

Developing Leadership and Adopting an African Leadership model for the Improvement of Public Services in South Africa

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Introduction

The South African public sector is reeling from the barrage of new initiatives with respect to the government's transformation agenda, and from a plethora of targets that need to be achieved in the public sector. With the demands from communities for improved service delivery, it is highly unlikely that the South African Government will relax the performance pressures it exerts on public sector organisations. Not surprisingly, leadership sits firmly at the core of this transformation agenda. However, the Government has repeatedly expressed concerns as to the lack of the effectiveness of leadership development initiatives on good governance practices and service delivery outcomes.

There is little shared understanding amongst management of the qualities required for effective leadership in the South African public sector. Furthermore, leadership theory is driven by conflicting interpretations. However, fundamental to improved leadership is a clearer shared understanding of what leadership behaviours, approaches and models work in delivering public services. Many leadership development initiatives based on Western Leadership models have been undertaken by the South African government, but there is little evidence so far as to their effectiveness.

This paper provides an overview of service delivery in South Africa; the critical need for effective leadership to improve service delivery by the South African public sector, and an overview of leadership approaches and models. The paper also points to why a particular model of African leadership is suggested in relation to the South African public sector; specifically, its validity with respect to the impact on factors that affect employee performance and thus service delivery outcomes.

General overview of South Africa

The Republic of South Africa is situated at the southern tip of the African continent. The size of South Africa is approximately 1.2 million sq km. It has common boundaries with the republics of Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, the Kingdom of Swaziland and Lesotho. The total South African population

is approximately fifty million. South Africa has a dual economy. One part of the economy is modern and relatively well developed, whereas the other is characterized by underdevelopment and an entrenched crisis of poverty. Moreover, there is a distinct relationship between underdevelopment, poverty and race in South Africa. The historical reason for this is that the previous National Party government (1949 to 1994) promoted the interests of the White minority in all sectors of society in South Africa, to the detriment of the other race groups.

In terms of the Constitution of South Africa, the government of South Africa is divided into three spheres: national, provincial and local government. The national government is responsible for policy formulation and for developing national standards, rules and regulations. The exclusive functional areas of provincial governments include public health, provincial roads and provincial planning. Municipalities, which are the constitutional units of the local sphere of government, are involved in local issues, such as municipal roads, water, electricity and sanitation to the community.

Apartheid era: the South African public sector and service delivery (1949 to 1994)

When considering service delivery by the South African public sector, it is important to understand the historical context of the public sector (A Report of the State of the Public Service 2001:11). Within the context of this discussion, the public sector refers to national, provincial and local government. For the purpose of this discussion, it is important to examine the nature and history of the public sector and service delivery prior to 1994. National, provincial and local government prior to 1994 reflected a highly fragmented and repressive system of government. In this regard, the public service which comprises national and provincial government, had at the time of democratization (1994), eleven separate and distinct systems, based on race, gender and ethnicity. Each of these systems was organized around its own priorities that took distinctive and idiosyncratic characteristics. The doctrine of 'separate development' involved the idea that Africans and others should reside and enjoy citizenship rights, in distinct ethnic homelands (Butler 2004:19).

'Separate development' was one of the key concepts of apartheid. The doctrine of 'separate development' implied that every South African must be assigned to an ethnic group, nation, or tribe, and that each of these must have its own site of self-government. This resulted in ten Bantustans and in 1970 homeland citizenship was forced upon Africans. Each homeland bureaucracy had its own public service.

In line with the South African government's policy of discrimination, the public sector assumed a brutal and authoritarian form of governance. The system that emerged under the apartheid regime was profoundly undemocratic. Furthermore, the public sector was explicitly organized, around the imperatives of inequitable principles, in which racism and sexism provided an important justification for many of the discriminatory practices adopted by government. Moreover, government departments created opportunities for gross malpractices, such as corruption and mismanagement. This was evident at every institutional level in 1994 in the South African public sector (A Report of the State of the Public Service 2001:11).

The South African public sector prior to 1994, adopted a management and governance framework that was characterized as unaccountable, non-transparent and non-participatory. Furthermore, centralized control and top-down management practices were evident. Accountability within the government departments were limited to bureaucratic accountability (A Report on the State of the Public Service 2001:8). Public servants in South African government organisations were held accountable for adherence to rules and procedures, rather than for service delivery outcomes. Wider accountability of service provision to the public was even less in evidence. There were a number of weaknesses in the South African government organisations prior to 1994 impacting on efficient service delivery. The most obvious weaknesses that were identified were inefficient management systems, processes and procedural issues. The absence of clearly defined roles and responsibilities was also a source of tremendous confusion in the public sector. There was also a lack of effective co-ordination and communication mechanisms.

The total number of public servants in South Africa was at about one per thirty inhabitants, which is extremely high in relation to other countries at a comparable stage in their economic development. Above all, productivity was relatively low, particularly if judged in terms of the ability to deliver services that meet the needs of all people in South Africa (Bardill 2000:104). The low productivity resulted in

part, from the shortage of appropriate human resources development (HRD) for staff, especially those in the managerial cadre of the South African public sector. It also resulted from the fact that a disproportionate number of staff was involved in essentially duplicative administrative functions, whereas serious understaffing frequently occurred at the level of essential service provision, in areas such as health, social services and education. Many of these constraints have served to inhibit the development of a professional work ethic and commitment amongst public servants.

South African government departments prior to 1994 were structured around the need of the apartheid state. Services to the majority of the population, (namely Blacks), were either non-existent or if delivered, were partially, inefficiently and inequitably distributed. The public sector had a policy which promoted exclusion or minimal service provision to Black communities in South Africa. The converse was true for White South Africans (A Report on the State of the Public Service 2001:8). The apartheid state of South Africa, directed resources into service delivery programmes for the uplifting of, at best, the 13, 6 percent of the South African White population. The post apartheid South African public sector was therefore faced with the urgent need to improve and redress service delivery imbalances and inequities, especially in previously disadvantaged communities.

Post apartheid era: the South African public sector and service delivery (Post 1994 to 2003)

The post apartheid democratic government in South Africa (since 1994) had to deal with the legacy of apartheid and colonialism (Media Briefing of the Minister of Provincial and Local Government, Mr. FS Mafumadi, Cape Town, 2 September 2003). In 1994, when the new South African government came into power it was evident that there was an absence of basic services, such as water, proper sanitation and electricity in many rural communities (Second Economic & Social Rights Report 1998/1999 2000). However, in some communities minimal services were provided. In 1995, it was estimated that approximately eight million people from previously disadvantaged communities did not have adequate sanitary facilities and that only fifty percent of South Africans, had waterborne sewerage. In 1996, it was estimated that approximately fifteen to sixteen million people did not have piped water.

However, urban areas in South Africa are better provided with higher levels of services. Conversely, the biggest backlogs are in rural areas, where services were virtually

non-existent in 1994. If one has to compare the urban areas with the rural areas with respect to service delivery, a number of differences become evident (Naidoo 2009).

In 1994, 10, 1 percent of the households living in urban areas, had a below basic service level for water (Naidoo 2004). Similarly, 39, 2 percent of the households living in rural areas have a below basic service level for water. The difference is even more marked in the case of sanitation, where 25, 8 percent of urban households and 75, 8 percent of rural households, lacked at least a 'ventilated improved pit latrine' (the basic level). This is reflected in Table 1 on the following page.

In light of these urban-rural differences in South Africa, it is questionable whether national averages have much value, such as 45, 9 percent of the nation's households lacked at least a basic sanitation service level. The reasons for these differences were attributed to past urban bias of services mainly towards White communities in South Africa. This system was designed to promote the exclusion of Blacks from the mainstream of South African society. The majority of the citizens who live in rural areas are Black.

The impact of the lack of service delivery by the previous South African public sector were further evident in the rural areas in the provinces, in which case, in 1995, 13, 6 percent of the Western Cape rural households, had a below basic water service level, whilst the same figure in the Eastern Cape was 76, 4 percent (Naidoo 2004). Two percent of the Western Cape's urban households had a below basic water service level, whilst the same figure in Eastern Cape was three percent. Approximately thirty-eight percent of Gauteng's rural population had a below basic sanitation service level, while the figure for KwaZulu-Natal was 88, 2 percent. Fifteen percent of Gauteng's urban population had a below basic sanitation services level, the same figure in KwaZulu-Natal was fifty four percent. This is reflected in Table 2 on the following page.

There were clearly vast differences with respect to the service levels among the rural communities in the provinces in South Africa. The South African government (since 1994), inherited households in urban areas which had inadequate municipal services and which were able to contribute very little to the cost of public services. Most municipal authorities (local government level) experienced difficulties in financing, delivering, sustaining and managing existing public services.

The South African public sector and service delivery in South Africa (2004 to 2009)

In examining local government in South Africa, it is evident that there are a number of challenges. Many municipalities have experienced protest marches, riots, and uprisings from communities that can be attributed to the lack of service delivery. In this regard there have been over 500 protests pertaining to service delivery over the past decade. Service delivery failure has been raised at different Imbizo's ('meetings of key stakeholders'), whereby either the President, Members of the Cabinet, Premiers, and councillors interacted with communities (Mafora 2009).

For example, the rural Ramotshere Moiloa municipality in the North West Province of South Africa, comprising of two townships, Ikageleng and Ntswelletsoku faced serious issues with respect to service delivery. The Ikageleng community raised their concerns pertaining to the lack of services around the following issues (Mafora 2009): street lights that are always out of order; blocked sewer network; poor road maintenance as well as poor road infrastructure; accounts that are three months behind schedule; lack of serviced sites for housing for low to middle income groups; and leaking water meters.

The plight of the Ntswelletsoku community concerned a lack of running water (Setsetse & Mkansi 2007:9). Although a reticulation system was completed in 2005, it is not yet functional. Since there is no piped water available for the residents, water is ferried to different points to the community by means of water trucks from the nearby town of Zeerust. However, this has also proven to be unreliable, as trucks transporting water are frequently broken-down, or water is simply undelivered to the community. Residents with vehicles fetch water from the nearby township of Welbedaght or in Zeerust (approximately 20 kilometers away). The majority of people rely on residents who have bore holes on their sites at a cost of \$0.50 cents per twenty litres and unemployment is conservatively stated to be 43% (www.statssa.gov.za/documents.htm). Almost no municipal services are provided directly by Ramotshere Moiloa municipality to the rural villages. Ikageleng and Ntswelletsoku residents complained bitterly about lack of services in their areas which culminated in petitions and demonstrations often characterized by violence. The community resorted to unlawful behaviour by blockading roads, destroying property such as water tanks, digging trenches in the middle of roads, staging protest marches and burning tyres. Since 2004 to date, petitions have repeatedly been sent to the municipality regarding the

Table 1: Service delivery backlogs in urban and rural areas at 1994

Service	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
Water	10, 1%	39, 2%
Sanitation	25, 8%	75, 8%

(Source Naidoo: 2004)

Table 2: Service delivery backlogs in urban and rural areas in the provinces at 1995

Service	Province	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
Water	Western Cape	2%	13, 6%
	Eastern Cape	3%	76, 4%
Sanitation	Gauteng	15%	38%
	KwaZulu-Natal	44%	88, 2%

Table 3: A comparative analysis of service delivery at local government level from 1996 to 2007

Basic Service	Year 1996 (%)	Year 2007 (%)	Percentage Increase or Decrease from 1996 to 2007
Building of formal dwellings	64, 4%	70, 5%	+6, 1%
Refuse removal	51, 2%	60, 1%	+8, 9%
Removal of bucket toilet system	4, 1%	2, 2%	-1, 9%
Electricity Connections	57, 6%	80, 0%	+22, 4%
Connection of piped water	84, 5%	88, 6%	+4, 1%

lack of service delivery but little has improved.

In the same light, numerous other municipalities in the country have experienced similar problems pertaining to service delivery. Since 2004, Ngaka Modiri Molema, Rustenburg, Ditsobotla, Bela-Bela, Mafikeng, Ratlou and Tswaing municipalities experienced uprisings as a result of service delivery failures by local government in relation to housing, scarcity of water, awarding of developmental tenders to non-locals, poor road infrastructure, sewage system, internal strife amongst councillors, business interests by contractors, poor public participation and communication (Setsetse & Mkansi 2007:11), (Naidoo 2009:206) and (Mafora 2009). The responses of the local authorities have been that 'the municipal services are up to standard' 'save some minor problems here and there' (Mafora 2009). The real concern is: does a service delivery backlog remain?

According to Statistics South Africa, service delivery has improved substantially in the past ten years (Community Survey, 2007). The statistics reflect increases in the major service delivery areas namely, building of formal dwellings, refuse removal, electricity connections and connection of piped water. However, with respect to sanitation, there has been a small decrease in the removal of the bucket toilet system (see Table 3.)

From 1996 to 2007, there was an increase of 6, 1% in newly built formal dwellings. With refuse removal there was an increase of 8, 9%, reliance on the bucket toilet system decreased by 1, 9%. With regard to electricity connections, there is a notable increase to 22, 4% and to piped water an increase of 4, 1%. The National Treasury's reported that since 2000, the financial allocation to the municipalities has increased substantially from R2, 1 billion in 1998 to R13, 2 billion in 2004. For the year 2007/08 the allocation has increased to R21, 3 billion. (National Treasury - Budget Review 2008). The 2008 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) focused on helping poorer municipalities with limited revenue-raising capacity to meet their service delivery objectives. As a result, proportionally larger amounts of the municipal infrastructure and financial management grants were allocated to municipalities. These revisions resulted in national transfers to local government of 19, 1% annually of the public spending budget, from R39, 2 billion in 2007/08 and a further transfer of R58,1 billion, in 2010/11.

Despite the increase in funding, the Auditor-General reports of 2006/2007 indicated serious challenges with regard to service delivery. For example, of the 25 municipalities in the North West Province, only 4 received

unqualified reports from the Auditor-General, while 1 had a qualified and 1 had an adverse opinion pertaining to service delivery. 19 municipalities had disclaimers for the financial year 2006/07. Ramotshere Moiloa has over the past two years have been one of those municipalities that received a disclaimer from the Auditor-General.

This paints a bleak picture with respect to public service delivery in South Africa. The critical question is: where does the problem lie? Although government has indicated that it has increased the allocation of revenue to local government, the question remains: why are there ongoing challenges pertaining to service delivery? The most obvious challenge is the lack of effective leadership and the adoption of inappropriate leadership approaches for the South African public sector context (Setsetse & Mkansi 2007:2), (Naidoo 2009:33) and (Miller 2005:124). This was re-iterated by Molopo (2003) who argued that the leadership approach adopted by the South African public sector is ineffective in promoting improvements and redress in, the quantity and quality of services, especially for previously disadvantaged communities.

Challenges impacting public service delivery

Fraser-Moleketi (2007:3) pointed out that while a number of initiatives undertaken by the South African public sector regarding leadership and management development had moved in the right direction, a number of challenges remained. In this regard, Schacter (2000:77) criticized the lack of appropriate leadership and management training, the duplication of training in some departments, poor quality, ad hoc and crisis training that take place in the South African public sector. Departments are also confronted with the challenge of a shortage of management capacity in the South African public sector. Many managers lack the ability to make effective strategic decisions, delegate and solve problems innovatively (Smit & Cronje, 2003:15). Related to ineffective leadership, is the lack of performance, which impacts on service delivery outcomes.

Fraser-Moleketi (2007:3) suggested that non-performance by public servants either took the form of not delivering services, or goal displacement by complying with rules and regulations rather than achieving governmental goals. Occasionally, political sensitivities inhibited Director-Generals' decision-making, such as the reluctance to dismiss non-performing public servants due to political considerations (Naidoo, 2006:257). Miller (2005:124) notes that a low priority is accorded to education and training of managers in the South African public sector: many national, provincial and local government

departments consistently fail to utilize their training budgets. Another challenge identified is the lack of co-ordination, as training needs are addressed by a wide variety of providers from local and international, public and private sectors.

Directors-General interviewed by the author, stated that human resources issues, such as lack of management and leadership capacity, skills and experience, and personnel conflicts were, and continue to, present problems. Despite massive investment by government in leadership development, many initiatives are regarded as failures (Naidoo 2004; 2005; 2009). Three formidable barriers have been identified, all relating to the attitudes of the most senior managers in these organisations. The first barrier was that top management believed that the fact that they already occupied the most senior leadership positions, confirmed that they had 'what it took' to be a leader, and regarded their further development, therefore, as unnecessary. Secondly, they believed that managers below them needed training. However, as a result of these managers undertaking leadership development initiatives, they became much more aware of the poor quality of leadership practiced by their superiors, resulting in greater frustration. This was deepened by the third major problem, which was that the suggestions made by those newly-returned from development activities, were rejected or ignored by their somewhat defensive and/or reactionary bosses. The result was disenchantment, greater cynicism, and lower morale among this group, who eventually stopped making any suggestions or trying new ways of leading. The investment in leadership development had, arguably, created greater dissonance and frustration among managers benefitting from leadership development, as they came to realise the poor quality of top-leadership. The greatest challenge is that it is highly likely that the current top and senior managers were not selected into these posts on merit alone but on their political affiliation to the government of the day.

Nonetheless, the author's research, conducted during 2004, 2006 and 2008, indicated that many managers in the South African public sector have been trained in some elements of managerial leadership. The previous Minister of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), Fraser-Moleketi (2007:2) exhorted that the senior management must adopt a managerial leadership approach, outlining that "it is their responsibility to direct and lead the operational and the programmatic aspects of implementing the political mandate. The responsibility rests with this leadership to give policy advice, based on factual context that enables political leadership to take policy advice, and identify the appropriate

outcomes in order that programmes can be developed and implemented to produce these required outcomes". However, despite those exhortations, not all senior managers have a complete understanding of government priorities and are therefore unable to translate government policy into sustainable programmes that positively impact on the lives of citizens.

The critical need for effective leadership in the South African public sector

There is relative agreement amongst Directors-General that senior managers ought to have a number of qualities, such as interpersonal, communication, creative cooperation, financial and human resource skills. The ability to analyse policy has also been identified by Cloete et al (2000:210) as a critical skill for senior South African public sector management. Sensitivity to the political environment is another important quality. Senior management should also become more cognizant of the political dynamics and environment in which it operates.

Miller (2005:124) argues that it is necessary to empower, challenge and motivate managers at all levels to be visionaries, initiators, effective communicators and decision-makers, capable of responding pro-actively to the challenges of the change process, rather than acting as administrators of fixed rules and procedures in government organisations in South Africa. Fraser-Moleketi (2007:2) argued that there was a need to "build leadership, to produce critical thinkers at every level of the chain, who dare to be different, to look at problems with new eyes, to recognise problems where others see the situation as an indisputable way to do things." According to Schwella and Rossouw (2005:762), managers now need specific competencies to enable them to manage and lead their organizations effectively into the future, while maintaining and improving effectiveness and efficiency. The South African public sector not only needs sound management, but also requires leadership at all levels of the service delivery chain. Rowe (2005:86) argues that managers ought to be trained in strategic leadership (a synergistic combination of managerial and transformational leadership), so that they can become more effective managers. The author argues that there is not only a need for strategic but also traditional African Leadership (discussed later). Hence the strategic transformative African leadership model has been designed for possible adoption by the South African public sector.

The South African public sector needs leadership competence, in all spheres and at all levels, including

senior management level. In terms of the Draft Public Administration Management Bill (2008:31), the head of a government organization must, through education and training of its employees, develop its human resource capacity to a level that enables it to perform its functions in an efficient, collaborative and accountable way. The Draft Public Administration Management Bill (2008) requires managerial, professional and strategic leadership across government institutions. The Senior Management Service (SMS) was therefore created at national and provincial government comprising a cadre of senior managers and professionals across public institutions. The purpose is to develop a management culture based on the values and principles of good governance enshrined in Section 195(1) of the South African Constitution (1996). The question is: are western leadership models relevant to the South African public sector? This is examined below.

Are Western leadership models relevant to the South African public sector?

Inarguably, there are ethnic and cultural biases in leadership research. Molopo (2004) argues that the leadership model adopted by the South African public sector should predominantly reflect the communities they serve hence the model must also attempt to reflect individuals from a variety of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The validity and application of predominantly Western leadership models to the individuals working in South African public sector organisations is a matter of concern. The questions raised, may be summarised, as:

- To what extent are models of leadership based on data collected from Western countries valid in South African organisations?
- Are Western leadership models, predominantly based on data collected in commercial and military organisations, of equal validity in South African public sector organisations?
- Western data is based largely on studies of homogeneous samples. Can they be presumed to reflect the ethnic and multi-cultural diversity in South African public sector organisations?

Local narratives and context are crucial when deciding on a leadership model for public sector organisations in South Africa. The leader, the followers, the situation, values, ethics, cultural factors and the task are all important factors in determining the appropriate leadership model of the South African public sector (Naidoo 2009). Unlike Western models of

“transformational and charismatic” leadership, the South African government stresses the need for partnership in engaging an extensive range of internal and external stakeholders, by actively networking with them, gaining their confidence and support through sensitivity to their varying needs. Conventional wisdom in the field of public administration research suggests it is impossible for managers to adopt a single leadership approach that effectively serves multiple, complex and mutually exclusive goals in a volatile and highly demanding public sector environment. Empirical accounts of public institutions continually identify a combination of managerial and transformational leadership as crucial explanations for improved service delivery.

Research conducted by Rowe (2001:82) suggests that the impact of a combination of transformational and managerial leadership on organisational effectiveness is far greater than only adopting one leadership approach or model. Naidoo (2009) argues that public managers could transform situations that seem impossible by adopting more than one leadership approach or model. The intention in this chapter is to suggest a unique model of Western and African leadership – combining diverse perspectives, approaches and sensitivities to culture and language, socio-economic and political perspectives with elements of both strategic leadership and traditional African leadership.

A strategic African leadership model for the South African public sector

A strategic African leadership model refers to a framework that is multifaceted and multidimensional with its own unique characteristics, diverse perspectives, approaches and strategies. The framework caters for sensitivities of culture, gender, religion, ethnic origin, socio-economic and political differences. These divergent perspectives, approaches and sensitivities are incorporated and developed in such a way that the full potential of public sector organisations may be realised optimally. A combination of leadership approaches and models are essential, in order to improve service delivery. The aim, therefore, is to utilise the divergent perspectives within the South African public service in order to reach the highest possible levels of performance. What is proposed is a model that combines elements of strategic leadership and traditional African leadership.

What is Strategic Leadership?

Strategic leadership is a combination of managerial and transformational leadership. Transformational leadership

is better known as visionary or charismatic leadership is future-oriented, and is concerned with risk-taking. Managerial leadership (also known as transactional leadership) involves stability and order, and the preservation of the existing order. Managerial leaders are more comfortable handling day-to-day activities, and are short-term oriented. Strategic leadership is the ability to influence others to voluntarily make day-to-day decisions that enhance the long-term viability of the organization (Rowe, 2001:81-82)

Rowe (2001:86) argues that the public service will be more viable in the long-term and better able to maintain stability in the short-term, if strategic leadership is prevalent. Freedman & Tregoe (2003:18) suggests that a strategic leader will promote greater productivity than either a managerial leader or a transformational leader. Managerial leaders maintain the existing order but may not invest in innovations that will change the organization and enhance organizational effectiveness in the long-term. However, transformational leaders may enhance the long-term viability of the organization. They want to change and be innovative to enhance organizational effectiveness in the long term. Combining these two leadership types to provide strategic leadership will promote organizational effectiveness and above-average performance in the long-term, as well as help maintain short-term stability.

Strategic leaders emphasize ethical values and moral principles. Strategic leaders oversee both day-to-day operational and long-term strategic responsibilities. They formulate and implement strategies for immediate impact and the preservation of long-term goals to enhance organizational efficiency and viability (Freedman & Tregoe, 2003:18). Strategic leaders have strong, positive expectations of the performance that they expect from their managers, public servants and themselves. They utilize and interchange tacit and explicit knowledge on both the individual and organizational levels. They use both linear and nonlinear thinking patterns. They believe in strategic choice and they promote organizational effectiveness to enhance future performance by using different approaches and models in their organization. Strategic leaders therefore need to understand both managerial and transformational leadership, and utilize the skills and knowledge of both.

The decisions voluntarily made and the actions voluntarily taken by managers and employees on a day-to-day basis eventually determine what strategy emerges in an organisation (Naidoo, 2004:156). Strategic leaders understand and use this process to ensure future viability

Table 4: Strategic Leaders

- Synergistic combination of transformational and managerial leadership
- Emphasis on ethical behaviour and value-based decisions
- Operational oversee (day-to-day) and strategic (long-term) responsibilities
- Formulate and implement strategies for immediate impact and preservation of long-term goals to enhance organisational performance and long-term viability
- Have strong, positive expectations of performance they expect from their superiors, peers, subordinates and themselves
- Use and interchange, tacit and explicit knowledge on individual and organizational levels
- Use linear and non-linear thinking patterns
- Believe in strategic choice, that is, their choices make a difference in their organisations and environment

Adapted from Rowe (2001:82)

of their organizations. Strategic leadership presumes a shared vision of what an organization needs to be, so that the day-to-day decision-making, or emergent strategy process, is consistent with this vision (Ozaralli, 2003:335). It presumes agreement among senior management on opportunities that can be taken advantage of, and threats that can be neutralized, given the resources and capabilities of the organization.

Rowe (2001:87) contends that the rewards of adopting strategic leadership are evident, as those with whom the leader works becomes energized and more productive, accomplishing more in less time. They come to enjoy work more, as they become more creative and innovative, and more prone to taking risks because they know this is what it takes to enhance long-term viability. Working through the paradox of leading and managing is demanding and difficult, but is achievable for a critical mass in public service organizations previously lacking strategic control. They need to understand the concepts of explicit and tacit knowledge and linear and nonlinear thinking and how to integrate them for the benefit of the organization. The rewards will often increase organisational performance and above-average performance.

Influencing public servants to voluntarily make decisions that enhance the organization is the most important part of strategic leadership (Freedman & Tregoe, 2003:24). The manager should be able to influence subordinates,

peers, and superiors. Strategic leadership presumes a shared vision of what an organization is to be. It focuses on the opportunities that can be taken advantage of, and the threats that can be neutralized, given the resources and capabilities of the organization. Strategic leadership presumes transformational leadership on the part of those with a willingness to take risks and it presupposes managerial leadership on the part of those with a rational way of looking at the world. Strategic leadership suggests that managerial leadership and transformational leadership can coexist. Strategic leadership therefore synergistically combines the two types of leadership.

What is Traditional African Leadership?

Many studies have thus far concentrated on leadership within the context of Western societies (Nuzvidziwa, 2003: 3). They have ignored the dynamic nature of traditional African societies. More importantly, these studies did not see the positive content of traditional African leadership. Naidoo (2009) argues that "African practices are perceived as being peripheral and belonging only outside the world stage, appearing rarely on the central stage and considered a hindrance to Western civilization." However, there are useful approaches that can be adopted within an institutional context from traditional African leadership. Aspects such as accountability, responsibility, transparency, collective management (participation) and humaneness can also contribute positively to the South African public sector.

Molopo (2003: Discussion) suggests that there are many sayings in African culture that point leaders in the direction of a more democratic leadership. Traditional African leadership for instance focuses on a strong system of common beliefs and values (Naidoo, 2009). These beliefs and values are still widely respected and adhered to in South Africa, although, in some communities, these beliefs and value systems are gradually being eroded, particularly those in urban areas. Nuzvidziwa (2003: 1) argues that culture is one resource that Africans should turn to in order to reap the benefits of leadership in the South African public sector. It is thus necessary to review and investigate traditional African leadership as it exists in South Africa today.

Characteristics of Traditional African leadership

Tshikwatamba (2003: 299) discusses the notion of ubuntu ('humanness') as being inseparable from the integration of traditional African leadership in the workplace. Even a brief look at traditional African leadership reveals that effective leadership involves the integration of ubuntu.

Ubuntu has a particularly important place in the African value system and emanates from African mores. Naidoo (2009) literally translates ubuntu as collective personhood and morality. Ubuntu entails that an individual who is part of the collective, (for example a tribe, family or institution), should be afforded unconditional respect and the right to be heard irrespective of his/her social status. It connotes supportiveness, cooperation and solidarity. Ubuntu positively contributes to the sustenance and wellbeing of a people, community, society or institution, by promoting the common good of all people. Ubuntu seeks to bring back 'humanness' into interpersonal and group relationships. In traditional African leadership, harmonious relations between individuals are bonded by ubuntu. It means "showing genuine concern for others", valuing their contributions, developing their strengths, coaching, mentoring, and having positive expectations of what people can achieve.

Setsabi (2001: 5) argues that ubuntu is a universal concept, because it brings about tolerance and recognition of the humanity in all cultural groups. According to Nuzvidziwa (2003: 3), these attributes underpin institutional and personal success stories, and can be viewed as intangible assets. They will, moreover, ensure dynamic and effective public sector organisations (Nuzvidziwa, 2003: 3). It would therefore be appropriate to call traditional African leadership value-based and ethical leadership.

Traditional African leadership generally emphasized participatory values as tools to be utilized by effective leaders (Nuzvidziwa, 2003: 11). It was seen as imperative for leaders to involve their followers in decisions that concerned them. In almost all African communities the use of open-air informal gatherings as assemblies for reaching consensus on contentious and non-contentious issues is well documented and fairly widespread. The sayings extolling the virtues of participatory leadership in Sotho society confirm this; for instance: "Letlaila le tlailela Morena." In other words, "let people say what they want even if it is not good." (Nuzvidziwa, 2003: 11).

Setsabi (2001: 3) argues that Africans by implications do not need to be lectured on effective leadership, as the basis of leadership is found within traditional African societies. The example given by Setsabi (2001: 3) and Maminime, (2001: 2), is the right to be heard and the need for tolerance, expressed in the phrase: "Le bo Motanyane, Molomo-mosehlanyana." In other words: "Everyone has the right to openly express themselves at Chiefs' gatherings, without fear of intolerance." It is important to ensure that this principle continues to be

respected in the South African public sector.

According to Molopo (2003: Discussion), the emphasis of traditional African leadership is on a system that works, by using for instance, "Khahiametsano (compromise), and le lumme (consensus)." Molopo (2003: Discussion) stated that there are other values found in traditional African societies that will be applicable within the South African public service such as "kutioelo bohoko (empathy)."

In the traditional African leadership model, individual goals are aligned to the achievement of collective objectives. Traditional African leadership centres on dedication to the community, which has been connected to self-discipline, self-sacrifice, solidarity and sociality. When collectiveness is the dominant principle, people, employees and communities, experience fundamental connectedness to each other. This determines the institutional culture and values. The desire to maximize employees' commitment to the institution and the ultimate object of motivating them to operate as co-owners, and not as mere employees, is attainable when the practices and values of traditional African leadership are integrated (Naidoo 2004).

Diligence and honesty are part of the moral basis on which traditional African societies are built. The underlying system of traditional African leadership is based on a set of values with regard to morality, reconciliation, equality of all people, human dignity, sharing, peace and justice. Traditional African leadership recognizes other people's human dignity and integrity, encompassing the universal values of mankind. Moral leadership is essential in traditional African societies, which means not only taking responsibility for one's actions, but also explaining them. Leadership in traditional African societies involves an obligation to act responsibly on behalf of one's people (Nuzvidziwa, 2003: 3). Leaders are not regarded as ordinary men or women. Instead, it is their duty to serve the community productively and with humility. Leaders balance their responsibilities and power through societal and self-imposed safeguards that require all leaders to consult and listen to their people.

This principle of joint accountability and responsibility could be particularly important for the South African public sector. In promoting this principle, both leadership and public servants would have co-ownership for public service delivery. Both leadership and public servants would be jointly responsible and accountable for service delivery outcomes. In this way, effectiveness and efficiency could be increased.

Traditional African leadership therefore espouses that

the most effective leader is the one who can lead others to lead themselves. Leaders are required to maximize the contributions of others by helping them to guide their own careers effectively, rather than using the ability to bend the will of others to the leader's will. Traditional African leadership seeks to focus on interpersonal and group relationships. It can be defined as a value-based and ethical leadership. These values are part of the moral basis which African societies are built upon. Traditional African leadership is not sectarian, as it can be applied to any setting including South Africa.

Integrating strategic and traditional African leadership

An integrated model will undoubtedly promote an effective institutional culture and work-ethos in the South African public sector. The argument advanced in this discussion is to promote the positive attributes of both strategic and traditional African leadership within the public sector. This framework should provide value-adding lessons adaptable to the South African and other public sectors. It is important that the current leadership framework be strengthened and that strategic leadership and traditional African leadership approaches, theories and models are revived and extended for the benefit of the South African public sector and other public services elsewhere. The emphasis is on improving the current leadership framework within a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic South Africa to improve and accelerate service delivery performance. It is also important for public administration in South Africa to recognize the importance of both strategic leadership and traditional African leadership in the midst of Western leadership practices. An integrated leadership framework would mean that the vision of leadership is collectivized through agreed-upon rules and customs. The focal point of the African leadership is co-leadership, co-ownership, co-responsibility, accountability, transparency and public participation.

Traditional African leadership and strategic leadership are clearly the basis for a sustainable public sector. It is about "being honest and consistent". It also relates to the aspect of integrity that is about transparency in behaviour, but also reflects the attitude of placing the good of the public sector before personal gain. A distinguishing feature of the Western 'charismatic and transformational' models is their somewhat "heroic" tenor, the African model suggests humanity/humility in the nature of leadership (Ubuntu). It should relate to consultation, an intention to discuss areas of disagreement openly with others, and a willingness to modify one's ideas after listening to others' views. It is about being accessible, approachable and in-touch. It reflects a style which is not status-conscious, which

attempts to ensure that staff at all levels feel comfortable and able to access the individual.

An analysis of the situational context of each organisation in the South African public sector is also required. Within the dynamics of the models proposed, leaders in the South African public service ought to have equal concern for people and outcomes. The valuing of diversity and inclusion is necessary in public sectors everywhere. Leaders should adopt an approach that builds on local (African) culture together with effective strategic leadership. Leadership should be fair and competent, trying to maximize participation and understanding throughout the public sector. The degree to which leaders in the South African public service empower others, will affect their legitimacy and the influence they have. The strategic African leadership model should create an inclusive culture, which ought to foster the feeling of being part of a community in everyone. It is about "inspiring others" and keeping in-touch, and is concerned with exceptional communication skills, keeping in close contact with others, and encouraging others to work on common vision of the public sector.

Significance of the model

Perhaps the first comment to make is how dynamic the model is for the South African public sector. The most obvious implication, is the staggering complexity of the role of leadership in the South African public sector. Another very clear lesson, is that the transactional competencies of management, while crucial for such complex organisations, are simply not sufficient alone. The other clear conclusion to be drawn is that existing Western models of leadership do not solely encapsulate this complexity. Perhaps of even greater importance, is the nature of leadership as perceived by Western countries versus these South African perspectives. Typically, the Western models place an overwhelming emphasis on charisma and on day-to-day operational management.

In contrast, the African leadership model emphasises the role of the leader, which is fundamentally about engaging others as partners in developing and achieving the shared vision and enabling them to lead. It is also about creating an empowering environment for creative thinking and for challenging assumptions about how public services should be delivered. It is also about much closer sensitivity to the needs of a range of internal and external stakeholders, inside and outside the public sector. It is about connectedness and inclusiveness. It undoubtedly presents a more "African" model of leadership, and

contrasts rather starkly with the more "heroic" Western models. Although this model is directly applicable to South African, it need not be restricted to the African continent, but can be applied in any society with culturally diverse organisations.

Conclusion

South Africa has many problems that are typical of a developmental state, indicated by ongoing protests and a patchy service delivery record. Hence, a more appropriate model of leadership is critical, that is appropriate for the 21st century public sector, combining elements of western leadership models and African values. This may improve and help optimise public service delivery in South Africa.

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