

# **A QUALITATIVE SYNTHESIS OF THE NATURE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT IN DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1994 AND BEYOND**

*Lebosa Peter Bogopane, Professor*  
North West University (Mafikeng Campus)

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## **Abstract**

This manuscript attempted to describe the wax and the eventual wane of the government's efforts to increase the level of public participation in the public administration and management structures, systems, processes and the procedures. The ultimate intent being to enhance and consolidate the role of active public participation in good governance and effective/efficient service delivery throughout the country. These and other similar, issues, problems, and challenges are ones that have inspired and motivated the author to undertake this research discourse. Subsequently, it has been the intention of this article to provide a qualitative synthesis and analysis of the nature of public administration and management in Mzansi (South Africa) since 1994, and beyond. To achieve this, the study started by identifying five themes/principles of a duly functional public administration/management, namely : (1) considering the public as citizen; (2) treating public as customer; (3) looking at the public as partner; (4) noting the public as voter; and (5) accepting the public as tax payer, and used them as the basis for this analytic synthesis. From these guiding themes/principles, this paper adopted qualitative data collection methods such as (participant observation, in-depth interviewing, qualitative document study, and qualitative case study) and qualitative data analysis and interpretation techniques such as (content analysis and qualitative case study analysis) were used to collect the required pertinent data and to analyse and interpret it accordingly. Qualitative nonprobability judgmental sample technique was preferred and used to determine the sample of the study. Subsequent to the key research problem and its accompanied sub-problems underlying the study, along with the research questions and related research objectives identified, several findings were arrived at and recommendations were suggested on the basis of the findings thus far arrived at.

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**Keywords:** Service delivery, sustainability, Customer orientation, Partnership and Governance

## **Introduction**

The past twenty years or so had been an interesting and, at some instances, a tumultuous period for public administration and management systems throughout the democratic South Africa. In the area of public service for example, it has become clear that all new public servants are hired on an “at-will” basis, thereby effectively “phasing out” the merit system in the appointment of civil servants in the country. The current system of public administration and management in South Africa is faced with rapid change in almost every area of public service, thus prompting a myriad of issues and challenges that are impacting very negatively on the day-to-day running of the government. At national level, for instance, the shenanigans/mischiefs/troubles that have displayed themselves in the national legislature (Parliament) recently are the major source of administrative and managerial concern. The view of this article is that in a democratic country, Parliament should remain to be a “SACRED HOUSE” in which laws and policies affecting the public are initiated, formulated, and legislated in the best interest of the entire society. This Honourable House cannot and should not be used as an “ARENA” where political parties wage their political battles and wars, as well as settling their political scores.

The recent announcement by the very Honourable President Jacob Zuma regarding the present status of both the ruling party (African National Congress—ANC) and the government, stating that these two important institutions in the history of this country are in a state of a crisis, should be a matter of serious concern to each and every peace-loving South African who dearly loves this country. The untenable state of labour movement in general and the Tripartite Alliance in particular, cannot be ignored, and tangible steps and radical action need to be taken to remedy the situation and bringing about lasting and peaceful solutions to the socio-economic and political challenges facing our beloved country. The genuine warning expressed by our beloved “Lady “(the Honourable Winnie Madgeezela-Mandela) in her recent interview on Interface programme on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) channel regarding these matters, should not be taken for granted

Local government in South Africa, though how important it is, is another sphere of government that is also not immune to these issues, problems and challenges, that emanate from the kind of public administration and management practices and systems that are currently predominant in South Africa. These issues, problems and challenges manifest themselves in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

apparent lack of local government personnel who have the required and necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to drive activities of these important local government institutions; the kind of structures and systems of local governance as they are currently stand; their failure to adapt quickly to the rapidly ever changing political, administrative and managerial circumstances; their lack of innovativeness; their total disregard of the principles of Bathopele and; more particularly more disturbing, their adherence to a high level of corruption and fraudulent practices and activities. All these and other similar problems do impact negatively on the very foundations of efficient and effective service delivery, which in turn leads to a number of service delivery protests that take on a variety of forms such as serious damage to municipal buildings, infrastructure, and other properties, extensive and unnecessary loss of peoples' lives, complete distrust and lack of hope in government, with complete and total disobedience and complete disregard of the rule of law (anarchy and lawlessness)

These issues, problems and challenges are the ones that have inspired and motivated this researcher to undertake this research discourse in an attempt to provide a qualitative synthesis and analysis of the nature of public administration and management in Mzansi Africa (South Africa)

## **Theoretical and legislative overview**

### **Theoretical framework**

At theoretical level, the study identifies five pillars of a functional democratic public administration and management system (namely: public as customer; public as partner; public as citizen; public as taxpayer; and public as voter) and uses them as a basis for this qualitative synthesis and analysis. This manuscript represent the first attempt at a general empirical perspective and understanding of this particular phase of public administration and management within the context of the history of modern democratic South Africa. The article will commence by giving a brief description of each pertinent element of the new public administration and management system as envisaged in this study:

### **Identification of pertinent elements of public administration and management.**

As a point of departure, it becomes necessary to indicate to the reader that from time to time, both academics and practitioners in the field of public administration and management continue to debate on what role the “public” should play in public administration and management The fundamental basis for this debate is justified on the premise that when and if the members of the public interact with the administrative side of government. They should be

viewed and treated as citizens, customers, partners, voters and, of course, as taxpayers.

After placing these roles (particularly those of as customers, partners, and citizens) in the context of the history of public administration and management (Thomas 2012) drew from recent research to recommend guidelines of how public administrators and managers can work effectively and efficiently with the public in these and other similar roles and capacities. This shift in focus is very important for the present public administration and management, simply because currently, unlike in the past, public administrators and managers are faced with a “public” far more complex than that which their predecessors encountered. In the same token, (Eichenthal 2013) presents the notion of considering the role of “public” as voter and as taxpayer. In respect of the former, it is often assumed that the demand for greater citizen participation is an indirect statement that elected officials are not fully representative of the opinions of their constituents—which, if true, is no doubt partially the result of the relatively small number of voters who participate, especially, at local government elections.

Same can be said about considering the role of “public” as taxpayer. In this particular case, the need for greater involvement by the public in the delivery of services is sometimes, and more often a reflection of the general unwillingness of the public to fully support these services through taxes (Eichenthal 2013). The following brief description of these critical roles of the public in public administration and management, is an attempt to contextualise them within the contents of this manuscript to enable the reader to have a clearer understanding of what this study is all about:

**(A)Public as citizen:** This contemporary concept is fundamental to the modern public administration and management practice and unlike its traditional version, proposes for “maximum and feasible involvement” of the public in all activities and decisions of government including, but not limited to public policy formulation; public policy-implementation, public policy monitoring and evaluation and public financial administration and management. This suggests that the public as citizen must play a significant and an active role in not only defining, but also deciding the direction of their government

Indeed, by involving the public and/or citizens in the political and administrative decision making processes, promises a number of benefits to both government departments/institutions and the public as well. In respect of government departments/institutions, the benefits may include: (a) better ground-level knowledge that otherwise would be unavailable to decision makers (Beierle, 2002); (b) greater likelihood of the public accepting any decision it helped make, which can facilitate policy implementation;(c) improved governmental performance (Neshkova & Hai 2011);and (d)

increased citizen/public trust in their government. In respect of citizens, the advantages can entail: (1) better matching of public policies and programmes to citizens' preferences; (2) improved citizens' capacity and empowerment for other joint efforts; and (3) better quality of life for all. Yet, in spite of all these, many political executives, public administrators and managers, traditionally and historically, have sought to avoid public participation and involvement (Bryson et al. 2013)

To correct this position, the following guidelines for modern political executives, public administrators and managers are advised as follows:

(i) Do not invite public involvement (unless required) when neither/nor public acceptance is needed to reach or implement a decision (Bryson et al. 2013);

(ii) In advance of decision making with public involvement, identify and define necessary decision constraints such as decision standards (e.g. scientific, technical, operational); budget constraints; time constraints; and/or limiting of the choice to two or a few options (Bryson et al. 2013);

(iii) In decision making with public involvement, minimise the decision constraints, such as technical standards, time constraints, and/or limiting of the choice to two or a few options (Bryson et al. 2013);

(iv) Recognise that the public involvement requires sharing decision making authority (Bryson et al. 2013);

(v) Plan to share decision-making authority to the extent and through the means appropriate, given the issue's constraints, the nature of the public and the like (Thomas 2012);

(iv) In any decision making with public involvement, undertake careful and thorough advanced identification of possible and relevant external actors and groups and recruit those representatives aggressively (Poister et al. 2009);

(vii) In decision making with public involvement, employ a variety of techniques and offer multiple opportunities to hear from the public (Denters & Klok 2010);

(viii) Do not initiate a process of public involvement unless the relevant authorities are committed to utilise the results (Bryson et al. 2013);

(ix) Initiate public involvement in decision making as early as possible (Baker et al. 2005); and

(x) Anticipate issues rather than allowing them to develop elsewhere (Ostrom 1990)

**(B)Public as customer:** In general, governments usually encounter a special challenge in providing good customer service. More often than not, making a request of government raises questions that do not arise when contacting a private establishment. The main challenge in this regard emanates from the fact that many members of the public find themselves

under the jurisdiction of multiple government departments, agencies, and other institutions, particularly at local government level. This often makes the solutions to their problem and answers to their questions horribly unclear to say the least, and sometimes confusing to say the worse .Even when the government is known, additional questions may arise over which government institution, agency, and/or department is responsible, or even which phone number is appropriate to call to access government services and/or goods .These and many other similar situations, call for the need for visible, accessible, as well as navigable systems for accessing and contacting governments. In attempting to achieve this, several guidelines that political executives, public administrators and managers should consider are suggested and recommended:

(i) Consider developing centralised contact points such as call centers and easily navigable websites for receiving and responding to questions, requests, and complaints from the public (Xin 2013);

(ii) Ensure the adoption of mobile device technologies for receiving and responding to questions, requests, and complaints from members of the public (Vander Veen 2010);

(iii) Endeavour to provide high-quality customer service when interacting with members of the public (Carbone 2008);

(iv) Consider the adoption of a customer relations management system when (1) centralised citizen contacting system is in place, (2) adequate resources are available, and (3) leadership is committed to effectively implementing customer/citizen relations management (CRM) system (Dayen 2010) The most important issue here is that having data centralised, appears to facilitate interdepartmental corporation and promote the development of a more holistic view of customers (King 2007);

(v) After adopting customer/citizen/ relations management systems (CRMs), governments should then plan for staff training on analysing CRMs data and for regular meetings to discuss the data (Behn 2006)

**(C)Public as partner (the issue of coproduction):** This view requires that contemporary public administrators/managers and political executives should commence by reviewing their outlook on the roles that they and the public should play in public affairs and services. Within this context, public administrators/managers/political executives must desist from considering themselves as service providers and experts. Instead they should start viewing themselves better as the lead partners in development and service delivery processes, where effectiveness is driven by the belief that the public must also contribute (coproduction). In enhancing this culture, contemporary public administrators/managers and political executives must always keep on asking themselves the question what assistance they need from the public

they serve. In consolidating this spirit of coproduction, several guidelines are hereby suggested and recommended:

(i) Define in advance any assistance desired from the public in order for public services and programmes to be effective (Bovaird 2007);

(ii) Where assistance is desired from the public, simplify the task to the extent possible (Thaler et al.2008);

(iii) Where assistance is desired from the public, consider how to enhance the public's ability to provide that assistance (Jakobsen 2013);

(iv)Where assistance is required from the public, consider how social norms and social networks can be activated to motivate that assistance (Bond et al.2012);

(v) Where assistance is desired from the public, use material incentives only in combination with other incentives to motivate the assistance (Laurian 2004);

(vi) Where assistance is desired from the public, retain the option for applying sanctions if and when reasonable cooperation does not occur based on other incentives (Thomas 2013)

**(D) Public as voter:** This, without any doubt, is one of the most important roles that the public can and must play in the process of public administration /management. Nowadays, there is this perceived realisation that the majority, if not all elected officials are not fully representative of the views of their constituents. If this perception is true, then there is no doubt that it can be partially attributed to the relatively small number of voters who participate, especially at local government level (Eichenthal, 2013)

**(E) Public as taxpayer:** From the above-stated point of public as a voter, similar sentiments can be express to the effect that the lower turn-out of the public at national, provincial, and local government elections, can be construed as an expression of, or an indication that the general unwillingness of members of the public to fully support government services through their taxes (Eichenthal 2013)

From these guiding principles of contemporary public administration and management it becomes clear that political executives, public administrators, public managers, and other public officials will be required to find ways and means that they can employ to engage the public as citizen, customer, partner, voter and that would increase their participation in the voting process as well as their willingness to adequately fund government services and programmes that they demand through their taxes. This gives rise to the focus on the status of public administration/management in South Africa, and the question of how these contemporary guiding principles of public administration/management can be successfully incorporated in the public administration/management systems in Mzansi (South Africa).

## **Legislative and policy framework**

Public administration and management in South Africa is founded and well-entrenched in the supreme law of the land (i.e. the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, Act 108 of 1996), and supported by a variety of other relevant legislative measures. It is this very Constitution that provide for South Africa (as a unitary state) to be organised in terms of three spheres of government (namely, Central/National, Provincial and Local), each having its own government institutions (i.e. legislative institutions, political executive institutions, administrative executive institutions, and judicial institutions at both the national and provincial spheres).The Constitution also provides for the Bill of Rights, which is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa, in that it enshrines the rights of all people in the country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity and freedom as well as demanding the state to respect, protect, promote, and fulfill the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights (Cloete 2012), This Constitution also provides for the cordial relationships between the public and all spheres of government

Other relevant and supporting legislative and policy measures include, but are not limited to:

- Division of Revenue Act, Act 10 of 2014 which provides for the equitable division of revenue raised nationally among the national, provincial and local spheres of government and the responsibilities of all three spheres pursuant to such division ,as well as matters incidental thereto;
  - The Public Audit Act, Act 25 of 2004 that prescribes the status and functions of the Auditor-General by safeguarding his/her position through, amongst others, establishing hi/her as the supreme audit institution of the republic, as well as providing him/her with full independence and making him/her subject only to the Constitution and the law and accountable to the National Assembly
  - Public Finance Management Act, Act 1 of 1999 and Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003. Together, these pieces of legislation use departmental accountability as a yardstick for good financial administration and management;
- Notably, from the above, it becomes clear that each government should have a general policy which must set out in broad terms how public administrators/managers and other public officials must and should utilise the financial resources of the public.
- Public Service Act, Act 103 of 1994, which amongst other things, requires that in each department entrusted to a minister, he/she must appoint public officials to staff that department. The Act also provides for how the staffing function in departments/institutions must be effected. According to (Cheminais et al.1998),this Act stipulates that “ a head of department shall

be responsible for the efficient management and administration of his/her department, including the effective utilisation and training of staff, the maintenance of discipline, the promotion of sound labour relations and the proper use and care of State property

- Labour Relations Act, Act 66 of 1995 which provides that public personnel managers have to take note of the rights of workers to equality, human dignity, freedom and f security of the person, privacy, freedom of religion ,belief, and opinion, freedom of expression, assembly, demonstration, picket and petition, freedom of association, political rights, freedom of trade ,occupation, and profession, fair labour relations, ,education, language ,and culture, access to information, and just administrative and managerial action
- Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act 85 of 1993 provides for regulations relating to hazardous chemical substances in the workplace
- Compensation for Injuries and Diseases Act, Act 130 of 1993
- Prevention and Combating of Corruption Activities Act, Act 12 of 2004

### **Statement of the problem**

Based on the above introductory background and the subsequent theoretical and legislative overview, the key central research problem is stated thus:

***Even though South Africa has commendable set of legislation and policies aimed at consolidating and enhancing the roles of the public in public administration and management, the needed cordial relationship between public administrators/managers and the public remains extremely illusive and dysfunctional.***

Contributing to this central problem may be the following sub-problems:

- Administrative/managerial capacity: This refers to (a) administrative/managerial structures, systems, processes, and procedures, and(b) administrative/managerial decision making and problem-solving skills; administrative/managerial plans, policies, and strategies, tactics, and administrative/managerial training and development programmes and projects;
- The nature and attitudes of the public: This looks at the South African public's position with regard to their civic responsibility and the quality of empowerment programmes that are made available to them to become active participants in public administration and management.

### **Research questions**

This qualitative study centres around the following key research questions:

- Are the administrative/management structures, systems, processes, and procedures, in the South African public administration/management well-designed and strategically positioned to deal effectively and efficiently with the South African publics?
- What is the nature and level of administrative/managerial decision making skills, problem-solving skills, policy making skills, planning skills, and communication skills prevailing in South African public administration and management particularly when considering the publics served?
- What is the attitude of the South African publics towards their civic responsibility and towards the training, development, and empowerment programmes available to them aimed at making them active participants in public administration and management processes and activities?

### **Research objectives**

Following from the above key research problem and its sub-problems, as well as the accompanying research questions the following research objectives became eminent and which are to explore:

- The sustainability and efficiency of the public administration's/management's structures, systems, processes, and procedures in dealing with the South African public
- The effectiveness and viability of the public administration's/management's decision making skills ,problem-solving skills, planning skills and communication skills available for addressing South African publics ,and
- The attitude of South Africa publics towards their civic responsibility and to the training, development, and empowerment programmes available to them, aimed at transforming them into being active participants in public administration and management processes.

### **Research design and methodology**

Within the context of this manuscript, the explanation of the term “research design” is the same as the one provided by (Babbie and Mouton 2011) which states that:

A research design involves a set of decisions regarding what topic is to be studied among what population with what research methods for what purpose...Research design is the process of focusing your perspective for the purposes of a particular research/study

On the other hand, the term “research methodology” will refer to the study and the use of research methods. This study adopted a qualitative

research design and methodology as directed by and justified by the nature of its key research problem and its sub-problems, the research questions and research objectives underlying the study. It is the belief of this author that this paradigm/approach is the most appropriate in answering research questions raised in this manuscript.

## Population

Within the boundaries of qualitative research, descriptive and exploratory approaches were adopted by focusing on public administration and management in South Africa. This exploratory synthesis concludes with a gap analysis that aimed to determine the required skills in delineating an ideal profile for public administration and management in Mzansi. The population selected for this study comprises of all public administrators/managers serving the entire South African public. Particular note has also been taken of the fact that the term “population” is used to refer to the universe of units from which a sample is selected (Bryman 2012)

## Sampling technique

The sample represents that segment of the population that is selected for the study. For the purpose of this study a non-probability judgmental sampling was preferred and used as it allows the researchers to choose the subjects of analysis on the basis of their knowledge of the research problem to be addressed. The sample for this study was compiled based on the nine provinces that constitute the demography of South Africa. It was constructed in such a way that in each province, at least one hundred public administrators/managers and at least one hundred members of the public were identified and selected for the purpose of study.

Figure 1: Graphic presentation of the sample:

Province	Public Administrators	Members of the Public	Total
Gauteng	100	100	200
North West	100	100	200
Limpopo	100	100	200
Mpumalanga	100	100	200
Kwa-Zulu Natal	100	100	200
Western Cape	100	100	200
Eastern Cape	100	100	200
Northern Cape	100	100	200
Free State	100	100	200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1800</b>

Source: Own source

## Research methods and techniques employed

### Data collection and gathering

Qualitative data collection and gathering methods were employed with due care in ensuring that the validity, reliability, credibility, objectivity

and dependability of data were not compromised. This basic process entailed the following:

***Participant observation:*** this is a research procedure that is typical of the qualitative paradigm as it necessitates direct contact with the subjects of observation .In this procedure, the researcher was involved in the one-continuum ranging from total involvement on the one hand and total observation on the other. This allowed the researcher to decide beforehand on the role he intended to take in the inquiry since the decision affects the total process of the inquiry. The researcher spent lengthy period of time actively observing participants in their natural setting in their workplaces (Neuman 2000)

***In-depth interviewing:*** This is the most predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research. All interviews that were conducted in this study were interactional events .In this method, interviewers are deeply and unavoidably implicated in creating meanings that ostensibly reside within the participants. Consequently, the researcher engaged in this mode of data collection knowing that interviewing the participants involves description of their experiences, as well as involving reflection on the description. In this study, after a lengthy uninterrupted period of preliminary interviews, the researcher prepared a detailed open-ended interview schedule, and on the basis of it, conducted in-depth interviews with the respondents (Krueger and Casey 2000)

***Qualitative document study:*** In this manuscript, the researcher used a variety of non-personal documents such as minutes of meetings, agendas, internal office memos, newspapers, magazines, and government’s legislative and policy documentation, with the knowledge that if these documents are studied and analysed for the purpose of scientific research, the method of document study as a data collection method becomes operative. Government publication, journal articles on public administration and management were used to amass the relevant and required data for the study (Ritchie and Lewis 2003)

***Qualitative case study:*** The researcher is of the view that a descriptive or factual statement makes a claim about what really is the case. Subsequently, there are various kinds of descriptive statements that allowed the researcher to distinguish between types of descriptive statements according to the following dimensions: the number of cases covered by the description; the number of variables included in a description; and the level of measurement in this study. Cases lodge with the different national, provincial and local government departments and institutions, and that have special contribution to make to this study, were secured and studied for the purpose of this assessment (Leedy& Ormrod 2001)

## **Data analysis and interpretation techniques**

In analysing and interpreting data, the following qualitative data analysis and interpretation techniques were used:

### **Qualitative content analysis**

In this manuscript, content analysis is viewed as a process of identifying patterns and themes of experiences research participants brings to the study—what patterns characterise their participation in the study, and what patterns of change are reported by and observed in the participants (Patton 2002). As a qualitative technique of data analysis, content analysis played an important role in this study as it involves detailed and systematic examination of the content of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes and even biases. The contents of the relevant documentations obtained and secured during data collection phase, were subjected to a rigorous analysis through this technique. The same is true with the information gathered through observation and responses from interviewees.

### **Qualitative case study analysis**

Case study analysis is an intensive investigation of a single unit or an examination of multiple “variables” (Babbie & Mouton 2011). This qualitative data analysis technique has been adopted in this study as it takes multiple perspectives into account and attempts to understand the influences of multilevel social systems of the subjects’ perspectives and behaviours—the defining characteristic of this technique is its emphasis on an individual. In this articles, relevant cases from government departments and institutions visited, were assimilated and their relevance to the study cautiously scrutinised to strengthen and consolidate their contribution to the study.

## **Findings**

Based on the research objectives underlying the study, appropriate qualitative data collection methods and data analysis techniques employed, as well as the using qualitative interview schedule, the following findings were arrived at:

- **Objective 1:** Exploring the sustainability and efficiency of public administration’s/management’s structures, systems, processes, and procedures in dealing with the South African public
- **Finding 1:** In all provinces studied, the study discovered that both structures, systems, processes, and procedures were not adequately designed and user-friendly, and thus making it difficult for public administrators/managers to deal efficiently with the public in a sustainable manner

- **Objective 2:** Exploring the effectiveness and viability of the public administration's/management's decision making skills problem-solving skills, planning skills and communication skills available for addressing the problems facing the South African public
- **Finding 2:** Similarly, the study revealed that appropriate skills required in respect of decision making, policy making, problem-solving, planning , and communicating with the public were dismally inadequate, and in some instances, completely non-existent/lacking. This rendered the interactions between public administrator/managers and the public ineffective and less viable
- **Objective 3:** Exploring the attitudes South African publics towards their civic responsibility and towards the training and development, as well as empowerment programmes available to them aimed at transforming them into active participants in public administration/management processes
- **Finding 3:** In the regard, the study found that, in the main, (with few exceptions, particularly in provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape), the majority of the people do not take their civic responsibilities very seriously. More disturbing, is the finding that in most provinces, the people remain passive rather than active in participating in public administrative issues that directly affects them in their daily lives. The study also discovered that certain provinces there was little or no effort taken to provide effective training, development, and empowerment programmes to the ordinary people aimed at transforming them into active participants, particularly in public administration and management processes.

### **Recommendations**

Based on these findings, this manuscript recommends that the following issues must be addressed in order to venture into an effective and efficient public administration/management terrain for that is so desperately needed in modern democratic South Africa:

The entire public administration/management must undertake a complete and serious soul-searching process, with the view to transform and commitment itself and start engaging itself to a paradigm shift, according which must start working together with the public towards the realisation of the objectives of good governance and effective and efficient service delivery. This could only happen, as this article suggests, when public administrators/managers begin to treat the South African public as:

- **Citizens (as described above);**
- **Customers (as described above);**
- **Partners (as described above); and more importantly, as**
- **Voters (as described above); and**
- **Taxpayers (as described above).**

## **Conclusion**

The past two decades had been an interesting, and at times, tumultuous period for public administration and management structures and systems through South Africa. This manuscript attempts to describe the wax and the eventual wane of the government's efforts to increase the level of public participation in public administration and management structures, systems, processes and procedures. The ultimate intent being to enhance and consolidate the role of active public participation in good governance and effective/ efficient service delivery throughout the country. These and other similar issues, problems, and challenges are ones that have inspired and motivated the author to undertake this research discourse. It is on this basis that this manuscript intends to attempt to provide a qualitative synthesis and analysis of the nature of public administration and management in Mzansi (South Africa). The study identifies five themes/principles of a duly functional public administration/ management model, namely: (1) considering the public as citizen; (2) treating public as customer; (3) looking at the public as partner (the issue of coproduction); (4) noticing public as voter; and (5) accepting public as tax payer, and used them as the basis of this analytic synthesis. From these guiding principles, the manuscript utilises qualitative data collection methods such as (participant observation, in-depth interviewing, qualitative document study, and qualitative case study) and qualitative data analysis and interpretation techniques to collect the required pertinent data with the view of analysing and interpreting it accordingly and appropriately and arrives at the anticipated findings. Subsequent to the key research problem and its accompanied sub-problems underlying the study, the research questions pertinent to the study, and the research objectives identified in the study, several findings are arrived at, and the recommendations are suggested on the basis of the findings so far arrived at.

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