

Enhancement of Accountability within the South African Public Sector: Knowledge Gained from the Case of a National Commissioner of the South African Police Service

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Abstract : The paper scrutinizes the literature on accountability and non-accountability, and then presents an analysis of a South African case which demonstrated consequences of a lack of accountability. Ethical conduct displayed by members of the public sector is integral to creating a sustainable democratic government, which upholds the constitutional tenets of accountability, transparency and professional ethicality. Furthermore, a true constitutional democracy emphasises and advocates the notion of service leadership that nurtures public participation and engages with citizens in a positive manner. Ethical conduct and accountability in the public sector earns public trust; hence these are key principles in good governance. Yet, in the years since the advent of democracy in South Africa, the government has been plagued by rampant corruption and mal-administration by public officials and politicians in leadership positions. The control measures passed by government in an attempt to ensure ethicality and accountability within the public sector include codes of ethics, rules of conduct and the enactment of legislation. These are intended to shape the mindset of members of the public sector, with the ultimate aim of an efficient, effective, ethical, responsive and accountable public service. The purpose of the paper is to analyse control systems and accountability within the public sector and to present reasons for non-accountability by means of a selected case study. The selected case study is the corruption trial of Jackie Selebi, who served as National Commissioner of the South African Police Service but was dismissed from the post. The reasons for non-accountability in the public sector as well as recommendations based on the findings to enhance accountability will be undertaken. The case study demonstrates the experience and impact of corruption and/or mal-administration, as a result of a lack of accountability, which has contributed to the increasing loss of confidence in political leadership in the country as elsewhere in the world. The literature is applied to the erstwhile National Commissioner of the South African Police Service and President of Interpol, as a case study of non-accountability.

Keywords : corruption, internal control, maladministration, non-compliance, oversight mechanisms, public accountability, public sector

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