

In his inauguration address on 27 April 2004, Thabo Mbeki said: 'Today we begin our Second Decade of Democracy. We are convinced that what has been achieved during the First demonstrates that as Africans we can and will solve our problems. We are equally certain that Africa will record new advances as she pursues the goal of a better life for all. She will do what she can to encourage a more equitable and humane new world order.'

This special issue of *Politeia* is dedicated to some of the developments and achievements of the past decade in South Africa. The country earned worldwide admiration during this period for its dedication to constitutional and legislative reform. This has not only been reform for the sake of saying that it has occurred, but has entailed significant changes to legislation in most areas. In all instances, laws were formulated to reflect the contents of the South African Constitution. These changes have an impact, among others, on government structures, the relationships that drive government and the relationships that drive the labour market. The contributions in this issue mostly deal, in one way or another, with relationships and how these manifest themselves either in government or between different role players in the workplace. Specific attention is paid in some contributions to the legislation that rules these relationships.

Several articles in this issue deal with labour relations. Kobus Wessels focuses his contribution on equal employment opportunities. He considers the concepts used in defining equal employment and finds that four criteria are used: equity, justice, merit and representivity. He argues that these criteria do not necessarily lead to true equality and equal employment opportunities.

In 'Managing people in the twenty-first century: Integrative public human resource management in sub-Saharan Africa', Johan van der Westhuizen analyses the changes that have occurred in public human resource management. He proposes a conceptual framework to integrate indigenous knowledge with modern, mostly Western, management philosophies and practice.

Gerda van Dijk explores legislative advances in 'Facilitating human resource development in the South African constitutional dispensation'. She considers how the regulatory environment facilitates the creation of a learning organisation. She looks at skills development legislation and human resource development strategies. She also considers the strategy developed by the Department of Public Service and Administration for the period 2001–2007, before linking human resource development to the learning organisation in conclusion.

Kosie Oschman examines total quality management (TQM) in his contribution, entitled 'In search of excellence: Primary and supportive dimensions of total quality management'. He points out that TQM is an approach that can be applied throughout all sectors of the economy to improve services and products, as well as the

environment within which employees have to work. He identifies the dimensions that are required to ensure its effective implementation. His final conclusions are based on a study to develop an implementation framework for the South African Air Force.

All relationships within the workplace are not necessarily positive. The next two contributions deal with issues of a more difficult nature. In 'Developments in labour relations in South Africa: Ten years of democracy (1994–2004)' Gera Ferreira briefly describes the history of South African labour relations since 1652. She then focuses on labour legislation promulgated since 1994, before discussing the CCMA. She pays particular attention to its effectiveness in resolving disputes and refers to recent statistics on its activities. She concludes with a view of its continued success in providing a fast, effective and user-friendly service.

In 'Whistleblowing and the law in South Africa', Christelle Auriacombe addresses legislation that has been introduced to protect whistleblowers. In addition to the Protected Disclosures Act 2000, she also discusses other laws with a direct bearing on whistleblowing. In conclusion, she points to the need for organisations to ensure that they have a healthy organisational culture with sound communication to facilitate whistleblowing in a more natural way.

Several contributions appear in this issue that deal with other kinds of relationships. Lianne Malan examines intergovernmental relations and co-operative government in South Africa. This system is crucial, specifically in the drafting of policies or the implementation of projects and programmes. Although it is based on a constitutional/legal framework, there is a commitment to its principles by all spheres of government. The article reviews the system's evolution over the past decade, identifies some of its successes, and proposes possible solutions to some of its failures.

In 'An overview of the ward committee system: A case study of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality', Kishore Raga and Derek Taylor explore the new developmental role of the third sphere of government in South Africa. This role encompasses democratisation, citizen participation and the empowerment of citizens and communities. The ward committee has thus been put in place to bridge the divide between citizens and their elected representatives. Specific attention is paid to the advisory status of these committees and whether this will result in them having little actual power to establish real linkages between communities and representatives.

Barry Hanyane focuses his contribution on defining the concept of civic interest in post-apartheid South Africa. Apart from examining the concept in theoretical terms, he also considers the realisation of civic interest in practice. This is done in the context of public officials making decisions in the civic interest.

This issue concludes with a contribution by Eric Nealer, entitled 'Student registrations: Some important observations'. In a study of student registrations during 2002–2003 in the Department of Public Administration and Management at

Unisa, certain registration trends were identified. These trends are useful tools in formulating a more effective marketing strategy and improving the professional assistance given to students during recruitment periods. The conclusions will be of value for marketing campaigns to promote the Department and Unisa.

We hope that the various articles will stimulate and broaden readers' research and contact horizons in such a way as to enhance the subject of Public Administration in both academia and the leading practitioners of the developing South Africa.

Eric Nealer
Guest Editor