **Wages and Salaries**

Projected total remuneration of Public Service employees for the fiscal year (1995\96) was R58.3 billion, which is equivalent to 37 percent of total estimated expenditure. The total wages and salaries bill is therefore expected to increase by 3 percent over the previous year, but this must be set in the context of the 18 percent increase in the preceding year, when the process of devolving functions to the provincial administrations was being implemented.

Taking inflation (of around 10 percent) into account, the budget appears to have achieved small savings in remuneration in real terms and has made little progress in the wider context of the potential for savings outlined above.

### **Narrowing the Wage Gap in the Public Service and Administration**

An important element in achieving a more representative civil service is a clear strategy for addressing entrenched wage disparities based on race and gender. The budget is a key instrument for redressing this imbalance, within the context of reprioritisation of spending subject to the overall resource constraint. The 1995 agreement announced between government and public sector trade unions is an important step. Freezing salaries above R126 411 while the lowest paid receive an increase of 22 percent will narrow the overall wage gap, and the new minimum wage of R13 200, increasing to R18 000 over three years, is also significant. The relative gain in the take home pay of low paid employees may well be reduced as they cross tax thresholds.



The financing implications of this agreement are not as yet clear, but it has been stated that it is partly at the expense of the state's contribution to the government's pension fund. This is a major concern as those on low incomes will be more dependent on their future government pension than those with higher incomes who have greater scope to utilise private pensions and build up savings. The need to cut the government's contribution to pensions and the overall financial burden of the wage settlement would be lowered if greater diversion of funds had been made from salaries at the higher end of the scale.

## Gender Equality and Affirmative Action

- Affirmative action was a much debated topic at the time of the release of the first RDP White Paper. It is widely accepted that affirmative action has to start with the public service, and has to go beyond race to incorporate gender and other areas of discrimination.
- Overall, there are probably at least as many women employed in the public service as men, but very few of these women are in the upper, decision-making, and powerful echelons of the bureaucracy. The virtual absence of women, and particularly black women, in the higher positions in the government service needs to be addressed.

Specific areas which need to be investigated with regard to women are:

- (a) the laws, rules and regulations which might, explicitly or implicitly, be operating in a manner disadvantageous to women
  - (b) attitudes and perceptions as to what is appropriate work for women or men
  - (c) the possible lack of suitably skilled female personnel.
  - (d) possible discrimination, implicit or explicit, on the basis of age, marital status, parenthood and/or interrupted careers, disability, sexuality, an unfriendly environment, and so on, and
  - (e) lack of opportunities for women.
- Some departments have already performed audits of their staff to ascertain the race, gender and other inequalities.

Some have begun to address these by drawing up employment equity policies. Some are actively monitoring the career paths and progress of women staff. The experience of these departments should be drawn upon by other departments and their lead followed. The Public Service Commission should codify, and thus entrench, best practice in general procedures and guidelines.

- A databank of women presently employed at all levels of government and within the parastatals should be created, their progress monitored, and reasons for unequal promotion, advancement, etc. investigated. The Public Service Commission should be charged with providing regular reports on the situation of women within Government.
- Discrete steps should be taken to address each and every one of the factors seen to be impeding women's appointment or promotion to positions in the public service. Recruitment and selection procedures should be reviewed. Jobs should be advertised in a gender-sensitive way and job descriptions drawn up in ways which do not discriminate either overtly or covertly.

Training programmes should be implemented for women in the relevant positions in respect of (a) technical skills in their areas of operation (b) leadership (c) development (d) political skills (e) research (f) organisation and management and (g) self confidence.

- In consultation with NGOs working on gender training, the Public Service Training Institute (renamed SAMDI) should develop a gender sensitivity training programme

aimed at promoting a culture and environment that will inspire parity and partnership between men and women in the public service.

Further, gender awareness training should be conducted for planners and policymakers to expose them to gender analysis techniques needed to identify and define the social, economic, political and cultural constraints on the advancement of women.

## **Size of the Civil Service**

### **Some Guidelines from the African Experience**

The apartheid legacy has left a bloated civil service, that needs to be trimmed. Currently, there is no norm on the size of the civil service. But some guidelines can be proposed based on the experience of other countries. South African policy planners can draw lessons from the failures and successes of other countries, in particular the African experience. There can be no universal norm on the size of the civil service. The decision on how big or small the civil service should be, must take into account the political and socio-economic conditions of a particular country and the services that the state must deliver. Political decisions on the matter should take into account economic considerations. A balance should be struck between political decisions and the economic capacity/resources of the country.

For example, it was reported in the *Tanzanian Business Times* (1992), that the Tanzanian government was under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to trim the size of its civil service by retrenching approximately 300 000 civil servants, and transferring state resources from consumption and non-productive sectors to productive and investment ones.

Most African states are in the same dilemma and cutting down the number of civil servants has become one of the conditions for the International Monetary Fund loans. According to Hugo (undated, p.3) "... the basic fact of the matter is that national resources in African have been engulfed by civil service pay rolls which have more often than not, been supply and not demand or results, driven". In this regard South Africa should take heed of Leonard's warning that in many African countries the state grew so large that it collapsed in on itself. The failure of the state to cut down on the number of its employees led to the inability of the state to pay and utilize the services of its employees meaningfully. "The taxburden of the salary bill put a drain on the economy, limiting the fiscal base of the state ..." (1991, p.1).

The decision to cut down the number of employees should be taken at a national level and the guidelines for such action should be determined at a national level. The guidelines must be informed amongst other things, by the services rendered by a particular department or province. There is a shortage of teachers and nurses in rural areas, whilst on the other hand in some urban areas, there is more personnel than it is needed. This means that teachers, police and nurses should be redeployed to rural areas where the need for their services is greatest.

The hiring of staff should be informed by the policy objectives of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, employment of staff must be based on need for such personnel. Katorobo (1991, p.38) is of the view that : "...when the civil service is managed on the basis of clearly articulated general objectives reduced to specific objectives, a range of modern techniques of management can then be introduced ... the optimal size of resources (money,

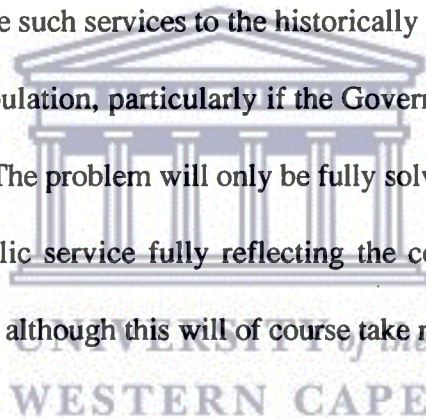
people, time, facilities and materials) can be determined. Tasks can be allocated and performance appraisals carried out based on achievement of specified and time-bound outputs or results. This is the demand-driven system." The move by the Department of Public Service and Administration to introduce performance contracts for managers will go a long way to improve productivity and efficiency in the public service. The plan to introduce a new performance appraisal system has been submitted to the Public Service Bargaining Chamber for discussions. The plan represents a shift away from automatic promotions based on length of tenure towards performance-related rewards. The new system will involve annual performance evaluations for promotions and salary increases. It will reward people for setting high standards and meeting them, not for routine work. Unlike the existing public service employment contracts set out job descriptions but not annual goals and targets. Performance contracts seek to introduce efficient business practices into government and ensure that officials are held accountable for their performance. They set out key responsibilities and annual targets that must be met, there by accelerating service delivery and ensuring that the taxpayer receives value for money.

The Minister for Public Service and Administration is still investigating the possibility of extending the performance contracts to all civil servants (Financial Mail, August 1, 1997). In the civil service, where applicable, the need exists to relate numbers to recurrent costs. The hiring procedures should be a response to the rationally determined needs of the entities created to implement government functions and tasks.

The size and quality of the work-force resulting from such a rational approach could be expressed as optional or justified if there has been a proper job analysis and description in determining the number hired. The important lesson from the African experience is that a balance should be struck between public sector employment and resource availability.

## **Conclusion**

The need to transform the public service has not only been generally recognised but is also being acted on, (see for example the White Paper on The Transformation of the Public Service 1995). Such a transformation is vital if the costs of service delivery are not to spiral as attempts are made to provide such services to the historically disadvantaged areas of the country and groups of the population, particularly if the Government is to achieve its aim of reducing the fiscal deficit. The problem will only be fully solved once the Government's stated aim of having the public service fully reflecting the country's racial and gender composition has been reached, although this will of course take many years, if not decades.





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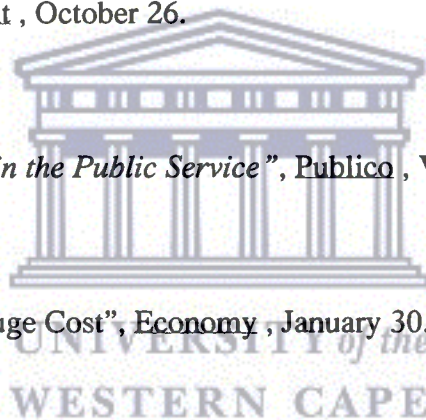
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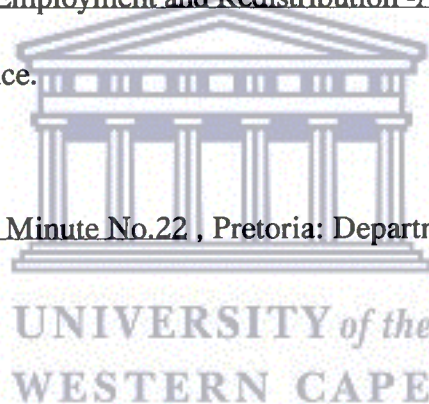
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