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The role of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa in the young democracy

By

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ABSTRACT

The NARS is the body charged with the proper management and care of the records of all public bodies in the South African public sector. it has been facing steep challenges in pursuing this mandate. Factors such as a shortage of staff, lack of space in the archival repository, and the inability to enforce compliance have rendered NARS incapable of performing its tasks. The premise of this research was based on the assumption that there is a neglect of NARS and record-keeping function in the public sector. The purpose of the research was to gather evidence of this claim and to understand the underlying reasons behind the neglect. A qualitative methodology was used to collect and analyse data using a field study design. The research revealed that NARS is unable to perform its duties in the public sector because its function is not recognised as vital to the pursuance of objectives in the public sector. Records are not valued due to the lack of priority of basic administrative activities, which has resulted in the neglect of records management. The study contends that the influence of the New Public Management (NPM), particularly the aspect of management which focuses on increasing the capacity of managers in order to enhance efficiency, has led to the lack of prioritisation of basic but important administrative activities, records management included.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management by Research and Dissertation at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Masimba Yuba

September 2013

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Lord God Almighty for the opportunity and avenues that he has opened up for me to be able to pursue this work. For life, and hope in the saviour Jesus Christ, without whom I would have no hope. I am filled with gratitude.

I am hugely indebted to my sister, Christine Charingirah and her husband Evans Kasai, for their patience and kindness towards me during my stay with them. I would be nowhere without them.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGSA   Auditor General South Africa

CADS   Control Accessibility Disposal and Storage

COGTA   Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

DAC   Department of Arts and Culture

DEIC   Dutch East India Company

DG   Director General

DPLG   Department of Provincial and Local Government

DPSA   Department of Public Service and Administration

DTI   Department of Trade and Industry

ICA   International Council of Archives

IGM   Information Governance Manager

IRMT   International Records Management Trust

ISO   International Standards Organisation

MOU   Memorandum of Understanding

NAA   National Archives of Australia

NANZ   National Archives of New Zealand

NARA   National Archives and Records Administration

NARS   National Archives and Records Service of South Africa

NAZ   National Archives of Zimbabwe

NPM	New Public Management
PSR	Public Service Reform
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
SAS	State Archives Services
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America
ZNA	Zambian National Archives

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

A society whose past is fractured by racial domination of a peculiar kind, such as South Africa's apartheid society (1948-1994), is in grave need of records and archives. This is true of the period of transformation from the apartheid system to a democratic system, for this period is one that particularly shapes the nation's future. The decisions about how to transform society and the processes used to achieve these ends are captured in records.

The value of records in a young democracy is two-fold. Primarily, records are an important resource in the daily routine business of any organisation. This is their primary value, the exact reason they are created. Their absence would lead to inefficiencies or failure in operational procedures (Kansas State Historical Society, 2007). Organisations and individuals create records in the conduct of their current business to support administration (Shepherd, et al, 2010). Mnjama (2004:49) has pointed out that there are several reasons organisations should manage records as a key resource. Records themselves are organisational assets because they document organisational activities and provide an audit trail, especially in establishing who did what, why and when. For example, records document financial activities. Without meaningful financial records, audits cannot be carried out, fraud cannot be proven, and those responsible for the financial management of the organisations cannot be held accountable for their actions (Mnjama, 2004).

Records are a crucial entity in the daily conduct of business in any organisation. Moreover, without records, no assessment can be made of whether individuals, private and public organisations have actually carried out the actions and transactions they were appointed to execute, or whether they ensured that these actions and transactions met the criteria of efficiency, legitimacy or the principles of good governance (Thomassen, 2001). In summary, it is virtually impossible for an organisation to function efficiently without proper records management.

The secondary value of records is termed so because it is a value generated from a use other than those for which the records are created. Records empower those in senior positions by allowing them an opportunity to shape how they will be remembered by generations to come. There is therefore a need to monitor and carefully examine the process of their creation. As Orwell (1942: 109) notes: *"Past events, it is argued, have no objective existence, but only survive in written records and human memories. The past is whatever the records and the memories agree upon. And since the party is in full control of all records, and in equally full control of the minds of its members, it follow that the past is whatever the party chooses to make it."* "Records are social constructs derived from the information needs and social values of rulers, government, associations and individuals who establish and maintain them." (Schwartz and Cook, 2002). Because of this, "archives, as records, wield the power over the shape of historical scholarship, collective memory and national identity, over how we know our selves as individuals, groups and societies" (Schwartz and Cook, 2002).

If rulers of governments have power and control over the contents of records and in turn power over the shape of historical scholarship, it is public access to records that also empowers the citizenry. They provide citizens with an opportunity to track the activities of their government. Access to information is seen as a necessary part of a healthy democracy. The laws associated with access to or freedom of information are intended to promote accountability and transparency

in governments by disclosing their decision-making process and by providing an audit trail of actions taken (Miller, 1999). Miller (1999: 18) further explains that "these laws provide people with the legal right to know what their government is doing, thus incentivising their government to act in ways that better reflect the desires and wishes of their citizens."

The understanding that emerges from the statements above is that records and archives are crucial to a democracy such as South Africa's because they enhance the ability of governments to administer their activities efficiently, which allows them to serve the populace effectively, an aim which any democratic government ought to have. Furthermore, records facilitate accountability and transparency, two important pillars in a democratic society. The ability of a record to aid these relations emanates from the purpose of creating a record, which is, to document the daily activities of organisations and institutions and to ensure an audit trail. This will be explored in further detail in the literature review. The dichotomy of power that is revealed here is one that is vital to a democratic society. The researcher views that central to this gap between the public and those in power is information. Information is crucial to the circumvention of the power that both sides have, and this is one of the components of a democratic system.

 Of fundamental importance in the South African context is the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARS). This is the government organ that is charged with the proper management and care of the records of governmental bodies; and the preservation and use of a national archival heritage (NARS, Act No. 43 of 1996 as amended). The mechanisms that the NARS have put in place in order to perform these functions are as follows:

i.   Inspection of all government departments - they inspect the records management systems in governmental departments in order to make an

assessment of their state and to provide instructions on how to improve if need be.

ii. Approval of file plans and retention schedule – whenever a file (a group of records) is created, it must be assigned a retention period which basically summarises the life of each record. This retention period is set by the departmental records officials. However the NARS have the duty of approving the file plans.

iii. Training – the section conducts training sessions and workshops on guidelines concerning records management in public bodies in order to raise competency of records officials and to raise awareness of the importance of records management.

iv. Determines classification systems – in order for records to be easily accessible when needed, classification into categories is done by the NARS for each governmental body.

v. Access and preservation strategies – these are in place to ensure that records that have been selected for posterity will survive for as long as possible. Furthermore, they ensure access to those records in the reading room in the NARS building.

In order to function efficiently, the NARS needs to be able to perform these tasks. This research will seek to establish whether these mechanisms are functioning well or not, and if they are not, why not. This paper will also attempt to understand what challenges the NARS is facing in pursuing this mandate.

Initial contact with the NARS revealed that the institution is facing steep challenges: a lack of space to collect public records of enduring value (no records of the new government have been deposited from the public bodies) and a crippling lack of staff (the Records Management section employs four people to date, with fourteen vacant posts). These are just two of the challenges the body faces.

The challenges that the NARS is facing indicate a lack of funding and appear to be symptomatic of a disregard for the value and importance of records management in the public sector. This research sought to find evidence that would substantiate the claim that there is a neglect of the NARS and its function in the public sector and to explore and understand the reason behind this apparent neglect. The researcher undertook to understand the value of sound record management practise and of preserving archives in contemporary South Africa. In order to understand the NARS, it is crucial to understand that the NARS is intended to function as a statutory body that serves the public good. The following discussion explains the regulatory framework in which the NARS functions.

1.2 STATUTORY AND REGULATOR FRAMEWORK

The foundation upon which the NARS functions is statutory, which is intended to provide the NARS with a basis upon which they are supposed to regulate public service record keeping.

1.2.1 The Constitution of South Africa, 108 of 1996

Section 195 of the Constitution advocates for the efficient use of resources in the public sector and this alludes to the use of records management space in both public offices and the NARS. There is also a provision for the availability of truthful information. Furthermore, the constitution provides for the public service of South Africa to be accountable. In all these instances records play a vital role, as shall be demonstrated in the literature review.

National legislation enacted to give effect to the provisions in this section of the Constitution is as follows:

1.2.2 The NARS Act (Act. No. 43 of 1996 as amended)

Section 13 of the Act provides the National Archivist with powers to pursue effective records management in the public sector. The Act goes as far as empowering the National Archivist to define the records management systems that will be adopted in public bodies. This means that the NARS is responsible for all records management activities in the public service, such as the authorising of disposal of records and determining which classification systems shall be used. It is upon this basis that the NARS published guidelines for matters such as paper and electronic records management. In these documents, the NARS disseminates a code of conduct to all public bodies with regards to public records management.

1.2.3 The Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act. No. 2 of 2000)

It is important to note that this Act defines a record in the same way as the NARS does. This illustrates that the NARS is a fundamental entity in the promotion of access to information. The Act exists in order to uphold the accountability of the state through transparency and effective governance. Accountability is to be upheld through the access to records that are generated by public bodies in the course of their business. The NARS function of stimulating sound records management practice is therefore vital in the promotion of the accountability provided by the Act. This helps the public to scrutinise the activities of their government and to be part of the decision-making process. It is interesting to note that the act also allows for the public viewing of official emails, an idea which the NARS tries to disseminate in the electronic records manual, that emails should be treated as public information and should thus be managed in that way.

1.2.4 The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act. No. 3 of 2000)

The Act provides for the fair, equitable, legal and administration of actions in the public service to be properly documented. The NARS plays a vital role in this because they determine the systems upon which records are created and managed. Since records are information about administrative acts that have been carried out, inhabitants of the Republic of South Africa whose rights have not been upheld, are encouraged to seek written reasons for such an action. Failure to produce such information from public servants can create the assumption that indeed the action that was taken was unlawful and unfair. In terms of records management, if emails are deleted or destroyed without the authorisation of the NARS, this can be assumed to be a deliberate attempt to conceal evidence and this could lead to legal action against the administrator or the organisation.

1.2.5 The Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (Act. No. 25 of 2002)

The act was enacted in order to provide for the legal communication and transactions of governmental activities through electronic means. The act stipulates that electronic messages are acceptable as long as they can be proved beyond reasonable doubt that they are reliable and trustworthy as evidence of the transaction. Reliability of this sort of communication depends on security measures that allow for the authenticity of those emails. The ability to provide evidence also depends on the integrity of the creator and receiver of the email. Public bodies therefore must ensure that they adhere to records management standards set up by the NARS pertaining to the credibility and reliability of system.

1.3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The origins of records and archives management in South Africa date as far back as the days of the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) (1652-1795) (Harris, 1997 and Ngoepe and Keakopa, 2011). In the days of the DEIC and the three years of the Batavian Republic (1803-1806), each of the government offices controlled its own records (State Archives Service, 1987). The second British rule of the Cape (1806-1901) was characterised by records management under the Colonial Secretary and Registrar of Records. In 1876 the Cape government appointed an ad hoc commission to investigate how government records were managed (Technikon South Africa (TSA) 1990).

Before the establishment of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910, each of the four colonies -- Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal -- managed records in their own way. The incorporation of the four former colonies in the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910 resulted in the establishment of a single national archival service under the Department of the Interior. This led to the incorporation of the four separate archives services under the central control of a Chief Archivist (Harris, 2000). In 1922 the Public Archives Act (Act No. 9) was passed.

However, the act only became fully operative after 1953 when staff of the Archives Service began an appraisal of government records as was required by the Act. This appraisal effort widened the role of National Archives, such that on 1 October 1957 a special section known as the Liaison Section, with a staff complement of three, was created in the office of the Chief Archivist to manage the work (Harris, 2002 and Ngulube, 2006). The State Archives was transferred to the Culture portfolio in the 1960s (Nargesia and Esfahani, 2011). According to Nargesia and Esfahani (2011: 148):

"Although initially attention was exclusively directed to appraisal, the officials also had to cope with investigating file plans. Since the maintenance of an effective file plan and the granting of standing disposal authority go hand in hand, the Liaison Section was increasingly approached for guidance and support when new file plans were compiled in government offices. The experience acquired by the Section in advising government offices in this regard led to the transfer of this function from the offices of the Public Service Commission to the State Archives Service (SAS) in 1960. At the same time the name of the Section was changed to Records Management Section, a name that has been retained until today. Systematic inspections of archives still in the custody of government offices also commenced in 1966, and towards the end of 1969 considerable progress had been made in the achievement of efficient records management. The SAS's involvement with records which were still in the custody of government offices (custody and care, file plans, disposal, etc.) gradually gave rise to a need for training of staff who were to be responsible for the handling of, and control over, records in such offices."

The responsibility of the SAS to perform an advisory role in records issues of government departments continues to date, although at regulatory, rather than simply an advisory level. The NARS (2003) stipulates that, "this dispensation continued until the promulgation of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (No 43 of 1996 as amended) which provided the basis for the transformation of the public archives system and its alignment with the imperatives of the democratic South Africa." They maintain that it also paved the way for the transfer of authority in archival matters other than those at national level to provincial governments. Schedule 5 of the Constitution of 1996 provides for archives other than national archives to be an exclusive provincial competence. As can be seen from the above, records and archives management developed rather progressively during its formative years to the period of

transition from 1990 to 1994. It is therefore interesting to explore why this function has been neglected in the public sector in since the inception of democracy.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.4.1 Problem statement

The NARS is the body that is charged with the proper management and care of the records of all governmental bodies, (NARS Act 43 of 1996)**.** They set up mechanisms and guidelines that are meant to ensure sound records management practice in public bodies and to preserve records of enduring value**.** Records are an important resource in a democratic society. They are primarily a crucial administrative recourse that ensures the sound management of basic administrative activities, which in turn allow for the government to serve it public effectively, and an important aspect of a democratic society. They are also crucial in a democratic society because they facilitate public accountability and transparency. They do this by providing information concerning the activities of any organisation of the state. Access to these records provides for the transparency and accountability of state to society. According to Chinyemba (2011) records management supports accountability by providing accurate information and evidence of an event, as well as administration, by providing an audit trail in performance of an action. Miller (1999) notes that one of the reasons for keeping records is to provide evidence for operational activity and for meeting accountability needs. The primary and secondary value of records is detailed by these two authors.

However, there is evidence to suggest that the NARS and its functions are neglected in the public sector. The NARS is facing serious resource deficiency in terms of finance and human resources. A pilot study conducted with three NARS staff on 20 July 2012 revealed that the NARS is understaffed (for example the

records management section requires18 employees to function at full capacity; however the section only has four employees). It was also revealed in the interviews with NARS staff that the institution no longer has space to house records for posterity. In 2010 the institution was allocated money to build new repositories only for the money to be recalled for other uses. Furthermore, the NARS has not received any records for preservation since the new government was established in 1994 due to lack of space. These, however, are only symptoms of a broader issue which this research sought to explore, that is; why does it appear that the function of the NARS undervalued in the public sector?

Previous research on records management in the South African public sector has tended to centre on establishing the state of records management in the public sector, and the challenges being faced in that field. For instance Ngoepe (2008) explored the records management trends in the South African public sector, using the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) as a case study. The research sought to understand the state of records management in the DPLG. Ngoepe and Keakopa (2012) also conducted a survey of the national archival institutions in Botswana and South Africa and managed to expose the challenges being faced in pursuing records management objectives in these countries. Makhura (2005) went as far as seeking to understand the contribution of records in the achievement of efficient performance in an organisation. There is however a gap in knowledge, as no research has sought to investigate the underlying reasons behind the current state of records management in the public sector. There is what appears to be a neglect of the NARS and records management function; this research seeks to establish whether there is sufficient evidence for this claim and to find out the underlying reasons behind this neglect.

The period under consideration in this research is from 1994 to March 2013. This is because 1994 is the year in which the young democracy was born and it is

important to understand the management of records in this period given their importance to this new democratic dispensation**.**

1.4.2 Research purpose

The purpose of the research was firstly to establish whether there is evidence for the claim that there is a disregard for the records management function in the South African Public Sector. If there was sufficient evidence, the researcher then sought to explore why the functions of the NARS in the public sector are apparently ignored, and to expose the implications of the neglect of its functions. Based on the research findings the researcher intended to provide insight into the situation by providing evidence of the plight of records management in South Africa.

1.4.3 Research question

What information is available to substantiate the claim that the records management function is undervalued in the public sector and what are the underlying explanations for this neglect?

1.4.4. Sub questions

1. What evidence is there to suggest that the South African public sector does not place value on the functions of the NARS?
2. What are the reasons behind this disregard for the NARS functions?
3. What are the implications of the neglect of the functions of the NARS?

1.5 RESEARCH REPORT OUTLINE

The research report comprises the following chapters:

Chapter one: Research introduction and background to study:

The first chapter introduces the topic and provides the context to the research topic under investigation. This includes providing detail on the premise of the research, the statutory mandate of the NARS and by providing a narrative of the historical development of the NARS. This is followed by an outline of the research problem and the research questions.

Chapter two: Literature review:

Chapter Two provides a review of the relevant literature that concerns itself with understanding why records are an important aspect of any government. There is an attempt to provide some context to records management internationally and in South Africa. It was also the researcher's priority to understand the role of records in the general administration of basic activities in the public sector. This is followed by an explanation of the value of records for a democratic and accountable government that is transparent and what role records play in that crucial pillar of democracy. It was also imperative to look at the models of public sector that have been used to shape South Africa. A conceptual framework emanating from the literature review follows.

Chapter three: Research methodology and outline:

The third chapter provides an explanation of the methodology that was used to acquire data to answer the fundamental question of the research. The research was qualitative in nature, seeking to explore the hypothesis that the South African public sector does not seem to place value on record-keeping processes. This was done by interviewing three categories of people. The sample was drawn on the basis of the people's knowledge of the value of records management in the public sector. Six people from the NARS were interviewed, three from the records management section and two from the repository as well as the current official National Archivist. Three records management professionals from different departments were also interviewed, as well as two records management

academics. One of the limitations of the research was the inability to acquire other sources of information, as an application to view reports of the inspections conducted by the records management section was denied.

Chapter four: Research analysis and data presentation:

Chapter four is a presentation and analysis of the data that was gathered. Basically these are presented in such a way as to bring out vividly the response. The priority was to answer the main questions outlined in the first chapter. Themes that are responses to the answers are provided in order to explain them in depth.

Chapter five: Conclusion:

The final chapter was dedicated to providing a conclusion to the research, to ensure that the findings of the research come to the fore and to ensure that the researcher's opinion is apparent. Of particular importance was the need to bring out the answers to the research and to provide an overall conclusion.

1.6 SUMMARY

This is an exploratory piece of research that sought to provide reasons for the apparent neglect and disregard of the role of the NARS in the South African government. To begin with, the research attempted to provide an understanding of why records need to be valued. This was pursued at greater length in the literature review. There was also a breakdown of the statutory framework that supports the need for sound records management practice in public bodies. This was followed by a brief historical background of records management practice in South Africa.

The research problem that emerged was identified through symptoms such as lack of human resource capacity to perform their designated mandate, and the lack of physical capacity to store records. The most significant focus of the research was in providing an analysis of the reasons for the neglect of the functions of the NARS in the South African government.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the existing body of literature that is pertinent to this research. The chapter gives an overview of what records management is and the concepts that underpin records management the world over, as well as in the public sector more specifically. The role of the NARS in the South African public sector was also reviewed, comparing it to other international archival institutions. This was followed by looking at some research on records management in the public sector. The second major section focuses on the value of records management in a general sense and a review of literature on the nature of South Africa's administration in order to provide a context for the later analysis of the state of records management in the country. At the end, a conceptual framework was developed, based on the literature review.

2.2. RECORDS MANAGEMENT: INTERNATIONAL AND SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

2.2.1 Definition of records management

The NARS (2004: 15) defines records management as "a process of ensuring the proper creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records throughout their life cycle to achieve efficient, transparent and accountable governance." The

definition is substantial because it correlates records management with both efficiency and accountability in government.

The NARS definition is in agreement with the Australian Standard AS 4390 (1996) which understands records management as the discipline and organisational function of managing records to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations. The sentiment that records management helps achieve efficient administration and accountability is both a South African and international discourse. However, the Australian Standard definition clarifies that records management performs the main task of meeting operational business requirements while fostering accountability as a secondary function of records.

In their Records Management Standard 15489-1 (2001), the International Standards Organisation ISO defines records management as the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including the processes of capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business transactions in the form of records. The ISO definition is significant because it includes the processes that records go through in the management process. The explanation is much more explicit concerning the fundamental processes in records management than the NARS and Australian Standard definition. What is further revealed is the ability of records to provide evidence of business transactions, which is fundamental to the audit trail.

The two definitions focus on the effects of sound records management practice. Overall, the concept of a record providing evidence and information about business transactions is fundamental to this research as it helps elaborate the properties of records management that are fundamental to fostering accountability

and to ensuring sound administration. The question is;what is it about a record that makes it possible for it to provide evidence?

2.2.2. The definition of a record

The International Records Management Trust (IRMT) (1999: 5) defines a record as a document regardless of form or medium created, received, maintained and used by an organisation (public or private) or an individual in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business, of which it forms a part or provides evidence. This definition helps to bring home an idea which is the keystone of this research - that records provide documents of the activities of an organisation. This documentary evidence is fundamental to the support of business transactions. The IRMT (1999: 5) further explains that;

"The term 'records' includes all the documents that institutions or individuals create or receive in the course of administrative and executive transactions. The records themselves form a part of or provide evidence of such transactions. As evidence, they are subsequently maintained by or on behalf of those responsible for the transactions, who keep the records for their own future use or for the use of their successors or others with a legitimate interest in the records. Although records may ultimately have significant research value, they are not created in the interests of or for the information of archivists or future researchers."

The Information Governance Manager (IGM) (2007: 3) supports this by saying that "records are corporate memory, providing evidence of actions and decisions and representing a vital asset to support daily functions and operations." If records are primarily an administrative resource, and they support functionality why does it appear that the South African public sector does not value its records management processes? The question remains: what is it about the nature of the

South African public sector that makes it possible for its officers to disregard such a fundamental activity in the running of any organisation?

2.2.3 The nature of a record

Whilst all records are information, not all information is a record (Records Management Infokit, 2007). The following is an analysis of the unique properties of a record that separate records from more generic sources of information or data. What follows is an explanation of what is required to produce good, reliable records. Understanding the nature of a record will help to instigate the reliability of a properly managed record to provide evidence for business transactions, which makes them a vital administrative resource..

Firstly a record must have ***content****,* which is information documenting the activities that have taken place (Records Management Infokit, 2007). This content will provide the evidence that makes it a valuable administrative and accountability instrument. It is the information conveyed in a record that makes it vital, and this information is the most important aspect of the record.

Secondly the record must have ***context****,* which means it must have a relationship with all other records from the department and this context will help, in accountability terms, to provide logical information. The context provides the basis of understanding the use of that record and helps to make sure that it is used for the correct purpose.

Finally it must have ***structure****;* thus there must be an intrinsic rationality to the presentation of information in the record and the metadata which is information regarding the context of the record and this is to be interpreted by the human eye (Records Management Infokit, 2007). This Metadata is basically information about the information: for instance who generated the information, for what

purpose, on what date, in what group of records it falls and where it is filed. This is a fundamental activity in the records management field.

According to the Records Management Infokit (2007) the result of adhering to these properties should be to create records which contain the following qualities:

i. Authenticity – the process for which the document records should be identifiable and provable. It should also be able to identify the authorised creator. Ultimately this is the metadata.

ii. Completeness – for a record to stand as evidence regarding a transaction that has taken place, it should contain all information about that activity. A record must not have all information concerning all activities in that context; it should be complete in regards to that specific activity.

iii. Reliability - a record must be able to stand on its own and provide accurate information regarding the activity that it is documenting.

iv. Fixity – as soon as a document is proved to be a record it should by no means be altered. It should remain as it is and should be as it was created. This is how the evidential value of a record is maintained.

The nature of a record is a primary concept to this research as it establishes how a record can stand as evidence which can be used to provide for administrative continuity and accountability. In order for the record to reliable, b it must be administered by professional records managers who understand the processes that information should go for it to be an authentic record that is complete and reliable.

Records go through various processes in their existence, and are managed in a systematic way to ensure their authenticity, completeness, reliability and fixity. In order to conceptualise these processes, records managers have devised two major concepts that underpin the management of records in an organisation. The

following is a discussion of these two concepts, the records life cycle concept and the continuum concept.

2.2.4. The records life cycle concept

While the previous section elaborated on the basics of records management and the uniqueness of a record, this section explains the fundamental theory that underpins public sector records management in South Africa. It provids an explanation of the correlation between public archives and records management in governmental bodies. This theory elaborates the progression of a record from when it is created in the government agency to when it is selected for the public archive.

The records life cycle concept was propounded by Theodore Schellenberg (1956). It portrays records as going through various stages or periods much like a living organism (Azman, 2009). There are three phases in the life cycle concept: current records, which are managed in registries or record offices, semi-current records which are managed in records centres, and non-current records which are managed in archives (IRMT, 1999). Figure 1 below illustrates the process that records go through in their life cycle.

Figure 1: Records Life Cycle Concept
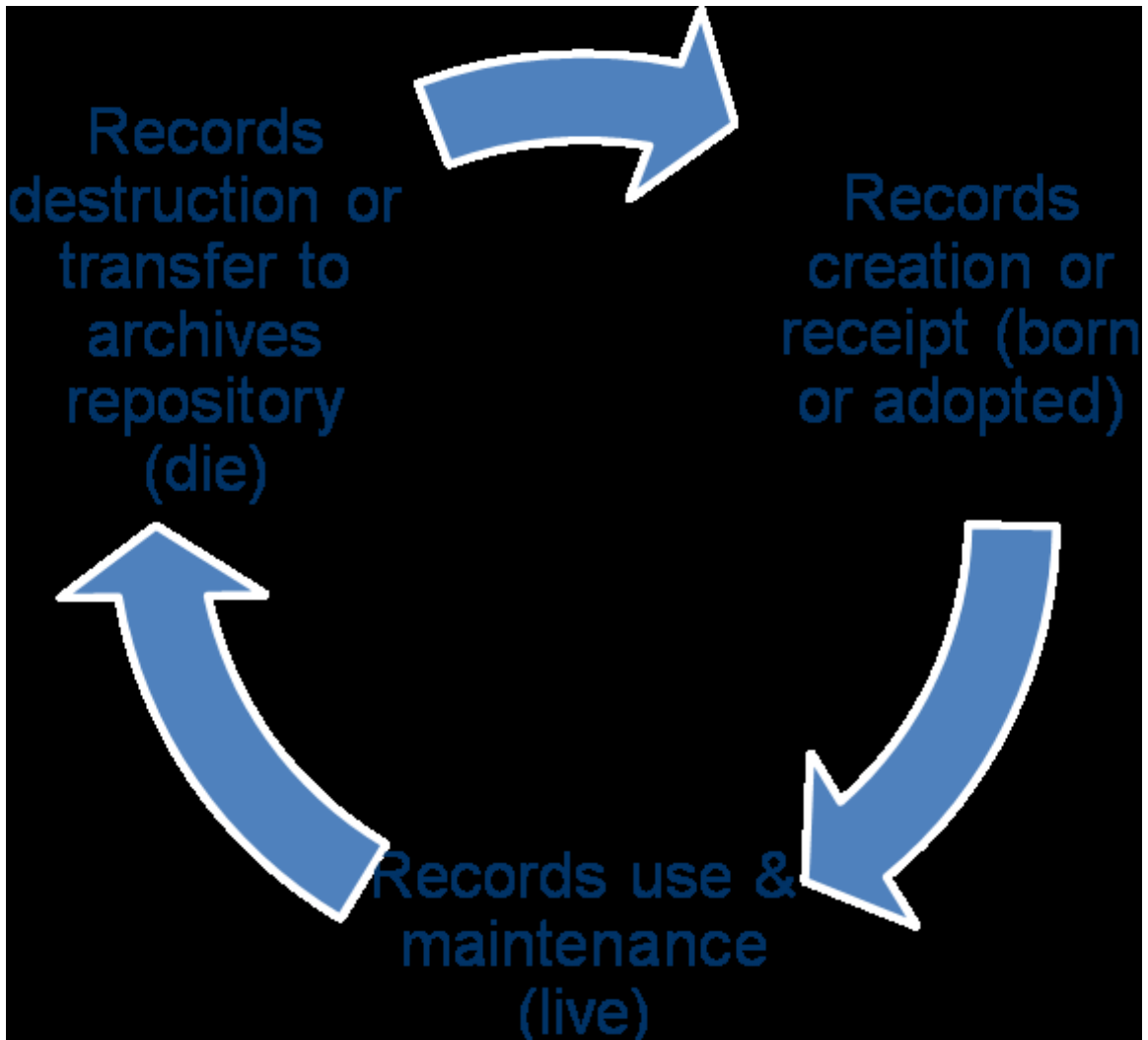
Source: IRMT, 1999

Figure 2: Records Life Cycle Model

Non-current	Current
Archives or Destruction	Office or file site/Registry
Archivist	Registrar
↑	↓
Appraisal and disposal	Appraisal and disposal
↑	↓

←   Semi current   ←

Records centre

Records manager
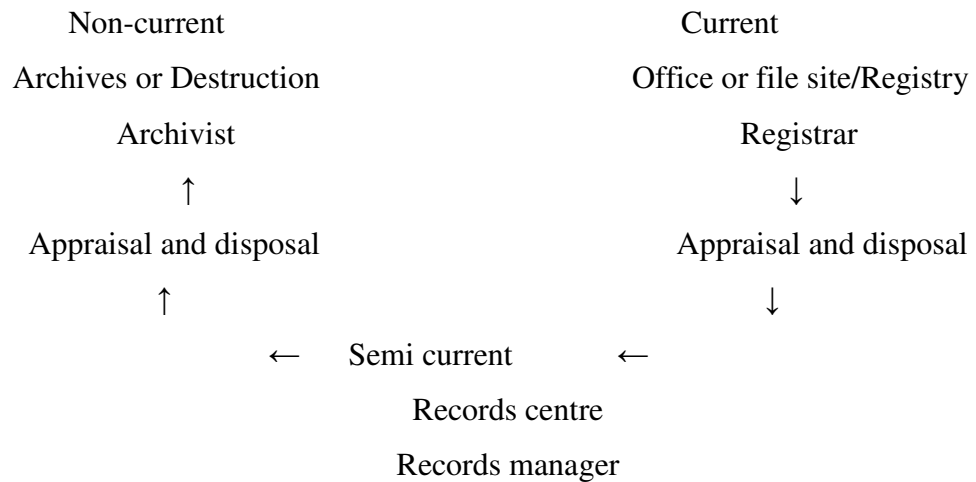
Source: Azman, 2009

The Northwest Territory Archives (2004) further elaborates each stage of the record in the life cycle concept. Current records are records that are needed frequently in the office of creation for administrative purposes. They are retrieved at least once per month, so they are stored in readily accessible office spaces. In South African government agencies the current records are managed in registries or records offices and the offices are manned by records managers (NARS, 2003).

Semi-current records are not needed for day-to-day business. Organisations need to keep them for reference, for legal reasons, or for financial reasons. They are not used often enough to justify their being stored in prime office space and equipment. Semi-active records are often stored at a lower cost in a records center. The NARS manual (2003) stipulates i the requirements to be met by government agencies in transferring semi-current records to private record storage companies. They also provide a list of recommended storage companies.

Non-current records are records that are no longer needed for the purposes for which they were created. They are transferred from the records centre to the archive where they are to be preserved for posterity, or are destroyed as per instruction of the disposal authority. The South African government agencies transfer their records to provincial archives for preservation while they seek approval from the National Archivist for those they want to destroy.

The life cycle concept describes the processes that a record goes from when it is created to when it is either destroyed or sent to the public archive for preservation. According to the NARS manual (2003) the concept fully describes the nature of the South African public service records management system.

2.2.5 Appraisal and disposal

Appraisal and disposal are two processes that take place at the end of the "current phase" to determine the continuing value of records (Bantin, 2007). At the semi-current stage another appraisal and disposal will take place in order to identify records to be transferred into the third phase, the non-current phase. According to Azman (2009: 47), these stages of appraisal are determining points, when decisions have to be taken as to whether to destroy or send records to the next stage of the life cycle. The aim of appraisal is essentially to formulate a disposal and retention authority (Bantin, 2007). These documents officially identify those records that ought to be destroyed and those that will be moved to the following stage of the life cycle.

The issuing of disposal and retention authority is one of the fundamental activities of the NARS in the South African public sector. This process is the one that determines which records will be kept and which ones will be destroyed. This is the process that actually ensures what will be remembered and what will be forgotten in the future. The government therefore has a great deal of control over

the shape of historical scholarship because they choose what to destroy or keep. It is therefore fundamental that the NARS is the one that determines what will be kept and what will be destroyed in terms of records. Yet still the NARS is neglected in the public sector, which begs the question fundamental to this:research ─ why?

2.2.6 Electronic records

According to the IRMT (2009: 22) "an electronic record is a record that is created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored by electronic means and that requires some form of computer technology to access and use." The NARS (2006) definition of electronic records is similar and the use of a computer is its most significant characteristic. Electronic records therefore encompass all information concerning activities and processes in organisations that are generated electronically. Electronic records systems are the sum of all machineries that allow for the reading and manipulating of electronic records such as electronic media as well as all connected items such as source documents, output information, software applications, programmes and metadata.

Electronic records bring a fundamental and unique dimension to records management. The NARS (2006) explains that the use of technology to operate electronic records and systems has considerably changed the way in which records are generated and managed. Electronic records bring fundamental challenges to governmental organisations that create them and to the NARS. However, this does not change the fact that records need to be managed well and to maintain their integrity and ability to provide evidence. There is a need for this to happen for accountability purposes, to support administrative action, to support recovery after disasters and to foster institutional and social memory.

An electronic record needs to maintain the basic nature of a record, properties that make it reliable and trustworthy. Maintaining these principles in electronic records has become one of the greatest challenges in the records management fraternity, particularly due to their lack of involvement in building up computer technology and its rapid advancement.

2.2.7 The nature of electronic records

According to the NARS (2006) much like paper records, structure, content and context, the fundamental characteristics in the nature of a record remain vital to electronic records. Paper records are in a single readable form, and it is one physical object that possesses all vital characteristics. The document is visible to our eyes (it is easy to see the difference between a letter and a ledger) the context of a letter is also easy to see, who wrote it, to whom it was written, on what date it was written and the date received by the receiver. In an office, the file number and position in the file will all contribute to the context in which it was written and received.

Electronic records pose a fundamental challenge which emanates from their nature. They do not possess structure, content and context all in one place. Take for example, an electronic database which may contain content in the form of data, but the information on its structure, perhaps the format of the record storage and context, and other records in the same group may be kept separately in software, technical documentation and directories. The challenge is that without context it is almost impossible to interpret the full meaning of a certain record and content cannot stand on its own to provide for the authenticity and reliability of a record. Hence, even for electronic records there is a need to ensure that all these properties are catered for, despite all these challenges. The NARS (2003) give an example of such a situation: a desktop folder containing communication without any form of subject filing or arrangement, or even a chronological arrangement, or

meaningful reference numbers, or links between related documents, and is searched in a random method by haphazard keywords only.

Over the last few years computer technology has developed rapidly and the issues of content, context and structure have become much more complicated than they used to be. Some systems are aimed at sustaining different types of information as separate entities, and the software then creates a temporary record in answer to specific query bringing together information that is kept in different physical entities. According to the NARS (2003), in any attempt to build an electronic records management system, archival considerations have to be put in place such that the essential characteristics are maintained when generating a record, such that the system does into just generate generic information. Precisely for this reason the NARS (2003) sanctions the use of and compliance to global values to ensure that authoritative and consistent records are created and preserved**.**

The IRMT (2009: 22) notes that an electronic record is

  i.   written on magnetic or optical medium, such as magnetic tapes, CD-ROMs DVDs, hard disks, USBs (universal serial buses) and other digital storage devices
 ii.   recorded in binary code
iii.   accessed using computer software and hardware
 iv.   manipulated, updated, deleted and altered.

The trustworthiness and genuineness of electronic records is endangered by the delicate nature of the electronic medium and the dynamic way in which electronic information is arranged. This challenge is compounded if appropriate records management disciplines are not applied in electronic systems (British Public Record Office, 1999).

The World Bank (2004) explains that electronic records stored in poor environmental conditions can be subject to loss and destruction. Even slight changes in humidity and temperature can disturb the magnetic or optical properties of mediums such as magnetic tapes, CD ROMs, DVDS, hard disks and USBs thus leading to the loss of some or all of the records. Furthermore electronic records can be easily manipulated and overwritten (World Bank , 2004). Unless strict security provisions are in place, electronic records can be altered or deleted without the organisation's knowledge.

Electronic records are entirely dependent upon technology, both for their creation and their storage. As a result, they must be managed over time in a computerised environment. Given the rapid obsolescence of computer hardware and software and the degradation of storage media, the mechanisms for the management of electronic records require a higher level of sophistication than is needed to manage paper records (The World Bank, 2004).

Despite all these challenges posed by the very nature of electronic records, the fundamental requirements of electronic transactions are no different in their basic nature from their paper counterparts: they need to be recorded, captured in a fixed form, maintained and made accessible as records (British Public Record Office, 1999). Electronic records must be able to offer the same degree of quality and reliability as evidence of business activity and the same level of accountability.

In hindsight records management scholars have developed a new model, other than the life cycle of a record concept discussed earlier, to manage electronic records more effectively. The continuum concept is also recommended by the NARS as a model of managing public sector electronic records.

2.2.8 The Continuum Concept

The Australia Records Management Standard AS4390 views the records continuum as a process of continual records management processes, from the time that they are generated in records offices to the time that they are disposed to archives for posterity or destruction. The AS4390 adds a fundamental dimension to this continuum, as it argues that even before records are created, the systems that are put in place to create these records form part of the continuum as well. This idea is a true reflection of the original idea that emerged around the 1950s.

There has been a movement towards ,the continuum concept in the field of records management in the past 50 years. Ian Mclean, an Australian archivist, was the first to moot the idea of the records continuum. According to Upward (1998), Mclean spoke of records managers and archivist being the same and archival science must not separate the two professions. Instead training in this field should be directed towards the idea of the characteristics of records, records management system design and the methods of classification. It was from this sort of continuation of professional activities that the concept of a continuum emerged.

At this time there was a break in thinking concerning the idea of the records continuum from the 1950's to the 1980s until an archival scientist from Canada named Atherton once again made the argument that the record-keeping process was fundamentally an integrated one. Unlike the records life cycle process which defines all these processes as significantly dissimilar, with different professionals at each stage, Atherton argued, as Upward had suggested, that records managers and archivists are all involved in the same process, they deal with the same record and are all concerned with the management of recorded information for the uses of their clients. The underlying unifying or linking factor in this continuum was the function of service to the records' creators and all their users (Flynn, 2001). What emerged from these crucial points in the history of the archiving profession

was the idea that there was a real weakness in the records life cycle model which had underpinned records management for over a century.

What emerged was a debate around these central ideas in archival science and in 1996 Frank Upward came up with four principles that underpin the continuum concept of archival science. According to Upward (1996):

i. The idea of a record includes those that had been called archives because of their continuing value, and this means that records managers and archivist must work together in order to ensure that records are kept or destroyed for the right reasons.

ii. The record is not just the physical object that contains it, but more importantly the information that it conveys regardless of what format it is in.

iii. Records are existent in a contextual environment, whether business or societal, and their management should be conducted in recognition of that environment.

iv. The substance of all records management is the principles of archival science and any processes and systems that records go though, though they may change, a fundamental focus on the past, present and future is needed.

What emerged from 'Upwards' discussion was a focused and more elaborate concept of records management which did not sideline the record life cycle concept but instead helped to look at it in a more integrated and interrelated manner. Just like the records life cycle which was conceptualised in the diagrammatic fashion, Upward (2000) also sought to produce such a conceptualisation, as depicted in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: The Records Continuum Model
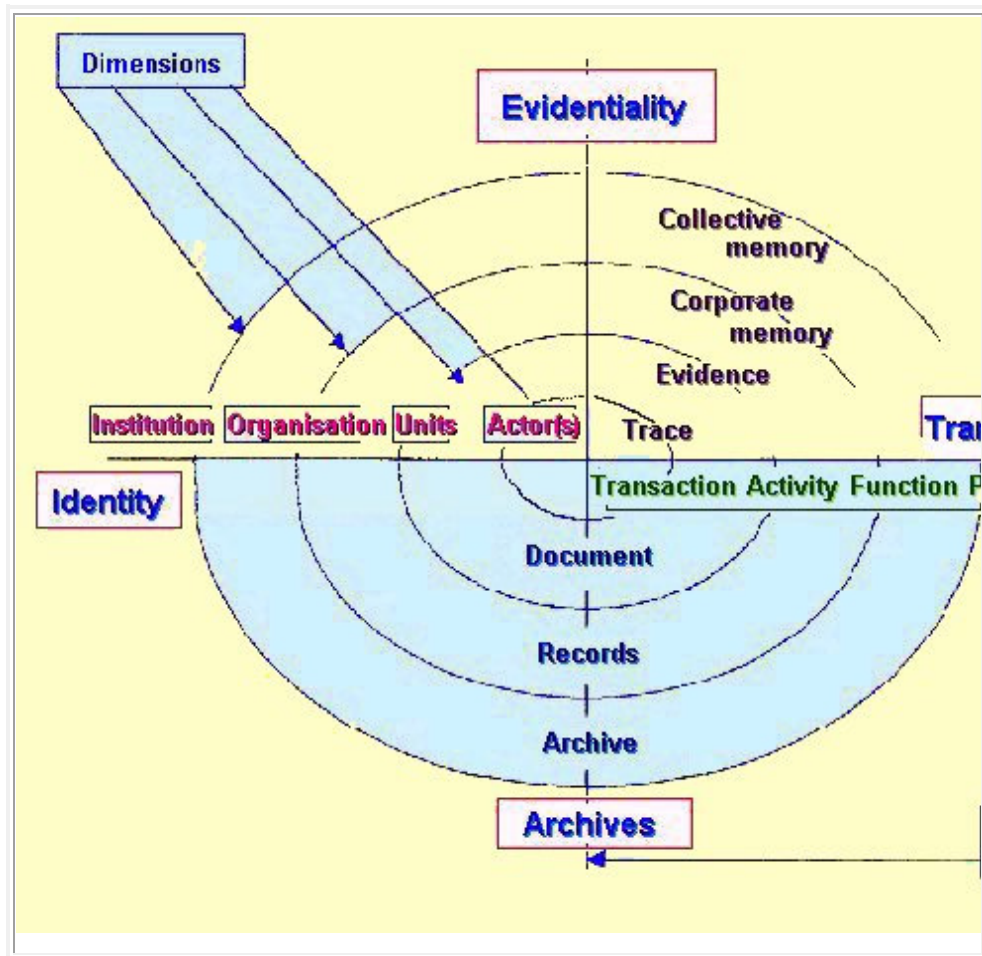
Source: Upward, 2000

There are four crucial issues which concern archivists in the management of a record: Identity, transactions, evidence and archives/storage make up what the archival profession does and focuses on.

The scope of the continuum involves; the generation of records though transactions and processes, the capture of those records in visible format, the organisation of corporate and personal memory for posterity, and the pluralisation of collective memory. The model delivers a tool for outlining the connection between archivists and records managers in the work of ensuring sound records-

keeping practices. It also helps to involve other stakeholders and how to work with them in this endeavour (McKemmish, 1998).

Pederson (1999) stated that such a model has four basic record-keeping functions: which he acronyms as CADS:

- **C**ontrol: Capture, identification, organisation and control.
- **A**ccessibility: Ensuring access and usability.
- **D**isposal: Setting up provisions (appraisal criteria and disposal policies or procedures) for "capturing" appropriate records and for "cleansing" the regime of records that are no longer needed, whether for business, regulation or cultural/historical purposes.
- **S**torage: Maintaining record authenticity, integrity and usability over time. The records continuum concept has been adopted by the South African public sector, in congruence with the records life cycle concept. The continuing role of the archivist from the creation to the disposal of records is the one that probably governs the regulatory role of records management processes with national archival institutions world over. .

According to the NARS (2006), electronic records management manual;the management of records in the South African public sector is regulated and underpinned by both the continuum concept and the records life cycle concept.

The NARS argues that the both processes are seamless and enable an integrated management of records of all formats. It is from this perspective that the NARS is accorded the regulation of records management function in the public sector. They advocate that the management of these records is made possible effectively by:

i. Placing them in logical, documented record-keeping systems to enable their retrieval and use; organising and arranging them in a logical manner in order to allow for their retrieval and use.

ii. Ensuring disposal is done according to regulation

iii. Administering that process of migration across new hardware and software effectively to ensure continued access

iv. preserving the security, authenticity and integrity of records to enable their permanent preservation and admissibility as evidence in court

v. maintaining the relationships between records and the processes that created them; ensuring that contextual information in records is maintained so that they do not loose meaning

vi. Building and handling correct metadata and audit trails to ensure the legitimate acceptability of the records.

2.2.9 The role of NARS in records management in the public sector

The intent of this section is to enlighten the reader on the specific legislative roles of the NARS to the management of records in the South African public sector. This is particularly important to this research because it provides background information on the relationship that exists between the NARS and records management in the public sector.

The National Archives and Record Service of South Africa act no. 43 of 1996 stipulates the functions of the NARS in relation to public sector records management. The broad aim of the act is to "provide for a National Archives and Record Service; the proper management and care of the records of governmental bodies; and the preservation and use of a national archival heritage; and to provide for matters connected therewith." The act further specifies that "the objectives and functions of the NARS are to preserve public and non-public records with enduring value for use by the public and the State, to make such records

accessible and promote their use by the public and ensure the proper management and care of all public records."

The NARS is therefore charged with the responsibility of ensuring the systematic and effective management of records in all governmental bodies. Crucial to this research is the underlying responsibility of the NARS to ensure that all records in the public sector are managed properly. The legal responsibility of the NARS is to ensure sound records management practice in the public sector. However, given the importance of records management in supporting administrative responsibility and accountability, it is will be interesting to find out why the value of the NARS in the public sector seems to be unrecognised.

It is the in light of this that the NARS, in 2003, produced the Records Management Manual Policy. The purpose of this manual is to communicate the NARS's records management policy and to make available information concerning the administration of records in all formats in a cohesive way (NARS, 2003). The manual provides specific directions concerning detailed requirements and conditions for administering the records of the South African public sector and it specifies the requirements of the heads of public bodies and the records managers in accordance with the National Archives and Records Service Act of 1996. The manual is applicable to all governmental bodies, any legislative, executive, judicial or administrative organ of state (including a statutory body) at the national level as well as to all provincial administrations and local authorities (NARS, 2003).

The manual provides guidelines concerning the duties and responsibilities of the records manager, classification systems for all public records in all formats, the disposal of records, and care of public records. The organisation also provides training for all records managers in government departments. These are the main responsibilities of the NARS in the South African public sector. It is important to

this research to compare roles of national archival institutions in the world, with those of the NARS. This helps to bring about an understanding of the importance of national archival institutions in the public sector and to understand whether the NARS functions are similar to the ones of other national archival institutions.

2.2.10 National archival roles: international trends

It is fundamental for this research to understand the international trends regarding the roles national archival institutions in public sector records management. This helps us to to understand whether NARS performspublic sector records management to an international standard, and to underpin the importance of this role. Clarity will also be sought on archival bodies to fostering public accountability and in supporting administration.

2.2.10.1 New Zealand

The Public Records Act of 2005 stipulates that one of the broad and core aims of the National Archives of New Zealand (NANZ) is to develop and support government record-keeping to "enable the Government to be held accountable by ensuring full and accurate records of the affairs of central and local government, providing for the preservation of, and public access to, records of long-term value in order to enhance public confidence in the integrity of public records and local authority records and to provide an appropriate framework within which public offices and local authorities create and maintain public records." As can be noted the role of the NARS and the NANZ is the same. The mandate to ensure sound records management practise in all government agencies is similar. Furthermore the intention is to ensure that records are existent particularly in order to foster public accountability and operational activities, which make it similar to the mandate of the NARS.

2.2.10.2 United States of America (USA)

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the body that is responsible for all archival and records management matters in the USA (US Government Manual, 2012). In terms of public sector records management systems, the US Government Manual confirms that NARA ensures "proper documentation of the organisation, policies, and activities of the Government, NARA develops standards and guidelines for the nationwide management and disposition of recorded information. It appraises federal records and approves records disposition schedules. It also inspects agency records and records management practices, develops records management training programs, provides guidance and assistance on proper records management, and provides for storage of inactive records. For agencies headquartered in the Washington, DC, vicinity, these functions are assigned to the Office of Records Services—Washington, DC." From the delineation of the roles of the NARA by the manual, it is safe to conclude that the function to regulate sound records management practice, which is inherent in the NARS and the National Archives of New Zealand is functional in the USA as well.

2.2.10.3 Australia

The Archives Act of 1983 specifies the functions of the National Archives of Australia (NAA), in relation to the management of public sector records, as "to promote, by providing advice and other assistance to Commonwealth institutions, the creation, keeping and management of current Commonwealth records in an efficient and economical manner and in a manner that will facilitate their use as part of the archival resources of the Commonwealth." Furthermore the Act details the powers of the National Archives of Australia, saying the archives may do all things that are necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of its functions and, in particular, may undertake the survey, appraisal, accessioning, arrangement, description and indexing of Commonwealth records; authorise the disposal or destruction of Commonwealth records; on

request and assist Commonwealth institutions in the training of persons responsible for the keeping of current Commonwealth records. The Australian archival system provides the National Archives with the powers to assist governmental institutions with matters such as creation, keeping and management of current records as well as to undertake the survey, appraisal, accessioning, arrangement, description and authorisation of disposal or destruction of commonwealth records. However, the mandate of the Archives is not binding in Australia as it is in South Africa, USA and New Zealand. The Archives do have an advisory role, but their advice is not regulatory which means that government agencies may decide not to implement what has been advised.

2.2.10.4 Zimbabwe

The National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) is governed by the NAZ Act 8 of 1986. The act stipulates that the functions of NAZ in relation to public sector records management are "to inspect and examine the records of all ministries of government, to give advice or instructions concerning the filing, maintenance and preservation and, when necessary, the transfer to the National Archives of the records of that ministry and to give instructions with regard to the retention or destruction of the records of that ministry." The NAZ falls under the department of Home Affairs, and the act stipulates that if "where a local authority or statutory body declines to comply with a request made in terms of in the act, such local authority or statutory body shall advise the Director in writing of its reasons." On receipt of any reasons from a local authority or statutory body, the Director may make representations in the matter to the minister responsible, who may take such action in the matter as he considers proper. This section is one that gives the NAZ teeth, in terms of consequences for not complying with their instruction. Thus the NAZ has a regulatory which is similar to that of South Africa's.

2.2.10.5 Zambia

The Zambian National Archives (ZNA) act 175 of 1994 stipulates that the functions of the institution shall be to "preserve, describe and arrange all public archives, to accept and store any public records which are transferred to the National Archives, to, at the request of a government department, examine any public record in the custody of such department and advise such department as to the care and custody thereof and shall and at the request of a corporation, society, association, institution or organisation which is prescribed by the Minister by statutory instrument, examine any public records in the custody of such corporation, society, association, institution or organisation and advise it as to the care." The Zambian National Archive takes a form we have not seen so far in terms of regulating public sector records management. They only act on request from the government bodies or from the minister. This means that they do not have to power to ensure sound records management practise.

2.2.11 Available literature on records management in South Africa

Literature on the records management in the South African public sector is thin. What is available includes an article by Ngoepe and Keakopa published in 2011 and a report from a conference called "Archives at the Crossroads" in 2007. Ngoepe (2008) explored the records management trends in the , while Makhura (2005) investigated the contribution of records management towards achieving competitive performance in organisations.

Ngoepe and Keakopa conducted an assessment of the NARS in 2011. They raise a concern over the lack of human resources in the NARS to perform its duty. For instance they say that only one person in the NARS conducts file plans. In fact the NARS is running on skeleton staff. They reported that it has become extremely difficult for the NARS to retain its staff due to low salaries and lack of career development paths in the NARS.

A report from Archives at the Crossroads in 2007 unveils the appalling state of records and archival platforms in the South African public sector. Some situations are redeemable, but the majority of public departments have records-keeping systems that have collapsed. The report points out that there are two major contributors to this situation: the deficiency in vital resources and a lack of skills necessary for the various archive services. The conference deliberations linked the lack of available resources to two points:

i. There is a failure in the South African public sector to recognise the importance of records

ii. Lack of political will to direct resources towards national flagship projects which would produce politically valuable symbolic capital.

iii. Three points were raised in relation to the lack of skills within the national archival system:

- The nature of government has failed to place significance and priority on records management systems. There is no serious advocacy from senior management in departments to pursue diligence in records management.

- There is high staff turnover on the NARS, despite it being a very effective training ground for archivists and records managers. Staff always leave mainly because of greener pastures, and salaries are comparatively low. Advancement routes are also scarce even in departments. There has been no effort to link advancements routes in the archives with those in departments and this makes employment less attractive.

- There are a number of institutions that train archivists in South Africa; however the profession has not been able to set up educational standards which would allow quality training in technical records management, and IT. Moreover the theoretical education is not subject to review and adequate planning.

From the above, one can note that the current state of the NARS and its future is not bright. Of particular concern is the lack of career paths which has resulted in a shortage of human resources.

Ngoepe's research on the records management trends in the DPLG was basically aimed at finding out whether the department is complying with the legislative requirements of the NARS. The key findings of the study revealed that the commitment and support of top management is of enormous benefit for the implementation of a records management programme.. The study recommended that records management should be included in the performance contracts of all employees in the DPLG. The study concluded that a records management programme will only function effectively if it is developed as part of the strategic objective of the organisation.

Ngoepe's major contribution to this research was the substantiation that records management in the public sector, through a case study of the the DPLG is under severe strain. A lack of skills and resources to ensure sound records management practice in the public was attributed to a lack of understanding from senior management of the value of records management in the functions of the department.

Makhura (2005) used SANParks in order to investigate the contribution of sound records management practice to the competitive survival of an organisation. His main concern was to establish the state of records management in that department and the manner in which end users in the department used the records. Makhura discovered that SANParks as an organisation was not adherent to records management regulations as set up by the NARS. Even though the vitality of records, especially electronic is understood in SANParks, there is no adherence to the mechanisms advocated by the NARS to ensure sound records management. If information and communication is vital to the functioning of SANParks, why is

the management of that information and communication lines neglected? The report form the Archives at Crossroads conference confirmed that records were not considered a vital resource in the public sector. Ngoepe and Keakopa's survey of the NARS revealed that there is a resource deficiency at the NARS that makes them incapable of functioning. All this points to a disregard of the record-keeping function in the public sector. The following section is dedicated to explaining the value of keeping records in the South African public sector.

2.3 THE ROLE OF RECORDS IN ADMINISTRATION

The International Council of the Archives (ICA) (1997) provides the definition of a record that is coalesced with the role of records in administration. Records are defined as recorded information produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an institutional or individual activity and that comprise content, context and structure sufficient to produce evidence of the activity, regardless of medium or form. The role of records here is to document information concerning activities that have been carried out in an organisation. This is what has been referred to in the first chapter as the primary value of records. This is what they are created to do, to provide an audit trail on actions that have been taken.

Ketelaar (1999) alludes to the fact that records are created in an organisation to manage the work of an organisation effectively, to document the reason for an activity, the date when an activity was conducted and to explain who did what and in what capacity. Roper and Miller (1999: 94) give specific examples in of the uses of records in governments; "developing and implementing policy, planning and making decisions, keeping track of actions, achieving consistency in decision making and achieving greater efficiency in the daily conduct of business."

Miller (1999) provides a list of records that may be important in governments; records of *rule of law* such as legislative records, court records, police records, prisons records, records that support *accountability* including accounting records,

procurement records, tax records, customs records, electoral registers, policy files, and case files. Efficient *management of state resources* can be enhanced by budget papers, policy files, accounting records, personnel records, payroll records, procurement records, fixed assets registers and property registers while *protection of entitlements* is aided by information such as pension records, social security records, land registration records and birth/death records. *Services for citizens* is are rendered with the aid of hospital records, school records, environmental monitoring records, *foreign relations and international obligations* are conducted with the aid of treaties and correspondence with national and international bodies on loan agreements.

Miller (1999) gives very specific examples of how records contribute to three of some of the central administrative matters of any organisation, financial management, human resource management and payroll control.

2.3.1 Financial management

Records are important for the management of accounting and financial administration. Preparing budgets for instance is highly dependent on records that document past expenditures. There would be no meaning in preparing a budget without looking at the past records. Poor records management is detrimental to the vital function of accounting in an organisation and it is characteristically impossible to audit and report without records. Furthermore records are a vital entity in detecting corruption and fraud. Debt can also be difficult to administer if the records that document borrowing activities are not clear, because debt in government departments usually cuts across the spectrum. Financial management is a highly information-specific vocation and this means that records should be managed well if this organisational activity is to be effective (Miller, 1999).

2.3.2 Management of human resources

Governments the world over have identified the need to improve the management of human resources if they are to be effective. Personnel files must be managed with basic records management principles if they are to succeed. It is however no secret that many countries have struggled to produce complete personnel files. A typical example is when governments try to significantly decrease the size of government personnel, a reform normally adopted to increase efficiency. Public service organisations are normally unable to produce records that are needed to make this possible such as staff numbers, the details of grade and the location of the records. In an age where governments seek to function on an incentive structure for public servants, accurate and complete records become a vital entity in this endeavour. Human resource management, which has begun to focus more on performance evaluation, which seeks to reward the competent employees and to punish the poor performers, depends highly on the past and present records of performance from individuals. It is impossible to locate this information if records are not managed effectively.

2.3.3 Payroll control

Personnel files are the basic source of information in payroll control. It is the evidence that someone actually works in the organisation. This file ensures that an individual is allocated an appropriate grade and that an appropriate salary is allocated with appropriate benefits being authorised. The payroll database is dependent on the personnel file and this makes sure that a person actually exits and that payment is being made efficiently. Computerisation of payroll and personnel information is only possible when attention is given to making sure that personnel files are accurate and complete.

The above is a discussion concerning how vital records are in the daily administrative activities of any organisation. The researcher has tried to bring the

discussion to a practical level in order to demonstrate that it is virtually impossible for organisations and governments to administer their activities efficiently without proper records management. The role of the NARS in ensuring sound records management practice is a very important one, but its apparent neglect gives rise to the need to understand why good record-keeping is not given priority in government.

2.3.4 The importance of records in pursuing efficient administration

Mutola and Wamukoya (2009) confirm that records are valuable assets that need to be managed and protected. Records also support business functions and are critical for the assessment of organisational performance. Without reliable records, governments cannot effectively manage state resources, civil service, and delivery of services such as education and health care. More generally, poor record-keeping can contribute to a lowering of the general standard of service offered to businesses. For example, there may be delays in replies to written inquiries about the registration of businesses, the issue of licences, and other matters necessary for companies to pursue their business interests (Mutola and Wamukoya, 2009).

Good record keeping practices can be vital in terms of assessing performance and providing vital information when there is a need to investigate corruption and fraud cases. For example, Van der Merwe (2004) reports that a paper trail of minutes, letters and documents was used to uncover irregular activities of former Deputy Minister of Social Development David Malatsi in the Western Cape Province. Records meticulously kept in 2002 by Ingrid Coetzee, the Director of Environment Management were a key ingredient in the Scorpions' corruption case against Malatsi.

Adami (2003) also confirmed that records at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) are assisting genocide victims to get justice and to aid the reconciliation process in Rwanda. These records include those of protected witnesses, graphic exhibits of horrific events in paper and audio-visual formats, and administrative records of accused and sentenced persons will remain in the record offices for the rest of their lives.

In Kenya, Ouko and Ameyo (2003) report that the Goldenberg Affair, a well-known financial scandal, relied heavily upon documentary evidence. The Judicial Commission and the defence legal counsel made use of records of financial transaction between the Treasury, the Central Bank of Kenya and the Exchange Bank to support the case for the defence and the prosecution respectively.

It is clear from these examples that records play a crucial role in the administration of government activities. As will be shown in the following section, records are also vital for accountability and for developing or maintaining a democratic society. This will be done by exploring their relationship to power, accountability, transparency and social memory.

2.4 ARCHIVES AND POWER

In an intriguing metaphor to demonstrate the power of archives, Jimerson (2009) portrays archives as temples, prisons and restaurants. In the archival temple, records of human history achieve authority and immortality. Documents, photographs, electronic records and other materials are placed in such temples and acquire special significance. The very act of selection and preservation sets some records apart from others and give them heightened validity. They are selected to be preserved for posterity. Thus they achieve immortality in the archival temple. This immortality is one that renders archives powerful. It is the power that emanates from the struggle against remembering and forgetting.

The Apartheid government provides a contextual example. According to Harris (2002: 69)

> "A key element in this exercise of hegemony was the state's control over social memory, a control which involved both remembering and forgetting. And the network of state-funded libraries, museums, art galleries, historical monuments, and archives was shaped profoundly by an apartheid imprint. By their silences and their narratives of power, their constructions of experience, apartheid's memory institutions legitimised apartheid rule." A vivid example was "…a large-scale and systematic sanitisation of official memory authorised at the highest levels of government and, while embracing all organs of the state, targeted the records of the security establishment. Between 1990 and 1994 huge volumes of public records were destroyed in an attempt to keep the apartheid state's darkest secrets hidden."

The archival temple metaphor exposes the reasons that archives are vital to the powerful. Part of the struggle of those in power is how they are remembered by future generations. They seek to control archives for they know how vital records are to historical scholarship and to their more immediate political future. It is to them, a memory controller.

The idea of the archival prison is one that emanates from the aspect of security and power. According to Jimerson (2009: 8) "From security doors to lockers for researcher's belongings, from closed stacks to reading room surveillance, cameras, archives often resemble prisons or fortresses." Records are imprisoned for their own security and so are researchers, who must consult records in closely guarded chambers under vigilant surveillance (Jimerson, 2009). Harris (2002) confirms that the State Archives Service (Apartheid's national archival institution) was bent on this sort security surveillance system, in which they meticulously monitored in collaboration with state security services, all the activities of the

researchers. Even today, NARS has in place top security measures such as those explained above. The power of the archival prison lies in protecting the records, which in a sense are prisoners locked up in vaults and strong rooms and are only allowed to go out when their visitors, (researchers) have requested them. They are protected so for their value in society, their ability to shape the future.

The archival restaurant is one that mirrors the archivist's power of interpretation to the knowledge and truth seeker, much like the waiter interprets the menu at the restaurant. Archivists are mediators of the menu, as they interpret the finding aids to new users and negotiate the one-on-one enquiry of the customer. This power to mediate what the user gains access to is the archivist's implicit claim to omnipotence over social memory. For the existence of a record is not enough to benefit society; it is the access to that record that ensures its usefulness. Schwartz and Cook (2002: 14) explain: "later in a record's life, a tiny fraction of all these records created are appraised, selected, and memorialised as archives. The vast majority are not. Archival choices about how to describe this archival fragment reinforce certain values and impose emphasis and viewing orders for the archive. Archival approaches to making records available (or not) again create filters that influence perception of the records and the past." Provision of access is one of the foremost endeavours of the archival profession, and this endeavour has given rise to the activities of accessioning, arrangement, description and cataloguing. These are finding aids that users of archives consult in order to find information they need. These aspects of the archiving profession render the archivist a powerful entity in memory formation.

The power of archives explained above is clearly in the hands of the public sector authorities. This is the power over what will be remembered and forgotten, power over the physical security of the records and power over what is accessed and not accessed. This power needs to be balanced by accountability structures and mechanisms aided by transparency. This is the balance that democracy seeks to

create, that those in power make decisions that benefit society at large and not themselves, and that the society makes a contribution towards the governance of their nation. Accountability and transparency help in ensuring a democratic society, as will be explained.

2.5 THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Public accountability will be explained in this section because it is a core concept employed in this research.

2.5.1 Origins of the concept of accountability

Dunbick (2002), Bovens (2005) and Nargesian and Esfahani (2011) all agree that the term accountability is derived from the term accounting.Bovens even goes as far as connecting the word to bookkeeping. Dunbick, Bovens and Nargesian and Esfahani all agree that the roots of the contemporary concept can be traced to the reign of William I, in the decades after the 1066 Norman conquest of England. In 1085 William demanded that all the property holders in his realm render a count of what they possessed and present it to him. After this the land owners were asked to take an oath before the King (Nargesian and Esfahani, 2011). These possessions were valuated and listed by royal agents in the so called Domesday Book. Subsequently, an accountability system was cgradually entralised in the royal government and every six months the accounts were checked in the form of centralised inspections. This count was the basis upon which royal government was established, not merely for tax purposes (Bovens 2005). The Domesday Book recorded what was in the royal governance and moreover, all the landlords had to swear commitment to the king. Over centuries since the Reign of William 1, accounting and accountability have come to mean different things. In contemporary political dialogue, accountability and accountable do not allude to the booking and financial administration which they used to convey, but they

provide an image of fair and equitable governance (Bovens 2005). The concept has been used as a rhetorical device; it serves as a synonym for many loosely defined political goals, such as transparency, equity, democracy, efficiency, and integrity (Mulgan, 2000; Behn, 2001; Dubnick, 2002). Bovens (2005) and Nargesian and Esfahani (2011) agree that nowadays, accountability has moved far beyond its bookkeeping origins and has become a symbol for good governance, both in the public and in the private sector. Furthermore, the accounting relationship has almost completely reversed. Accountability does not refer to sovereigns holding their subjects to account, but to the reverse, it is the authorities themselves who are being held accountable by their citizens (Nargesian and Esfahani 2011). By the end of 20th century, the United States of America, United Kingdom and Australia witnessed changes of traditional bookkeeping and accounting in the form of public administration to a more elaborate meaning of accountability (Nargesian and Esfahani, 2011). This change took place by introducing a new public management in the government of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and also public sector reforms towards managerialism in the government of Ronald Regan in the United States. In both these reforms, types of methods and tools of private sector entered into the public sector (Pollitte and Boucharct, 2005).

2.5.2 Defining and explaining accountability

Accountability can refer to the relationship in which someone who acts in a certain capacity has a responsibility to clarify and defend their action or conduct to someone who is superior or who they serve (Day and Klein, 1987; Romzek and Dubnick, 1998; Lerner and Tetlock, 1999; McCandless, 2001; Pollit, 2003). Beu and Buckley (2001) agree that accountability denotes the idea of explaining one's conduct to an audience that has reward authority, and where rewards are perceived to be depending upon audience evaluation of such conduct. The sentiment echoed in the above definitions is that there is a party that must offer an explanation and

justification for their activities and processes to another party. Oakerson (1989: 114) concurs by further explaining that "to be accountable means to have to answer for one's action or inaction, and depending on the answer, to be exposed to potential sanctions, both positive and negative." Grant and Keohane (2005) elaborate in the same way as Oakerson did by saying accountability implies that some actors have the right to hold other actors to a set of standards, to judge whether they have fulfilled their responsibilities in light of these standards, and to impose sanctions if they determine that these responsibilities have not been met. There must be a relationship that exits between those two actors for there to be the need for accountability measures. This relationship should lead to the establishment of standards upon which the one giving account will be judged. Schmitter (2007) agrees that accountability is first a relationship between two sets of actors in which the former accepts to inform the other, explain or justify his or her actions and submit to any pre-determined sanctions that the latter may impose.

2.5.3 Importance of accountability in a democratic society

Any government that claims to be based on democratic principles must have an ideology specifically embedded with principles of public accountability. In the simplest of explanations, a democratic government is voted into power by the public, hence the public are its employers The government acts on behalf of the public and therefore must be accountable to them. McKenzie (1999) insists that the first challenge, which arises directly from the spread of democratic systems and institutions in recent years, is the movement for greater accountability and transparency in government.

Therkildsen (2001) argues that democracy is a sub-species of a broader concept, the accountability of state to society. This political accountability is about those with authority being answerable for their actions to the citizens, whether directly or indirectly. Thus one of the measures of a democratic polity is the extent to

which there exists an institutionalised mechanism through which the mass of the population exercises control over the political elite in an organised fashion (Moore, 1998). Grant and Keohane (2005) are in agreement, as they say a crucial feature of representative democracy is that those who govern are held accountable to the governed. If governance is to be legitimate in a democratic era, mechanisms for appropriate accountability need to be institutionalised.

Day and Klein (1987) make an important distinction between political and managerial accountability, the latter being about making those with delegated authority answerable for carrying out agreed tasks according to agreed criteria of performance. In a democratic government, those in political positions are voted in by the people and they appoint managers to run the public services, hence there must be accountability measures at both managerial and political level. Accountability involves both the political justification of decisions and actions, and managerial answerability for implementation of agreed tasks according to agreed criteria of performance, (Day and Klein, 1987).

Grant and Keohane (2005) stipulate that accountability functions to expose and sanction two sorts of abuses: the unauthorised or illegitimate exercise of power, and decisions that are judged by accountability holders to be unwise or unjust. In politics, ensuring accountability requires establishing institutions that provide information to those people trying to hold power-wielders accountable and that enable them to impose sanctions on the power-wielder. One of the institutions that provide that kind of information in the South African context is the NARS because they are responsible for the regulation of records management in the public sector and the preservation of records of enduring value. Records provide an audit trail concerning the activities and processes that have been carried out and are therefore a vital source of information in the pursuance of accountability in a democratic society.

2.5.4 Elements of accountability

The researcher intended to explore various rudiments that have been postulated by scholars that lead to the concept of accountability in a democratic society. These elements will help to locate, conceptually, where the activities of the NARS fit into the accountability framework. According to Weissman (1983) the process of accountability involves establishing a set of role relationships that detail who is accountable to whom, for what, both within and without an organisation, utilising methods and procedures through which an accounting is given to the responsible parties that standards of effort, effectiveness, and efficiency have been met. In Weissmans delineation, the NARS fits into the utilisation of methods and procedures through which accounting is given. The NARS is mandated to ensure that reliable records management systems are functioning in the public sector which aims to ensure the reliability of records produced. Furthermore, records ensure that every process is documented.

Rubenstein (2007) insists on a different set of elements which are standards, information, and sanction. Rubenstein (2007) notes that the first phase is determining the standards to which the one giving an account will be held. These standards might be rules, norms, outcomes, or procedures. The second phase involves those holding the accountability acquiring information about whether the accountee has complied with these standards. Those being held to account maintain a main source of this information. They have both moral and strategic reasons to report back to accountability holders regarding their compliance with standards. The moral reason is that accountability holders deserve to know whether a power wielder has or has not complied with its obligations to them. In response to the information provided at phase two a decision is made, at phase three, about whether to sanction the one being held to account. It is this sanctioning component of the accountability process that gives accountability teeth (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996). In Rubenstein's model the NARS plays a

major role in the second phase by ensuring that records that provide information for both moral and strategic reasons. This source of information is basically the records of activities that have been carried out.

Bovens (2005) also provides three elements that make up the process of accountability. First of all, the actor must feel obliged to inform the forum about his conduct, by providing various sorts of data about the performance of tasks, about outcomes, or about procedures. Often, particularly in the case of failures or incidents, this also involves the provision of justifications. Secondly, the information can prompt the forum to interrogate the actor and to question the adequacy of the information or the legitimacy of the conduct. This is the debating phase. Hence, the close semantic connection between ''accountability'' and ''answerability.'' Thirdly, the forum usually passes judgment on the conduct of the actor. It may approve of an annual account, denounce a policy, or publicly condemn the behaviour of a manager or an agency. In passing a negative judgment the forum frequently imposes some sort of sanctions on the accountor. In Bovens' model, the records that are produced by the systems put in place by the NARS take centre stage as they occupy the first and second stage. The accountee provides data that would ensue that their activities are known while in the second phase that information will be used to interrogate the accountee.

2.5.5 The dimensions of accountability

Bovens (2005) tackles the dimensions involved in the question pertaining to who gives account and who takes account. He also elaborates the relationships that may exist in order for there to be an accountability forum. This is crucial to the understanding of accountability as a theory as it provides light on the various levels and directions that accountability can take.

2.5.5.1 Who to account to?

Public managers who function in a democratic system in the modern world have an obligation to be accountable. There are various forums that they have to face, various accountability relationships that they are must account to. According to Bovens (2005) there are five major accountability relationships which public managers potentially have to face up to. It is interesting that all these forums require different sources of information and have different expectations and norms in regards to the expectations of the public managers' activities. There is a challenge therefore for public managers because of the many groups that watch and expect things from them. The question is to whom are they to account to and on what basis should they be judged?

i.   Political accountability – Public managers have to pay attention to the need to account to elected representatives and political parties. These are very important facts in the daily lives of public manager's life. However it all depends on the system of government. In legislative arrangements with cabinet obligations and a general civil service, such as South Africa, Britain and The Netherlands, political accountability is usually to the minister, who is a representative from the parliament. It has however began to be true that public administrators now may have to appear from time to time to the parliament to explain their activities, and this may be through forums such as parliamentary committees and inquiries (Mulgan, 2003).

ii. Legal accountability - Public managers also have an obligation to be accountable to courts and the legal system. A summons maybe be issued to public managers by the courts and public managers have to be answerable. The growing formalisation of social relations has ensured the legal accountability has become an extremely important relationship for public managers (Harlow, 2000). Furthermore, this emerging phenomenon has been encouraged by increasing trust in courts which can also account

for the growth of this type of accountability (Behn, 2001). The basis of legal accountability is the formal responsibility conferred to the public manager which stands as legal grounds upon which courts can act. Consequently, legal accountability is the most clear-cut type of answerability as the legal inquiry will be based on thorough legitimate values, agreed by public, punitive, or managerial statutes, or precedent.

iii.   Professional accountability – public managers are apart from being general senior administrators, professionals in more specific field. Some are trained accountants, some are mechanical engineers and some are scientists (Abbot, 1988). This means that they have to be answerable to various professional associations and disciplinary tribunals made up of professional peers. These professional associations try to enforce standards which are basically codes for acceptable practice and these are applicable and binding to all members. These ethics are scrutinised and imposed by professional bodies of oversight on the basis of peer review.

iv.   Administrative – in what Power (1994) calls the audit explosion, various constitutional oversight bodies have been established globally in order to provide external administrative and financial oversight in order to provide independent control over public bodies. These include auditors, inspectors and controllers. There are varying forms of these organisations, such as local ombudsman offices and audit offices, anti-corruption units, independent supervisory authorities and chartered accountants. The mandates of auditing offices have been broadened to encompass not only the probity of public spending but the effectiveness and efficiency of public administration (Pollitt and Summa 1997).

v.   Organisational accountability – one of more fundamental accountability relationships is the one that pertains to juniors accounting to seniors in public organisations. Administrative and political seniors ask their juniors in the offices to give an account of the assignments that they have been

tasked to complete. This is done both formally through annual reports and informally in operational meetings.

Organisational and administrative accountability are two dimensions in which records play a central role. These dimensions are information specific and require the exchange of vital information concerning activities that have been carried out. For instance in administrative accountability, audit institutions demand financial records when performing an audit. In organisational accountability the need for pubic managers to account for their assignment requires that records of activities are properly managed. The hierarchical relationship is governed by the exchange of vital information which is the records.

When Weber (1947) writes in concern over how to mitigate the powers of a bureaucracy, he says one of the most vital aspects of such an attempt would be the recording of administrative acts, decisions and rules, even in cases where oral discussion is the rule or is even mandatory. He says that this applies to all sorts of orders and rules and that the combination of written documents and continuous organisation of functions is the central focus of all types of modern corporate action. This documentation of activities is central to the organisational and administrative accountability. Records are therefore crucial to any accountability structure.

Cendon (2012) focuses on the responsibilities of public administrators and explains that the nexus is three-fold; responsibility that emanates from capacity, one that emerges from accountability and responsibility that result in liability.

i. Responsibility as capacity: Basically this is the power of the public service official to act. The law provides regulations in which which the responsibility of the public servant is defined, and forms the basis upon which public servants acts and performs their duties. This set of rules is

the one which sets up an obligation to function and also places a limit for the action that can be taken.

ii.   Responsibility as accountability: This is the responsibility of the public official to provide information, particularly records which offer clarifications, and explanations to superior people in the organisational hierarchy, which may be internal or external. This is as an assessment offf the conduct of operational business. Non-democratic government systems also function on this sort of accountability because public officials need to give reason to their superiors for their activities.

iii.   Responsibility as liability: There is an assumption of the implications of a role's activities and this is applies to those who head departments even if they themselves have not been responsible for the actions taken.

Responsibility as accountability is a vital component of any administration system as it requires that information be made available concerning the performance of an action to a superior. This information is what records document, thereby underlining the importance of records management in the public sector. Cendon (2012) confirms that responsibility as accountability is more meaningful for the analysis of the public administrations performance and is as more telling about the democratic nature of the public administration.

2.6 TRANSPARENCY THROUGH ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Transparency through access to information is one of the most important components of democratic society that ensure accountability. The existence of an effective and efficient national records management system is not enough to ensure accountability in the public service, only the existence of access legislation would make this pillar of accountability complete. Miller (2003) formulates that access laws are designed to promote accountability and transparency in government by providing citizens with a legally enforceable right to obtain full and accurate information about the activities and decisions of their government.

As has been discussed earlier, properly managed records provide the platform to disseminate full information concerning activities and decisions taken because they document the processes.

Dirks (2004) maintains that the call for greater transparency, has led to the passing of freedom of information and protection of privacy laws, which have reached into the private as well as the government sectors. The laws associated with access to or freedom of information are intended to promote accountability and transparency in governments by disclosing their decision-making process. The decision-making process records documents, and records management systems seek to ensure the proper management of those documents. Records and access are relatively interwoven when pursuing accountability.

According to Miller (2006) ultimately, the success of access legislation rests firmly on the ability of governments to create and maintain and citizens to seek out and obtain reliable, trustworthy and accurate government records. Without effective management of the records of government, then, it is not possible to provide quality access to reliable and useful information. When citizens seek answers using access to information legislation, they are not expecting a public servant to provide that information verbally, they expect to receive the original records, the evidence of the decisions and actions.

2.6.1 Archives and social memory

Archives – as records – wield the power to shape historical scholarship, collective memory and national identity, over how we know our selves as individuals, groups and societies (Schwartz and Cook, 2002). Records are social constructs derived from the information needs and social values of rulers, government, associations and the individuals who establish and maintain them (Schwartz and Cook, 2002). It is within the nature of records to provide a documentary heritage

that aids the development of social memory. Carter (2006: 216) points out that "archives are filled with voices. Individuals may visit archives in order to hear the stories of their ancestors and predecessors, to learn of past actions of their governments and to examine the activities of private organisations." It is no coincidence that the most dominate use of records in the NARS is by genealogical researchers, and those involved in land claims and chieftainship matters. This is because actions of the past government can be reversed legally with the use of records and people can build identity through genealogical information acquired from records. The principles and strategies that archivists have adopted over time and the activities they undertake – especially choosing and appraising what becomes archives and what is destroyed –fundamentally influence the composition and character of archival holdings, thus of social memory (Schwartz and Cook, 2002). "The power of the archive is witnessed in the act of inclusion, but this is only one of its components. The power to exclude is a fundamental aspect of the power of archives. Inevitably, there are distortions, omissions, erasures and silences in the archive. Not every story is told. Harris (2002) illustrates:

> 'A more fundamental skewing of social memory is evident in SAS's collections of non-public records. With the exception of the Boer resistance to British imperialism, they documented poorly the struggles against colonialism, segregation, and apartheid. Black experiences were also poorly documented, and in most cases were seen through white eyes. Similarly, the voices of women, the disabled, and other marginalised people were seldom heard. This is partially explained by the difficulty experienced by SAS in securing donations of records from other than establishment-aligned sources. But the heart of the issue was a collecting policy which quite deliberately directed archivists away from grassroots experience towards society's pinnacles, and which eschewed the documentation of orality. A more blatant ideological intervention was demonstrated by SAS's official history project,

which involved the production of a multi-volume official history of one of the central events in Afrikaner memory, the South African War of 1899–1902."

Archives are battle grounds of power, but they themselves are powerful in the documenting of memory and its long-term preservation. The NARS is no exception; especially in the formative years of the South African State, documenting decisions of government that are vital for the future is crucial. But at first glance one cannot help but see the total disregard for records and archives in the public sector. The question this research seeks to address is why this neglect exists.

The shaping of social memory is vital in collective decision-making which is a necessary part of any democracy. Social memory shapes a society's world view and archives are crucial in the development of social memory. Democracy has been defined in terms of decision-making. According to Democracy Watch (2012) a democracy is a society in which all adults have easily accessible, meaningful, and effective ways to participate in the decision-making processes of every organisation that makes decisions or takes actions that affect them. In a compelling attempt to construct a basic model of democracy, Ranney and Kendall (1969) construe that the minimum characteristics of a democracy include that each member of society must have in some sense, as good a chance as his fellows to participate in the community's decision-making. Archives are therefore a vital component of a young democracy such as South Africa's. In essence, the value of democracy lies in mitigating the power of those in public offices who make decisions in representation of the public. Records assist this democratic process by making it possible to have information that is so vital to knowing what is happening.

Records are an important administrative resource, and a fundamental pillar in the pursuance of a democratic society. However, it appears that the South African public sector does not consider them as a vital resource. Since the significance of sound records management practice is meant to benefit the public sector it would be helpful to understand the form of public service in South Africa since 1994.

2.7 THE NATURE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR

The administrative fabric of the apartheid government was already beginning to unravel in the 1980's (Chipkin, 2012). "There is no doubt that waste, corruption and inefficiency where the hallmarks of that apartheid state" (Chipkin, 2012: 12). The administration of the former homelands is a typical showing of the fragmentation of the South African state. Chipkin (2011: 5) explains in detail:

> "Homeland administrations grew quickly between 1965 and 1970. By 1971, 3581 black Africans served in the Transkei civil service, and additional 2000 chiefs in administrative roles. By 1980, the Bophuthatswana public service had reached 55,000 employees. In 1990 there were 197,455 public servants in the self-governing territories and another 438,599 personnel in the nominally independent states. By 1992, the civil service in the Homeland areas had swollen to 638,599 people, or 16% of their economically active populations, and an even higher proportion of their middle classes (p.301). The bloated system was due in part to the extent of duplication in setting up administration for each of the homelands."

This fragmentation of the administration made it extremely difficult to administer the government efficiently and effectively. But there was a very clear reason why this system had to be maintained. The Bantustan administration was supposed to be a symbol of change, a compromise by the apartheid government to give the black people sovereignty over their own affairs. However officials in the Bantustan administrative structures were poorly trained, least qualified and

inexperienced. The white officials in the Homeland administration were those who had been transferred from the South African civil service and were considered to be incompetent (Chipkin and Meny-Gibert, 2011). This had a negative effect on administrative effectiveness and the state.

According to Chipkin and Meny-Gibert (2011), "At the time of South Africa's transition to democracy, there were nearly 650,000 homeland officials, often with rudimentary qualifications, formed and apprenticed in dysfunctional administrations that operated less according to standing orders and impersonal processes and more through patronage and personal rule" There was chaos in the homeland administration, and even the South African civil service was beginning to show signs of stress from the placements of securocrats at the senior echelons of public service, simply because the focus in departments became ambivalent. What occurred in 1994 was an inheritance of a crumbling administration by the new democratic government.

2.7.1 Transformation in the public sector since 1994

South Africa's first democratic election in 1994 ushered in a new government. As is expected with any new government, changes were expected, but this is even more so with a change from the apartheid system to a democratic system. And so did they happen, or rather were they sought for. A particular concern was the public sector, and the need transform the way it functioned during the apartheid period. There was no doubt a need for this transformation, particularly since the apartheid was a ruthless system of discrimination and dominance. Chipkin (2011) explains rather austerely,

> "In the first place, the apartheid state operated a brutal system of racial segregation and domination. Expenditure on black South Africans was a fraction of what it was on whites. Government departments and state

administrations were fragmented by race and even further divided across Bantustans and self-governing authorities. The result was a plethora of parallel bureaucracies, responsible to multiple political authorities. In addition, the South African bureaucracy was staffed especially at management levels, exclusively by white South Africans and amongst them, overwhelmingly by Afrikaans speaking men."

There is no doubt that there was a need for change, a need to transform the way in which this government worked. Transformation of the public service took various forms such as integrating the diverse governments and administrations of the apartheid into a single public service, changing the direction of public spending to focus on the majority black population, changing the demographic character of the public service and the change to the way the public sector operates (Chipkin, 2011).

It is this last element of change which appears to be applicable to this study. Of particular concern to this research is the fact that records offer a crucial resource to the administrative and operational functions of the government. Records are created primarily for the purpose of documenting operational activity and to ensure an audit trail of the activities that are created (Ketelar, 1999 and ICA, 1997).

It is the model of public service that was adopted in 1994 that underpins the activities of the government. This is important because these models help to understand what is considered important in the public sector. Chipkin (2011) argues that state bodies are not simply the sum of their personnel and their administrative techniques. They are shaped by models of the public service, and it is valuable to this research to understand what models were adopted to shape the public sector in 1994.

2.7.2 New Public Management vs. Public Administration

Late 19th century and 20th century governments where shaped by the public administration model of public service (Chipkin and Lipietz, 2012). This ideal type system of government, which Weber calls bureaucracy, was characterised by hierarchical internal structures, rule-bound activities, permanent and neutral officials who were motivated by public interest and accountable to the political leadership (Chipkin and Lipietz, 2012). According to Cameron (2009) in the 1980s, the traditional bureaucratic public administration model of Max Weber and Woodrow Wilson was challenged in Anglophone countries such as England, Australia and New Zealand. What emerged was a new model of public sector management called New Public Management (NPM). "Derived from public choice theories and new institutional economics, these sought to introduce result oriented and performance-related operating principles to keep bureaucracy lean and mean" (Chipkin and Lipietz, 2012: 4). Market-based mechanisms were adopted to improve democratic accountability and new ways of controlling personnel were introduced through a system of rewards and sanctions.

However, there has been much criticism of the NPM in recent years (Cameron, 2009). Argyriades (2000) is concerned with the focus on markets in order to achieve public management objectives. Private organisations are driven by markets, public institutions are called on and mandated to perform in public interest, and it is not possible to adopt the same models to manage both. There is also no place for business principles which seek to focus on private individual gain in an area that is supposed to focus on shared communal ideal (Goodsell, 2004). There is also an assumption, which most obviously cannot be true, that the private sector and the public sector are principally the same (Kickert, 2006). Allison (1983) argued that there are major differences between the public and the private sector. Even though there are some similarities, the differences are much more elaborate and critical than the similarities. There is, in fact, research that

proves that the private sector is not necessarily more effective and efficient than the public sector; some public institutions are actually very successful (Rainey and Chun, 2005). Furthermore, there is an emerging argument that the NPM is not appropriate for developing countries (Manning, 2001; United Nations, 2005).

Arguments have emerged as well concerning the ability of the NPM to reinforce the reliability of the public service (United Nations, 2005). Minogue (1998: 30) argues that "the NPM emphasis on efficiency sits uneasily with traditional Public Administration values with equity, community, democracy, citizenship and constitutional protection." Farazmand (2006) is concerned with the neglect of the NPM of justice, impartiality, transparency and answerability in favour of flexibility and cost-effectiveness which are values that do not sit well with public service. Haque (2000: 601) suggests that "traditional Public Administration values such as impartiality, equality, representation, integrity, fairness, welfare, citizenship, and justice have changed toward business values such as efficiency, competition, profit, and value for-money."

Rosenblaum and McCurdy (2006) are of the opinion that the advocacy to override rules and regulations are unwise. Rules are an important factor in trying to regulate activity and this ensures sound structure is adhered to. Hughes (2003) alludes to a major concern that if managers are allowed to act in their own way, then their accountability to politicians may be detracted. This may cause a huge challenge in the pursuance of organisational objectives and is detrimental to results.

2.7.3 The introduction of the NPM in South Africa

The NPM has been highly influential in shaping the South African public sector operations in post-apartheid South Africa (Levin, 2004; Miller, 2005; Cameron, 2005). Chipkin and Meny-Gibert (2011) chronicle that in 1991 a group of public

administration academics and professionals gathered to consider what the character of the post-apartheid public service would be. They came up with the Mount Grace resolution in which they called for a break with the Public Administration of the apartheid era and championed the New Public Management as the model that should shape the South African public sector operations.

Cameron (2009) maintains that, "in South Africa the Public Service Law Amendment Act of 1997 introduced Performance Management in South Africa." Furthermore the PSR which were passed in 1999 gave Performance Management a greater base upon which it could be performed (Miller, 2005). According to Chipkin (2011) signs that that the NPM was becoming fully influential in the functions of the public sector were seen when the Public Finance Act was enacted in 1999. What the act did was remove responsibility for financial accounting from cabinet ministers and gave it to senior officials in the public department, such as director generals. The act gave senor public servants a high degree of autonomy through their ministers. Polidano (1999) affirms in NPM there is a focus on decentralisation, giving line managers more control over personnel and financial management, in order for them to be more responsible for their activities.

Levin (2004) confirms that in South Africa, PSR has been influenced by the characteristics of the NPM and this has included a focus the devolution of central powers in human resources management and finance. It would be interesting to note what the effects of this model have been on the functionality of the public sector. How has NPM manifested itself, and what have been the results of the introduction of this model of public sector reform?

2.7.4 The effects of the NPM on the public sector

2.7.4.1 Non-compliance and corruption

Chipkin (2013) argues that the abandonment of the internally focused, rule driven, hierarchically structured public administration for an autonomous, value-driven managerialsm and outcome-focused NPM is associated with the general neglect of the administrative processes in government departments. For example, according to the AGSA (51), "the extent of wasteful expenditure and non-compliance by accounting officers is indicative of an environment where incurring unauthorised and irregular expenditure has become the norm and not the exception".

According to Chipkin (2013: 11):

> "The recent diagnostic of the Limpopo Provincial administration conducted by the National Treasury is informative in this regard. Administrators did not simply find evidence of mass looting. They found departments operating in the absence of basic administrative processes. Departmental records were chaotic; administrators frequently could not find contract documents, there was no asset registry in the Province, Provincial data, including number of school children in the Province was unreliable or simply non-existent."

As can be seen above, the non-compliance to rules, standards and procedures is also associated with corruption. In the case of the NPM being adopted to shape the form of the public sector in South Africa, and the absence of these rules, standards and procedures in the public sector could be a factor in the increase in corruption.

2.7.4.2 Increase in senior management positions

According to Chipkin (2011), one of the most dramatic effects of the NPM has been a change in the structure of the public service. "There has been an increase in

the number of senior management posts in relation to the base. Whereas prior to the introduction of NPM, the ratio of managers to staff was 1: 1700. Today the Department has, on average, 40 per 200 staff." The increase in senior management posts in the public sector is also influenced by the need to create a black middle class that matches the white middle class (von Holdt, 2010).

2.7.4.3 Agentification

Another common characteristic of the NPM is the conversion of various departmental activities and responsibilities to form smaller agencies with a co-operative set up (Hughes, 2003). Hood (1991) agrees that the move towards this agentification of departmental units and sections involves breaking up large departments and making them smaller with separate funding. Chipkin and Lipietz (2012) investigated the design flows that emerged in the DTI that was shaped by the corporatisation approach under NPM. Their focus was the Companies and Intellectual Property Registration Office (CIPRO) (now CIPE), trying to understand how the influence of NPM led to the crumbling of the agency. One of their findings was that a business model was used to pursue the highly administrative task of registering companies and this business model was difficult to focus on because of the need to obviously ensure efficiency in operational activities.

2.7.4.4 Ambivalence towards centralisation and decentralisation

According to Cameron (2009) one of the key mechanisms of the influence of NPM in South Africa has been the devolution of various central responsibilities in government to the responsibility of managers. However, as Cameron puts it, while a framework for decentralisation has been put in place, in practice the idea has not really been implemented as many would like to assume. There has been limited delegation to managers by Ministers. Instead, maintains Cameron, there has been a movement in the direction of a much more central government, which has been influenced by the need to grow a stronger developmental state which is strong at

the core of government. Public sector financial reforms have led to greater financial control from the National Treasury in public bodies. Records administration is a centralised activity in any organisation, and one would wonder if this decentralisation has contributed to the neglect of the records management function.

2.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Records are central to any administration activity. They are information that is generated as evidence of all transactions; therefore they provide an audit trail as to the activities that have been carried out, (IRMT 1999). As highlighted by Chinyemba (2011), the primary purpose of records is to support general day-to-day activities of administration in any organization, and the secondary purpose is to support accountability by providing information that is evidence of activities that have been carried out. The secondary value is basically to support accountability as a democracy initiative. In archival science, the value-based theory was propounded by Schellenberg in 1956 and it is used to underpin appraisal of records in the life cycle of a record. These two uses of records in the public sector provide the underlying concept to this research.

2.8.1 Records as an administrative resource

According to Weber (1947), the one of the hallmarks of any administrative activity is the recording of administrative acts, decisions and rules, even in cases where oral discussion is the rule or is even mandatory. He says that this applies to all sorts of orders and rules and that the combination of written documents and continuous organisation of functions is the central focus of all types of modern corporate action. For Weber, this central activity makes it possible for organisations to function effectively and efficiently because the availability of recorded information facilitates future action and assessment.

Records are actually central to the activities of any government and organisation. One of the fundamental dimensions of the literature review has been to explain the reason why any administrative activity would be futile without sound records management practice. Miller (1999) has gone to lengths, as explained earlier to bring about a justification of the impossibility to perform tasks such as financial management, human resource management and payroll control. The State of Florida (2009) confirms that the impact of records on the ability of an organisation to function effectively is indisputable. It is only through the operation of a well-run records management program that an organisation retains control of its corporate memory, which allows an organisation, either public or private, to conduct business. It entails all recordkeeping requirements and policies that allow an organisation to establish and maintain control over information flow and administrative operations.

It is central to the research that records are a essential administrative resource. The relationship between the NARS and all public bodies in regards to records management was a fundamental. According to the NARS act (1996) one of the major functions of the NARS is to ensure sound records management practice in all public bodies. In the NARS (2003), the Records Management section was established for this purpose. They do this with the aid of four major mechanisms:

i. Inspection of all government departments' records management systems in order to make an assessment of their state and to provide instructions on how to improve if need be.

ii. Approval of file plans and retention schedule whenever a file (a group of records) is created, it must be assigned a retention period which basically summarises the life of each record. This retention period is set by the departmental records officials. However the NARS have the duty of approving the file plans

iii. Training – the section conducts training sessions and workshops for public bodies on their guidelines concerning records management in order to raise competency of records officials and to raise awareness of the importance of records management.

iv. Determines classification systems – in order for records to be easily accessible when needed, classification into categories is done by the NARS for each governmental body.

As can be seen above the role of the NARS in ensuring sound records management practice is a crucial one in South Africa's public sector. Records in themselves are a vital component of any administration and their management is crucial too.

2.8.2 Records as an accountability resource

Various accountability relationships such as political, professional and legal were explored. Although records were found to be important in all these types of accountability relationships, organisational and administrative accountability were the ones in which records played a crucial role.

Administrative accountability pertains to the relationship among auditors, inspectors, and controllers with public institutions. These auditing institutions rely heavily on records, particularly financial records, to form an audit opinion. Organisational accountability pertains to the relationship among superiors and juniors in a government institution. This is basically the hierarchical or top-down relationship that is pursued by public administration and which recorded information plays a crucial role. These two accountability relationships form part of a broader democratic pillar of accountability. Records allow for the provision of information that is vital to ensure that organisations act in the interest of the public and to ensure that the powers of the government are minimised.

The central focus of the research was to understand the value of records in South Africa's young democracy, and to understand why those records and their management have been neglected in the public sector. Weber has been the foremost advocator of bureaucracy which is basically public administration. One of the most important activities of the bureaucracy is the recording of activities, of which those records need to be managed effectively for them to be used for both administrative and organisational accountability as well as for the day-to-day administrative purposes of an organisation.

2.9 SUMMARY

The literature review began with a focus on the nature of records and records management and the concepts that underpin this function in the public sector – specifically the concepts of records as vital resources in administration and accountability. The researcher sought to provide an overview of best practices and theories internationally and in South Africa with regards to the management of records. A crucial feature of this section was defining of records themselves and the concept of records management. There was an attempt to define the properties of a record, and what makes them different from other generic sources of information. The role of the NARS in the South African public sector was also explained in more detail and there was a comparison with five other national archival institutions. Furthermore, existing research on records management was also explored in the South African public sector.

The second section went on to explore the values of records in more detail iand ought to justify the need for sound records management in any organisation, and in particular a democratic country. This began by explaining the need for records in any administrative activity and this was followed by the exploration of the relationship between records and power and how accountability makes sure that those in power are kept accountable and that their powers are checked by the

access to information provided by access law. The role of records in building up social memory was also explored.

This was followed by an attempt to understand the model of public administration adopted by the new South African government in 1994 to provide the broader context of reforms that have shaped practice and accountability in post-apartheid public service. The chapter concluded by outlining the key concepts underpinning the research – i.e. the value of records in administration and accountability.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an outline of the methodology used in the research to gather and analyse data. This was done by locating the research in the broader realm of qualitative research and establishing a field study as the research design. Interviews and documents were the main sources of information pursued. The sample and analysis method used is also identified.

The discussion that follows makes a comparison between the two research methodologies, quantitative and qualitative research. The researcher will explore the characteristics of each in order to make a decision concerning which one best suits the probing of the research problem at hand.

One of the major differences between qualitative research and quantitative research lies in the philosophical underpinning of each (Neuman, 2011). Quantitative researchers rely on the positivist approach while qualitative researchers rely on interpretative or critical social science. The researcher discusses positivism, interpretivism and critical social science.

3.1.1 Positivism, interpretivism and critical social research

Modern positivists adopt an essential orientation to reality: reality is real; it exists out there and is waiting to be discovered (Neuman, 2011). The basic observational laws of science are considered true, primary and certain because they are built into

the fabric of the natural world (Mulkay, 1979).In this vein positivism is directly related to quantitative research because quantitative research seeks to observe that natural world by using instruments (Neuman, 2011).

According to Merriam (2009: 8) in "interpretive research, or constructivism, which is where qualitative research is most often located, reality, is socially constructed, that is, there is no single observable reality. Rather there are multiple realities, or interpretations of a single event. Researchers do not find knowledge, they construct it." This research fits the description because the researcher sought to construct and interpret information from the NARS staff and documents so as to understand the phenomenon of the undervaluing of the records management function in the South African public sector.

According to Crotty (1998: 113), critical social research "is a contrast between research that seeks merely to understand and research that challenges … between a research that reads the situation in terms of interaction and community and a research that reads it in terms of conflict and oppression … between a research that accepts the status quo and research that seeks to bring about change." This research does not fit into the critical social science orientation because it does not examine existing social structure in order to effect change. Instead the need is to explore the conditions of the NARS and records management in the public sector.

3.1.2 Research approach

One of the differences between the two styles comes from the nature of data. Soft data, in the form of impressions, words, sentences, photos, symbols and so forth dictate different research strategies from data in the form of numbers (Neuman, 2011). This research is qualitative because it did not seek to look at quantities or amounts; instead the intention is to understand how people interpret their experiences at the NARS using soft data.

Quantitative research is a means of testing theories by explaining the relationship among variables; it is deductive (Creswell, 2009). On the contrary Merriam (2009: 15) notes that qualitative researchers are inductive. The researcher wanted to gather data to build concepts, hypotheses or theories from bits and pieces of information from interviews and documents and these would be combined and ordered into larger themes as the researcher works from particular experiences of NARS staff to general conclusions and recommendations.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010: 95) "quantitative researchers seek explanations and predictions that will generalise to other persons and places." In this qualitative research, a single case, the NARS, has been selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular depth of the challenges faced by the NARS in pursuing its mandate and what the reasons behind the current state are, rather than to find out what is generally true of many state archives because this is the only body in South that is designated this mandate (Merriam, 2009).

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher has delineated the methodology that best suits this inquiry as qualitative research. Although qualitative research remains the umbrella term, there are various strategies such as ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, critical research, case studies and field study were explored. This research was a qualitative field study.

3.2.1 Field study

The researcher undertook a field study in a descriptive form. A field study is an inquiry that attempts to explore and interpret people's views from interviews and observations to provide answers to the research question (Rossman and Rallis,

2012). This sits well with the purpose of this research in particular, which aims to explore the reason behind the neglect of the records management function in the South African public sector. The research was instigated on a hunch that the South African public sector is neglecting the records management function. It was therefore imperative to explore this phenomenon by going into the field to interview people who have experience in records management. The NARS was the primary source of data.

3.3 SAMPLING

According to Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003: 77) qualitative researchers are identified with non-random or purposeful sampling. This research will use non-random samples. Subjects were deliberately selected, because these are the individuals who act on the mandate to ensure sound records management practice at national governmental level and to preserve records of enduring value (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003). Patton (2002: 440) argues that "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study." Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling.

The structure of the NARS reflects the organisation of the South African government, with the NARS at a national level and each province with its own archives. This research was focusing on the NARS at a national level.

 The NARS is divided into two main sections, the one being the Repository section where archiving records are stored and the Records Management section which is responsible for the mandate to regulate public sector records management systems. The researcher used both sections to acquire information-rich data that would help to assess the challenges that the NARS faces in advancing its role as a records management systems regulator.

NARS internal reports generated after conducting inspections in departments were also requested. At the time of writing a PAIA request had been made to access these documents. Interviewees had already agreed to contribute to the research. Three people from the records management section and two from the repository were to be interviewed. A former national archivist also agreed to be interviewed. In order to get a view of records management in the public sector as well, three records managers from different departments as well as two records management academics were asked to contribute and had provisionally agreed. These last were included to get an independent view of the reason why the role of the NARS seems to be neglected in the public sector. The researcher intended to make use of internal reports of the NARS, which are prepared after their inspections of the public sector records.

3.4 PILOT STUDY

Before the research began in earnest, a pilot study was conducted with NARS staff on 20 July 2012. Three people were interviewed, to obtain an understanding of the current state of functioning in the NARS. Each interview lasted 20 minutes, and served to establish relationships with NARS staff.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The researcher used interviews in order to gather data. Merriam (2009:85) defines data as "nothing more than ordinary bits and pieces of information found in the environment." This research gathered data which consists of direct quotations from NARS staff about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge obtained through interviews, detailed descriptions of the activities, actions and excerpted quotations or entire extracts from various types of documents (Patton 2002).

The researcher interviewed 4 employees from the NARS, three records managers from the DPSA, AGSA and DTI all of which were former NARS employees. Two Archival science academics from UNISA and the Nelson Mandela Foundation were interviewed. In total, nine interviews, of approximately 35 minutes were carried out. However, a PAIA application to access reports was rejected.

3.5.1 Interviews

DeMarrais (2004: 55) defines an interview as "as a process in which a researcher and a participant engage in a conversation focused on a question related to the study." An interview is engaged to understand people's perspectives, perceptions, feelings and thoughts (Patton 2002).

3.5.2 Types of interviews

According to Merriam (2009: 90) interviews are classified according to the amount of structure that they carry. She says that the classes are highly structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In highly structured interviews, questions and the order which they are asked are determined ahead of time. A highly structured interview could be problematic in this research because rigidly adhering to predetermined questions may not allow the researcher to access participant's perspectives and understandings of the world. "Instead," says Merriam (2009:90), "you get reactions to the investigator's preconceived notions of such a world."

Because of the exploratory nature of the research, the researcher used the semi-structured interview. Specific information was required by the researcher from all respondents concerning the challenges the NARS faces in pursuing its mandate and the reason behind the neglect of the NARS (Merriam 2009). The major part of the interview was guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored and neither the exact wording nor the order of questions was determined ahead of time.

The final type of interview is the unstructured interview which according to Merriam (2009: 90) is particularly useful when the researcher does not know enough about the phenomenon to ask relevant questions.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of making sense of data. And making sense of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has read; it is the process of making meaning (Merriam, 2009). Basically data analysis is the process that is used to answer the research question from the data. Merriam (2009: 175) illuminates that a qualitative data analysis is emergent, which means that analysis will revolve as the research develops. Collection and analysis of data will be done simultaneously. However this is not to say that the analysis will finish when data collection is done.Analysis will become more intensive as the study progresses and once all the data are in (Merriam, 2009: 169).

3.6.1 Analysis strategy

Merriam (2009: 175) devises a strategy of data analysis that she draws from the constant comparative method first proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) for their grounded theory. The researcher adopts this method in order to analyse data for this research. Merriam calls the analysis regime category construction. This method helps to bring out themes that will be answered by the research questions and are tentative conclusions concerning the reason behind what appears to be a neglect of the NARS function. The analysis regime included four steps: coding, sorting categories with data, naming categories and becoming more theoretical.

3.6.1.1 Coding

Merriam (2009: 178) calls this step category construction while Neuman (2011) calls the same process coding. In order to avoid confusion the researcher decided to call the first step coding. The process began with reading the first interview transcript. As the researcher read through the transcript, notes, comments, observations and queries were jotted down in the margins (Merriam, 2009). The notations were next to the bits of data that were interesting, potentially relevant or important to the study, this is the process called open coding (Neuman, 2011).

The researcher adopted open coding at the beginning of the analysis, and was expansive in identifying segments that might be useful. After going through the entire transcript the researcher went back to the marginal notes and comments (codes) and grouped those comments and notes that seemed to go together. This process is called axial, and is at times analytical coding. The researcher adopted analytical coding which went beyond descriptive coding, it is coding that comes from interpretation and reflection on meaning (Richards, 2005). The researcher kept a running list of the groupings attached to the transcript. The next data was scanned in exactly the same way, bearing in mind the first of groupings that were extracted from the first transcript and checking whether they are also presented in the second set. A separate list of comments, terms and notes from this set was made and then compared with the one derived from the first two interview transcripts. This master list constituted a primitive outline reflecting the recurring regularities or patterns in the study. These patterns and regularities became the categories or themes into which subsequent items were sorted.

3.6.1.2 Sorting categories and data

At the beginning, the researcher generated dozens of tentative categories. As codes were assigned, core themes or categories were compiled into a separate memo retaining those that seemed to hold across more than one interview. As the

researcher went along some categories were renamed to more precisely reflect the data and some categories became sub-categories. This was followed by fleshing out the categories with the rest of the data. The construction of categories was highly inductive but became more inductive once the categories had been established.

3.6.1.3 Naming the categories

Since the categories or themes were responsive answers to the questions, the naming of categories was congruent with the orientation of the study. This was particularly informed by the theoretical framework of the study. The names of the categories came from at least three sources, the researcher, the participants and sources of literature.

3.6.1.4 Becoming more theoretical

The ideal manner of moving from a descriptive narrative involved using concepts to describe phenomena. This was the process of systematically classifying data into some sort of scheme consisting of categories or themes as discussed previously. The categories described the data and to an extent also interpreted the data. The highest level of analysis was making inferences, developing models and generating theory. It is a process, Miles and Huberman (1994: 261) write, of moving up from the empirical trenches to a more conceptual overview of the landscape. "We are no longer just dealing with observables but also with non-observables and are connecting two successive layers of inferential guile." Theorising is a step toward developing a theory that explains some of the practice and allows a researcher to draw inferences about future activities. This will be helpful to drawing conclusions and bringing out a general theory as to why records management is undervalued in the public sector.

3.7. VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND ETHICS

According to Merriam (2009: 209) all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. Producing trustable results is especially critical for applied research like this one because it is dedicated to trying to improve practice in the field of records management.

Internal validity deals with the question of how much findings match reality (Merriam 2009: 213). However in qualitative research, there are multiple realities, thus it is impossible to measure qualitative research based on the notion of reality, (Ritcliffe, 1983; and Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2003; Becker 1993). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) validity must be assessed in terms of something other than reality itself: that something is the notion of credibility. The researcher used multiple sources of interviews by interviewing six NARS staff, and three records managers in the public sector and two academics from UNISA and the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

Merriam (2011: 222) formulates that external validity is the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. This is what is referred to as the generalisability of a study. Qualitative researchers are not concerned with it because the focus is on specific cases. Thus Lincoln and Guba (1985: 298) suggest the notion of transferability in which the burden of proof lies not with the original investigator but with the person seeking to make an application elsewhere.

This research will ensure the possibility of transferring results to another study by providing a highly descriptive, detailed presentation of the setting and findings of the study (Merriam 2009: 223).

According to Merriam (2009: 220) reliability refers to the extent to which the researcher's findings can be replicated. She explains that reliability is a problem in the social science because human behaviour is never static nor is what many experience necessarily more reliable than what one experiences. In qualitative research the more important question is whether the results are consistent with the data collected (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Rather than ask the outsider to get the same result, a researcher wishes outsiders to concur that given the data collected, the results make sense, and they are consistent and dependable.

Richards (2005: 143) says that good qualitative research gets much of its claim to validity from the researcher's ability to show convincingly how they got there and how they built confidence that this was the best possible account possible. A highly descriptive and detailed presentation of the findings is also a useful way of shoring up consistency with results.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Merriam (2009:225) to a large extent, the validity and reliability of a study depends upon the ethics of an investigator. Patton identifies the credibility of the researcher along with rigorous methods of inquiry as the essential components to ensure the credibility of a qualitative research. Patton (2002: 552) further reveals that the credibility of a researcher depends on training, experience, track record, status and presentation of self. Identified informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality are important considerations for the research.

Informed consent of the participants was acquired from interviews while giving them enough details about the research. The purpose and intentions of the study were made clear and their participation in the research was voluntary. There was no force used to for them to disclose information that they were not comfortable to disclose. Further they were informed that the information from the research would not be used for purposes other than the research without their consent.

The researcher also made the conditions of anonymity very clear to the interviewees. This included not revealing their names in the research, just mentioning the departments from which they belong. To this the respondents agreed and only a coding system would be used to identify them. No one other than the researcher will know who provided the information. However, some respondents said they would not be concerned if their names were used as this was not going to jeopardise them in any way.

In terms of confidentiality the researcher assured the respondents in advance that their information would be handled confidentially and not be disclosed outside the research. This helped to put the respondents at ease when responding to the questions.

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research is focused on the national level of government in the NARS. However the study would have benefited from understanding the state of records management in the provinces to gain a broader picture of the attitudes and behaviours towards records management in the public sector. However for a study of this magnitude to be conducted it would have to be at PHD level, for a longer period of time.

Acquiring consent in government departments was a major challenge. There was a general lack of interest in the idea of study in departments and it was a major drawback in terms of interviewing people in the actual departments to find out what exactly was going on.

There was also a paucity of this type of research; it seems no such work has been done in the South African public sector. It would have helped to shape the research. Even though some work has been done in trying to assess the state of

records management in the public sector, none of the work has come close to trying to find out what exactly is the underlying reason behind that case. Whilst this has made undertaking the research more challenging, it is also what makes the contribution of this research particularly important.

3.10 SUMMARY

The focus of the chapter was on delineating the research methodology used to gather the data. The research was qualitative in nature, in the interpretive realm, as the researcher sought to interpret people's experiences to understand why the NARS is undervalued in the public sector. The researcher used interviews as the main sources of data, with records managers in the public sector, NARS staff and records management academics among the groups of people to be interviewed. Permission to view reports was also applied for through the PAIA act at the time of writing. The research was a field study as it sought to explore and understand the reasons behind the neglect of the NARS from the experiences of people who work in the NARS and who have an understanding of the field of records management. Validity, reliability and ethics were also dealt with in the chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Having delineated the research methodology in the previous chapter, this chapter serves to present and analyse the data that was gathered. It is crucial to mention that data presentation and data analysis are two different activities although closely related to each other. Data presentation is a process of describing the data that was gathered, while analysing the data involves building themes from that data that would serve as answers to the main research question. The presentation of these was done simultaneously in order to integrate the analysis with a rich description of the findings.

The research was aimed at exploring the reasons that the functions of the NARS in the public sector are apparently neglected, and to expose the implications of the neglect of its functions.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the sample of the research included five people from the NARS (three from the records management section and two from the repository), the national archivist who was suspended, later officially reinstated, but not practically working there yet, three records managers in different public institutions and two academics.

The researcher managed to interview four people in the NARS, instead of five due to the fact that the repository only has two archivists one of whom was not available, while the three interviews with the staff in the records management

section were conducted. Three records managers in the public sector from different departments were interviewed as well as two academics from UNISA and the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

The interviewees were categorised as follows;

1. National Archives employees including national archivist ranging from A to E
2. Records managers in the public sector ranging from A to C
3. Academics on records management ranging from A to B

Table 1: Breakdown of respondents

1.NARS	1A-E	Official national archivist
		3 in the Records Management Section
		1 in the Repository
2.Records Managers	2A-C	Auditor General
		The Department of Public Service and Administration
		The Department of Trade and Industry
3.Academics	3 AB	Verne Harris – Nelson Mandela Foundation
		Mpho Ngoepe - University of South Africa

For example, if the researcher wishes to quote any of the staff at the National Archives they will be referred to as 1 A. This is to ensure that anonymity is preserved.

The researcher also applied to have a look at internal reports that are generated by the NARS after they conduct inspections of governmental bodies. This was to establish the general state of records management in the public sector. The PAIA

application was however rejected and it was not possible to have a look at those documents. The understanding of the state of records management in the public sector was not the main thrust of the research, but it was of relevance in making a case for the research. Although access to these records was denied, it did not hamper the acquisition of rich information from the interviews.

The presentation and analysis of data is shaped by the central research questions presented in chapter one:

1. What evidence is there to suggest that the South African public sector does not place value on the functions of the NARS?
2. What are the reasons behind this disregard for the NARS functions?
3. What are the implications of the neglect of the functions of the NARS?

These questions were used to draw up guidelines in the semi structured interviews, which collated various items of information used to build concepts and themes.

4.2 ANALYSIS STRATEGY

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the researcher adopted Merriam's (2009) category construction. This strategy was considered appropriate as it focused on bringing out major concepts and themes emerging from the interview transcript. The analysis regime included four steps; coding, sorting categories with data, naming categories and becoming more theoretical. The previous chapter dealt with explaining these steps in depth. The particular exercise was done on interview transcripts and this chapter focuses on presenting the findings.

What follows is the presentation of the results, showing the major themes that emerged from the interviews. Basically these themes are answers to the three major questions that have guided the research from the beginning. As a way of

presenting, each question will be answered through evidence provided in interviews.

4.3 EVIDENCE OF NEGLECT OF THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

Various questions were used to find evidence of neglect if it existed and this was particularly aimed at NARS staff. However, all the other interviewees have worked at the NARS and contributed to this question as well. Some challenges were mentioned across the spectrum of interviews, though coined in a different manner. The answers to this question include staff shortages, space shortages, low ranking of records managers, low salaries, high staff turnover, non-compliance and budget allocation constraints.

4.3.1 Staff shortages

One of the fundamental challenges that emerged from the interviews was the shortage of staff both in the repository and records management section. It was confirmed, as was stated in the first chapter, that the NARS is struggling to perform its task due to lack of staff. This is particularly crippling due to the fact that the records management section, which used to function at full capacity with 18 people, now only employs four. There was a sense of demotivation and dejection among the staff due to this issue. The section was unable to conduct inspections, to approve file plans and authorise disposal or even to conduct records management training sessions with the public sector because they were overwhelmed as a result of staff shortages.

Ngoepe and Keakopa (2011) categorically state that the biggest challenge in the NARS at this stage is the lack of human resources. The magnitude of work to which they are assigned, such as approving file plans for all the departments at national level, is an impossible task for one person. And yet that is precisely the

present situation: only one person is designated to the task of approving file plans, (Ngoepe and Keakpa, 2011). Interviewee 2B, a records manager in the auditor general's department, revealed that one of the reasons that departments give for not managing their records effectively is that they are not receiving necessary support from the NARS (Interview, November 19, 2012).

Interviewees in category 1 (NARS staff) were unable to give a solid answer as to the state of records management in the public sector due to the fact that they had not conducted inspections in a long while. Interviewee 1A (interview, May 12, 2012) said that the NARS is not fully aware of the situation on the ground because there are no inspections happening due to staff shortages. The responsibility to conduct inspections in the public service is a crucial activity which allows them to form a clear picture as to the state of records management in the public sector in order to make decisions as to how to improve this situation. The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act No. 43 of 1996 specifically mentions that the National Archivist is charged with the inspection of the records of all public bodies.

According to 1B from the NARS records management section (Interview, June 1, 2012), only one staff member is available to make inspections to 4,000 clients and because it is impossible to carry out inspections systematically, they are only done as clients' request. Asked to explain further, the respondent noted that,

> "Yes but now because we are understaffed I've heard previously there used to be a section that was fully capacitated. They used to go unannounced to government departments and do inspections, but since we are short of staff we do inspections upon request from government departments. We wait for them to request us to come and we assist them because there are a lot of them. We cannot do it on a regular basis, so maybe this week we'll go to one

or two. So we wait for them to approach us and then we go there and do the inspections."

Asked to explain further how often departments request inspections, 1B (Interview, June 1, 2012) lamented that, "unfortunately not enough, but on our side maybe it's a bit better because we are understaffed, but when they do there are serious problems." It is a fascinating comment to hear from the staff of the NARS, that they feel that its better that departments do not request inspections because they lack the human resources to perform them.

The NARS has been unable to fill posts for a long time now and yet staff have constantly moved to other departments. So chronic is the staff shortage that it is no longer uncommon for operational managers to act in two capacities. For instance, interviewee 1D (interview, September 3, 2011) states that, "I am currently an assistant director client services as well as assistant director sensitive records. I've got two caps currently." In explaining this fact, the respondent did not seem too fazed by this issue, it was as if this is the norm now. Interviewee 1A (interview, May 12, 2012) is in the same situation, heading up the records management section and also issuing disposal authority. "I am the head of the records management… but due to lack of capacity I am acting in two other positions as well." There was much more of a lament from 1A concerning this issue.

It is interesting to note that interviewee 1D (interview, September 3, 2011) mentioned that there has always been a staff shortage in the repository section even during the apartheid period. Asked to explain the differences between the apartheid era and the democratic one, 1D said "… actually we mourn about human resources now, it was the same problem then, human resources were actually a problem. It might be a bit much for records management, it might be different now but for the repository we actually suffered to get staff, to get the

understanding about the work that we do." This is a very important aspect in the research: it seems the basic administrative fabric of the public sector was already unravelling even before the ushering in of the democratic period. However the respondent was quick to note that the staff shortages were not as chronic as they are now, to the effect that that NARS was still able to perform duties effectively unlike the current situation.

The staff shortages themselves are not evidence that the functions of the NARS are being neglected in the public sector. It is the inability or lack of interest to deal with the issue that highlights the devaluing of the NARS. Attempts to fill the posts have been made to no avail. In 2008 two deputy director posts were advertised but the Minister of Arts and Culture decided that no post was going to be filled, money that had been designated for that was taken away and sent to the development of soccer stadiums.

> "…You see we only four people in the division in the past they did not, they were not filling vacant posts, there is no room for improvement, you know because they, … in 2008 there was two deputy director posts advertised, a short list was done, then the minister decided that she, no post, she said no post is going to be filled and she took the money and gave it to the soccer, you see."

In fact, interviewee D mentions that the department is restructuring itself but the end result has been that the repository sections have not filled any vacant posts since 2008. During the week that the researcher interviewed respondent 1A (interview, May 12, 2012), the DG of the DAC was supposed to have visited the NARS to discuss the issue of staff shortages, but had not come on the specific date, and never made an apology or explanation as to why. The question therefore would be why the NARS has been facing such serious shortages in staff. Like many other departments in the South African public sector, there is a very high

staff turnover which causes a high vacancy rate. Chipkin (2011) confirms that there is a very high vacancy rate in departments. Statistics shown in 2006 show for instance that in the department of Agriculture had a vacancy rate of 27.1% and the Department of Communications had a vacancy rate of 31.9.

4.3.2 High staff turnover

Establishing that one of the major reasons behind staff shortages was a high staff turnover was not difficult. During the interview with 1A (interview, May 12, 2012), it was revealed that one of the four employees in the records management (interviewee 1B , June 1, 2012) section had received a job offer from the Auditor General and interviewee 1A was concerned that if a counter offer was not made they would be severely crippled. In fact IB confirmed that if he did not receive a counter offer from the NARS has was going to leave because there was no incentive for him to stay. The interviewee1A (interview, May 12, 2012) then mentioned that staff turnover was the greatest challenge that the NARS was facing.

Interviewee 2A (interview, November 13, 2012), a former employee of the NARS now working in one of the departments as a records manager, mentioned that "if you look at the National Archives, they start training people, people sit for two or three years and then they get offers and leave for other offices." It was a sentiment that was echoed by all the respondents, that the NARS is seen as a training ground and soon after one acquires experience one moves to a better job. Testament to this fact is that all the people who were interviewed for this research that once worked for the NARS had at some point left because of better career opportunities and advancement routes.

The biggest problem with staff turnover is the limitation of the skills that are available. This is because any new staff members will take time to learn and become an expert in the field. Interviewee 2C from the DPSA (interview,

November 19, 2012) highlights that staff turnover is also a challenge because new people take time to really learn the ropes and when they have learnt they leave. The movement is not just witnessed in the NARS, but in the departments of the public sector. This is an issue Chipkin and Lipietz (2012) talk about as being a problem in the entire public sector.

The fact that there is a high staff turnover is not enough to provide evidence that the functions of the NARS are being neglected. It is the reason behind this turnover that can provide that evidence. Interviewee 3A (Interview, November 12, 2012) stipulates that there was a large staff turnover due to a change in atmosphere from an open and transparent government that sought to serve people soon after independence to a more intolerant government. Although this reason might be valid, it is impossible to substantiate is because only 3A mentioned that. Furthermore most of the staff mentioned that had left the NARS remained within the public service. The reason echoed by most is the low salary levels offered to people in the NARS.

4.3.3 Low salaries in the NARS

The high staff turnover is a major problem in the NARS that appears to be primarily caused by very low remuneration. Respondent 1C (interview, June 4, 2012) explains: "…our people move to other places where there are greener pastures because being an archivist in the public sector is not well remunerated." It was a sentiment that was echoed by 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) and 1D (interview, September 3, 2012), who both complained that salaries in the National Archives where low compared to those in the rest of the public sector. In a conversation between the two, 1D expressed that salaries were a bit higher in the NARS compared to the apartheid years but 1A jumped in to say that comparing the levels with other government departments, the NARS was very poor. Ngoepe and Keakopa (2011) confirmed that it has become extremely difficult for the

NARS to retain its staff due to low salaries and lack of career development paths in the NARS.

Despite the fact that records managers and archivists possess rare skills, salaries are low. According to 3B (interview, November 8, 2012) the public service reporter reports that archiving is a rare skill and there is a shortage of about 200 archivists nationwide but the salary levels are very low. Despite the identification of archiving as a rare skill with major shortages in supply, salaries have not been adjusted upwards to attract and retain these skills.

It was interesting to find out why the salary levels in the NARS were low. Interviewee 3B, who had previously worked for the NARS makes the connection between low salaries and a very low entry level for professional recruits in the NARS. For other departments and agencies entry level professional staff is at level eight, for the NARS it is at level six. This for some reason has resulted in the fact that salaries are low even for senior staff because they started at a lower level. According to 3B (interview, November 8, 2012) the DPSA is the one that determines these levels. Respondent 1E (interview, July 18, 2012) confirms this by mentioning in the interview that "… to get people in and keep them was a huge challenge because the salaries did not reflect the skills that were required." The NARS has been struggling to maintain staff due to this low ranking of the entry level. According to 1D (interview, September 3, 2012), the DAC has been restructuring itself since 2008 and this issue will not be resolved until that restructuring is completed, meanwhile the NARS continues to suffer the situation just outlined- like that of interviewee 1B who was on his way out of the NARS to the Auditor General's department, plainly due better remuneration and advancement opportunities.

The low ranking and low salaries in the NARS is a challenge that is echoed by the plight of records managers in the public sector. Most records managers are also

placed at a very low level in terms of formal human resources structure in their respective departments.

4.3.4 Low ranking of records managers in the public sector

Closely related to the issue of low salaries and low entry level in the NARS is the low ranking of the function of records managers in the public sector. Interviewee 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) lamented that records managers are not placed at a sufficiently senior level in the public sector for them to make any impact. "We feel that records managers are too low in ranking and therefore we want to insure negotiations with the DPSA, the department of public administration that they make records management a responsibility of senior managers." Their sentiment is that for records managers to influence sound records management practice in the public sector, they had to at least have a post which would allow them to influence top managers to enforce sound records management practice. However interviewee 2A from the DTI (interview, November 13, 2012) has a senior management post in their department, but is still not influential enough to be able to ensure compliance. "…I am sitting at senior management level but there are still people to whom I report and they make decisions over and above me." The researcher asked the respondent if this made any difference and he said "not necessarily. The thing is to buy in from top management; the executive must buy into the whole process. So even if I was sitting at deputy director level if I had the great support and relevant support from the top it would make a difference what level I am at."

Furthermore, the records management post is held in low esteem in the public sector. According to interviewee 2B (interview, November 19, 2012) usually people are transferred to records management because they are underperforming or they are being punished. "When a new minister is appointed they bring their own staff and they send those who were there to records management." This

reflects the way in which records management is viewed in the public sector, which gives a clear indication that the records management function in is not particularly valued in the public sector.

If the NARS and the records management function is held in such low esteem in the public sector what is the level of compliance to the standards put in place? It was therefore fundamental to question the level of compliance in the public sector with the NARS act and NARS records management procedures and standards. The researcher asked every respondent what the level of compliance was and the sentiment was that the level of compliance is appalling.

4.3.5 Non-compliance

According to the NARS Act No. 8 of 1996, it is the function of the NARS to set up guidelines as to how records are managed in the public sector. In light of this, the NARS (2002) produced a manual that governs the management of records in all formats in the public sector. These guidelines include day-to-day procedures of how to deal with records from their creation to destruction.

Respondents, across the spectrum of interviews conducted, agree that compliance to the NARS act and standards is minimal in the public sector. Interviewee 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) notes that one of the biggest challenges is the non-compliance with standards and laws set up by the NARS. "We've got good legislation, we've got good directors of policy but the problem lies with the application and the level of records management." According to 1C (interview, June 04, 2012) there is no compliance to the regulated standards of records management in the public sector. This is to the extent that even a simple regulatory requirement such as the need to appoint a designated records manager in the public sector is not being followed; about 50% of public bodies do not have a records manager.

Interestingly, however, respondent 2C (interview, November 19, 2012) notes that in areas where records are supporting the line function of the department such as Home Affairs, records are managed properly, but central policy departments like the DPSA are struggling because it is not a priority for them. Compliance with records management procedures is not really up to standard in the DPSA. "Mainly because we are a centre department, we are not necessarily providing a service in a manner in which you look at it, where you say you are issuing IDs and so forth and whatever you need you quickly go back to the file." There is a significant gap between policy and implementation in the DPSA in regards to their function, particularly because it is a policy and framework department and filing is not really straight forward and it is not a priority. Respondent 2A (interview, May 5, 2012) concurs that the policies and structures are available in the public sector, records managers are appointed, policies and procedures are set up but unfortunately all these are not complied with. There is no attention given to the management of records in the public sector.

The result of this non-compliance has been a rather bleak view of the state of records management in the public sector. Interviewee 1C (interview, June 04, 2012) categorically states that generally the state of records management in the public sector is not good, a sentiment echoed by all the respondents. "What I would say to you generally is that, particularly as a records management official charged with the responsibility to ensure that our regulatory requirements are complied with, I cannot say I'm happy with the uptake and attitude of records management in the public sector." The notion that the state of records management in the public sector is poor is postulated by all respondents, even though none could give a solid response as to the state of records management. As noted in the second chapter, a report from the Archives at Crossroads in 2007 unveils that there is no doubt that the present archival and record-keeping services are patchy and in some instances collapsing.

A significant issue has been the reduction of levels of compliance from the apartheid era to the democratic period. Interviewee 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) said compliance with records management standards was much better in the apartheid period than it is now. "Only seven local authorities did not have a file plan in 1993 and if you compare it today there is hardly any contact with local authorities." According to 1B (interview, June 01, 2012) some departments are actually destroying records without disposal authority because they simply do not apply for it. Only fifty percent of the departments have disposal authority. Interviewee 1B expressed concern that some departments called them only when they were in crisis. "That's the saddest part because we don't think these inspections are meant for us to intervene when things are bad." The last inspection they went to in April it was a crisis because they were not compliant to the standards in place.

The non-compliance with records management standards and procedures set up by the NARS to ensure sound records management practice in the public sector is a significant pointer to the idea that the role of the NARS in public sector is undervalued. The fact that the role is regulated by law, but can still be ignored is central in postulating this idea.

4.3.6 Space shortages

A specific phenomenon that emerged from the data gathering process that helped shed light on the valuation of the NARS in the public was the idea of space shortages in the NARS repository. It is the specific events that surround these space shortages that significantly suggest that the records management function is undervalued in the public sector.

It was noted, with concern by all the interviewees in the NARS, that the current Archival Repository does not have any space to collect records of enduring value.

In the second chapter, the researcher explained the Life Cycle Concept postulated by Schellenberg in 1956, which portrays records as going through various stages or periods, much like a living organism, (Azman, 2009) There are three phases in the life cycle concept; current which are managed in registries or record offices, semi-current records which are managed in records centres, and non-current records which are managed in archives, (IRMT 1999). Non-current records are records that are selected by the process of appraisal to determine which records will be preserved for posterity based on their significance in the history of the country or organisation. It is that repository that does not have space to receive records of the current government. Interviewee 1B notes that no records were transferred to the archives while he was working there for about five years.

According to Interviewee 1A, (interview, May 5, 2012), "…this building is full to capacity; we are not able to receive any transfers. We had the green light to start a new building in the space adjacent to this building but then it was stopped, I don't know why we lost the money." The space issue has been one of the most crippling issues in the function of the NARS and the general outlook of records management in the public sector. To the extent that public institutions are keeping records, their registries are clogged with records. This could be a factor in the mismanagement of records.

The question that emerged is why there was no action to resolve the problem. All respondents confirmed that since 2002 there have been plans to expand the repository. According to 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) in 2010 the plans had been drawn up, everything had been put in place and Treasury allocated R700 million for the plans to move forward, but they took the money away before it was used. The money was withdrawn to fund the World Cup. This is a significant measure of the level of the importance of records management in the public sector. The priority to improve the functioning of the institution is clearly not there and this has been a major hindrance to public sector administration.

From the above, another major challenge emerged that showed how unimportant the records management function is in the public sector: the NARS is significantly neglected when it comes to budget allocation. This alone stands as evidence to suggest that there is a neglect of the NARS function in the public sector.

4.3.7 Budget allocation constraints

It is universally accepted by all respondents that the NARS is struggling to perform its duties due to budget allocation constraints. Respondent 3A (interview, November 12, 2012) explicitly explains that "the records management and archival functions are underfunded, they have very little political support so the will is not there to make things happen." He further explains that it has been impossible for the NARS to function very well since 1994 because there has been neglect from the government, and this is particularly reflected in the budget. The underfunding is an important signifier of lack of political support for the NARS to function well.

Interviewee 1E expressed significant understanding of why the NARS has been constantly receiving a low budget. "Implementation of the budget in the archives was never properly costed and consequently what was needed to provide the capacity in the ideal situation was never given by the National Treasury. So we are always fighting off a historical budget which was inadequate and based on the needs of the old apartheid archives." As a result, allocation of resources to capacitate the NARS has dwindled over time and this has crippled the activities of the NARS. It is significant that the NARS has not received a budget allocation that suits the capacity. Budget allocation always reflects focus and priority areas. The fact that there is a gap in the budget allocation reinforces the fact that there is a neglect of the NARS and records management function in the public sector.

It was one of the major aims of the research to substantiate the claim made in the first chapter that there appears to be a neglect of the NARS functions in the South African public sector. It has been the aim of this section to present evidence that indeed the South African public sector has significantly ignored the functions of the NARS and the inability of the National Treasury to allocate enough budget has contributed to the crippling the institution. The Archives at Crossroads report (2007) clearly reveals that there is a national failure to appreciate what is at stake in investing in archive, and secondly the direction of resources into national flagship projects designed to produce politically valuable symbolic capital. The report also notes a failure in the culture of government to prioritise record-keeping and archives. Record-keeping across government is largely without active management and personnel are untrained. These are all symptoms that make it safe to say the NARS function in the public sector is neglected. Once this had been established, the overarching aim of the research was to uncover the underlying reasons behind the neglect of this function in the public sector.

4.4 UNDERSTANDING THE DISREGARD FOR THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

Having established that the records management function has been neglected in the public sector based on evidence provided above, the researcher sought to understand the reasons behind this disregard. The presentation that follows is particularly focused on the responses acquired in the interviews because no work has ever sought to explore this phenomenon in South Africa.

The responses gathered build the following major themes as responses to the question; the challenge of technology and electronic information, the lack of power of the NARS to enforce compliance, the lack of political and senior managerial support, the departmental placing of the NARS, the deficiency of the NARS act, the erosion of the bureaucratic nature of government influenced by NPM and the neglect of basic administrative tasks in the public sector.

4.4.1 Technology and electronic records

It emerged from the interviews that one of the biggest reasons behind the neglect of the records management function in the public sector is the advent of technology and the emergence of electronic records. The NARS is not equipped to manage electronic records. According to interviewee 1E (interview, July 18, 2012), "… transformation took place at a time when technology was transforming as well. I think that was fundamental. Your state structures are changing at a time when globally your record-keeping is moving to a totally different paradigm." The emergence of the democratic government of South Africa and the rapid advancement of computer technology occurred simultaneously.

As a result, the process of change in technology was not really managed well to allow government to equip itself with this technological change while also keeping the integrity of records management a priority. It was understandably not on top of the list of priorities and this had significance on the future of records management (1E, interview, July 18, 2012). Interviewee 1A is of the opinion that because South Africa has a hybrid system in which electronic and paper records are managed simultaneously and the NARS is not equipped to receive any electronic records, a generation of records is going to be lost. When it comes to electronic records, the NARS is not considered a forerunner, even though they must have a significant stake in the management of those records.

The crucial challenge with electronic records emanates from the nature of records as discussed in chapter 2. The delicate character of the electronic medium, and the different way in which computer technology is deployed, pose a serious challenge to the trustworthiness and genuineness of the record if appropriate information management techniques are not adopted (British Public Record Office 1999). Electronic records can be easily manipulated and overwritten, (World Bank 2004).

Unless strict security provisions are in place, electronic records can be altered or deleted without the organisation's knowledge.

Moreover, electronic records are entirely dependent upon technology, both for their creation and their storage. As a result, they must be managed over time in a computerised environment. Given the rapid obsolescence of computer hardware and software and the degradation of storage media, the mechanisms for the management of electronic records require a higher level of sophistication than is needed to manage paper records (World Bank, 2004).

Respondent 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) reveals that the current government has found it difficult to manage records because the nature of records has changed, from paper to electronic and if you cannot manage paper records you will struggle with electronic records. Interviewee 2A (interview, November 13, 2012) identifies the nature of work in these days which makes adherence to records management standards difficult.

> "I know when I started working everything was in hard copy format. These days the stuff is electronic. There haven't been any real attempts or drives in government to move away from the hard copy to electronic in a systematic way, we are applying hard copy standards to electronic formats. The file plan for instance that was created in the 1960s is still the same one used in the current technological environment. The NARS has not been considered as a serious stakeholder in advancing technology and this has resulted in them falling off the radar and struggling to influence sound records management practice in the public sector."

As can be noted above, the technological advancement has made it difficult for the NARS to manage electronic records effectively. It would be plausible to suggest that with the necessary resources and the NARS would be able to fully

control the technological challenge effectively. However, in the advancement of technology, the NARS is not seen as an important entity. This is particularly because the government does not see information as a strategic resource. Records are meant to be realised as a fundamental administrative resource, this allows for continuity and assessment through the audit trail but this is not the case in the South African public sector.

4.4.2 Lack of political and senior management support

Another major theme that emerged from the interviews was the idea that the NARS is struggling to perform its tasks and gain recognition due to the fact that they lack the support of political senior managerial staff. . According to interviewee 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) records management is struggling because senior management in government departments is not enforcing compliance. This means that records management is not a priority to them. Interviewee 1C (interview, June 04, 2012) agrees that one of the challenges is the lack of championship at a strategic level which is caused by a lack of understanding of what the NARS really does. It is a lack of understanding of the value of records in the pursuance of obligations that make it impossible for senior manager to champion it.

Respondent 2B (interview, November 19, 2012) provided a vivid example of how senior management can champion records management. COGTA used to have a good records management program, but ever since the DG who was heavily invested in records management left, it has deteriorated to alarming levels. The DG used to work for the NARS and had intensive knowledge of the importance and implementation of records management. The result of his departure has been a neglect of records management by both middle and junior level staff in departments. According to Interviewee 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) in the departments there is no buy-in from senior management towards records

management and the people sitting at lower levels also see that senior managers do not take records so they struggle to do so themselves..

Some examples of neglect seem to stand out. 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) notes that "… there are no funds to build more repositories, money has been allocated twice but it was recalled. There appears to be a lack of seriousness towards the functions of the NARS, they don't take them seriously." IB (interview, June 01, 2012) also laments that the head of human resources in the DAC was supposed to visit the NARS in April to discuss crucial posts but unfortunately had not come by November. There had been no explanation as to why he didn't come. Interviewee 1E (interview, July 18, 2012) recalls; "… in 1996' I went to Mpumalanga Province as the first provincial director of Arts and Culture which included Archives and spent most of the time in meetings in Pretoria complaining about the fact that nothing was being done about archives and records." The major problem was that budget allocation and staff training, was not sufficient to allow the NARS to perform its designated mandate.

The lack of support from political and senior management has eroded the value of records in the departments and it has allowed the administrative side to rot. According to 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) records management has lost status. It should be championed and enforced by top management so that people can actually adhere to standards. The lack of support from senior management makes it hard for records management standards to be complied with, but the NARS also lacks the power to enforce compliance. This is once again a major reason why there is a neglect of the records management function in the public sector.

4.4.3 Records not recognised as a strategic administrative resource

The reason why senior management in government departments do not offer enough support to record-keeping is because the South African public sector does

not recognise records as a crucial strategic resource. This is given as a reason why the function of the NARS has been neglected in the government. Interviewee 2C (interview, November 19, 2012) from the DPSA makes the connection that generally the public sector is struggling in terms of records management, there are pockets of excellence here and there, but based on a snap survey with knowledge managers around the public sector (conducted by the interviewee on behalf of DPSA), it seems records management is not seen as key in the pursuance of objectives. However this report was not accessible, as it was meant for internal use only. Respondent 1E (interview, July 18, 2012) clearly explained that records and information are not taken seriously as a strategic and important factor in the management of government activities. The public sector tends to trivialise the vitality of information itself, technology is understood as important, but the need to have the technology is not really seen. Technology exists to make information and records management easier and more efficient. Records and information themselves make administration of general activates more effective and efficient. But the idea in the public sector has been to modernise it, without truly reflecting on why there is a need to do that.

Interviewees 2A (interview, November 13, 2012) and 2C (interview, November 19, 2012) agree that one of the fundamental reasons why the South African government is ineffective is because the records have not been managed well, and systems and processes of administration rely heavily on a good record management structure. According to 3A (interview, November 12, 2012) the government has not taken basic administrative tasks seriously, they have focused on building policy but they have not been able to make the link between policy and effective implementation due to the fact that simple procedures and basic organisational activities have been neglected. In this sort of environment, records which are highly bureaucratic and administrative become trivial.

As discussed in chapter 3, records provide the foundation for good administration. Ketelaar (1999) alludes to the fact that records are created in an organisation to support and manage work, to record why, when, where, in what capacity and by whom and what actions are carried out. Roper and Miller (1999: 94) give specific examples in of the uses of records in governments; "developing and implementing policy, planning and making decisions, keeping track of actions, achieving consistency in decision-making and achieving greater efficiency in the daily conduct of business."

It can be seen from the above that basic administrative tasks have been neglected; henceforth there has been a lack of seriousness in records management itself. 3B (interview, November 8, 2012) gives an explanation as to why basic administrative activities are not prioritised in South Africa. "Good records management happens at two opposite ends of the spectrum, totalitarian regimes and strong mature democracies of which South Africa is a very young fledgling democracy. Record-keeping is not priority, and fledgling democracies with fierce contestations such as layers of inertia, conservativism from that past dispensation, sensitivity about criticism from media, these are not good ingredients for a commitment to general administration, accountability, transparency and efficiency in good record-keeping."

Von Holdt (2010) supports this argument in an analysis of dysfunctional hospitals in South Africa, making a compelling argument that:

> "Inside the bureaucracy of the South African state, there are tensions that take the form of contradictory rationales for bureaucratic practices: on the one hand, the aspiration to establish a modern, effective bureaucracy, and on the other the drive to subvert the dominance of whites and the apartheid system enshrined in the previous state, and promote the rapid formation of a new black elite. The second set of rationales is organised around a cluster of

six distinct but interrelated themes – class formation, ambivalence towards skill, the maintenance of face, hierarchy, ambivalence towards authority, and the prevalence of budgetary rituals – and does not take as its primary purpose the fashioning of effective state institutions. It is the tensions between these different rationales, and the salience of the second set, that accounts for much of the dysfunctionality of state institutions."

From the above one can note that one of the reasons behind the neglect of a highly administrative institution such as the NARS is the set of priorities in the public sector, which render records management a trivial activity. It is this sort of attitude which makes an issue such as the placement of the NARS under the DAC such a trivial matter to resolve even after a serious recommendation by the TRC after 1994.

4.4.4 Structure and placement of the NARS

Closely related to the above point, is the baffling placement of a highly administrative institution the NARS under the DAC bracket. Interviewee 1D says that the structure has not changed from the apartheid era, when the SAS used to fall under the then Department of National Education, which has now changed to Arts and Culture. 3A (interview, November 12, 2012) reveals that The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommended that the NARS be a statutory type body with the view that many archival institutions have struggled due to positioning and the records auditing function suffers. It remains unclear as to why the TRC recommendation was not taken into consideration, and the results have been devastating.

The DAC has been unable to cater effectively for the NARS because their main thrust and that of the NARS are not aligned. According to Interviewee 1E (interview, July 18, 2012) "… you have a problem with the National Archives

being in Arts and Culture, it's been nicknamed the banqueting arm of government, on events and the cultural sector, …, the hard staff, the systems, the archives they had to support is either not understood or ignored." There is a general agreement among interviewees concerning this bracketing issue. Interviewee 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) maintains that the NARS falls under the DAC, which is not a true reflection of the regulatory role that the NARS has over the public sector. It would not be the same if they fell under for instance, the AG, because clearly the DAC does not know what the NARS is doing. Respondent 2C (interview, November 19, 2012) supports this by saying, " It is curious to note that the NARS falls under the DAC, DAC used to be the Department of National Education and NARS fell under that and just continued. But the regulatory role of records management does not suit the DAC and that makes the NARS toothless. According to respondent 3B (interview, November, 08, 2012) the NARS is supposed to be an institution on its own, such as in countries like Canada, instead it is a directorate in the DAC. The mother body itself does not rate them as an important functionary because they don't understand what the NARS does."

Respondent 3A (interview, November 12, 2012) expresses this in the most explicit terms: "It is baffling that the NARS sits under the DAC. There is nothing cultural about the NARS, why place it in the Department of Arts and Culture?"

It is a reflection of the lack of priority towards the basic administrative function of records management in the public sector that an issue such as the placement of the NARS has not yet been resolved As interviewees noted, it would have been better if the NARS was in some other suitable department to enforce sound records management practice. For example, Interviewee 1E (interview, July 18, 2012) explained that, "it was better when the Department was Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. At least there was an understanding of systems and why the Archives is an institution, but when it became Arts and Culture alone, you couldn't get top

management in Arts and Culture to grasp what the requirements with the archives were, even with sympathetic and knowledgeable ministers like Pallo Jordan."

These responses illuminate why administrative tasks have tended to be ignored. It is not difficult to see that there is a neglect of this function in the public sector, and one would have to ask what form the public sector has taken for a basic and administrative activity to be ignored in the public. It came to a point where respondents talked about the nature of the public sector which made for this function to be ignored and trivialised.

4.4.5 The influence of New Public Management (NPM)

It emerged from the interviews that the manner in which work used to be done in government during apartheid and the way in which work is being done now has significantly changed. According to 1D (interview, September 04, 2012), the system was very strict during apartheid. "We had to keep report books where we had to report each and every minute we worked. You work eight hours a day you had to report on those eight hours, for so many minutes you did this, you did that. Every Friday we had to submit report books of what we did during the week." That has changed, the strictness has been removed. This is a system that was based on Max Weber's (1964) bureaucratic system of government, in which one of the most vital aspects would be the recording of administrative acts, decisions and rules. This documentation of activities is central to records management in the public sector, which seems to have been eroded in the public sector; it was a system that made sure that work was done.

Interviewee 2A (interview, November 13, 2012) agrees that the whole attitude and approach has changed,. "It was extremely rigid and organised; it's now a question of people doing things their own way. They are highly educated so they want to do what they want to do according to the rules, the way they understand things,

and its part of the reason records management can't be implemented." It appears that this sort of approach to work is influenced by the introduction of New Public Management to replace the more bureaucratic Public Administration system of government which was the system of the apartheid government. There was already a breakdown in the administrative fabric of the apartheid government in the 1980s (Chipkin, 2011). With a change to NPM on an already unravelling system, this caused a major breakdown of the record-keeping function. Lane (1994) says that one of the implications of this change would be a movement away from standard rules and set procedures for doing things to a more adaptive and innovative way of doing things to maximise individual capacity. Chipkin (2012) has reported that the NPM has been the model that has been used to orient government functions since 1990.

Interviewee 2A (interview, November 13, 2012) gives a vivid example of how much basic administrative tasks are ignored in departments. "Records management is seen as an administrator function. Now if you look at DTI, our focus is on growing the economy and that's import. So something administrative like records management is not as important compared to how many jobs we have created or how many imports and exports we have. So the focus especially on the executive level is strategic and getting the economy of this country to grow." The interviewee explains that there is a misunderstanding there, because basic tasks and individual duties are the ones that make it possible to achieve the great strategic goals, and records play an integral part in all of this. Respondent 2B agrees that there is a lot of good planning and good strategy sessions but actual implementation still always an issue.

The erosion of the administrative fabric is definitely a factor in the demise in importance of the NARS in South Africa's public sector. This means that the managers and senior managers in government do not really take basic administrative tasks seriously, because they focus on the strategy and are

oblivious to the management of basic administrative activities. Interviewee 2A (interview, November 13, 2012) commented that without the support of senior management it is easy for junior level staff to ignore the tasks of records management.

4.4.6 Inability of the NARS to enforce compliance

In addition, it's a legal issue that the NARS is unable to enforce compliance to the NARS act and the standards that they put in place. This is because they do not have the powers to act on government departments which do not comply. NARS 43 of 1996 does not provide any clause; in the event of non-compliance, the act is completely silent. Interviewee 1C (interview, June 04, 2012) is concerned that the NARS does not have any power in terms of administering consequences for not being compliant with the NARS act and standards which makes the NARS toothless.

It is a further challenge that records managers do not have senior management posts which could allow them to enforce compliance. This is a legal challenge as well. Respondent 2B (interview, November 19, 2012) laments that the National Archives act does not specify the level to which a records manager will be appointed in public institutions; furthermore a records manager is not appointed but designated meaning that anyone, even a person not qualified ucan be designated a records manager. The act is silent on crucial matters which would legally bind departments to perform records management tasks effectively.

Another angle that brings about the inability to enforce compliance is one that pertains to status. Interviewee 1A (interview, May 5, 2012) expresses concern that the NARS do not have the teeth to make an impression on their client offices. "If the auditor general reported to Parliament about the bad state of records management in governmental bodies then probably action will be taken."

According to interviewee 1C, because of the lack of capacity of the NARS to enforce sound records management practice in the public sector they have entered into an MOU with the AG in which the AG would report to the NARS on lack of compliance in their audit visits. The MOU with the AG was entered into upon realising the NARS does not have the clout to pursue their regulatory mandate and the AG. The NARS has no influence and capacity to enforce compliance. Interviewee 2A (interview, November 13, 2012) agrees that NARS are sitting there and they are toothless, they are too small at this stage, "I don't think they have the resources or even the relevant skills to actually enforce this through government." Interviewee 1B (interview, June 01, 2012), a NARS official confirms that, "we do not have the people and the skills to advise clients on retention periods."

It is clear from the above that the NARS is struggling to perform its duty due to the lack of capacity. The biggest challenge is the inability of the NARS act on some vital issues that pertain to compliance. Another challenge is the status of the NARS, the way they are viewed, which has resulted in the inability make a serious impression on the departments they regulate.

A crucial entity of this research was to establish the reason behind the neglect of the NARS function. This section therefore provided an interesting dimension to the research by linking and legitimate reasons as to why the NARS as been neglected in the public sector. The fact that records are not considered a vital resource by the current government has been demonstrated. It has meant that technological advancement has been advocated for, but there has been no real attempt to understand why there is a need to modernise the public service. Furthermore, the nature of the public service, and the model which was chosen to influence its nature, the NPM, has played a huge part in the neglect of the records management function. This influence was on top of an already unravelling administration in the apartheid period. What then would be the implications of

this sort of neglect? It was a dedicated question in this research. As explored in the literature review, records possess value in both administrative and accountability initiatives, particularly because they provide an audit trail. It is interesting to note that respondents agreed with these values and pointed out that a neglect of records management would cause a deficiency in these areas.

4.5 IMPLICATIONS OF NEGLECT OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

Respondents identified the following effects of the neglect of the records management function: non-compliance to the NARS act, the lack of an audit trail, ineffective administration, lack of public accountability and organisational and social memory eroded.

The general neglect of the records management function in the public sector means that departments are going against the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA). Interviewee 2A (interview, November 13, 2012) observes that one of the major issues that emerged is the lack of compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. As noted in the first chapter, the function of the NARS is primarily statutory, as it is a requirement of the constitution of South Africa that information is managed efficiently for it to be a useful strategic resource.

According to interviewee 1C (interview, June 04, 2012), space for records that are not managed well is costly, some records which should not be kept will be kept and some that should be kept will be destroyed and that could cost the organisation legally, financially and administratively. Auditors, also, request documents to perform their tasks and without that information it becomes a major issue. This means that records that are not managed well will cost the organisation legally, due to non-compliance with the NARS Act.

Respondent 1B (interview, June 01, 2012) confirms that, "the non-compliance to regulated standards placed by the NARS is primarily a legal issue, because the function of the NARS is a statutory one, therefore there is a danger of acting against the constitution." Besides the neglect of records management activities being a compliance issue, there is a major disadvantage that comes with inefficient administration in departments.

4.5.1 Inefficient administration

One of the major results of the neglect of the records management function in the South African public sector is the inefficient management of basic administrative tasks. As discussed in chapter two, the primary value of records in an organisation is the support of basic administrative tasks. In that chapter, the role of records in financial management, human resources management and payroll control is explained at length. Miller (1999) gives an explanation as to the role of records in payroll control; the personnel file should be the primary source of evidence that a person actually exists, that the grade is appropriate to the salary paid and that any additional benefits are appropriate and have been authorised. Entries on the payroll database should be checked against an authoritative source to ensure that the person actually exists and that payments have been authorised. It therefore follows that records are vital in administration, and lack thereof would result in maladministration.

According to interviewee 2B, (interview, November 19, 2012), without sound records management practice in the public sector, there will be deficiency in the basic administrative tasks that make a department function on a daily basis. "Our administration continues to rot and rot and rot." Interviewee 3A (interview, November 12, 2012) agrees that if information is not well organised, the day-to-day administration and management work is much more difficult to perform if information is not readily available. Records management ensures the information

is readily available and that decisions are made faster. For example according to 2C (interview, November 19, 2012) the Eddington hospital in Durban managed to improve service delivery due to the fact that they improved their filing system.

The management of the hospital is said to have made it a point to ensure that their patient files where managed well so that when clients come it would not take long to actually find their files. This is a typical example of how the efficient management of records could go a long way in ensuring a much more efficient administration. It is also important to note that part of the focus in turning around the functionality of the South African Revenue Authority (SARS) and the Department of Home Affairs has been to improve record-keeping activities in those institutions. The lack of a proper functioning records management structure results in maladministration and the lack of proper audit trail. This relationship is not a linear one, but one in which both efficient administration and audit trail are dependent on each other.

4.5.2 Lack of an audit trail

The lack of sound records management practice in the public sector makes it impossible to have an audit trail of the actions taken in the course of business. Basically a record is created as evidence of transaction. It is the record's implicit claim to importance; its properties allow it to provide evidence of actions taken and this is what makes it unique compared to other generic sources of information. Both administration and accountability depend heavily on this audit trail provided by records. Interviewee 2B (interview, November 19, 2012), admits that without records it is impossible to prove that a certain decision has been made and understand the process that led to the decision. Furthermore, it is impossible to detect malpractice such as fraud and corruption without records.

According to 2C (interview, November 19, 2012), if good records management practice is set as a standard in South Africa and everyone in the public institutions is in support then it would be possible to more effectively detect corruption and fraud. For example, Van der Merwe (2004) reports that a paper trail of minutes, letters and documents was used to uncover irregular activities in the case against former Deputy Minister of Social Development, David Malatsi, in the Western Cape Province. Records meticulously kept in 2002 by Ingrid Coetzee, the Director of Environment Management were a key component in the Scorpions corruption case against Malatsi.

According to respondent 3B (interview, November, 08, 2012) audit reports are always confirming that poor records management is impacting the audit process. There are always stories about the AG being unable to form an opinion over certain local authorities and departments because there are no records in those departments. It is impossible for an administration without sound records management practice to have a proper audit trail. The Auditor General has expressed concern in the report of 2012 that some departments and local authorities have been impossible to audit due to the lack of records. Interviewee 2B, a records manager in the Department of the Auditor General confirms that for the auditor general to form an opinion there has to be evidence in the form of records to show that activities have been carried out in a particular manner. In most cases it's impossible for the auditor general to get records because of the state of records management in the public sector. This has an impact on administrative accountability which records play a crucial role as discussed in the second chapter. Therefore the lack of an audit trail also results in the lack of accountability which is another major effect of neglecting the records management function in the public sector.

4.5.3 Lack of public accountability

Records, as discussed in the third chapter of this report are a vital component of an accountability regime in the public sector. Accountability sits as a fundamental pillar in South Africa's young democracy, and records are well understood as vital to accountability. In fact the NARS Act No. 8 of 1996 confirms that one of the major responsibilities of the NARS is to ensure sound records management practice in the public sector for accountability purposes. Interviewee 3A (interview, November 12, 2012) explains that that if the administration is not managing records properly then it will be impossible for there to be organisational and administrative accountability which is a fundamental problem in any institution. According to interviewee 3B, without records it is impossible to be accountable as one has to prove the actions they have taken to whomever they are accountable. Chapter two discusses the various types of accountability, giving ways in which records play vital roles in each, of which organisational and administrative accountability is vital especially in the public sector.

The role of records in accountability means that without sound records management practice it is impossible for a government to be accountable, both internally and externally. It also means that social memory, which records and archives seek to maintain, is eroded. The particular relationship between social memory and accountability through access to information is explored as well in the second chapter of the research.

4.5.4 Organisational and social memory is eroded

Another serious implication to the neglect of the function of the NARS is the erosion of organisational and social memory. As discussed in chapter 2, records of enduring value end up being preserved in the archives for posterity. These records help to build up social and organisational memory which is vital for future decision-making. According to interviewee 1D (interview, September 04, 2012),

without sound records management it is impossible to foster organisational memory which ensures the continuity of the running of a department. Whenever there is a new employees or a new minister, things have to change drastically because there are no records of previous actions taken.

Furthermore, according to 1D (interview, September 04, 2012), societal memory is eroded, as the archives will not receive any records of important activities which were fundamental to the state of society at that moment. Records have the ability to redress discrepancies of the past in future, such as land issues and chieftainship issues which are currently being redressed with aid of records in the National Archives. According to 1D, some of the most used records in the archive at the moment pertain to land claims and chieftainship disputes all of which are some of the most pervasive vehicles of oppression under apartheid.

In the second chapter the researcher went to lengths to explain the values of records and one of them is the vitality of records to social memory. Records are social constructs derived from the information needs and social values of rulers, government, associations and individuals who establish and maintain them, (Schwartz and Cook, 2002). It is within the nature of records to provide a documentary heritage that aids the development of social memory. Therefore the neglect of the NARS function results in the erosion of social memory.

It is interesting to note that the implications of the neglect of the records management function noted by respondents were discussed in the literature review of this research. The major implication is the maladministration that emerges from the lack of records management. The suggestion is not that lack of sound records management practice is the single cause of maladministration; however the point is there records are a strategic administrative resource and their poor management contributes to maladministration.

4.6 SUMMARY

The chapter provides a presentation of the findings of the research. It has been the priority to answer the questions that were raised in the first chapter concerning the neglect of the function of the NARS in the public sector. The first question was to establish whether indeed the South African public sector neglects the records management function. It emerged from the interviews that there definitely was a neglect of this function as witnessed in particular cases of the treatment of staff shortages in the NARS by the DAC, the low ranking of records managers in the public sector, the non-compliance to the NARS act, low budget allocation and space shortages in the NARS. The research sought to raise the question to a higher level by explaining the reason behind this neglect by broader processes of government. It emerged that one of the major reasons behind the neglect of the NARS has been technological advancement which did not take into consideration the vitality of information itself, and not just the technology. Furthermore, this is compounded by the lack of recognition of records as a strategic administrative resource. This brought about the abandonment of the suggested replacement of the NARS outside the DAC to a more relevant department or portfolio. Furthermore, the vitality of basic administrative activities has been eroded by the movement from the bureaucratic system of government to the NPM. The research then sought to highlight the implications of this neglect as these were identified as being non-compliant with the NARS act, the weakening of basic but vital administration in the public sector, the lack of an audit trail, the weakening of accountability in the democracy and the erosion of social and organisational memory.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The NARS is charged with the responsibility to ensure sound records management practice in the South African public sector. However steep challenges have been faced in pursing mechanisms such as storing archival records, inspecting government departments, approving file plans, creating classification systems, approving disposal authority and training personnel in the public sector. This research was based on the notion that the NARS functions in the public sector are neglected. The aim therefore was to establish what the reality is and to understand why that is the case.

In the previous chapter, the researcher sought to present and analyse the data that was gathered in the research. This was done by interviewing NARS staff, records management personnel in government departments and academics in the field. The research was been focused on exploring the idea that there appears to be neglect of the records management function in the South African public sector. As presented in the previous chapter, the first question sought to establish that the NARS has indeed been neglected by providing evidence to such a claim. The researcher discovered that the NARS has been struggling to perform its task particularly because of the meagre staff complement that they currently have. A typical example that ran through all the interviews with NARS staff was the allocation of resources totalling R700 million in 2010 to build new repositories, which was taken away due to the need to build soccer stadiums.

The second question hinged upon the need to raise the problems in the NARS to speak to broader issues of the nature of the South African public sector. The researcher sought to do this by understanding the reasons behind the neglect of the record keeping function in the public sector. It emerged that records management, is not considered an important administrative resource and because of the that, the NARS is neglected. This is evidenced by the lack of commitment to fill up empty posts on the part of the DAC.

Finally the study examined the implications of the neglect of the NARS and the record-keeping function in the public sector. It was established that the administrative wing of South Africa's government has unravelled due to lack of attention to record-keeping standards. Furthermore, organisational and administrative accountability would be impossible without sound record-keeping systems.

The aim of this chapter therefore was to draw up conclusions of the research. This will be accomplished by answering the questions raised in the first chapter. But first, here is a synopsis of previous chapters.

5.2 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The main issues that emerged from the research process were the inability of the NARS to perform its functions due to lack of capacity; the issue that records are not considered a vital resource in the public sector; and the way in which NPM has eroded the value of basic administrative tasks which has contributed to maladministration.

The conclusive statements with regard these issues are presented in the detail below.

5.2.1 Inability of the NARS to perform its functions

It was established from the research process that the NARS is currently unable to perform its functions as stipulated in the NARS act of 1996 due to its neglect in the public sector. There are several reasons behind the inability of the NARS to perform their function as public sector records management regulator. Staff shortages were identified as the main reason behind this inability and have resulted in major sections, such as the records management and the repository sections, to function on skeleton staff. The records management section is actually crippled to the extent that they cannot perform any of their tasks at all. A section that used to function with 18 people, (and even then there was a staff shortage), is now functioning with four people. It is damning that a task such as the approval of all file plans from government departments and agencies is performed by one person. The approval of disposal authority is also done by one person, who also acts as the head of the section. The inspection of public bodies which amount to 4000 at national level is done by one person. There is no doubt that the magnitude of work in both sections does not reflect the number of people who work there.

Furthermore, the repository section does not have any space to house records of enduring value. The last time records where received was during the apartheid period, hence, there is a serious backlog of records that should be transferred to the repository from public bodies but cannot be transferred due to lack of space. The result has been the inability of this institution to perform this important function. It has also caused fundamental challenges in departments as they have to look for space to house these records. The preservation of records of enduring value is one of the most important functions of the NARS. In fact all their other activities emanate from this function; they however cannot perform this function. Furthermore, money that had been allocated by the National Treasury to build new repositories in 2010 was recalled due to the Soccer World Cup.

Some mechanisms that were previously used to pursue NARS mandate such as training of departmental staff in the public sector have been abandoned. Attempts to fill the post of the staff member who resigned in 2008 have been futile, due to lack of budget to replace him. Attempts to outsource the service have been rejected as well, because the DAC would not approve the funds for that to happen. It was on the basis of the above evidence that the researcher came to the conclusion that the NARS is unable to perform their functions. This inability does not come from a lack of skill, but from a neglect of this function in the public sector. As discussed in the previous chapter, the NARS has been neglected in the public sector, and it has been impossible to function due to this neglect. If one has a look at the issues that have affected the NARS, and efforts that have been put to solve this issue, and the response that these attempts have been met with, particularly within the DAC, it is not hard to see that the institution has been neglected. Issues have not been resolved because the NARS is not recognised as a strategic institution that regulates an essential function.

5.2.2 The neglect of records management in the public sector

The value of record-keeping is particularly undervalued in the DAC. Records are not understood as a crucial administrative resource, and even if they were, the DAC is not the correct department to oversee that work; hence there has been a neglect of the functions of the NARS. Information and records are crucial strategic resources that facilitate efficient administration, as established in the literature review of the study. The value of records to any administrative activity cannot be disputed; an examination of how useful such records are to human resources, financial management and payroll control illustrate this fact. There is, however, a serious lack of understanding of the value records play in the public sector. For example, advancement in the use of computer technology has been heavily advocated and implemented however, when technology was introduced in the workings of the public sector, there was no real attempt to consult the NARS

and other information practitioners in order to align this modernisation with the imperatives of information and records management.

There is also a lack of understanding of the value of records to the general administration of basic government activities. For instance, the NARS, a highly administrative organisation is placed under the DAC, which is a cultural organisation. There is a link between the heritage which the NARS preserves in records and the DAC, but the inner workings of the NARS are highly administrative and not cultural. Hence the NARS can be viewed as an important heritage resource, but the system within the NARS is a highly administrative one. A look at other international trends in regards to the placement of national archival institutions reveals a significant lack of understanding of what the NARS does in South Africa. In Canada the national archival institution is a stand-alone institution while in Zimbabwe it falls under the Ministry of Home Affairs. The fact that there was a recommendation by the TRC to make the institution a stand-alone institution in the 1990's, and that this recommendation was not implemented is also testament to the fact that the management of records in the public sector is not taken very seriously.

Another significant indicator of the neglect of this function is the low ranking of records managers in public bodies. This aspect runs parallel with a low entry level for archivists in the NARS. Level 6, compared to level 8 or even 9 in other departments is evidence that the significance of the profession is clearly underestimated in South Africa. A profession with high vacancy rates in the public sector is unable to attract any new people because of the low salaries that the DPSA allocates to this profession.

5.2.3 Basic administrative tasks are undervalued

As noted in the literature review, South Africa's administrative structure was already unravelling towards the end of the apartheid era. The apartheid government struggled to maintain an efficient administration, especially due to the fragmentation of the government through the establishment of Bantustan governments. Therefore, the new government in 1994 inherited a malfunctioning administration. It was at this stage that the NPM was being advocated for as the best form of government internationally and its principles were advocated and adopted by the new democratic government.

In the real sense, NPM itself does not undermine basic administrative tasks such a records management. It assumes that these will be done efficiently, and it pursues an extension to efficient administration. However, if a system that is inefficient introduces NPM, the results are not as pleasing. Therein lies the uniqueness of the manifestation of the NPM in South Africa. The assumption that basic administrative tasks will be done efficiently has left senior managers and politicians oblivious to the need to ensure that these small but important tasks are carried out. The focus is more on managerialism, and building strategy without understanding that the small tasks such as records management build up to capacity for the strategy to be implemented effectively. The raise in the number of managers in the public service is a serious indicator of this managerialism as indicated in the literature review.

Furthermore, administering basic activities effectively and efficiently is not high on the list priority of the South African government. There are issues that are much more urgent and pressing. For example, Redressing the ills of the past apartheid government, and creating a black middle class to match that of the white has been the priority, and in effect, some seemingly small matters such as records

management are easily ignored by senior management. One cannot ignore the fact that records management and administration are the least of priorities in the public sector.

5.2.4 Maladministration in the public sector

It is no secret that the South African public sector is inefficient. There are pockets of excellence here and there, but it is plausible to say that generally, the public sector is inefficient. It should be noted that the lack of seriousness towards records management is not the only cause of this maladministration. Neither is it the greatest. However the researcher argues that records are a crucial administrative resource, and lack of efficiency in any administrative act can be attributed, to a certain extent, to lack of sound records management practice. The Eddington Hospital in Durban is a typical example. Seeking to improve service delivery, they made sure their records management system was improved and this helped reduce the time spent looking for patients documents and thus reduce the Length of queues.

Records go a long way in ensuring efficiency in administration. It cannot be denied that a record's implicit claim to importance is the ability to offer an audit trail of actions taken. And these actions are fundamental for future administrative action. This is what allows it to provide for a smoother administrative process. Therefore it is true that sound records management practice make it possible to increase efficiency in administrative tasks in the public sector. And the fact that there is maladministration in the South African public sector is attributed in this research to lack of sound records management practise.

5.2.5 The neglect of record keeping impacts negatively on democracy

One of the important issues that was revealed in the research process is the neglect of the records-keeping function has a negative impact on the democratic process

in the young nation of South Africa. Because records are important to the administrative process, and because they facilitate the efficient running of government bodies, it is hard not to notice that their neglect is actually compromising democratic initiatives. Democratic governments are called on to serve the citizenry effectively, and to ensure the betterment of the livelihoods of people through efficient service delivery. This is one of the core pillars of a democratic initiative, and administrative processes are meant to enhance the smooth running of service delivery. Given the importance of record keeping to administrative processes as much discussed in this research, a neglect of this function is actually a neglect of the democratic process in South Africa. The improvement of service delivery in the department of Home Affairs is an example. There is no doubt that any inhabitant of South Africa, citizen and non-citizen is affected directly by the work of Home Affairs in terms of documentation. And there is a need to ensure that this department functions effectively. There has been a turnaround in the work of this department in recent years, and one of the initiatives to achieve that turnaround has been the improvement of record-keeping activities. Good record-keeping practice has made it possible for Home Affairs to be a lot more efficient in their function of documenting the nation. So what is true is that a compromise on the records-keeping function affects the democratic process.

Furthermore, records are important in providing an audit trail. It goes without saying that record-keeping is an important entity in the pursuance of accountability in any organisation. The South African public sector recognises this, which is why records are an integral part of the PAIA act. Information concerning the activities of government is provided by such records. And any democratic government can be called upon to ensure accountability by access to records of governmental activities. Therefore a neglect of this function contributes to the watering down of democracy initiatives in South Africa's young democracy.

5.3 ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first question was: What evidence is there to suggest that the South African public sector does not place value on the functions of the NARS?

One of the most telling pieces of evidence that the South African public sector undervalues the NARS functions is the inability to resolve staff shortages. Staff shortages are caused by a high staff turnover, which is attributed to the low entry level for archivists in the NARS. The level is determined by DPSA, and this is further evidence that the functions of the NARS are disregarded. Attempts to fill vacant posts have been fruitless, due to the lack of commitment from senior management in the DAC. Furthermore, records managers in the public sector are low ranking, which renders them incapable of enforcing compliance in their respective departments.

This is testament to the fact that the South African public sector does not value the function of the NARS. There is also widespread non-compliance to standards set by the NARS to enhance sound record management practice. This is because the NARS does not have the status and power, to be able to enforce the regulations they put in place. The inability of the National Treasury to commit to expanding the repositories in favour of soccer stadiums is also demonstration of the lack of importance of the NARS in the South African public sector.

The second research question was: What are the reasons behind this disregard for the NARS functions?

It emerged that one of the most fundamental reasons behind the neglect of NARS is the advancement in technology which has not involved the NARS at planning level. In a sense, the NARS has not been instrumental in the advancement of standards that have to do with electronic records; therefore they seem to have

fallen off the radar when it comes to regulation of electronic records. This is because technology is understood to be vital in the public sector, but the information that technology seeks to manage is not regarded as strategic.

The placement of the NARS in the DAC is also a reason behind the neglect of the NARS, because the DAC is a cultural organisation, and the NARS is highly administrative. Hence the NARS has been misunderstood in the DAC, leaving them toothless and unable to enforce compliance. It is also attributed to NPM as the nature of government adopted over and above a malfunctioning administration that was adopted in the 1990s that an administrative institution such as the NARS is neglected. Crucial administrative activities such as records management have been neglected and senior managers have not ensured that basic tasks are carried out.

The third question was: What are the implications of the neglect of the functions of the NARS?

Records are vital for the continuity and assessment of activity. They provide an audit trail which makes it possible to make informed decisions. The neglect of the NARS function has primary implications. The lack of sound records management practice contributes to maladministration. A lack of audit trail makes it impossible to have administrative and organisational accountability. Furthermore, social and organisational memory is eroded making it impossible to have continuity in government institutions.

5.4 SUMMARY

The research sought to explore the idea that the South African public sector does not place value on its records management systems. The follow-up question to this idea was focused on finding out why there is a neglect of this function.

It would be authoritative at this stage to conclude that indeed the South African public sector does not place enough value on the record keeping function. The question is why should they place priority on this function, and if they do not, why that is the case. Ultimately, records management is a basic administrative task. It is imperative that records are managed well from their creation to their disposal. And the NARS is the institution charged with regulating this function in the public sector. However, they are crippled and unable to function, due to lack of capacity, human resources being a case in point. Their role is not considered important in the public sector, which is why attempts to fill posts vacant since 2008 have been futile. Furthermore, the NARS has suffered due to their placement in the DAC. Of particular concern is the cultural and heritage inclination of the department, which does not sit well with the administrative function of the NARS. At the end of the day, records do have a heritage value, but the processes that they go through for them to arrive to that stage are not cultural, they are administrative. This is precisely why the DAC is not the right department for the NARS to fall under.

The intention has been to look at these challenges, which are obvious for everyone to see, and try to understand why the NARS is considered unimportant. This is not to say that the government has systematically made it a priority to cripple or sideline the NARS. However, as this research revealed this neglect speaks to a broader issue of the nature of the South African public sector. What form has it taken to for such a basic but crucial administrative resource to be neglected? Two broad issues emerged as answers to these questions.

The first was that there are focus areas in the South African public sector, just like any other government. And the pursuance of sound administration is assumed in South Africa, but in reality it is not being practice. There are seemingly bigger issues that the government needs to deal with, and this is particularly seen in the need to redress the ills of the apartheid government. Therefore policies are

directed towards that, and seemingly smaller matters like the basic administrative task of records management end up being neglected.

The NPM was adopted as the system of government in the 1990s. This was done implemented an already unravelling administrative system of the later apartheid state. This means that NPM was adopted on an already crumbling administration. The NPM seeks to focus more on running government at a strategic and managerial level more efficiently, and to allow for innovativeness and this has brought about a challenge for the basic administrative tasks such as record-keeping, because senior managers are not too concerned about ensuring the small jobs such are done well. NPM does not advocate the erosion of these basic but important tasks, however the South African public sector adopted this system on top of a government whose administrative fabric was already beginning to breakdown. This has resulted in a serious gap in the functioning of government. What has emerged is a government that struggles administratively partly because record-keeping is neglected. Service delivery is poor in the public sector, and it is reasonable to attribute this to poor record-keeping. Examples of improved service delivery championed by records management have been given in this research. If a government is unable to offer efficient service delivery, then it has compromised its democratic principle. Thus poor record-keeping results in a compromise of the democratic values of South Africa's young nation. Furthermore, if records are not managed well, it affects the process of accountability which is put to effect partly by access to records of governmental activities. It is therefore important to pay particular attention to record-keeping in South Africa's public service and seek to improve this function because it is important to democracy.

5.5 WAY FORWARD

It was not within the remit of the research to provide recommendations. The intention was to shed light on the function of record-keeping in the public sector and how it has influenced the work of the public sector. However, one major

suggestion towards improving the state of record keeping in the public sector emerged in the research; that is the placement of NARS in the DAC.

The researcher understood that some of the fundamental challenges being faced by the NARS resonate from this structure. For instance, the human resources issue is supposed to be dealt with by the department, but because they do not quite understand what the NARS does, and the work of the NARS does not really resonate with that of the DAC, the human resources section does not fully make it a priority to resolve this issue.

Therefore it is important to attend to this matter in order to improve the work of the NARS. For example, placing the department under the auditor general makes sense, considering the auditing function of the NARS in records management. Another option would be to make the NARS a stand-alone institution which directly reports to Parliament. This way they would be able to fulfill their own function and move in a direction that helps to improve records management. This would be in line with international practice such as in Canada and the USA.

5.6 AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

There are many opportunities for future research that have emerged from this research. The exploratory nature of this research makes it possible to further pursue more areas of research.

There is a need to explore the state of records management in the South African public sector, particularly in the public sector in general. Literature has been thin at this level, and it would be valuable to understand the state of records management in the public sector because it helps to provide a basis upon which further research can be done in order to provide solutions to the challenges the NARS is facing.

It would also be valuable to understand the influence of the NPM and its effect on the functioning of the South African public sector. Of particular interest would be what negatives and positives that have emerged from the adoption of this model, and what could be done to make it much more effective than it is.

Another possibility is trying to understand the attitudes and behaviors towards basic administrative activities in the public sector: how staff understand these activities, and what sort of value to they place on them. Furthermore, it would help to gain perspective of what sort of challenges these people face in the pursuance of these objectives.

In the literature review, the researcher suggested that the neglect of record-keeping could be aiding corruption. It would be an interesting area of research to attempt to understand whether there are actually people in the public sector who are invested in ensuring that records are not managed well in order to avoid corrupt activities being traced. Furthermore, it would provide an interesting dimension to find out whether corruption is being aided by this lack of record keeping.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Individual participant information sheet

Research topic: The role of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa in the young democracy

Dear research participant

The researcher at the Graduate School of Public and Development Management of the University of Witwatersrand is appealing for your assistance by making yourself available for an individual interview.

I am currently conducting a research study with the aim of understanding the value of the function the NARS in the South African public sector and to understand why this function appears to be undervalued.

You are kindly asked to respond to a set of questions by the researcher. The researcher will ask you questions in relation to the topic and you are required to provide detailed answers to this questions. The researcher may also ask for clarity to get more information. Your answers will be recorded only with your permission.your permission.

Your rights as a participant, including the right to withdraw at any time without penalty, are ensured. You can leave the study, or ask for a break at any time, at any stage.

You are requested not to disclose any instances of corruption that you know of, as the information you provide is not protected from any legal process that might occur.

The researcher may publish the findings of the research in peer reviewed journals or present them at conferences. Your anonymity is guaranteed and your confidential information cannot be disclosed.

For further information please do not hesitate to contact M. Yuba on: 0717444683.

If you have any questions, please ask them now.

If you would like to participate in the research please sign the attached consent form.

Yours sincerely
Masimba Yuba: Wits University Student
Horacio Zandamela: Student Leader, University of Witwatersrand

Appendix 2: Participant consent orm: individual interviews

Titte of the research project: the role of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa in the young democracy.

Researcher: Masimba Yuba

Researchers contact details: Mobile: 0717444683
                                            Student Number: 597690

Dear research participant

If you agree to be interviewed, please sign the consent below.

Consent:

I agree to participate in the research project. I have read the participant information sheet, which is attached to this form. I understand what my role will be in this research and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I am satisfied with the instructions I have been given so for and I may request further information at any stage of the research project.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research interview at any time, for the reason and without prejudice.

I understand that I have the right not to be recorded if I so with.

I have been informed that anonymity will be used in research report, but confidentiality of the information I provide will not be guaranteed, if I provide full details.

I am free to ask any questions at any time before, during and after the study.
I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet.

I have not been coerced in any way to participate in this study.

Data protection: I agree to the researcher and the University of Witwatersrand processing personal data that I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the research project as outlined to me.

Name of Participant (print)………………….. Signed………………..Date……………
Name of witness (print)…………………… Signed……………….. Date………………

Appendix 3: Tape recording consent form

Dear Research Participant

If you agree to be audio recorded, please sign the consent below.

Consent

I agree to participate in the above research project. I have read the Participant Information Sheet and signed the participant consent form, which are attached here to this form. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I am satisfied with instructions I have been given so far and I may request further information at any stage of the research project.

I have been informed that anonymity will be used in the research report, but confidentiality of the information I provide will not be guaranteed if I provide my full names.
I am free to ask any questions at any time before, during and after the interview.

I agree to be audio recorded by the researcher.

I have not been coerced in any way to be tape recorded.

I understand that I am free to ask the researcher to stop the tape recording of the interviews at any time, for any reason without prejudice.

Data protection: I agree to the researcher and the University of Witwatersrand processing personal data that I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the research project as outlined to me.

Name of Participant (print)………………….. Signed………………..Date……………
Name of witness (print)…………………… Signed……………….. Date………………

Appendix 4 Individual interview questions

A. What evidence is there to suggest that the South African public sector does not place value on the functions of the NARS?

1. Would you provide a brief back round of yourself, what you do and your history in the field?
2. What challenges are associated with your work, what are the difficulties you encounter in doing your work?
3. What are the organisational challenges that make it difficult for the organisation to achieve its goals?
4. What attempts have been made to solve these challenges?
5. How successful have these attempts been?
6. What have been the hindrances to these attempts?

B. What are the reasons behind this disregard for the NARS functions?

1. What is the attitude towards records management in the South African Public sector?
2. What would you say are the challenges associated with records management in the public sector in general?
3. What is the difference between the apartheid era records management system and the democratic government's one?
4. What are the similarities?
5. What would you note as the reason behind this change?
6. In your personal opinion what is the reason behind the neglect of the records management function in the public sector?

C. What are the implications of the neglect of the functions of the NARS?

1. How has the lack of compliance to records management standards affected your department?
2. What has been the result of the challenges that have been faced in the NARS.