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# THE NEW AND THE OLD IN THE COMPLEX OF POWER RELATIONS IN THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE – A POLEMIC EDITORIAL

*M.H. Maserumule*  
*Guest Editor*

In the editorialisation of this 2012 March edition of the *Journal of Public Administration* I could not think of a more appropriate parlance with which to capture the thematic essence of the articles that comprise it than to say the greatness of scholarship is not in the age of a scholar, but in the wit and ingenuity employed to navigate uncharted epistemological grounds. It is in this context that this polemic editorial, nostalgic of the Minnowbrook intellectualism spawned by the complex of power relations in the contestation of intellectual space and the hegemonic gerontocracy competing with the new in shaping the evolution of public administration as a field of study, is themed. As the old paradigms outreach their epistemological depth and utilitarian value, “the interest in change of [their] epochal character adds gravity” (Johnson, 2007:96) to the search for an alternative frame of thinking. However, the pursuit for an alternative paradigm is not an easy exercise as the old refuses to accept the reality of its fate in various ways that even go to the extent of using or abusing state apparatuses to obtrusively assert its irrelevance, thereby disturbing the efficiency of the industry of knowledge. History is awash with precedents of attempts to expunge ideas whose time has come. With the passage of time, such attempts proved futile, as it is almost impossible to contain ideas whose time has come. Socrates was incarcerated by the Athenian government for his ideas, which were labeled impious. In trying to instill a sense of courage in those that faced the intellectual tyranny of established credos, Socrates insisted, as an American moral philosopher Susan Neiman (2008:17) writes, “that we should rise above whatever particular mire happens to grip us, in order to seek something better and truer”. We need to draw instructions from these words, for their instructiveness is a befitting counsel to the challenges that beset that intellectual energy, “which is entirely called for the freeing, the progress and the happiness of Africa” (Fanon, 2001:166).

As it is almost impossible to expunge ideas whose time has come, the incarceration of Socrates was not in vain. His ideas begot Plato, whose philosophy has probably had more influence on the theory of knowledge “than that of any other man” (Greek Philosopher Plato 81, undated: on-line). Plato begot Aristotle, who, unfortunately, became arrogant about being corrected as the obsession with authority got to him, to the extent that those who dared challenge him were arrested. Galileo Galilei, an Italian scientist who subscribed to Copernicanism, is among those who suffered the wrath of Aristotle, with state apparatuses

unleashed to silence him. He was arrested, but his ideas defied the confines of prison to profoundly change our world view (Aristotle's Authority, undated: on-line). An idea whose time has come cannot be obliterated, no matter how hard state apparatuses are used or abused to achieve this end. In our recent history we find Antonio Gramsci, who was also persecuted for his ideas, which also refused to succumb to the limitations imposed by incarceration. To date Gramsci's *Selections from the Prisons Notebooks* is used as an analytical framework and a source of inspiration to challenge hegemonic tendencies in the complex of power relations in the politics of knowledge.

The list of martyrs of truthful knowledge in our history is endless, to which a common thread that characterise them is that their physical being was limited by the context of their times. However, their intellectual being is immortal, timeless, and resonates profoundly with the contemporary. An idea whose time has come cannot be dismembered from the progressive body of knowledge, no matter how hard the established creeds try to undermine it. The belligerence of the aging paradigm engenders a complex interplay between emergence and continuity, "with the old playing new roles in emerging formations" (Johnson, 2007:96), impelled by the desire to maintain the status quo. In his column in the *Free State Times* of 9 March 2012, titled 'Stakes are High in Politics of Academia', Munene Mwaniki (2012) describes this interplay as "the science and art of complex or aggregate power relations" (p. 10). Being dismissive of the new so as to obtrusively assert its steadfastness for hegemonic ends, the old epitomises nihilism. It appropriates to itself the epithet of giant with connotations that the new represents dwarfism rather than alternative thinking. John Kenneth Galbraith, an American economist, recognises this phenomenon in *The New Industrial State*, where he made reference to "a sizeable group of economists who unhesitatingly associate whatever they have been told to believe in their youth with absolute scholarship. Anything alien to such installed belief is deficient" (1979: xi). Likewise, John Maynard Keynes, in his *General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*, observes that "there are not many who are influenced by new ideas or theories after they are twenty or thirty years of age, so that the ideas which civil servants and politicians and even agitators apply to current events are not likely to be the newest" (1973:383-384).

When the young becomes old it refuses to consider new perspectives and inevitably reproduced itself in a hegemony used as a firewall against anything new. One can just imagine the extent of conservatism of the old especially when the antagonists of emerging knowledge are septuagenarians, whose ideational outlook is steeped in the past, determined to impose the irrelevance of their scholarship orientation as relevant. This takes the form of exploiting the relationship they had with the publishing companies to publish texts based on the paradigms that history had long declared irrelevant in the science of governance. Regurgitating government policies, systems and processes in such texts is often misconstrued as scholarship. This is mediocrity in the extreme, which also finds its way into the journals of those whose editorship fear serious scholarship. The editorship of those journals whose re-orientation seeks to engender serious scholarship is constantly attacked for just simply being committed to truthful knowledge. This is the stratagem the old employed to obliterate the new as it jettisons the irrelevance of the aging paradigm. It also assumes the form of anointing those that the old had indoctrinated, whose scholarly outlook is characterized by



a lack of intellectual backbone, as editors of scholarly publications to serve as proxies in perpetuating the “fundamental pedagogy of big lies” (Macedo, 1993: 183). This impedes the life cycle of scholarship.

In appropriating to itself the self-proclaimed epithet of the connoisseurs of scholarship, washbuckling its gerontological imagination as the finite of science, the old disturbs the birth of the new. In the book *Challenging Beliefs: Memoirs of a Career*, as co-authored with Vlismas, Noakes describes this phenomenon as ‘the Mafia of Science’. It is characterised by a strong network of gatekeeping used to ensure that the emerging ideas that challenge a dominant paradigm remained perpetually emerging on the periphery of scholarship. The new is often dismissed on the basis that it possesses only a little knowledge, which is seen as dangerous. But, as Huxley asks, “where is [that] man who has so much [knowledge] as to be out of danger? Huxley warns: “science commits suicide when it adopts a creed”. It is important for the old to understand that, based probably on its intelligence plus experience, of which the total sum ought to be wisdom (Mphahlele, 1997:53), their “business is to teach [its] aspirations to conform [itself] to fact, not to try and make facts harmonize with [its] aspirations”(Huxley, s.a: n.a). In the old the new expects wisdom for intellectual leadership, not intellectual dictatorship. Because of the creed of the old trying to manipulate science for hegemonic ends, one is necessarily inclined to agree with Johnson in an answer to the question whether epistemology has entered the post-hegemonic phase. He simply responded: “I don’t think so”. What then are the consequences of this? The answer is, ‘interregnum’. As Forde explains, interregnum “is an ancient Roman term that was used to describe the period of time that lapsed between the death of a royal sovereign and enthronement of a successor” (2011:16). Gramsci used this concept in the socio-political discourse to underscore the same point that this editorial perspective brings to the façade to contextualise the quality of scholarship in this edition seeking to attend to that interregnum. This Italian philosopher wrote in his prison notes: “the old is dying, and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms”.

In the interests of posterity and the future of humanity the consciousness of the new cannot afford the complacency of powerlessness in its attempt to oppose “the intrinsic and insatiable greed” (Mbeki, 2012:12), of intellectual hegemony pursued to protect undeserved legacies evolved from the epistemological praxis of regurgitation of Euro-American public administration scholarship rather than origination of ideas. This makes now the time to disentangle the fibre of prosaicism foregrounding the grit of public administration scholarship in South Africa. The attempts to take the discipline to new heights should, using Lucky Mathebula’s nifty phraseology, valiantly refuse to succumb to the gravity of thorny hills and the temptations of powerlessness, as this latter phenomenon engenders a never-ending psyche of inferiority that condemns emerging ideas, that challenges that aging paradigm trying to reproduce itself by oscillating between “dataless platitudes” and “theoryless empiricism” (Hess, 1987:376), to perpetual obscurity. Using Thabo Mbeki’s superlative parlance, “to achieve our own [intellectual] renaissance, we must determine our place within this [complex] system” of power relations in the politics of knowledge and take a conscious position on “what we have to do to claim and hold this space” to ensure that “cognitive justice” prevails (Derrida, 2002). Perhaps, in so far as the foregoing is concerned, the new

could draw lessons from the Minnowbrook phenomenon, which evolved as a result of the new's impatience with the hegemony of the old obtrusively shaping the course of public administration. This phenomenon emerged in 1968 in the United States (US) and is generally considered the most influential initiative attempting to revolutionise the discipline.

The articles featured in this edition are framed in the style of Minnowbrook scholarship so as to challenge the orthodoxy. They are an attempt towards positioning the new in the epistemological landscape of the discipline. The articles in this edition are a combination of criticism and critique, questioning the basis of conventional thinking and the hegemonic logic that undergirds the theory [or lack of theory] of the discipline. Their contextual basis is embedded in the critical reflection on the humanities by Kondlo. Public administration is the "figure of humanity" (Derrida, 2002:207). This makes it part of humanities. Kondlo's article cannot be more appropriate in contextualising the discourse that the articles contained in this edition pursue. Basheka challenges the mainstream thinking whose historicising of public administration is based on the assertion that Woodrow Wilson is the founder of the field as an academic discipline. Nkuna and Sebola take Basheka's point further in their article whose contention is that in theorising public administration, the discourse needs to go beyond modern thinking. Louw concurs with Basheka, Nkuna and Sebola in her article that examines the question whether a shift from public administration to governance is a genuine pursuit of science or ideological adventurism. She argues that in some universities in South Africa the adoption of the designation governance in describing their instructional programmes appears to be more of the latter than the former.

Basheka's point in historicising public administration from an epistemological perspective coheres with Meny-Gibert and Chipkin's article on why, in studying public administration, the past matters. They make a very important contribution in reconstructing the discourse on the history of public administration as a field of study. So is Mathebula's article, which examines the phenomenon of hegemony and its implications for public administration scholarship. He argues that "South African scholarship, as a result of the colonial and apartheid context within which it developed, is disciplined by a hegemonic discourse formulated by a 'complex' with linked centres of persuasions interior or exterior to its desired true self". What a profound observation, which connects to Phago's "inevitable postulation of prospects", which examines the quality of Public Administration scholarship in South Africa. In their article, Thani and Disoloane pursue a similar point, although from a different contextual orientation, to that which Phago makes, in examining the role of academics in teaching and improving public administration in the 21st century. The highlight of this edition is its consideration of a much-talked about subject in South Africa – a developmental state. This is a continuation of the discourse that the South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM) has started in its attempt to remain relevant in its pursuit of topical issues of the contemporary world. Tsheola theorises a developmental state in the context of empirical dynamics as it relates to service delivery planning and violent protests in South Africa. Maserumule does likewise in his article which deconstructs the discourse on the concept of a developmental state. Maserumule's exercise in conceptualising a developmental state coheres with Tsheola's theorisation of this phenomenon.

It is only to this extent that I could preface the content of this edition, for giving too much of fine scholarship in a summary runs the risk of misrepresenting, or distorting, the originality in the coherence and quality of the discourse. Suffice to indicate that the scholarly depth and orientation of the articles in this edition refuse to “cohabit with the philosophy and practice of neo-liberalism” (Mbeki 2012:16). They jettison Fukuyama’s (1992:17) thesis that neo-liberalism marks “the end of history as such, the end point of man’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government”. These articles deviate from the paradigm of mediocrity, with its false and misleading claim of being esteemed scholarship, as is propounded on the basis of contextless theoretical propositions and the mastery of the art of merely describing human phenomena, including the description of government organisation, its activities, policies, legislations, systems and processes without any serious commitment to reflective scholarship. The articles in this edition go beyond description of scientific phenomena by ascending to that level of analytical rigour dedicated to contextual discourse. In taking this editorial perspective to its conclusion, it is perhaps appropriate to invoke Gordon Brown’s words, which I find worthy of citation, for they instil a sense of the valiant from which we could draw inspiration as we contend with the challenges that beset the discipline and the fraternity of public administration in South Africa. He writes:

As far back as I can remember I have been fascinated by men and women of courage...What separates these people...from the rest of us and makes their lives and achievements so remarkable is that they were prepared to endure great sacrifices and persist...against the odds and in the face of great adversity. They are for us exemplars and icons, at once daunting and cherished. Their stories live on and inspire us...Quite simply, they seemed to be driven and sustained by higher ideas. (Brown, 2007:01)

Are we part of the equation that Gordon Brown refers to, or are we complacent in perpetuating the pedagogy that seeks to continue with the oppression of the oppressed by either omission, characterised by our silence in the midst of intellectual injustice, or commission by our own conspicuous acts that seek to stifle any germination of the new in the epistemological landscape of the discipline? Martin Luther King once said “a time comes when silence is a betrayal”. In conclusion a question for all of us, including, more importantly, the wider readership of this *Journal*: are we part of the equation of heroism in the pursuit of intellectual justice or of the equation of betrayal by either our conspicuous presence in asserting our hegemonic ends or absence, as a sign of indifference or cowardice, in the complex of power relations in the politics of knowledge? Huxley reminds us that “every great advance in natural knowledge has involved the absolute rejection of authority, [whose] irrationally held truths may be more harmful than reasoned errors”.

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# 'HUMANITIES TO COME' AND 'THE UNIVERSITY WITHOUT CONDITION' – TRANSFORMING THE HUMANITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE PERSISTENCE OF UNRESOLVED NATIONAL AGENDA ISSUES

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## ABSTRACT

This article argues that transforming the humanities is about restoring the curious impulse, depth and purpose of 'the intellectual cause', the uncompromising quest for 'the truth'. In a country like South Africa it is also about the development of a discourse which articulates the 'African condition'; a discourse which African scholars can proudly own as theirs. This has not happened as yet, therefore the debate in the last section of this article is about 'the humanities to come – philosophical fragments'. The article examines the sources of the rather constricted transformation of humanities in South Africa and infers the direction transformed humanities at the university should be taking. However, the article emphasises that national issues of post-apartheid state formation, the superficiality of transformation at this level, and the fact that it filters down to the higher education system which the university is a part of, means the transformation of humanities will for a much longer time remain deformed. The analysis in the article draws inspiration from and is informed by Jacques Derrida's work *Without alibi* (2002), particularly his chapter titled 'The university without condition'. The 'to come' is derived from Derrida's notion of 'justice to come' (Derrida, 1997:306; Critchley, 2006:108).

The article uses these concepts as tools for reflections on the sources of the problems and future possibilities for the humanities in South Africa and perhaps, in the continent as a whole. The sources of the constricted transformation of the humanities, the article argues, are inextricably linked to the vicissitudes of the relationship between the state and the university and a higher level, the character of the national agenda of transformation. There is a negative dialectic at the very heart of post-1994 settlement – the dominance of continuities with the pre-1994 past undercuts the value of transformation, in economy, society and most importantly in the transformation of contents of knowledge and articulations of effective power within institutions of knowledge generation, particularly the university. The article proceeds to examine the policy landscape intended to transform higher education in South Africa, post-1994. It raises the question: to what extent have the policy objectives been achieved? In other words, how has the government fared in meeting the key elements indicated in its National Plan on Higher Education? There is obviously a mixed bag of successes and failures. The racial composition of universities has changed but the sense of ownership of the university space, both physical and intellectual, has not been transformed. The article also links the character the universities in South Africa acquired, post-1994, to the muted transformation of the humanities.

## INTRODUCTION

The quest for the transformation of the humanities in South Africa is like – in the words of Kierkegaard – “aching for a fulfilling restoration” (Kierkegaard, 2009:xiv) that is yet to come. It is like aching for the ‘restorative impact’ of reflective intellectual life. Reflective scholarship based on critical theory seems to have slowly dissipated in South Africa. This has been more noticeable following the defeat of apartheid and the end of resistance to the most brutal form of white-settler racial oppression. There was a time when the humanities were held in the highest regard as their position and roles provided sites of resistance to powers of dogmatic and unjust appropriation (Derrida, 2002:206) as was represented by the apartheid system. As Vale (2009) argues, the humanities “played a central role in bringing an end to apartheid but have been orphaned”, and the perception now is that they are failing post-apartheid South Africa. Of course, one must not generalise too much. The situation of the humanities at the universities varies according to varied contextual specificities of these institutions. In some historically white, English universities, for instance, there are pockets of excellence in terms of a tradition of reflective scholarship in the humanities. This is of course criticised in various quarters – part of the criticism is the unashamedly ‘white ownership’ of intellectual discourse in these institutions despite the good liberal talk about change and transformation. There also seems to be a thinly veiled anti-intellectualism culture in some influence-peddling sections of the post-1994 administrations; this somehow has contributed to the ‘marginalisation’ of the humanities. Humanities tended to be relegated to the status of armchair speculative ‘talk-science’ not so crucial to the post-1994 reconstruction and development of a new state. But despite these tendencies, the ideological baggage of white liberal scholarship is one factor that came under scrutiny and added doubt to the transformation-relevance of the humanities in the ‘new’ South Africa. The lesson to be drawn from this scenario is that part of the imperatives of a genuine transformation project in the humanities is to ground the rationale of the life of critical scholarship in such a way that it is unencumbered by ideological biases.

Transforming the humanities in South Africa forces one to re-open numerous questions about the post-1994 dispensation. The character of this period is reflected in the character of higher education transformation and in the transformation of the humanities. This is the period of ‘elite-consensus’ and the eclipse of ‘critical reason’. I use the term ‘eclipse of critical reason’ for the period post-1994 to describe a situation where dry pragmatism, the security of capitalist interests and marginalisation of critical theory, took centre stage. Since 1994, ‘experience’, ‘brute fact’, ‘quantification’, ‘measurement’, and ‘implementation’ have become analytical categories that are advantaged, taken for granted and even made to constitute the ‘normative’ discourses of research acceptable to government. The post-independence reconstruction and development imperatives are largely responsible

for this state of affairs, but also the failure of human scientists to position themselves and to advocate the depth of their cause by demonstrating the usefulness of the insights they generate in policy thinking and construction of realistic assumptions. This also contributed to 'the orphaning' of the humanities. The experience of humanities in South Africa is not very different from the experience of other African states post-independence.

Mkandawire's (2009) contention that "attempts to improve Africa's prospects by focusing on scientific advances and the benefits accruing from them have all too often overlooked the important perspective which the humanities and social sciences afford; perspectives which draw attention to the cultural and social dynamics of people and institutions" articulate the experience of the humanities in the entire continent. The fact that much work undertaken in the humanities is largely from scholars outside the African continent somehow blunts the development of the humanities in Africa. As a result, Mkandawire (2009) argues further that the potential for African scholars to respond has steadily diminished, as their research centres have been underfunded and their energies diverted. What all this shows is that it is incorrect to read the transformation of the humanities in South Africa outside the context of the humanities in Africa and also outside the context of knowledge and power relations between the North and the South.

In the specific case of South Africa, many positive things have occurred as part of the transformation of the nation-state, post-1994 and these cascaded to many spheres in the polity including higher education. The transformation of the universities in South Africa is one such positive result of the transformation of the nation-state. But the transformation of the humanities in the universities has always been the 'weakest link' in the chain of improvements. The transformation project in the country resulted in the promulgation of the National Plan on Higher Education, a blueprint of the nation-state's position on the relationship between the 'new' democratic power and various forms of knowledge. Informed by national legislation, the transformation project within the South African universities focused on issues of de-racialisation of the various levels of the university's management, of research and teaching staff, the refocusing of research funding to priority areas of government, the development of strategic plans and performance monitoring systems, in other words, the reconfiguration of systems and process and replacing white liberals with black counterparts. But this has very little to do with the transformation of intellectual discourse. Hence the universities in South Africa in terms of racial composition and structures may never look the same again. But they are still the same in terms of content of teaching, research focus and culture. One cannot forget to mention the government's conscious efforts to support the humanities in particular, through the National Research Foundation Chairs and also the 5<sup>th</sup> Grand

Challenge of the Department of Science and Technology's Ten Year Plan. But this is state-driven and bureaucracy-led. Nothing for the humanities in South Africa will ever work in an effective and sustainable way without the involvement of practising human scientists; involvement which starts from conception and continues to implementation. As long as government support gets handed down from the top 'like food-parcels' to buy votes from the masses, the transformation of the humanities will forever be blunted.

Most importantly, transformation still has a long way to go before it talks 'loudly' to what matters most – the character of knowledge produced and the expansion of spaces of 'cognitive justice', i.e. 'a justice of thought' (Derrida, 2002) in the academe, particularly in the humanities. Hence the imperative at this point is to move 'from matters of fact to matters of concern' and from matters of concern to a new transformative praxis, in order to develop the humanities of all men and women, the humanities of all human beings in their cultural and cognitive diversity. The concern in the specific case of South Africa emerges from the question: Has the long marginalised 'African voice' been strengthened in the humanities?

The focus of this article is on the humanities at universities as they are distinguishable from all other research institutions – the 'other' research bodies are largely in the service of state power and the economic order of the day and they are not granted in principle the same independence as the universities. But the question still remains – "can the university affirm an unconditional independence – can it claim a sort of sovereignty without ever risking the worst, namely, by reason of the impossible abstraction of its sovereign independence, being forced to give up and capitulate without condition, to let itself be taken over and bought at any price"?(Derrida, 2002:206). Given the underlying insecurities of the universities, what can be said of the humanities?

The trend of thought followed in this article begins with an examination of the national context and in particular, a reflection on the 'transformation paradigm' South Africa has chosen and which is embraced by some universities with little moderation. The article argues that it is this particular paradigm of transformation which sets back the transformation of the humanities. Second, the article examines the transformation of the higher education landscape and critiques the basic policy architecture which informs the universities' transformation project. It argues that this also contributes to the constricted transformation of the humanities. The article also debates the concept of the university and touches on issues of amalgamation of universities in South Africa. It examines the impact this had on the humanities, and makes reference to the situation of Walter Sisulu University in South Africa's former Transkei.



## IMPLIED AND EMBEDDED ISSUES

The other question or grey area implied by the theme is about the meaning of the humanities. When we talk about the transformation of the humanities, what exactly are we referring to? Or, put differently, what do the humanities cover, which gives them an identity, notwithstanding the currency of multi-disciplinarity? Without falling into the trap of definitions which often delimit fluid and complex issues, the humanities is generally, that which theorise the praxis of human communities and society at large. This immediately juxtaposes the humanities with quantitative social sciences and policy implementation social sciences. I am tempted to concur with Derrida when he argues that the humanities, “a concept whose definition it will be advisable to refine” is the “force of resistance” where the ‘unconditionality’ of the university has its “unique or privileged place” (Derrida, 2002:2007). The ‘unconditionality’ of the university has “an originary and privileged place of presentation, of manifestation, of safekeeping,” a space of re-elaboration, in the humanities. Derrida (2002) correctly concludes that the humanities is the forum for the negotiation of a university’s borders with the world and the organisation of resistance to all forms of power. In terms of content, the humanities covers the “sciences of man and culture”, legal studies and philosophy, literature, linguistics, theory, psychoanalysis, history, politics and “the figure of humanity in general” (Derrida, 2002:207).

A history of the humanities in South Africa, and the journey of their transformation, is a contentious ongoing project. It appears that among the major weaknesses in transforming the humanities in South Africa is failure to promote and ensure the centrality of the African voice in the orientation and content of the humanities. Both in the history and intellectual discourse of humanities, the voices, the perspectives and thinking of African intellectuals are in most cases secondary or subdued by the “network of imperial knowledge” (Vale, 2009:213). As Baroness Amos (2009) correctly argues, African research which is set firmly within African intellectual frameworks and embedded in African approaches is needed. But the African intellectual in South Africa also needs to be freed from himself/herself; he has thrown himself ‘greedily upon western culture’; he has tried to make European culture his own; he is not content to know “Rabelais and Diderot, Shakespeare and Edgar Allen Poe” (Fanon, 1963:176), he binds them to his intelligence and regards them as the starting point of knowledge. This is not only a question of orientation and content, but also a methodological question. How does transformed humanities in our country develop innovative methodologies, rigorously tested and appropriate to bringing out African issues and experiences? This, Said (2003:15-16) argues, can be resolved if work in the humanities finds and formulates “a first step, a point of departure, a beginning principle which advantages the African ‘problematic’ without feeling ashamed. At another level the human scientists themselves contribute

to their marginalisation – they struggle to overcome their ‘lone’ work tendencies; they cannot derive among themselves meaningful ‘co-opetition’ (Nalebuff & Brandenburger, 1996), i.e. competition and co-operation – a strategy of joined-up capabilities. This is the area where government support needs to be concentrated, if the humanities is to be rescued and placed firmly on the path of transformation. But to unpack these issues, one needs first, to examine the national context which informs the paradigm of transformation in South Africa’s higher education landscape.

## **A REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL CONTEXT OF TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The period 1989 to early 1994 provides a very useful context often overlooked when dealing with today’s challenges of transformation. This was the foundational period of transformation in South Africa and from the very outset the strategic centre of transformation rested firmly within the parameters of ‘an elite-managed political process of negotiations’ (Mckinley, 1997). An examination of the period 1989 to early 1994 discloses the fragility of the national consensus on which the new South Africa rests. How do you get to handle intellectually and even practically a situation whose resolution meant that both the oppressor and oppressed are victors? A situation where the ‘conquerors’ and the ‘conquered’ emerge as both winners in a liberation war triggered, first and foremost, by the dispossession and subjugation of African people? Mamdani (2010) also argues that “Codesa was indeed born out of the realization that there was no victor in the struggle against apartheid”.

Among the remarkable characteristics of South Africa’s negotiated transition from 1990 to 1994 is that a ‘deeper ground which establishes rational connections between the pre-emancipation order and the new ‘emancipated’ one’ (Laclau, 2007), was left largely intact. The ‘rationale and orientation of thinking’ which informs policy practices, the ‘transformative’ foundation of the new South Africa, is not truly radical in the sense of an historic rupture or a ‘radical chasm’<sup>1</sup> between the oppressive past and the emancipatory present but is dominated by continuities and old paradigms of top-down solutions. What this means is that, towards the last days of apartheid, the more things changed, the more they remained the same. As political leaders closed a deal on a new dispensation, some sections of the white community insisted on continuing with their old ‘white ways’ and were not defeated. And black people were thrilled by the victory they had not really won. This marked the birth of what, in Derrida’s terms, is a ‘quasi-normative axis’ of the emancipatory politics in South Africa, post-1994, i.e. the dualism of competing victories and competing fears.

There is a negative dialectic at the very heart of post-1994 settlement – the dominance of continuities with the pre-1994 past. This undercuts the value of transformation. The transformation paradigm which emerged out of the negotiated settlement is a truncated one in that it has nothing to do with the liberation of ‘African thought and spirit’ in South Africa. It has all to do with de-racialisation of formal public institutions rather than change of content. Hence, ‘the Anglo-Saxons, not even the Boers’, continue to enjoy the hegemony they enjoyed before 1994. They have the greatest and most pervasive influence on the educational system and their values have universalistic pretensions and continue to enjoy supremacy (Mafeje, n.d). This describes, in short, the character of the national context which frames paradigms of transformation in the higher education sector.

The character of the state post-1994 can be described as one of ‘thin’ democracy, strong proceduralism and weak implementation. The transformation paradigms which emerged from this context could not be ‘deep-going’ to the extent of transforming the content. The preoccupation with structures and racial composition has clouded the interrogation of content and the injection of new pan-African ideas and agenda.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The Education White Paper 3 – A Programme for the Transformation of the Higher Education System was crafted and adopted in 1997. This gave rise to the National Plan for Higher Education which was intended to give effect to the vision for the transformation of the higher education system outlined in the Education White Paper 3 (Department of Education, 1997). According to the White Paper, the key challenges facing the South African higher education system are: “to redress past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities” (White Paper 1.1). Hence the key elements of the National Plan for Higher Education dwell much on de-racialisation, producing the graduates needed for social and economic development in South Africa, achieving equity in the South African Higher Education system, achieving diversity, sustaining and promoting research, and restructuring the institutional landscape of the higher education system. These are important issues one would expect transformation in a divided and developing country to consider. But to what extent have these policy objectives been achieved? In other words, how did government policy fare in meeting the key elements indicated in the National Plan? This is obviously a mixed bag of successes and failures. The racial composition of universities has changed but the sense of ownership of the university space, both physical and intellectual, has not been transformed – black people, in most instances, continue to feel marginalised or accepted under a jealously guarded ‘conditionality’ of the white man.

All in all, good policies to support and transform the higher education system are in place. The enabling policy framework, sound as it appears, is not yielding the levels and depths of changes expected. The transformation policies related to the higher education sector are confronted by a considerable gap between truths on paper and lived realities in the sector, gaps between 'procedural commitments and their actual implementation' (Roy, 2007). Hence the difficulties in effecting a significant shift from a Eurocentric frame of reference to a properly invoked and properly utilised 'Afrocentricity' (Sklaar, 1993:98). The capacity of African cultures, intellectual legacies and societal dynamics tends to be marginalised in intellectual spaces, despite the existence of many 'transformative' policies.

On a much broader scale one may wonder why transformation in South Africa has moved so slowly or why the paradigm of transformation is so truncated. Jordan (1997), one of the ANC's heavyweight intellectuals, argues that there is 'an intractable tactical conjuncture' which is the burden of negotiated democracies, post-1994 and it is more apparent in the implementation of transformative policies. He argues that national liberation movements have, in many cases, been compelled to postpone aspects of their programme and policy 'in the light of the intractable tactical conjuncture'. The retreat, so he argues, is undertaken in order to prepare for a more coherent and rapid advance. But this cannot explain why the 'tactical conjuncture' is now assuming the status of permanence, hence the stunted transformation in the economy, society and most importantly of intellectual discourse. The persistence of knowledge-power imbalances between the historically disadvantaged groups and the historically advantaged groups, most of whom are white, mostly male and whose research continues to dominate the knowledge production sector and forms the bedrock of dominant ideas in South African society, is a matter of concern. This situation persisted even during the Mbeki period of the African Renaissance, a period during which the inclination to transform in order to address racial inequalities, was more robust, and now during the period of the Zuma administration. The iterations, staggered movements, cautious acts but on the whole, the dominance of continuities over discontinuities, characterise the project of transformation of higher education.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSITY – TOWARDS A UNIVERSITY 'WITHOUT CONDITION'**

Perhaps, there is a need to wrestle first with the concept of a university. If the transformation of the humanities is to succeed, the university must be what it is supposed to be – 'a university without condition'. But how do we conceptualise a university? One is inclined to argue that there is the institutional and non-institutional aspect of the university and keeping the two in sound balance is vital. The non-institutional aspect extends beyond the walls of what we call the university

and is wherever the space of unconditional scholarship and critical thought can occur. The institutional aspect comprises the formal university as it has evolved historically. But on the whole, the university is that which professes the truth; that which declares and promises an unlimited commitment to the truth. The university ideally should thus be “a place in which nothing is beyond question, not even the current and determined figure of democracy, not even the traditional idea of critique, meaning theoretical critique and not even the authority of the question ‘form’, of thinking as questioning” (Derrida, 2002:205). These characteristics have been lacking and continue to lack in some of our universities in South Africa.

The character acquired by the universities in South Africa, post-1994 is a difficult one – the hankering to be different or new is clearly there but the burden of the past still weighs too heavily. The university is also saddled by the need to keep a careful balance between, on the one hand, the concerns of political power, represented by the government and on the other, the autonomy the university requires “to question and to assert, or even going still further the right to say publicly all that is required by research, knowledge and thought concerning the truth” (Derrida, 2002:205). Academic freedom in the new dispensation is not unconditional freedom. It is the freedom with conditionalities very much related to the fragility of transition and transformation in the entire nation-state. Among these conditions is relevance to the priorities of the state. The quest for relevance to ‘power’ could inadvertently translate into courting political favour with the powers that be. The university in South Africa is constrained by history, culture and the character of the regimes of ‘power’. But most importantly, the university is constrained by a lack of reflexive critical dialogue within itself. The transformation project has so far yielded a university ‘with condition’. So long as the university is ‘with condition’, so long as the university cannot claim sovereignty without risking the worst – i.e. being forced to surrender unconditionally, then the humanities in the university can hardly be humanities ‘without condition’. The ‘humanities to come’ requires a university ‘without condition’. How does the present university nurture and create space for ‘humanities to come’ – this is a transformed humanities which has broken the intellectual cul-de-sac of today; this is a humanities which freely generates “new concepts” “to set afoot a new humanity” (Fanon, 1961:225).

Jansen’s article titled ‘The slow death of the intellect’, published in the *Mail & Guardian* of 27 August to 2 September 2010, goes to the core of the problems within the South African universities today. As he puts it, “we got into this rut because of a number of factors that together reduced many of our universities to degree machines and diploma mills. One reason was the creeping managerialism that turned the scholarship of teaching and inquiry into a parade of measurable units used by university bureaucracies to satisfy the constant demands for numeri-

cal accountability – for outputs by the research office or administrative compliance with external regulations by the academic standard office” (Jansen, 2010). But he stops short of relating the challenges within the universities to the character of ‘regimes of power’ and the policy performance of the entire post-1994 dispensation. The nature of policies in place inculcates the managerialism and number crunching research compliance culture. This inadvertently discloses the burden of legislated transformation; a transformation project which falls from the politico-legal superstructure instead of rising from the societal base.

The universities in South Africa come a long way. Pre-1994 the categories of institutions that existed comprised historically white, historically black, historically Afrikaans, historically English universities, technikons, and colleges. A process of amalgamation occurred and unfortunately has escaped, to a certain extent, the attention of scholarly examination. The amalgamation process, despite the advantages it brought, such as the consolidation of universities into a few but administratively integrated institutions, did a lot of damage to the humanities. I will take as an example, the case of Walter Sisulu University. Walter Sisulu University arose out of the merger of Border Technikon, Eastern Cape Technikon and the University of Transkei on July 1, 2005. In its strategic vision developed in 2006 the University defined itself in the following way: “Walter Sisulu University will be a leading African comprehensive university focusing on innovative educational, research and community partnership programmes that are responsive to local, regional, national, continental and international development priorities”. The areas of specialisation which emerged from the strategy included the *Mthatha Campus* becoming a centre for innovative rural development; the *Butterworth Campus* becoming a centre for excellence in business enterprise; and the *Queenstown Campus* becoming a centre for job creation and improvement of service delivery (Walter Sisulu University, 2006).

The focus of the University was by strategic design and orientation, pragmatic. The humanities and law were combined to form one focus area or programme. The emphasis was on developing a set of competencies that can be applied in a rural development context in the area of specialisation. The programme included a practical or experiential learning component including, for example, community service learning modules, short placements with a local community service organisation and/or local government (Walter Sisulu University, 2006). Already the humanities was on the back foot, even before the strategic plan was finalised. A plea from the Acting Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences says it all: “we, therefore, ask the WSU authorities and the Academic Integration Planning Team not to fragment the human sciences but to allow all the disciplines in human sciences to form an integrated unit” (Walter Sisulu University, 2005). During this

period the humanities in all South African universities was on the retreat and had to justify its existence. At the University of Port Elizabeth, for instance, as far back as 1999, history as an academic department and as an area of academic teaching and research faced the possibility of disappearing. Up to now, the humanities is still recovering from neglect, and a sense of futility among human scientists still predominates. The challenge is how to make the humanities attractive and restore its sense of significance.

## **HUMANITIES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY**

Transforming the humanities should be about restoring the curious impulse, depth and purpose of ‘the intellectual cause’, the uncompromising quest for ‘the truth’. A quest, it must be added, should involve a critical appraisal of all received ideas, values and conventions (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1997:7). This is not necessarily about generating ideas which can be translated into operative technologies, but about training the mind, expanding the horizons of understanding human life in the fullness of probabilities, falsehoods and truths. This is a pursuit of intellectuals, especially in the humanities and for that they submit to no power, regardless of the price to be paid, the ultimate price being, as in the case of Socrates, giving up one’s life (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1997:8). The reason I make this point is that when we talk transformation there is a tendency to reduce it to changing racial composition and providing more money for research, but the transformation of ‘content and spirit’ is usually glossed over. Substantive transformation is about changing the character of the intellectual discourse. The development of a discourse which articulates the ‘African condition’ and a discourse which African scholars can proudly own matters in a country with a long history of racial oppression and discrimination.

There are a number of commendable successes on the part of government in support of the humanities. Among these, one can mention the National Research Foundation (NRF) Research Chairs Programme, the Blue Skies Research Programme – a research programme that is “multi-disciplinary, embracing characteristics of self-initiated, curiosity driven research, research that requires high investment risks and research that addresses important and/or new phenomena, novelty and that pushes the frontiers of knowledge” (National Research Foundation, undated: online). The other support programmes aimed at the development of research capacity at South African higher education institutions include the Thuthuka Programme and the National Research Foundation’s Competitive Programme for Unrated Researchers and these are targeted at young researchers, especially those from designated groups. Lately the Department of Science and Technology has finalised its concept document on the 5<sup>th</sup> Grand Challenge, meant to support human and social sciences so that they can play a ‘meaningful’ role in the knowledge economy. All these initiatives, good as they are, do not go far enough to address the insecurities

and concerns of human scientists. These include the expansion of spaces and the protection of arenas for discourses which are not necessarily ‘politically correct’.

The distribution of NRF Chairs, for that matter, does not advance, as fast and as expected, the transformation of the humanities. Universities which have always been on top of the academic ratings, pre-1994, still continue to lead and are the highest recipients of the Chairs. The reproduction of hierarchies of pre-1994 in the knowledge production sphere is supported rather than altered through the NRF Chairs. These are the universities which have the material resources and critical mass of scholars to meet and exceed the requirements for the NRF Chairs. The number of Chairs (distribution) per South African university between 2008 and 2009 is shown in the following table:

**Table 1: Number of Chairs per South African university**

NAME OF UNIVERSITY	NUMBER OF CHAIRS
University of Cape Town (UCT)	27
University of Witwatersrand (WITS)	14
Stellenbosch University (SU)	9
University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)	8
University of Pretoria (UP)	7
Rhodes University (RU)	3
North-West University (NWU)	2
University of Free State(UFS)	2
Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)	2
University of Western Cape (UWC)	2
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)	1
Walter Sisulu University (WSU)	1
University of Fort Hare (UFH)	1
University of South Africa(UNISA)	1
University of Limpopo(UL)	1
University of Zululand (UZ)	1
Total	82



**Table 2: Rated black researchers in the humanities 2008 - 2009**

NAME OF UNIVERSITY	NUMBER OF RATED BLACK RESEARCHERS
University of Fort Hare(UFH)	1
Walter Sisulu University (WSU)	1
University of Witwatersrand (WITS)	3
Stellenbosch University (SU)	3
University of Pretoria (UP)	2
University of Johannesburg(UJ)	1
University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)	2
University of South Africa(UNISA)	1
University of Western Cape (UWC)	1
Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)	1
University of Cape Town (UCT)	1
Total	16

If this scenario is indeed correct, it means many more targeted interventions are still needed to transform the humanities. But the question is: how do you transform the humanities with such limited numbers of African scholars who are prepared to commit to scholarship as a life-long career? How do you develop a critical mass of African scholars and incentivise them to stay in academia? How do we take a new look at the rating system and improve the distribution of NRF Chairs so that there is a significant growth in the number of rated black scholars and black NRF Chairs? How do you do all these without compromising the academic research standards and quality of outputs? To turn the tide is not going to be easy and therefore requires a much more long-term plan.

## **HUMANITIES ‘TO COME’ – ‘PHILOSOPHICAL FRAGMENTS’**

The ‘philosophical fragments’ refers to emerging ideas which may eventually contribute to the articulations of the future of the humanities in South African universities. It is also important to explain the notion of the ‘to come’ a bit beyond the Derridean thesis. The ‘to come’ infers a general move towards an idea that is not yet an idea but which is nonetheless felt in the need to move towards it. A practical example is the disarticulate articulations of an independent African intellectual discourse in South Africa. The ‘to come’ in the humanities in South African universities may not be necessarily connected to ‘the present’ and if it is, the connection

may seek, inadvertently, to rebut the very foundations. This is the sense or feeling one gets when examining the current state and yearnings for a better humanities in South Africa. There is hunger for a new humanities and a reconstructed epistemology which dismantles the coloniality of knowledge and power.

The challenges, if one looks more inwardly at the humanities in the universities, are multi-layered and this article singles out one for examination. This layer involves the choice/s of paradigms or even models of transformation of the humanities. Have the humanities or the universities in which the humanities are based made the 'right choice/s' of paradigms for transforming the humanities in order to generate a new humanities in South Africa? Or have the choices entrenched the reproduction of the status quo, i.e. the superficiality of transformation and the dominance of continuities over discontinuities? Without dealing with issues embedded in this question, it will be difficult to realise the ideals stated in the Charter for Humanities in South Africa. West (1994) has thought through some of these issues and it makes sense to outline the four paradigms or possible models the transformation of the humanities at the universities could possibly pursue. The first is the Booker T Temptation Model in which the preoccupation is the mainstream bourgeois liberal academic model. African universities and intellectuals in this model seek to prove their worth within the system rather than re-configuring the entire system to the very core.

A number of universities in Southern Africa have followed this model – the National University of Lesotho, the University of Botswana, the University of Swaziland and numerous universities in South Africa. The effects of this model are more prominent in the character or direction of the humanities. The second, according to West (1994) is the Go It Alone option. It involves attempts by African scholars to 'shun' the mainstream or the hegemonic establishment. As West (1994) argues, this route is difficult if not impossible to sustain, especially if the institutions are to grow and enter into a balanced relationship with the world. A good example of the Go It Alone option was tried at the University of Dar-es-Salaam during this period. The 'decolonisation' or Africanisation project at this university went beyond the superficial de-racialisation of university leadership and management to a much deeper level of transformation of the intellectual discourse. This involved the transformation of the curriculum across disciplines. "It was spearheaded by inter-disciplinary teams of academics who designed inter-disciplinary courses meant to pioneer the study of development as part of a broader historical study of imperial expansion since the fifteenth century" (Mamdani, 2009). Even though the experiment collapsed, it boosted the confidence of African scholars and helped lay the foundation for the indigenisation of the humanities in Tanzania. The university's reliance on the state as sole funder, yet trying to be independent of the same funder, 'the state', led to numerous confrontations, strikes and shutdowns (Mamdani, 2009). The third

model, according to West (1994) is called Talented Tenth Seduction. It emphasises innovation by marginalised groups and marginalised knowledges within the existing system; it infers a situation characterised by, among other things, group insularity, self-preservation and attempts to cope creatively within the university mainstream. The fourth model, West (1994) calls the Critical Organic Catalyst. It is about a striving to be attuned to the best of what the mainstream has to offer but still maintaining a strong grounding in the realities of African communities, articulating their views, experiences and thoughts and also developing methodologies and strategies that best capture their knowledge.

The latter model is what is supposed to inform the project of ‘the humanities to come’ in the South African universities. Unfortunately the national as well as the university contexts arrest the development of transformed humanities in many ways. Not only does it reproduce the humanities in its own image but it also circumscribes the efforts aimed at authenticity and originality. Diop (1974:xvii) articulates this point strongly as he argues that “the effort is corrupted at the base by the presence of the very complex one hopes to eradicate”. Hence, as he puts it, “no Negro African author or artist” has “yet posed the problem of man’s fate, the major theme of human letters”. The emerging consensus among leading human scientists in the continent is that until African languages are capable of expressions of philosophic and scientific thought (mathematics, physics and so forth) humanities will continue to be superficial in dealing with the realities of the wretched African majority; that African cultures will not be taken seriously until the utilisation of African languages in education becomes a reality (Diop, 1974; Mafeje, 1992).

## CONCLUSION

The transformation of the humanities in South Africa will remain slow and is likely to stagnate over a long time. The problem is first and foremost the meaning the independence of the university supposedly has in relation to the government; second, with the institutional cultures that constrict the move towards the ‘humanities to come’ and at faculty levels, the challenge is that the crop of experts of the apartheid era continue to lay the foundations for the crop of experts in the post-apartheid era, thereby reproducing expert practices and knowledge in their own image. A typical continuity is that the curriculum in the humanities has hardly changed, both in content and in paradigmatic orientation. There is a need to create a fresh pipeline and this requires a long-term view and serious investments.

The distribution of NRF Chairs, even though a useful intervention, is not helping to advance, as fast and as expected, the transformation of the humanities. Universities which have always been on top of the academic ratings, pre-1994, still

continue to lead and are the highest recipients of the Chairs. The overall struggle for the 'humanities to come' will continue to generate debates. At the centre of the debates is how to resolve the tension between the quest for relevance and authenticity, on the one hand, and the imperatives of radical thought, on the other.

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# THE PARADIGMS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION RE-EXAMINED: A REFLECTION

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## ABSTRACT

Public administration scholarship of the 21st century has tended to focus more on recent paradigms of New Public Management (NPM) and its successor paradigm of governance while largely ignoring the strong foundation of century old paradigms of public administration. This approach, if persistently allowed in African universities, will create a serious knowledge deficit among the new crop of African scholars in the discipline of public administration. Where efforts have been made to consider the foundational paradigms of public administration through a historical trajectory, emphasis is again given to the evolution of public administration from American and European contexts, completely ignoring the indigenous African systems of administration. Yet, pre-colonial Africa had not only one but several systems of administration and governance structures that ought to be known by African students and scholars of public administration. In this author's view, our effort to re-examine the paradigms of public administration is an urgent one and as African scholars, we must equally reclaim the African traditional systems of administration in our scholarship. This article examines the paradigms of public administration and explores some of the indigenous systems of administration that need to be advocated for in the teaching of public administration. The purpose of the article is to reflect on how public administration as a field of study has shaped up, thereby enabling young scholars to appreciate the epistemological contexts of the discipline but also to re-examine how modern administrative challenges could be addressed by revisiting the old principles and practices which occupied the minds of the earliest scholars. Of course not all such principles and practices could be applied in addressing the current challenges. From the deflation of the politics-administrative dichotomy by Simon in 1946 and the puncturing of the science of administration by Dahl in 1947, the discipline of public administration has suffered a lack of a unified theoretical framework. The NPM at least tried to bring back this uniformity but this was short-lived and many scholars soon had to declare its death during the 1990s. The article first explores indigenous systems of administration and then re-examines the paradigms of public administration from the politics-administrative dichotomy (1887-1926), through the principles of administration (1927-1937), the era of challenge (1938-1947), the identity crisis (1948-1970), from public administration to public management (1970 to early 1990), from public management to governance (1990-2008) and to the new public governance debate (2010 to date).

## INTRODUCTION

Administrators have been (and will possibly always be) an important ingredient of any social organisation since man began living in organised societies. There is hardly any activity surrounding the life of a human being that is not influenced directly or indirectly by activities of public administrators. As such, society must tolerate the increasing presence of public administrators in the lives of the citizens and universities must accelerate their efforts to produce a cream of public administrators who have appropriate values and competencies to serve the public diligently. The teaching must be approached from the foundations of both the theory and practice. Shafritz et al. (2011:214) remind us that civilisation and administration have always moved hand in hand. Since ancient times, a city was defined by the walls created for its defence. Once primitive tribes gathered in cities – when they became civilised – they had to be sufficiently organised to build their strongholds and defend themselves from attackers. This necessitated a sophisticated system of administration. Owing to these developments, scholars became interested in developing a theoretical knowledge base for understanding how administrators did their work but also in developing skills perceived to be critical for developing a crop of public administrators to manage a variety of public tasks. As far as history records indicate, the 18th century noble, King Frederick William I of Prussia, created professorates in Cameralism in an effort to train a new class of public administrators. It was not until the 18th century that Cameralism, which concerned the systematic management of government, became a speciality of German scholars in Western Europe (Nasrullah, 2005:198).

As early as 124 BC, there was a university in China teaching administration (Simcox, 2010:118). While quoting Biot (1845:97) in *Essai sur l'instruction publique en Chine et de la corporation des lettres*, the author reminds us that the Imperial College called Thai-hio was not founded till 124 BC. This college was to admit 'fifty scholars, 18 years old or upwards, chosen from lists presented by the Minister of Rites on the one hand and the provincial officials on the other'. These pupils were regularly examined and promoted on merit. Admission to these scholarships was by nomination but unsuitable or incapable candidates were dismissed at the first examination, and the patron was punished for a bad choice. As a practical profession, public administration in China is traced to the Xia Dynasty, and even to the tribal community in primitive society (Zhang, 2001), although the systematic study of public administration in the contemporary sense did not last long into the 20th century. By 2 BC, there existed a civil service in China with 15 000 employees. Such a solid number needed a team of administrators who had to be trained in the whole 'science' of administration. However, the actual teaching of public administration in China was abolished in the 1950s only to start again around 1981 (Holzer & Zhang, 2002:6).



The first PhD students in public administration in that country were recruited in 1999 and had a completion period of their three-year programme in 2002. It should be appreciated that according to most accounts of medieval times, the ability to read and write, add and subtract was dominated by the few educated elites who served as public employees. Against this background, the need for expert civil servants whose ability to read and write would form the basis for developing expertise in such crucial activities as legal record-keeping, paying and feeding armies and levying taxes became a matter of necessity. As the European imperialist age progressed and the military powers extended their hold over other continents and peoples, the need for a sophisticated public administration grew and so did the need for a team of administrative staff. Thus, from a Western European perspective, scholars had no choice but to systematically build a foundation for the discipline of public administration.

Henry (1984:2) notes that advisors to rulers and commentators on the workings of government recorded their observations from time to time; and sources as valid as Kautilya's Arthashastra in ancient India, the Bible, Aristotle's Politics, and Machiavelli's The Prince all point to the long history of the practices of public administration. However, prior to the 19th century, most public administrations had problems that by all measures are equal to the current challenges of modern administrative systems. Early systems of administration were personal – based on loyalty to a particular individual such as a king or minister, instead of being impersonal, based on legality as conceived by an organisation or the state (Hughes, 2003:18). Their practices often resulted in corruption and misuse of office for personal gain; problems that are a cancer to modern administrative systems. Practices that seem alien in our contemporary times were commonplace in earlier administrative systems. Patronage employment in state functions was a very common occurrence, people were employed on the basis of nepotism, reliance on friends or relatives or paying bribes to be recruited. These problems must have influenced earliest scholars to propose systems of administration that were based on stringent rules and meritocracy. In modern times, the recurrence of these problems is commonplace. Promotions in public office are based on political 'correctness of managers' as opposed to meritocracy. Nepotism, patronage systems and tribalisation in public service job allocations are now a malaise that characterises most public administration systems at central, regional and local levels. These developments give us, as academics, an opportunity to reflect on the paradigms of public administration.

History ought to be an important tool for any discipline. It ought to be a 'walking stick' for an elderly discipline like public administration which prides itself on being more than 100 years old. Students of public administration must appreciate the fact that while the practice of public administration has ancient origins, the

study of the discipline is not very old. Despite objections by scholars such as Raadschelders (1998) who contends that the study of public administration is hardly new because one can trace the contributions of Kautilya in India, Herodotus and Aristotle in Greece, Machiavelli in Italy, and Ibn Khaldun in the Middle East, the fact remains that serious theorising of the public administration discipline is not that ancient. Ancient writings were indeed available but the academic study of the discipline came years later. Von Stein, an 1885 German professor, is considered to have been the founder of the science of public administration though most public administration literatures attribute such to Woodrow Wilson of the 18th century who often receives accolades as the father of the discipline through his widely cited seminal essay published in 1887. In the time of Von Stein, public administration was considered a form of administrative law, but Von Stein believed this was too restrictive. He promoted the thinking that public administration needed to be regarded as an integrative science that needed to rely on pre-established disciplines such as sociology, political science, administrative law and public finance. In his view, public administrators needed to be concerned with not only the practice but the theory. His justification was based on the fact that the knowledge in public administration was generated and evaluated according to the scientific methods.

Wilson, a young professor of political science at Princeton University, published in the *Political Science Quarterly* of 1887 a seminal essay titled 'The study of administration'. The essay became influential, especially his proposal on separating politics from administration, as perceived strategy for promoting efficiency in government. This debate has continued to generate controversy among practitioners and academics to date. All these historical facts challenge contemporary public administration scholars and practitioners to appreciate the influence of ancient traditions in the structure and systems of administration. Neglect of these facts by scholars makes it difficult for young scholars and students to have a clear picture of the scope of public administration but they also lack an understanding of how modern administrative systems emerged. To avoid this problem, the teaching of public administration ought to systematically build on the foundations set by the rich history of the practices of public administration in many parts of the world. Of much relevance to African scholars and students of public administration should be the indigenous systems of administration in African universities. A need to reflect on how ancient systems were constructed and survived for centuries ought to provide an important template for a comparative analysis of administrative systems. Despite existing variations, scholars ought to appreciate that every society has historically had its collective systems that gave it a structure for organising the efforts of men and women to live harmoniously and contribute to the public interest. From a public administration point of view, these collective systems that existed in Africa before the colonialists constituted an African administrative system that must be part of the public administration scholarship.

This article contextually begins with an overview of the indigenous administrative systems. This debate is logically constructed through examining the ancient systems of administration in other parts of the world but later emphasis is placed on Africa. This effort is intended to 'deflate and puncture' any arguments by some scholars whose conscience tells them that pre-colonial African societies never had any sense of organisation and could therefore not have had any administrative system worth studying. The next section of the article is then devoted to the paradigms of public administration; a debate that starts from the politics-administration dichotomy, through the principles of administration, to the era of challenge, the identity crisis, from public administration to public management, from public management to government, through the global crisis and then from governance to new public governance. In each of these paradigms, the article examines the major assumptions and values that unified scholars. In this effort, most prominent scholars who championed the debate in each of the paradigms are discussed. Their ideas need to be re-examined in the context of the modern times. The last part of the article gives concluding remarks.

## INDIGENOUS SYSTEMS OF ADMINISTRATION

History bears testimony that during the ancient and medieval periods, there were sound administrative principles to justify the governance of the times. On this subject, Cladden (1965:11) had the following to say:

...in the very beginning, when human society was taking shape as a consequence of the co-operative propensities of individual men, the allocation of different tasks, or jobs of work, to different persons according to their capacities, led to the emergence of the division of labor, about which students of social sciences and economics are constantly reminded. The household head or tribal chief as the first director general of his miniature realm began to find the task of running the show too much for him. His natural solution was to assign some of his responsibilities – perhaps to delegate some of his responsibilities – to an assistant or deputy. Hitherto he had himself carried out whatever administration was needed in his primitive society....the chief himself was certainly not aware that there was any such thing as administering....

The above quotation is only an example to confirm that practices of administration have had ancient history. There are good historical accounts that confirm the existence of administration by 1491 BC. During the exodus from Egypt, a story that is ably documented in the holy books, Moses followed the recommendation of Jethro, his father-in-law, to delegate authority over the tribes of Israel along hierarchical lines. Delegation and hierarchies later became key aspects for establishing most public administration systems and most scholars of management and public administration based their constructions of a public administration system on the principle of delegation. In 400 BC Plato recognised management as a separate

art and subsequently promoted the principles of specialisation, another important concept that influenced management and administration scholars. The principle of specialisation shaped the thoughts of advocates of the scientific school of management. Smith produced his great economics work, *The wealth of nations* (1776), in which he supported the principle of specialisation in his principles of market economy which have equally shaped the economics practices of many public administrative systems throughout the world, and more so the debate on New Public Management (NPM) since the 1980s. From these few examples the question emerges: What messages do we give our students of public administration as far as the administrative systems of pre-colonial Africa are concerned? Is there any effort among African scholars in the teaching of public administration in African universities to deal with indigenous systems of administration in Africa?

Literature confirms that pre-colonial Africa had accomplished a great deal in the areas of political and social organisation, architecture, city building, arts and crafts, commerce and trade, tax administration, grievance handling and discipline, as well as democratic arrangements. In a number of primitive societies, fighting was recognised as a legitimate means of obtaining redress for an injury, though not a means of dominating others (Mair, 1962). To the proponents of the colonial enterprise, 'pre-colonial Africa' was more than a dark continent inhabited by a bunch of primitive warring tribes who wandered in the jungle without any sense of human organisation (Njoh, 2006). Supporters of the colonial enterprise would possibly add that Africans should always show gratitude to the colonial masters for having saved them the misery and tribulations experienced before the advent of colonialism. Yet, the continent had robust and sophisticated administrative systems for managing affairs of public interest, especially given the historical periods of the time. Despite the problems that were experienced in some of the administrative systems by tyrannical leaders, most kingdoms had achieved a great deal in terms of social organisation. Shafritz and Russel (1996) report that in the African pre-colonial period, public administration was constructed as the king's largesse which comprised the goods, services and/or honours that the king, chief or clan head bestowed on those under his or her jurisdiction from time to time. The responsibility of ensuring that every member of the community had access to communally-owned factors of production, such as arable land, rivers and lakes, rested in the hands of these authorities. However, the leaders did more than the above as they also controlled the timing and rate of use of resources. They would, for example, determine which portion of the land had to be left fallow.

Leaders of the period had a regulatory function that fits perfectly under what Shafritz and Russell (1996) label the legal definition of public administration. In this connection as Njoh (2006) suggests, African leaders were pre-occupied with discipline and administering punishment to those who went against the established

rules. However, some of the systems of punishment would be described as having been very brutal and thus against human rights as known today. The continent had strong systems of ensuring harmony and discipline which were indicative of a well-organised society. However, Mair (1962) in her book on *Primitive government* states that 'it is a fact of history that it was the European peoples who discovered the others, and in most cases established political dominion over them, and not vice versa. The Europeans in her view possessed technical superiority in a number of fields and the techniques of the peoples who came under the European rule were rudimentary, and so could have been their systems of government. On this wrong perception, Ake (2000) observes that it is bad enough for the rest of the world to insist on representing Africa as the ultimate victim of original sin, a sad forsaken place where nothing good or noble ever happens. Indeed, one may argue that while Africans could have lived a 'miserable' life in one form or another, it is completely wrong to suggest that pre-colonial Africa was devoid of systems of administration or social organisation.

As more objective accounts of the pre-colonial systems of governance are exposed, it becomes clear as suggested by Mazrui (1986) that pre-colonial African societies had sound administrative systems that featured a variety of polities, including the city-states, empire-states, as well as conquest states. Pre-colonial Africa had not only one but several systems of administration and governance structures. The fragmented or highly decentralised systems were in the majority while the highly centralised polities were few and included the well-known kingdoms such as the Songhai Empire, the Ashanti Kingdom, the City-State of Benin, all in West Africa, the Bakongo Kingdom in Central Africa and the Buganda Kingdom in East Africa. African societies, throughout the centuries, were organised on the basis of a social contract. In the process, they had clear agreements regarding the ideas and principles that were to guide their political systems on the basis of which power and authority were to be exercised by the various elements of government (Njoh, 2006).

Traditionally, pre-colonial Africa had notions of well-functioning village democracy which was effectively applied in different contexts. These are facts that ought to find consideration in modern scholarships in democracy within the teaching of public administration. In traditional pre-colonial Africa, it was very common for members of the community or their delegated representatives to sit in public places to deliberate on general issues of public concern but also to decide on the necessary action. This is what is meant by the definition of public administration as 'implementing public action'. Public administration could, during the pre-colonial period, be taken to encompass everything that the king, clan head or village leader and his or her official deputies or assistants such as councils of elders did in their

official capacity. In many parts of Africa, especially in the British colonies where indirect rule was the norm, the indigenous systems of government survived and were used by the colonial powers alongside the colonial system of administration.

Jarret (1996) confirms that pre-colonial African polities typically comprised of three major bodies, namely a Council of Elders, Chief Priests and Moral Elders and Chiefs. These three bodies were tightly woven to form a single administrative system capable of executing functions ranging from mundane tasks such as using the talking drum to summon a meeting of the king's aides, to complex undertakings, such as planning and executing war. Each body was placed in charge of a well-defined set of activities. The council of elders was charged with the responsibility of conceiving, planning, implementing and managing the community's development projects. Projects such as public infrastructure building and maintenance, building and maintaining the chief's palace, and building and maintaining weekly markets fell under the jurisdiction of the council of elders. The idea of crime as an anti-social act certainly existed, and it was the concern of authority in society to restore and promote social relationships. Reconciliation and the restoration of social harmony were the objects of judicial proceedings, not retribution. Hence the importance attributed to compensation, and even ritual feasting as the outcome of a process of reconciliation was used.

The chief priests were comprised of people who were endowed with usually special spiritual powers and or/skills, which were more often inherited than learnt. They functioned as religious authorities and acted as a bridge between members of the community and their ancestors. Members of this body were also charged with the responsibility of educating the community on African spiritual laws, religious doctrines and principles. In this regard, they provided knowledge on the importance of living in harmony with the natural environment, including land, rivers, lakes, forests and why members of the community must see themselves as simply custodians and not owners of the natural resources. Furthermore, the chief priests also served as health official or medical practitioner as they were responsible for healing the sick. The moral elders (who would be the officials responsible for ethics and integrity in Uganda's case, for example) were responsible for teaching moral conduct and upholding moral standards throughout the community. They were also responsible for recording all major events that took place in their communities. In this case, they served as community historians. The fact that most pre-colonial African societies did not boast of a written culture does not mean they were incapable of recording information. This feat was accomplished through two main strategies:

- The most common involved storytelling. These stories were passed on from one generation to another until they became legendary.
- Through drawings or sketches. Such drawings and sketches have surfaced in caves and other artifacts uncovered through archaeological and other discoveries.

To further understand how the indigenous systems of governance operated, examples of the Songhai's empire, whose governance apparatus comprised among other units several ministerial bodies (Njoh, 2006), can provide an appropriate template. Prominent in the empire was a ministerial body in charge of agriculture and this was headed by an inspector of agriculture. This would be equivalent to the ministry of agriculture in modern democracies. There was also a ministerial body in charge of etiquette headed by a chief of etiquette and protocol. Yet, another ministry was responsible for the calvary under the leadership of the chief of calvary. But most striking was the ministerial body in charge of minority affairs which had several agencies responsible for the various minority groups resident in the empire. One such agency was in charge of the Berabic Arab affairs and another was responsible for white minorities. In that kingdom, jurisprudence, particularly justice, was an important issue. The leadership then acknowledged this in many important ways. The most notable was the creation of positions of chief of justice or *cadi* (*qadi*). The *cadi*'s who were posted to major cities such as Djemne and Timbuctu throughout the empire were appointees of the king. They were responsible for dealing with common-law issues, disputes between citizens and foreigners or among citizens. The king or loyal justices were in charge of more serious crimes such as treason. Individuals found guilty were sentenced based on the severity of the crime. For example, some were sent to prison, while others were required to participate in community services. Serious offences were usually punishable by cruel means to avoid repetition of the same mistakes by others.

It is further reported in history that in one of the empires of Ghana, the king ensured administration of justice by having a group of army commanders who would come on horseback to his palace every morning. When all had assembled, the king would mount his horse and ride at their head through the lanes of the town and around it. Anyone who had suffered injustice or misfortune would confront the king and stay there until the wrong had been remedied. The king would ride in town twice every day and this method was famous as a method of justice. The justice machinery in the empire was at two levels. Examples of punishments included burying the guilty party alive, and chopping off one hand— a practice which continues today in modern Arab communities where sharia law is in practice. In some pre-colonial African societies, adultery was a serious offence. It was accordingly punished severely. If a man was caught in this practice, he was punished by having a sharpened bamboo stick forced into his penis and then having the stick broken. In other communities such as the Ngwa Ibo of Nigeria, the same crime was punishable either by death or sale of the offending party or parties into slavery. In some societies, if the offending party was a woman, she would be killed. To put things in perspective, instances of cruel and unusual punishments were commonplace in Europe around the same epoque. For example, during the reign of Henry VIII in England, the penalty for not attending church was punishable by losing one or both

ears. When King Henry's son came to power, he made the brawling in a church or church premises punishable by mutilation.

## PARADIGMS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Public administration, especially conscious theorising about it, is not as old as its practice. Public administration has developed as an academic discipline through a number of stages. These stages are what this article terms the paradigms. Different authors have given their classification although there is a great deal of uniformity in their scholarships. Henry (2010:27), for example, classifies the paradigms under the politics-administration dichotomy (1887-1926); principles of public administration (1927-1937); public administration as political science (1950-1970); public administration as management (1950-1970); public administration as public administration (1970 to the present); and, governance (1990 to the present). The inclusion of public administration as a science as well as management within the same period from 1950-1970 reflects the unhealthy tension that existed in the historical development of the public administration discipline as will be elaborated on later in the article.

Dhameja (2003:1) refers to the crucial phases in the growth of public administration as 'partial narratives' and includes the dichotomy between politics and administration, scientific study and practice, the value-fact dichotomy which reduced public administration to an applied area rather than a normative theoretical paradigm, the theory-informs-practice viewpoint, comparative public administration and New Public Administration. This classification covers all issues that Henry identifies. As a modern profession and field of study, Dwivedi and William (2011:21-22) have grouped the development of public administration in two major epistemological phases. The first epistemological phase was the emphasis by Woodrow Wilson and Goodnow on separating politics from administration as the most single important reform that was needed to promote efficiency and remove the objectionable and immoral practices of spoils and patronage. The second related phase was the development of scienticism. This period was influenced by two major scientific principles of rationality/objectivity and quantification. The main purposes of these scientific elements was to remove biases and fallacies of human thought by searching for 'hard data', which could be measured, and presented in an objective and rational manner. The next part of the article now examines each of the paradigms in the development of public administration. This effort will logically begin from the first paradigm with the key assumptions and ideas of the various authors being given attention, to the latest paradigms and the questions being generated.



**Period 1: The Politics–Administration Dichotomy (1887-1926)**

The key assumption and strategy during this epistemological period was the idea to separate politics and the administration functions of government as a strategy for promoting efficiency and effectiveness. The period also believed that administration of the public sector was different from administration in the private sector. During this period, it was believed that as a strategy for promoting efficiency and effectiveness in the running of government, there had to be a clear distinction between those involved in the game of politics and those who were charged with the business of administration. This period was one in which the extension of administrative practice was believed to be a necessary step in improving government (Cox, Buck & Morgan, 2011:6). The first systematic writer of this time was Woodrow Wilson whose article entitled ‘The study of public administration’ that appeared in the Political Science Quarterly of 1887 set the ball rolling for the academic study of public administration. Wilson proposed four issues for study and discussion in his article, namely: (1) Separation of politics and administration, (2) Comparative analysis of political and private organisations, (3) Improving efficiency with business-like practices and attitudes toward daily operations, and (4) Improving the effectiveness of public service through management and training of civil servants, as well as encouraging merit-based assessment. The separation of politics from administration has been the subject of lasting debate. In his article, he emphasised the need to study public administration as a discipline separate from politics, arguing that, “Administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics and those administrative questions were different from political questions,” and thus the field of politics was not the field of business. Table 1 presents the key differences between politics and administration and as such the jurisdictional areas of politics and administration, according to the advocates of the dichotomy.

**Table 1: Dividing politics and administration**

POLITICS	ADMINISTRATION
Deals with political questions	Deals with business questions
Deals with the “expression of the will of the people”.	Deals with the “execution of the will of the people”.
Deals with politicians and plays politics of the politicians	Deals with civil servants/technocrats and plays politics of the administrators

One becomes a politician by one's popularity, either through positive or negative popularity	One becomes a civil servant by one's intelligence, experience and qualifications
One becomes a politician through election	One becomes a civil servant through selection and formal recruitment
Prior training is not given to politicians and their qualifications are of low standing	Civil servants are professionals in various fields
Power is the centre of study in politics, i.e. process of capturing and retaining power	Running administration successfully, efficiently and effectively is the central focus here
Approve policies	Implement policies
Tell naked lies	Dress their lies with technicalities
Survive on talking loudly	Survive on writing a great deal
Rarely have a code of ethics	Governed by an ethical code of conduct

By 1900, in a ground-breaking book, *Politics and administration*, Frank J. Goodnow became a major proponent of the Wilsonian separation movement. Goodnow noted that there were two distinct functions of government, which he identified with the title of his book. *Politics*, he wrote, had to do with policies or expressions of the state will, while *administration* had to do with the execution of these policies (Henry, 2010:28). Goodnow, in his teaching career in 1884 at Columbia in the United States, taught history as well as administrative law. At the time Wilson made his publication, Goodnow was an adjunct professor and became a full professor of administrative law in 1891. In 1903, he was made an Easton professor of administrative law and municipal science. He subsequently became the first president of the American Political Science Association in 1903. The United States president (Roosevelt) made him a member of the commission to draft a new charter for greater New York, and President Taft chose him as a member on the commission of economy and efficiency.

Administration and management are concepts that have almost historically moved side by side, although management literally replaced administration during

the 1970s when it was felt that government administration needed to be done through borrowing private sector management styles. At the time of the politics–administration dichotomy, a number of American and European management scholars suggested a number of classical management principles that became influential in shaping the study and practice of public administration. First among these scholars was F.W. Taylor (1911), well known for his scientific principles of management. Cox, Buck and Morgan (2011:7) consider Taylor’s work under their categorisation of ‘Administration as a science’ and confirm that the work of Taylor and the concept of scientific management were to have a profound effect on public administration for the entire period between the two world wars. Interestingly, the specific tenets of scientific management were quite similar to the already familiar views of the progressive era of the 1870s. Taylor believed that just as there was a best machine for each job, there was a best working method by which people should undertake their jobs. He considered that all work processes could be analysed in discrete tasks and that by a scientific method, it was possible to find “one best way” to perform each task (Mullins, 2007:43). Each job was broken down into component parts, each part timed and the parts rearranged into the most efficient method of working. Taylor’s greatest public sector popularity came in 1912 after he presented his ideas to a special committee of the House of Representatives set up to investigate the Taylor and other systems of shop management (Shafritz *et al.*,2011:231). Taylor’s comprehensive statement of scientific management principles was focused on what he called the “duties of management”. He advocated for the following:

- Replacing traditional, rule-of-thumb methods of work accomplishment with systematic, more scientific methods of measuring and managing individual work elements.
- The scientific study of the selection and sequential development of workers to ensure optimal placement of workers into work roles.
- Obtaining the cooperation of workers to ensure full application of scientific principles.
- Establishing logical divisions within work roles and responsibilities between workers and management.

Taylor was an early advocate of efficiency as a non-partisan concept somehow divorced from politics. He believed that in order to improve efficiency, officials would have to place this goal above politics – a hard step for elected officials to take. Taylor saw a non-partisan personnel service as essential to increasing the quantity of work. Political officials and top administrators needed a change of heart toward a civil service mentality that would elevate merit over influence, working what he called “a great mental revolution in large numbers of men” (Taylor, 1916:9). Whereas scientific management focused on the productivity of individu-

als, the classical administrative approach concentrated on organisations in total-ity with emphasis on the development of managerial principles rather than work methods. Prominent contributors to this school include Max Weber, Henri Fayol, Mary Parker Follett and Chester I. Barnard. They were pre-occupied with studying the flow of information within an organisation and emphasised the importance of understanding how an organisation operated. For example, Fayol, a French execu-tive engineer, developed a comprehensive theory of management that fundamen-tally shaped the academic and practical field of public administration. According to Shafritz *et al.*, (2011:231), Fayol's major work, published in France in 1916, was almost ignored in the United States until Constance Storr's English translation read-ing *General and Industrial management*, appeared in 1949. The following were the principles he advocated for:

- **Division of work:** Division of work and specialisation produces more and better work with the same effort.
- **Authority and responsibility:** Authority is the right to give orders and the power to exact obedience. A manager has official authority because of his or her posi-tion, as well as personal authority based on individual personality, intelligence and experience. Authority creates responsibility.
- **Discipline:** Obedience and respect within an organisation are absolutely essen-tial. Good discipline requires managers to apply sanctions whenever violations become apparent.
- **Unity of command:** An employee should receive orders from only one superior.
- **Unity of direction:** Organisational activities must have one central authority and one plan of action.
- **Subordination of individual interest to general interest:** The interests of one employee or group of employees are subordinate to the interests and goals of the organisation.
- **Remuneration of personnel:** Salaries – the price of services rendered by employees – should be fair and provide satisfaction both to the employee and employer.
- **Centralisation:** The objective of centralisation is the best utilisation of person-nel. The degree of centralisation varies according to the dynamics of each organisation.
- **Scalar chain:** A chain of authority exists from the highest organisational author-ity to the lowest ranks.
- **Order:** Organisational order for materials and personnel is essential. The right materials and the right employees are necessary for each organisational func-tion and activity.
- **Equity:** In organisations, equity is a combination of kindness and justice. Both equity and equality of treatment should be considered when dealing with employees.

- **Stability of tenure of personnel:** To attain the maximum productivity of personnel, a stable workforce is needed.
- **Initiative:** Thinking out a plan and ensuring its success is an extremely strong motivator. Zeal, energy and initiative are desired at all levels of the organisational ladder.
- **Esprit de corps:** Teamwork is fundamentally important to an organisation. Work teams and extensive face-to-face verbal communication encourages teamwork.

Among other management scholars, Mary Parker Follett, an American social worker and management consultant, was a pioneer in the fields of organisational theory and organisational behaviour. Along with Lillian Gilbreth, Follett was one of two great women management gurus in the early days of classical management theory and some writers regard her as the mother of scientific management, if Taylor is to be the father of the scientific movement. She was one of the first women ever invited to address the London School of Economics, where she spoke on cutting-edge management issues. In her writings, she admonished micro-managing, regarding it as “bossism”. In her capacity as a management theorist, Follett pioneered the understanding of lateral processes within hierarchical organisations, the importance of informal processes within organisations, and the idea of the “authority of expertise” – which served to modify the typology of authority developed by her German contemporary, Max Weber. Follett advocated for the principle of “integration” or no coercive power-sharing based on the use of her concept of “power with” rather than “power over”.

In the late 1800s, Max Weber (a German sociologist) disliked management of organisations on a “personal” family-like basis and the fact that employees were loyal to individual supervisors rather than to the organisation. He believed that organisations should be managed impersonally and that a formal organisational structure, where specific rules were followed, was important. He thought of authority as something that was part of a person’s job and passed from individual to individual as one person left and another took over. This non-personal, objective form of organisation was called a bureaucracy. In the Weberian tradition bureaucracy was viewed “as the expression of rational and efficient administration” (Breton & Wintrobe, 1985:33). A bureaucratic organisation was the most efficient way to control the work of large numbers of people (Denhardt, 2000:30). Weber believed that all bureaucracies had to have the following characteristics:

- **A well-defined hierarchy.** All positions within a bureaucracy are structured in a way that permits the higher positions to supervise and control the lower positions. This clear chain of command facilitates control and order throughout the organisation.

- **Division of labour and specialisation.** All responsibilities in an organisation are specialised so that each employee has the necessary expertise to do a particular task.
- **Rules and regulations.** Standard operating procedures govern all organisational activities to provide certainty and facilitate coordination.
- **Impersonal relationships between managers and employees.** Managers should maintain an impersonal relationship with employees so that favouritism and personal prejudice do not influence decisions.
- **Competence.** Competence, not “who you know”, should be the basis for all decisions made in hiring, job assignments, and promotions in order to foster ability and merit as the primary characteristics of a bureaucratic organisation.
- **Records.** A bureaucracy needs to maintain complete files regarding all its activities.

While the application of bureaucracy has received modification, it has largely remained unchanged in the teaching of public administration. Had it not been developed, the understanding of public administration would have been incomplete. During his days, Weber made significant contributions to the theories which formed a foundation for the subsequent theoretical frameworks. While Weber’s theory has formed the traditional foundations of public administration systems, the emergence of managerialism and the new public management and governance agendas have sharply modified a number of principles that he advocated. However, despite these modifications, certain ideas of Weber’s principles still apply in contemporary public administration. The idea for using original records is a principle that still applies. In the preface to the *Introduction to public administration*, the first textbook on the subject. White (1926) wrote that his book rested on four assumptions. First, it assumed that administration was a single process, substantially uniform in its essential characteristics whenever observed, and therefore avoids the study of municipal administration, state administration or federal administration as such. Second, it assumed that the study of administration should start from the base of management rather than from the foundation of law, and was therefore more absorbed in the American Management Association than in the decisions of the courts. Third, it assumed that administration was still primarily an art but attached importance to the significant tendency to transform it into a science. Fourth, it assumed that administration had become, and would continue to be, the heart of the problem of modern government. These assumptions have been elaborated by Storing (1965:39).

The politics–administration dichotomy provided a solid foundation for the theorisation and teaching of public administration. The core beliefs during the first period demanded that government be divisible into two functions or processes,

namely, decision and execution. Making decisions was the realm of politics and policy making. It was the area in which the processes of democracy were relevant. Executing decisions, however, which is the realm of administration, presented other problems and needed other criteria. To the processes of administration the methods of science, proved so powerful elsewhere, were relevant. The criteria were economy and efficiency; and economy can on close analysis be viewed as an aspect of efficiency. Through scientific research of the phenomena of administration scholars could derive principles of administration. While political scientists and lawyers engaged in this debate, no apparent solution was found. It remained an intricate field to completely separate politics from administration in the real process of running government. The contributions of the management scholars during this period were intended to establish an institutional framework through which efficiency and effectiveness would be promoted. Political science at the same time was the natural home of the study of public administration. Public administration was listed as one of the important sub-disciplines that constituted the field of political science. Earliest writers were formalistic, legalistic and believed more in institutions and structures that followed rules as a strategy for promoting efficiency in the running of government. The article now turns to the second paradigm in the development of public administration.

### **Period Two: Principles of Public Administration (1927-1937)**

Public administration had a reputational zenith during this second phase (principles of administration) of its development (Henry, 2010:29). Both as a discipline and practice, public administration commanded a high degree of respect and its products were in great demand both in government and business during this period. It is reported that by 1925, for example, a person would not have talked about public administration so that people knew what that person meant. This perception changed during the principles period. As an academic backtrack, while there may have been between 30 and 40 public administrations programmes in universities and many subordinated to political science departments, between 1927 and 1936, the number of universities that had public administration as a course on their menu had quadrupled (Stone & Stone, 1975:30). These were clear signs of a growing discipline. The rising stature of public administration was attributed to the Rockefeller family, whose interest in the field remained undiminished following its success with the New York Bureau of Municipal Research. Rockefeller philanthropies poured millions of dollars into the public administration profession, leaving "no important part of the public administration community...untouched" (Henry, 2010:29). The period saw a number of influential writings, among them *Principles of organization* by Mooney and Reiley, *Creative experience* by Mary Parker Follet, Fayol's *Industrial and general management*, and the *Papers on the science of public administration* by Gullick and Urwick (Basu, 1994:14).

During this period, there was a claim that public administration had matured to become a science. As such, there was a belief that there existed certain 'scientific principles' (or proverbs as Herbert Simon later called them) of administration that could be relied upon to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government. The period saw a number of public administration scholars give what they believed constituted the core administrative principles that could shape the discipline of public administration. It was believed that the 'principles' of administration worked in any administrative setting regardless of sector, culture, function, environment, mission or institutional framework. One year after White's classic text, W.F. Willoughby's 1927 book entitled *Principles of public administration*, appeared as the second fully-fledged text in the field of public administration. Willoughby's principles had an American progressive tone, as did White's introduction, but the former's title indicated a new thrust of public administration. It was believed that public administrators would be effective if they learned and applied scientific principles of administration (Henry, 2010:29). With these two important publications, the academic programmes in public administration increased.

In 1929, the University of Southern California established the first independent professional school of public administration. The coming years were very fruitful in the practice and theory of public administration. In 1933 for example, President Roosevelt appointed the first woman in his cabinet to the position of secretary of labour. In the same period, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) was established by the American Congress as an independent public corporation. In 1936, J. Donald Kingsley and William E. Mosher published the first textbook in the field of personnel entitled *Public personnel administration*. At the same time, John Maynard Keynes published his *General theory of employment, interest and money* which called for use of a government's fiscal and monetary policies to positively influence a capitalistic economy. All these were signs of a growing discipline and area of practice. Another significant author in the same year was E. Pendleton Herring in *Public administration and the public interest* where the author asserted that the bureaucrats by default must often be arbiters of the public interest.

In 1937, Gullick and Urwick, who were confidants of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, wrote their 'Papers on the science of administration' in the form of a report to the President's Committee on Administrative Science. They promoted seven principles of administration and, in so doing, gave students of public administration that snappy anagram, POSDCORB, which stood for planning, organising, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting (Henry, 2010:29). These principles have to date had lasting impact on the management and administrative discourse. Basu (1994:14-15) informs us that the main reason for the interest in administration, at least in the USA, was that following the catastrophic years of the Great Depression in the 1930s, the functions of the government had so rapidly



multiplied that there were not enough skilled government personnel to fill the welfare departments newly created under the New Deal. Therefore schools of administration were established quickly to train as many men and women as possible, in the techniques of administration.

Mooney and Reiley (1939) set out a number of common principles which relate to all types of organisations. They gave particular attention to (1) the principle of co-ordination – the need for people to act together with unity of action; (2) the exercise of authority and the need for discipline; (3) the scalar principle – the hierarchy of organisation, the grading of duties and the process of delegation; and (4) the functional principle – specialisation and the distinction between different kinds of duties. In the 1940s the discipline was subjected to searching criticism of its core beliefs, and heterodoxy came to replace orthodoxy. The criticism and new orienting ideas were clearly foreshadowed in the 1930s. In 1936 there had appeared *The frontiers of public administration*, a series of essays by John M. Gaus, Leonard D. White, and Marshall E. Dimock, in which these prominent figures of the orthodox period introduced points of view later to become important.

Kettl's (2000:8-9) article on 'Public administration at the millennium: the state of the field' reports that from its very beginning, public administration was one of the critical foundations of political science, and political science was the natural home of public administration. Despite this early marriage, however, public administration and political science soon nearly divorced. He notes that public administration promoted a short-lived training movement, devoted to preparing students for the public service with a curriculum independent of political science. Many public administrationists were unhappy about the outcome, and some political scientists found the partnership to be an uneasy one. The difficult issues of training for the public service and the role of such training within the association were to become central problems for public administration and its place within the discipline. Public administrations were never satisfied that political science recognised the importance of practical policy problems and education for the public service. There was concern that many political scientists struggled continually to advance theory-building in the field and cared little about professional training. The American Political Science Association had long listed public administration as one of its major fields. The connection was an uneasy one, but for better or worse, political science remained the home for the study of public administration (Henry, 1987).

### **Period Three: Era of Challenge (1938-1947)**

By 1914, the American *Political Science Quarterly* had listed public administration as one of the five disciplines of political science administration, comparative government, public law, international law and political theory. Public administra-

tion was therefore one of the critical foundations of political science and political science was its natural home. But the two disciplines divorced when public administration started training people for public service with a curriculum largely independent of political science. By 1939, public administration had made great strides in its development into a science and in that year the American Society for Public Administration was formed with its quarterly journal, the *Public Administration Review*. The journal was used to propagate the public administration message. Today, the journal is still very actively used for communicating the public administration message. The American Society of Public Administration provided a forum for the scholars and practitioners to meet and exchange views which helped to spread theories and ideas, and led to the development of the science of public administration. This development in the USA was also aided by some management scholars who developed the scientific management movement in the country.

By 1940, public administration had acquired remarkable prestige and self-confidence within political science and in the practice of government. One-fifth of all doctoral degrees awarded that year in political science were in public administration (Martin, 1952:662). As management research continued in the 20th century, questions began to emerge about the interactions and motivations of the individual within organisations. It was advanced by some scholars that management principles developed during the classical period were simply not useful in dealing with the many management challenges of the time. In particular, the behaviour of individual employees needed further elaboration. The main theme during this period was the advocacy of the Human Relationship Behavioural Approach. The Human Relations school of Elton Mayo (to which Herbert Simon belonged) contributed a human dimension to public administration which encouraged the study of the individual and his behaviour in organisations. The use of psychological approaches in understanding individuals in the work places became a key ingredient for understanding public administration. With this development, public administration turned from a purely mechanical study of the process of policy implementation as projected by Willoughby in 1927 to a human subject interested in the role of the individual in the organisation and in devising means to get the best out of the individuals manning the administration. This shift was later to have a devastating effect on the discipline of public administration.

Max Weber, a German sociologist, developed in the early part of the 20th century what is known today as the organisational structure called a bureaucracy. Weber described his ideal type of organisation that he called a bureaucracy as 'a system characterised by a divisions of labour, a clearly defined hierarchy, formal selection, formal rules and regulations, impersonality and career orientation'. The most influential arguments against a bureaucracy were developed by Robert Merton. Merton

wrote in 1940 that there was a tendency for “the rules to become more important than the ends they were designed to serve, resulting in goal displacement and loss of organisational effectiveness”. He argued that the demands on officials to conform to bureaucratic regulations led to ritualism, rigidity, and difficulties in dealing with the general public. Maslow (1943) in *The theory of human motivation* developed the hierarchy of needs, which is a theory in psychology. Maslow subsequently extended the idea to include his observations of humans’ innate curiosity. His theories parallel many other theories of human developmental psychology, all of which focus on describing the stages of growth in humans. Maslow studied what he called exemplary people such as Albert Einstein, Jane Addams, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Frederick Douglass rather than mentally ill or neurotic people, writing that “the study of crippled, stunted, immature, and unhealthy specimens can yield only a cripple psychology and a cripple philosophy.” He thus studied the healthiest one per cent of the college student population to make his conclusions. On his part, Paul Appleby (1945) argued that since “government is different” from private enterprise, public administration is different from business administration.

Dissent from mainstream public administration accelerated in the 1940s in two mutually reinforcing ways. One objection was to the politics–administration dichotomy. This dichotomy was rejected on the grounds that in an ideal world of government, it was difficult to separate politics from administration. It was argued that administration cannot be separated from politics because in its political nature and role, administration was not only concerned with policy decisions but also dealt with policy formulation. In an elaborate analogy of the nature of the dissent against the dichotomy Henry (2010:30) informs us that over the years, a peculiar pervasion warped what was likely the original meaning of the politics–administration dichotomy. ‘Politics initially had meant only partisan and often corrupt politics. By the 1930s, politics had been expanded in its scholarly meaning to include public policy making, and public administrators, in accordance with the dichotomy, should not enter into the forbidden ‘political’ zone. It was at this point that the dichotomy became intellectually untenable though difficult to shed. Gaus (1950:188) hammered the last nail in the coffin of the politics–administration dichotomy when he stated in one of the leading journals of public administration of the time that “a theory of public administration means in our time a theory of politics also”. With this declaration, the dichotomy died a natural death.

It is to be observed that the period saw not only the deflation of the politics–administration dichotomy but a simultaneous effort of puncturing the principles of administration. The contention was that there was no such a thing as a ‘principle’ of administration. Simon was also an important critic of the principles of administration and described them as proverbs. He advocated the behavioural approach

to public administration if the discipline was to be made scientific. He focused upon decision making as the alternative to the principles approach, noting that decision making was at the heart of administration and that the vocabulary of administrative theory must be derived from the logic and psychology of the human race. He outrightly rejected the politics–administration dichotomy and recommended an empirical approach to the study of public administration. At the age of 31, Simon published his book (which was part of his PhD thesis) in 1947 entitled *Administrative behavior*. The aim of the book was to show how organisations can be understood in terms of their decision-making processes. Simon got a Nobel Prize in 1978 for his contribution to science with decision processes in economic organisations. In the same year, Simon published his *Administrative behavior* that presented one of the most likely ever known devastating attacks on the discipline of public administration, Robert A. Dahl, in the *Public Administration Review* published another formidable challenge to *The science of public administration* with its three-fold critique that required comparative inquiry. In an attack, Robert Dahl (1947:8) argued that, “as long as the study of public administration is not comparative, claims for ‘a science of public administration’ sound rather hollow.” He argued that the evolution of the science of public administration was hindered by three problems which had to be resolved:

- The frequent impossibility of excluding normative considerations from the problems of public administration. The study of public administration must be founded on some clarification of goals.
- The need to study certain aspects of human behaviour limits the potentialities of the science of public administration. He criticised the tendency that existed to treat the organisation in formal technical terms and to regard human beings who constitute organisations as more or less material.
- The unscientific nature of the principles of administration which were based on examples drawn from limited natural and historical setting.

Henry (2010:32) has done a fine job in reminding us of the fearful reactions of these attacks. He suggests that at the time Simon obliterated administrative principles as the foundation of management theory, and with them those of public administration as well, he offered an alternative to the old paradigms. He proposed that there should be two kinds of public administrationists working in harmony: (1) those scholars concerned with developing ‘a pure science of administration’ based on a thorough grounding in social psychology, and (2) those concerned with ‘prescribing for public policy’. To him, this enterprise in number two would not only not stop until it had swallowed up the whole of political science, but must absorb economics and sociology as well. Unfortunately, economics and sociology appear not to have been easy disciplines to swallow by the weakened public administration at that time. Political science, however, faced the unfortunate effect of disruption in its house.

Henry (2010:30-31) has summarised these dissenting views into what he calls “deflating the dichotomy and puncturing the principles”. As a result, the two defining pillars of the discipline of public administration (the politics-administrative dichotomy and the principles of administration) were shattered. Herbert Simon’s devastating work on *Administrative behavior* first appeared in 1946. It challenged public administration to abandon its single-minded focus on the structural and replace it with a concern for the behaviour of the individuals and groups within organisations. Simon suggested that organisations that have employees who understand and agree with established goals are more likely to succeed in achieving those goals. For Simon, employee concurrence with goals was more important to success than the structure of the organisation because, when necessary, information will use informal means to overcome structural barriers to achieving goals. The logical extension of this increased role of workers was the reality that policy and organisational goals can be determined by those same employees (Cox *et al.*, 2011). Once a stroke generated by Herbert Simon and Robert Dahl hit this unifying scholarship, the public administration scholars were left with no known home and focus.

#### **Period Four: Identity Crisis (1948-1970)**

Soon after the end of the Second World War, public administration’s place within political science declined precipitously. Simple principles about the pursuit of efficiency, based in an administration separate from politics, seemed unacceptably shallow in the light of the war’s administrative experience (Kettle, 2000:10). In 1948, Waldo attacked the gospel of efficiency in his book, *The administrative state* where he asked, “Efficiency for what?” He subsequently warned that public administrative efficiency must be backed by a framework of consciously-held democratic values. He tried to establish the direction and thrust of public administration as a field of study given that efficiency had dominated the administrative thinking prior to World War II. Within the period, Sayre attacked public personnel administration as “the triumph over purpose” (Shafritz & Hyde, 1997:74). In 1949, Selznick introduced and defined “cooptation” as “the process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy determining structure of an organisation as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence” (Shafritz & Hyde, 1997:147).

In the post-war years, public administration changed its character, scope and methods of investigation. What was left was a very ‘sick’ discipline of public administration. The dichotomy was declared dead in 1950, due to a major stroke by Simon in 1946. Its death was confirmed when J Gaus, a leading scholar, published his article, ‘Trends in the theory of public administration’. The article appeared in the leading *Journal of Public Administration* and it stated that “a theory of public administration in our times means a theory of politics also”. With this confusion,

public administration would never be the same again. Henry (2010:32) regards this period to have been that of 'Public Administration as Political Science', arguing that as a result of the related concerns, public administrationists drove back with some alacrity into the warm and engulfing sea of political science. Some political scientists, however, tried to drown their 'strange and unnatural' progeny in it. Some public administrationists began an exercise of re-uniting and reestablishing the linkages between public administration and political science but there were major issues to resolve. Political scientists were willing to absorb public administration into their larger and loftier realm, but the price of admission was high: public administration would shrivel to an 'emphasis', an 'area of interest' or even a synonym of political science (2010:32). Other public administrationists were simply not sure what they should be doing.

The leading students and writers of the postwar period adopted sharply different attitudes – whatever their other differences – on this matter. It has been generally agreed that while the phenomena of politics and the amount of policy making may decrease as one moves from the top of an administrative agency to its bottom, or into some of the technical processes or functions, they are still generally present to a significant degree; and at the level of chief executive or top management, where so much interest is focused, they are important matters indeed. The results of this recognition manifested themselves in a variety of approaches. For example, Simon's decision-making schema attempt to include the valuational as well as the factual. Some writers, such as Paul H. Appleby (1952), wrote searchingly on the interaction of politics and administration in a democracy. Others, such as Norton E. Long (1962), concentrated more sharply on politics-in-administration, on the power factor in administration. And yet others, such as Emmette Redford (1958), reflected on how the ethical or public-policy component is brought to bear on the technical component.

Kettle (2000:12) contends that during the 1950s and early 1960s, public administration suffered from lack of a theoretical guide and a comfortable disciplinary home. While it had come to the realisation that politics mattered, he asserts, it had not developed a persuasive explanation of how. Meanwhile, much of political science had convinced itself that public administration had little to offer a more behaviourally-oriented field. Although some public administration scholars started calling for peace talks with political science, the conditions of such efforts were stringent. Fesler (1975) raised worry that the field lacked focus and thus had no identity, noting that some critics had long felt the field was being "slowly nibbled to death" by the behavioural sciences. Political science scholars started developing theories to explain the challenges of the time and this was in complete disregard of the contribution of the discipline of public administration as they charged those in

public administration to have had a very serious poverty of theories. Public administration was accused of being concerned with mundane or low-level activities of government, unlike political science which was concerned with higher-level strategic activities. Public administration during this period lacked a natural home as the discipline was no longer welcome in the house of its youth -- political science. As a result, this period saw several reactions:

- A group of scholars decided to return to their mother discipline of political science but they were largely not welcome until they fulfilled certain conditions.
- Another group of scholars formed a new field of administrative sciences.
- Other scholars developed the development and comparative public administration sub-fields.
- There emerged calls for the separation movement of public policy from public administration -- agitating for the new sub-discipline of public policy separate from public administration.
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The development and comparative administration group gained a high degree of recognition during the period. After World War II came to an end, there came about the independence of the colonies and the need for development of administrative systems suited to these colonies emerged. There had also been a challenge posed by Dahl on what public administration needed to do if it was truly to claim a place among the sciences. Scholars, therefore, found the need to arrive at generalisations in the field of public administration which would be applicable in the new independent countries which had diverse political, economic and social systems.

In 1953, the American Political Science Association appointed an *ad hoc* committee on comparative administration and in 1960 a Comparative Administration Group (CAG) that subsequently affiliated with the American Society for Public Administration (Heady, 2001:14) was started. Comparative and development administration, which trace their origins to scholars and practitioners of North America, set out to achieve greater understanding of the administrative culture and styles of decision making, nature and behaviour of institutions, and structures and functions of governance in other countries with whom their nations became involved during World War II (Dwivedi, 2011:24). A vigorous interest developed in comparing administrative processes and institutions (Guess & Gabriellyan, 2007) of developing countries. However, Björkman (2010) recently commented that the imposing nomenclature, status, and even the existence of comparative public administration has been repeatedly questioned and there are trenchant disputes, especially about the appropriate level of analysis as well as the conceptual units to be compared.

Jones (1976) reminds us that the 1950s and 1960s were characterised by the well-financed efforts of American and European experts to export administrative technology and thereby guide recipient countries toward modernisation. Ample resources as well as a pioneer spirit of optimism characterised the era of comparative public administration. Chaired by Fred Riggs, who is variously regarded as the 'granddaddy' of comparative administration, and with the financial support of the Ford Foundation, the period from 1962 to 1971 saw the CAG presiding over what many call the heyday of the comparative administration movement. The Ford Foundation gave its financial assistance on three conditions, one of which specifically related to the expansion of research in comparative development administration. The academic momentum in the 1960s accelerated rapidly. The field grew in numbers, funding and academic attention. According to Wart and Cayer (1990), over 500 members had joined the Comparative Administration Group (CAG) of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) by 1968. Even university curricula were not immune to the enthusiasm, and thus courses in comparative and development administration became far more common and, in some cases, were required. External events also tended to propel American academics and technicians abroad: the new thrust in Latin American affairs stimulated by the Cuban Revolution and the subsequent Alliance for Progress; the rapid decolonisation of Africa; the Vietnam War in Asia; and the formalisation of a standing foreign aid agency.

Cox *et al.* (2011:12) report that the late 1960s was a period in which many long-held academic notions were criticised and often rejected. Public administration, like many other disciplines, experienced just such a period of upheaval. This period is best symbolised by a conference held at the Minnowbrook Conference Center at Syracuse University in 1968. The purpose of the conference was to explore emerging theories of public administration, with particular emphasis on views that were anti-hierarchical and also people-oriented. Henry (2010:32), who refers to the 1950-1970 paradigm as 'public administration as political science', reports that public administrationists during this period were no longer really sure of what they should be doing and there was lack of a fully comprehensive theoretical framework. For their part, political scientists were willing to absorb public administration into their larger and loftier realm, but the price of admission was high: public administration would shrivel to an emphasis, an area of interest, even a synonym of political science. The intention was for them to drop any claim that public administration was an independent discipline.

Contextually, from 1948 to about 1970, the state was considered a central institution in the process of managing public affairs. The state was seen as an engine of social economic development and an efficient administration was regarded as



the primary agent in formulation and implementation of government development plans and programmes. In this context, administration as a concept was highly regarded compared to the concept of management. In this paradigm, management as a concept began to take over from administration. Within this period, most African countries had just moved from colonial domination and they had undertaken serious socialist-oriented policies, but they never improved their efficiency. The focus of inquiry among public administration scholars spanned the dynamics of state-building, nation-building and bureaucracy building – a field of inquiry that Esman (1991) rightly called development administration. Hughes (2003) weighs in to suggest that fostering economic growth via bureaucracy according to a Western model of rational administrative authority became the concern of development administration. Consequently, scholars and practitioners started looking for solutions elsewhere, particularly in the private sector. Moreover, government was accused of inefficiency, red tape, corruption, and general poor service delivery. Government was regarded as part of the problem not part of the solution. The only doctor seemed to be in the private sector. It was clear at the time, as conveyed from the writings of the period, that many of the states' most talented citizens had learnt to work the existing system to their advantage (Joseph, 1987). The exploitative, inefficient and ineffective performance typical of Africa's independence regimes flowed directly from the difficulty of creating national governing rule-systems, and the sub-optimal solutions that were reached (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982; Young, 1994).

### **Period Five: From Public Administration to Public Management (1970-1990)**

Before the 1960s, government was regarded as a central pillar of any society, more so in the delivery of essential public services. However, by the 1960s and 1970s, government came under intense pressure, with its greatest charge listing problems of being ineffective, inefficient, and largely wasteful. By this period, mismanagement, nepotism, political patronage, large and rigid bureaucracy, and widespread corruption became the features of public administration machinery (Turner & Hulme, 1997). These were trying moments for the discipline of public administration. There was a call by citizens for efficient administration to replace ineffective and wasteful bureaucracy. The challenge was on how to address the problems to fulfill the legitimate demands from the citizens who wanted better services from their governments. As a panacea to the problems, it was suggested that public administration would have to distance itself from politics to answer this call and if at all it had to remain effective. Elected officials supported these arguments for they had long believed that the involvement of the administrators in politics (policy making) had unfairly affected their spectrum of activities. For example, in the United States of America, the Hoover Commission, chaired by University of Chicago Professor Louis Brownlow, was constituted to examine reorganisation of government. Brownlow subsequently founded the Public Administration Service

(PAS) at the University, an organisation which provided consulting services to all levels of government until the 1970s.

During the 1980s, governments (and academics) were unconvinced that the traditional system of administration provided an effective form of management of their public services, especially when compared to the robust systems used by the private sector. This thinking brought about the need to inject an entrepreneurial spirit in the running of government using techniques and approaches borrowed from business administration. New modes of delivering public services that relied on business-like styles were proposed. As a result of this thinking all governments, particularly those from the west, including the Scandinavian countries, suggested a comprehensive package of reforms seen as prescriptions to cure the ills of the public sector. It is within this period that somewhere a managerial approach began (Hughes, 2003:48). From the 1980s onwards, the state started rolling back in both developed and developing countries for various reasons, and the emphasis shifted from the state and the public sector to the private sector. The public sector was generally 'diagnosed' to have had an acute sickness whose symptoms manifested themselves in inefficiency and corruption, among others. With this diagnosis, the experts forcefully argued that the prescriptions had to come from an efficient doctor who was only to be found in the private sector. Government was a patient and it needed a doctor! The prescriptions to governments were very clear: liberalise, privatise and stabilise. The implementation was later to see a number of reforms right from the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) through the capacity-building reforms of the 1990s and the new service improvement reforms of the 2000s.

Mutahaba (2010) helps us to understand that by the 1980s, public administration systems in many countries of Africa were characterised by a high degree of inefficiency and ineffectiveness. As a result, they were unable to effectively implement national development plans. In addition to internal weaknesses and institutional limitations, the weak performance of the public administrative systems emanated from increased dependency on donors for the implementation of development plans. Citizens were increasingly dissatisfied with their governments and governments seemed unprepared to address the citizens' demands. The majority of African countries had just obtained independence from colonial powers and most of the inherited administrative systems did not have well qualified people to run the complex machinery of government and to fill a big vacuum that had been left by the colonial powers. Most African administrators were in fact more 'thirsty' for power than the delivery of services. Most African countries, Uganda included, experienced political turmoil which affected the social, political and economic organisation of the state.

Adamolekun (2005) reports that at independence, most countries in sub-Saharan Africa inherited public administration systems that performed two key functions of a modern state fairly satisfactorily: assuring the continuity of the state, and maintaining law and order within each country's territorial areas. During this time, most countries moved quickly to recruit and train nationals to replace the departing colonial officials and to assure the steady supply of trained men and women for their expanding public services. There was also a reorientation of the service delivery function of the public administration from the interests of the colonial countries to those of the new states. In many cases, this meant more rapid expansion of the provision of services in agriculture, the social sector, and infrastructure than was the case during the preceding decades of colonial rule. Because of the problems that characterised governments, experts began to perceive the weaknesses to be in the strong-state central planning model. Something needed to be done quickly to address this perceived problem. This debate did not only take place in Africa but in developed countries as well. Emphasis was placed on utilising and reforming existing structures and systems rather than building new ones -- an incremental approach of a sort was recommended. Management improvement systems for achieving results were developed, often in cooperation with private and community organisations. Solutions were now sought more from management than from administration. A policy consensus favouring privatisation, deregulation, debureaucratisation and decentralisation often went hand in hand with criticism of the state's role and a campaign to reverse the growth of government machineries.

Eventually, all efforts were directed at weakening the state in society and there was a consensus that the size of the government had to be chopped and more responsibilities given to the private sector through a number of new, well-designed mechanisms for service delivery. During the period, there was a collective assault on the organisation of government and vehement questioning of the conventional and traditional ways of doing things. The modalities that had long been relied on to deliver government services became a subject of attack. A clear distinction between private and public administration emerged. A general trend advocating for more "client" or "customer" oriented approaches, decentralisation of authority and being more "business oriented" gained high momentum. There emerged what was labeled the New Public Management (NPM) movement. The ideas of the NPM were grouped into two strands, namely, those ideas that derived from managerialism (which emphasised management in government) and those ideas emanating from new institutional economics, which emphasised markets and competition as a way of giving choice and voice. NPM became a collective name for a bundle of particular management approaches and techniques, many of which were borrowed from the private sector.

For much of the 20th century, Hughes (2003:48) reminds us, there was little difference between management structures or styles between the public and private sectors. Large companies were as hierarchical and Weberian as any government department. It was only from the 1950s or 1960s that problems of bureaucratic rigidity became evident in the private sector. The rise of the manager coincided with the realisation that the division of tasks and the writing of manuals to cover every contingency had limitations. It was argued that someone needed to take charge and also take personal responsibility over results. The apparent success of managers in the private sector led to concerns being raised that the public sector had fallen behind. Quoting from Pross (1986:73), Hughes (2003:48) has the following message on the same subject:

Since the 1950s, there has been a steady deterioration in the potency of... sources of legitimacy and thus in the status of the bureaucracy...Flaws in the merit system were the first to cause concern. It was accepted that the public service was scrupulously non-partisan and highly competent, but in the eyes of many these advantages were offset by a system of management that undermined efficiency and effectiveness. (Hughes, 2003:48)

Economic reforms emphasised the need for liberalisation of the economy by reducing controls, denationalisation, privatisation, private sector orientation and reliance on market forces. Political reforms, which included democratisation, decentralisation, increased people's participation and public accountability, had to accompany the economic reforms. In addition, administrative reforms that included de-bureaucratisation, downsizing of the public service, introduction of strong measures for combating corruption and enhancing productivity (Turner & Hulme, 1997; Hughes, 2003) were implemented. Major systematic cutbacks in public administration were undertaken in several Western democracies in the early 1980s. The State, which in the previous 20 years had been widely perceived as a necessary engine of socio-economic development, was now portrayed in negative terms and condemned for interfering in market forces. The mystique of the dominant state machinery successfully leading development could no longer be regarded.

Following the changed role of the state and growing demands for good governance globally, the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm emerged to implant a new approach into traditional public administration. This new approach was geared towards enhancing efficiency, productivity, improved service delivery and accountability (Hughes, 2003), and emphasis was oriented to results as opposed to the process – which was the orientation of traditional public administration. The new approach called for a reduction in the exclusive reliance on public bureaucracy for service delivery to a system that advocated for the increased use

of the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as alternative mechanisms of service delivery. It gained unmatched gusto when in 1992, David Osborne and Ted Gaebler published their book, *Reinventing government*. The new model advocated for the use of private sector-style models, organisational ideas and values to improve the efficiency and service-orientation of the public sector. The politics– administration dichotomy and the principles period were long gone but still alive in reality!

Hughes (2003:58) has offered one of the strongest critiques of the politics-administration dichotomy. While defending the need for public management, he argues that the traditional model tried to de-politicise what was essentially political. He believes that to achieve political goals is the main function of any public service worthy the name. Public management recognises the essential political character of government: public servants work with politicians in an interactive process called management. Of course, politicians have the final say, but the unrealistic separation of policy-making from administration has been finally discarded. On this same point, Hughes (2003:58) retorts thus, “if one of the main characteristics of the managerial model is that managers take responsibility for the achievement of results, the relationship between the managers and politicians and managers and the public must alter”. He adds:

In the traditional model, the relationship between the politicians and managers was narrow and technical, of master and servant, of those giving the orders and those carrying them out. Under the public management model, the relationship between the politician and the manager is more fluid and closer than before. It is not a narrow and technocratic form of management, as political authority still exists. Public managers are now involved in matters of policy, they are also involved in matters of strict politics, they are more often personally responsible for matters and will pay by losing their jobs if something goes wrong. Public management has become a form of political management and the relationship with political leaders has changed...the skill needed of a public manager is how to be a bureaucratic politician, to be able to interact with politicians and with the outside in a way that is beneficial to both oneself and the organization. (Hughes, 2003:58)

Some authors have defined NPM as a combination of splitting large bureaucracies into smaller, more fragmented agencies, encouraging competition between different public agencies, encouraging competition between public agencies and private firms and using economic incentives lines (e.g. performance pay for senior executives or user-pay models). The defenders of NPM regard individual citizens as “customers” or “clients” (in the private sector sense), rather than as citizens who own the governments from a democratic point of view. Some critics have had seri-

ous issues with this, charging that the New Public Management concept of treating people as “customers” rather than “citizens” is an inappropriate borrowing from the private sector model which does not have a firm position in the public administration standing. The argument is that because businesses see customers as a means to an end (profit), rather than as the proprietors of government (the owners), merely the customers of a business (the patrons), government cannot follow this logic. In New Public Management, while people are viewed as economic units, in public administration, the same citizens are seen as democratic participants. In fact, they are regarded as owners of government and civil servants and politicians are simply agents and should be subordinate to civilian authorities (Maserumule, 2009).

During the Clinton Administration (1992-2000), it is reported that Vice President Al Gore adopted and reformed federal agencies using NPM approaches. In the 1990s, New Public Management became prevalent throughout the bureaucracies of the US, the UK and, to a lesser extent, in Canada. Several reforms which mirrored the NPM model promoted the diminished role of the state in favour of the bulldozing dominance of market forces and this became the full gospel of the 1980s and early 1990s. By the late 1980s, there was widespread acknowledgment of a development crisis in sub-Saharan Africa and the decline of public administration in the majority of the countries was just one of the manifestations, albeit a critical one, given its responsibility for the important state functions.

Major reforms were a common feature in Uganda. Such reforms included: broad economic reforms; privatisation of public enterprises; decentralisation; retrenchment and downsizing of the public sector (through the broader public service reforms); tax administration reforms; outsourcing and contracting out; performance-based management; public financial management reforms; and public procurement reforms. This idea of exporting public sector economic reforms to developing countries was crystallised in the “Washington Consensus” in 1995 when it was generally accepted by major donors and international development agencies that trade, not aid, and private investment, not state money, would be more effective in bringing about sustainable development in less developed countries. In line with these new ideas, the involvement of the State in economic and social development was to be reduced, and government was to operate according to market-like mechanisms wherever possible. Between 1966 and 1986, Uganda went through a series of civil conflicts that culminated into the National Resistance Movement (NRM) capturing state power in January 1986. These conflicts reduced the country’s level of economic activity through the destruction of economic infrastructure, dis-saving and capital flight that diminished the country’s stock of physical and human capital.

The country's economic productivity was reduced by disruption and expenditure diversion to quell the civil strife to the extent that per capita gross domestic product declined by 40 per cent between 1971 and 1986. During the same period, most Ugandans retreated into the informal sector of the economy and this led the subsistence activities (excluding livestock and construction) to increase from 21 to 36 per cent of the economy. Therefore, when the NRM took over state power from the Okellos' Junta (September 1985- January 1986), which itself had come to power after two decades of economic and social decline (including Idi Amin's military dictatorship – January 1971 to April 1979), Uganda's economy and society were in total ruins. A year later, in May 1987, the government, with the support of the Breton Woods institutions, embarked on economic policy reforms whose major objectives were to ensure the reconstruction of the war-torn country and eventually lead to the recovery and development of the Ugandan society. These reforms centred mainly on the liberalisation of the economy and decentralisation of government services with the view of achieving development and elimination of abject poverty among Ugandans.

During the past few years, there has been a gradual move away from extreme market or government solutions. Market forces alone have not led to economic productivity and social progress. Apparently, it has been realised rather not too late that markets and civil societies will not thrive without a strong and competent public administration. This implies that administration has to reclaim its central place in the management of public affairs. The role of state machinery should and is to be viewed in the larger perspective of governance. Beyond conventional bureaucratic public administration, governments now incorporate legal and policy frameworks for proper policy environments, and appropriate measures to promote participatory systems for civil society to engage in policy formulation and programme implementation, as well as contribute to an effective and transparent process for control and accountability of government actions. Nonetheless, public administration must remain the pre-eminent locus and responsible guarantor of the public interest and a vital player within public management and governance. Short of this logic, service delivery will remain in abeyance. We now turn to the governance paradigm.

### **Period Six: From Public Management to Governance (From the late 1990s to 2008)**

The belief that lack of 'good governance' might be the main hindrance to economic growth in Africa was firmly set in the minds of the international community following a World Bank report published in 1989 which categorically declared that, "Underlying the litany of Africa's development problems was a crisis of governance". By 'governance' it was meant the exercise of power to manage a nation's

affairs. Since then, the phrase 'governance' has attained the status of a mantra in the development business. It is presented as the 'discovery of new truths' that must be hammered into the benighted minds of African policy makers. The Africans themselves often consider it as one more item on the list of aid conditionality (Mkandawire, 2007:679). The new inspiration word came from African scholars although the current use of the concept diverges significantly from their own original understanding. In the preparation of the 1989 report, the World Bank did the then unusual thing of consulting African scholars and commissioning them to prepare background papers, apparently at the insistence of Africans within the World Bank; and it is from this effort that governance became regarded as an important element of any government machinery.

In the late 1990s, Janet and Robert Denhardt proposed a new public service model in response to the dominance of NPM (Stone, 2008). This successor model to NPM was labeled the digital-era governance. It focused on themes of reintegrating government responsibilities, needs-based holism (executing duties in cursive ways), and digitalisation (exploiting the transformational capabilities of modern IT and digital storage). One example of this is [openforum.com.au](http://openforum.com.au), an Australian not-for-profit eDemocracy project which invites politicians, senior public servants, academics, business people and other key stakeholders to engage in high-level policy debate. Principles such as public participation, transparency, accountability, and subsidiarity have now been a part of our daily lives. The effects of these principles posed problems which were worth investigating. The number of problems was increasing and these problems were getting more and more complicated and displaying technical characteristics on a large scale when compared with the past (Dwivedi, 2011:129). With this realisation, there was a consensus that there had to be a shift from public management to governance.

In 1992, Osborne and Gaebler published their book *Reinventing government*. In 1997, there was the conception of virtual organisations and beyond. With the changes in technology, communication, and the global economy, there was a perceived decline of government's role in delivery of services. Globalisation and the emergence of the Internet exerted immense pressure on governments to reduce their sovereignty so that the earth may be governed as a planet (Henry, 2010:38). With these pressures, the institutional distinction between the public (at central and local levels), not-for-profit and the private sector emerged. The centre of argument was the role of non-state actors in the delivery of public services which had been the preserve of the public sector before the 1970s and the private sector in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s. In the latter part of the 1990s, governments were required to relinquish most of their traditional responsibilities to individual citizens, groups of citizens, engage in public-private partnerships, the not-for-profit sector, the private sector, the public authorities, associations of government



and other governments, as well as a host of other non-state actors. In this whole arrangement, non-state actors were required to play a critical role in the delivery of public services. In this ensuing debate, a clear distinction between government and governance emerged.

In governance, as Henry (2010:38) sums up, “we are moving away from government, or the control over citizens and the delivery of public benefits by institutions of the state, and we are moving towards governance, or configuration of laws, policies or organizations, institutions, cooperative arrangements, and agreements that control citizens and deliver public benefits. Government is institutional; and yet governance is institutional and networked.” Much of the new thinking referred to above originated from the developed nations. It found its filtration down to developing countries through technical assistance and structural adjustment programmes. In the majority of countries in the developing part of the globe, they experienced rising debt levels and an inability to meet their international obligations. As a solution, most of these countries acceded to reducing the role of the state through implementing whatever prescriptions were suggested by the powerful nations of the world. The fall of the former Soviet Union and the democratising trends that followed also reinforced the move towards more market-based economic systems. However, while this reliance on market forces was being practised in many countries, there was evidence that market therapy, both shock and gradual, led to some economic dysfunctions and much social misery. Apparently there might be a role for the State after all, if only to moderate the negative social consequences of the unregulated market.

Hughes (2003:76) has done a fine job in making an articulate distinction between government and governance. He opines that government is the institution itself, whereas governance is a broader concept describing forms of governing which are not necessarily in the hands of the formal government. It is within this same context that concepts like corporate governance, local governance, and global governance emerged. Corporate governance, for example, was used to refer to how the private sector structures its internal mechanisms to provide for accountability to its stakeholders. While government may be involved through company law in the affairs of the private sector, there are a number of aspects in which it does not have much control. Governance is not the preserve of the government alone but certainly it is one of the key players. Other players that may include private sector organisations, the church, non-governmental organisations, professional associations, traditional cultural institutions, and a number of other citizens’ groups are important ingredients of good governance machinery. Initially, governments, private institutions, and civil society organisations were seen as critical institutions of governance. It was believed that their participation was crucial in mobilising the knowledge and insight necessary to take advantage of the potential benefits of globalisation and to mitigate or prevent its potential threats. However,

inclusion of other players was seen, and continues to be seen, as a mechanism of increasing the whole spectrum of citizen participation.

After decades of debate on the mutually exclusive roles of the State and the market, it became clear that there are as many complementarities as oppositions in the roles of these two partners. Along with this change, there was also a growing acceptance of the fact that different cultural and political circumstances required different approaches in lieu of the notorious 'one size fits all' solution. Governance issues are topical in every discipline. In this regard, the concept has been applied in various contexts – economic governance, political governance, environmental governance, administrative governance, judicial governance, social governance, technological governance, global governance, corporate governance and local governance, among others. In their paper on governance and democracy as critical pillars for successful East African regional integration, Bana and Basheka (2011) have suggested that the use of political governance may provide an appropriate broader template for the discussion of governance and democracy matters. They believe that politics shapes the functioning of any government and the politics in the state determines the economics, as well as providing an appropriate administrative framework for the delivery of services. Problems in the politics of a country create problems in the whole functioning of society.

To better understand governance, new and sophisticated tools have been developed and are being used to measure the performance of governments. The results from such measurements are now taken seriously by African leaders, policy makers and academics across different fields. One such tool, the Africa Governance Index as reported by Rotberg and Gisselquist (2009), has been widely accepted and leaders, such as in Rwanda, have shown great interest in understanding what they can do to improve their ranking in a given category. However, some leaders dispute specific rankings, but this still implies the measurement system makes them aware of how their governance is perceived domestically and internationally. Some leaders have shown willingness to make changes in their own actions in order to change these perceptions. The index offers a report card on the accomplishments of each government for the years being investigated. The idea of the Ibrahim index is to measure this statistically, and be able to compare increases or declines in governance. The index results allow citizens of individual countries, and civil society institutions to accurately monitor how well their government is performing. The index is updated annually and even the sources of information are continuously updated both through the efforts of the measuring institutions and other related projects.

### **Period Seven: From Governance to Global Crisis (2008-2010)**

For the period 2008 to 2010, no serious academic theory was advanced. The world economy was grappling with the global economic order that saw Washington change its policies. Uganda's economy is still suffering from the global crisis with inflation now at over 30%. This period could be described as a period of the crisis of identity of the public administration discipline but also a crisis of ideology to guide governments. Most criticisms have been made against the Washington consensus policies especially on trade liberalisation and elimination of trade subsidies. The agricultural sector has become the centre of this criticism. Their prescriptions did not work the way they expected. The importance of local economic development models has gained much recognition with the current global economic crises.

### **Period Eight: From Governance to New Public Governance (2010 to date)**

To support the role of the state and ensure that its goals are fulfilled, public administration continues to evolve, absorbing new methods and adapting practices according to social and technological progress. Internal and external pressures, as well as cultural and contextual challenges, continue to maintain a formidable presence, thereby influencing the way not only government delivers public services but also the way academia perceive this role. The multiplicity and complexity of the problems facing different countries surely do not support the adoption of the 'one-size-fits-all' prescriptions. As public administration continues the struggle to provide the foundation for maintaining confidence in the stability and continuity of the State, efforts to enhance its professionalism and integrity and to buttress its impartiality, legality and transparency are critical to the fulfilment of the State's overarching goals. This new role of public administration in improving overall governance is carried out in the context of and in response to local, national, regional and global pressures, as well as challenges for survival, development and change. This point Louw underscores in her article, *From public administration to governance: Science or ideology*, in the pages of this edition of the *Journal of Public Management*.

The big challenge for governance in the years ahead is to reinvent a framework for society that transcends the government structure, and moves towards a more inclusive and organic linkage of the roles of government, business and civil society. Within the changing context, another new public service model dubbed 'New Public Governance – NPG', an approach which includes a centralisation of power; an increased number, role and influence of partisan-political staff; personal-politicisation of appointments to the senior public service; and the assumption that the public service is promiscuously partisan for the government of the day (Peter, 2008). Osborne (2010) suggests that NPM and governance approaches fail

to address the complex reality of the design, delivery and management of public services in the 21st century. He thus proposes what he calls a more sophisticated understanding of public policy implementation and public service delivery. Such an approach moves beyond the sterile dichotomy of 'administration vs management' and allows a more comprehensive and integrated approach to the study and practice of public policy implementation and public service delivery. Some previous writers had suggested that the concern of public administration should be an integrated science that borrows from other disciplines, while those disciplines maintain their original identity. To this end, Osborne fulfilled of what the author had recommended.

He reports to us that NPG is neither presented as a normative new paradigm to supersede public administration and NPM nor as the 'best way' to respond to the challenges of public policy implementation and public service delivery in the 21st century. Rather, it is being presented as a conceptual tool with the potential to assist our understanding of the complexity of these challenges and as a reflection of the reality of the working lives of public managers today. Governance and public governance are not new terms; they come with considerable prior theoretical and/or ideological baggage. He informs us that critics have differentiated two broad schools of governance literature – corporate governance and 'good governance'. He argues that NPG focuses more on inter-organisational relationships and on the governance of processes, stressing service effectiveness and outcomes that rely on the interaction of PSOs with their environment. The central resource-allocation mechanism within NPG is argued to be the inter-organisational network, with accountability being something to be negotiated at the inter-organisational and interpersonal levels within these networks.

In his final observations, he suggests that if we are to develop NPG as a conceptualisation of public policy implementation and public service management, it is necessary to move towards an integrated body of knowledge about the NPG. What about the German Professor Stein who had advocated for this in the 19th century? Had academics built on this approach, probably we would have a new public administration body of knowledge. This requires our research community to start asking a series of 'new questions' about the fundamentals of NPG. These questions are focused on the underlying principles of public services delivery in the plural and pluralist state and on the public service system rather than on individual PSOs. But public administration has traditionally focused on a political system, not an individual PSO. He suggests the following new questions:

- What should be our basic unit of analysis in exploring public policy implementation and public services delivery, and what are the implications of this for theory and practice? -- the fundamental question

- What organisational architecture is best suited to delivering public services in the pluralist state? – the architecture question
- How do we ensure sustainable public service systems and what does sustainability mean? – the sustainability question (the same as the previous questions above but he has changed the order)
- What values underpin public policy implementation and service delivery in such systems? – the values question (what about the propositions by Weber and other writers?)
- What key skills are required for relational performance? - the relational skills question
- What is the nature of accountability in fragmented plural and pluralist state? - the accountability question
- How do you evaluate sustainability, accountability, and relationship performance within open natural public service delivery systems? – the evaluation question. How is it different from the performance measurement in NPM or Weber's views on expectations of the public servant?

## CONCLUSION

The challenges before us today are different from those of yesterday, and will most likely be different from those of tomorrow and the days to follow. However, the study of public administration is informed by the history that hardly changes. There is an impressive past in the practices and theory of public administration that we should never forget. History needs to be a walking stick for our discipline. Contextually, pre-colonial Africa had impressive systems for managing public affairs that scholars of the discipline on the continent must examine. The teaching of public administration in African universities should explore the indigenous systems with a view to capturing major value systems that put societies together for the common good of everybody. Community resources were jealously guarded by everybody and discipline was a key principle for harmonious existence. Pre-colonial Africa had accomplished a great deed; in the areas of political and social organisation, architecture, city building, arts and crafts, commerce and trade, tax administration, grievance handling and discipline, as well as the practical elements of democracy. In an effort to understand pre-colonial Africa, scholars must create a balance sheet where good values that could have maintained practices are screened from bad practices, especially those that were practised by tyrants. Despite the historical facts, public administration has to respond to challenges of our times. While Henry (2010:39) predicts that the future of public administration is one of less government, the extent to which this will be possible under situations of global economic crises and apparent failure of other actors should be a matter of concern to all public administration scholars. Citizens are increasingly becoming concerned about the kind of services they get from their agents-government.

Citizens in a democratic government will always blame their own governments because it is the same governments to which they transferred their responsibilities.

Dhameja (2003:8) has observed that contemporary public administration cannot sustain itself in a political, economic and social vacuum. The implication of such a statement is that the discipline will keep changing in the light of changing circumstances within society. Public administration of the contemporary folk will keep facing complex challenges and pressures in the face of changing trends in liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. Compared to the problems existing in public administration, general research in public administration is comparatively backward. Today, the management of public affairs remains an extremely important area of practice. The study of public administration is essential in the day-to-day world. It is assuming global importance and gradually occupying a central place and position in the family of social sciences. However, we cannot understand the public administration of today or the one of tomorrow without knowing what has happened before.

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# PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THEORETICAL DISCOURSE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A NEED TO GO BEYOND MODERN THINKING

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## ABSTRACT

The concept of a developmental local government was introduced while debates in Public Administration were in full swing to suit the post-apartheid state. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 necessitated a refinement of the discipline of Public Administration in South Africa. Local government transformation, however, took place after other spheres of government were transformed. It is argued that local government as a vehicle for realisation of envisaged development was underestimated by role players involved in the transformation of the South African government system. Debates in Public Administration are contributing in shaping the implementation of developmental local government. The space of public administration in terms of the Constitution presents an atmosphere for continuous engagement. The discourse surfaces beyond odds of mainstream public administration. The domination of the orthodox or modern mainstream public administration discourse had factored a simplistic engagement in local government. The society in which developmental local government is taking place is postmodern in nature; there is no unified criterion on which to base judgment of reality of one fact against another. Reality can only be determined locally without adhering to a one-size-fits-all scenario of modern thinking. Therefore the need for ongoing debate to enable realisation of developmental local government beyond limits of rational public administration discourse in South Africa is long overdue.

## INTRODUCTION

It is clear that the praxis of developmental local government as characterised in the South African dispensation is partially less pragmatic. Developmental local government came in while debates within Public Administration were in full swing. The newly adopted democratic *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* necessitated a refining of the discipline of Public Administration in South Africa. Transformations brought about by changes in government dispensation sparked a debate as early as 1991 through the Mount Grace conferences. How-

ever, such transformation took place after both the national and provincial spheres were transformed. It is not clear whether such transformation was a priority or the process was so complex as to warrant separate engagement. Such processes have run faster than theoretical debates. This opened space for a rush to adopt the New Public Management (NPM) tendencies dominated by private sector consultancy. The transformation became a political project to be realised within a specific time-frame. The state of debate in Public Administration has contributed in shaping the implementation of developmental local government in South Africa. The normative nature of public administration as expounded in Section 195 of the Constitution exposes a conundrum in a dominant paradigm that aspires for a one-size-fits-all scenario. The current theoretical discourse reflects a gap in practice. Development of a dominant modern discourse is engraved in practice through simplistic assumptions of NPM that is in contrast to managing a dynamic postmodern society beyond common sense. In as much as the Mount Grace debates focused among other things on shortfalls of a generic perspective in favour of systems thinking in public administration, the fact is that such realm is within dominant modern thinking based on “positivist” ontology. Developmental local government is reduced to simple phenomena that conform to the reductionist approach of NPM. Yet theoretical approaches contributed to the development of public administration-premised developmental local government. Realities in local government practice are determined locally. That presents a postmodern scenario that necessitates a need for prescripts beyond rational science.

## **NORMATIVE FOUNDATIONS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Over the years, a number of normative requirements developed in public administration (Van der Waldt & Helmbold, 1995). These are value norms worth striving for, and which must serve as criteria for public conduct (Botes, Brynard, Fourie & Roux, 1996). These norms underwent adjustments which eventually crystallised into a number of basic, identifiable ethical or moral behavioural guidelines. In terms of South African public administration, such guidelines are as per Section 195 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. They are read together with provisions of Section 51 of the *Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*. Botes *et al.* (1996) provide a theoretical base for such guidelines as guidance of a supreme political authority; public accountability and responsibility; application of administrative law; respecting values of society; pursuance of high ethical norms and standards; and social justice and equality.

Public service as it is today owes much of its being to the public administration theory that prevailed at the beginning of the 20th century including respect for the rule of law; a commitment to serving public good; and an expectation that public servants will exhibit integrity, probity and impartiality in serving public trust (Bour-

gon, 2007). These in essence imply that the development of theoretical discourse in Public Administration is dominated by trends that prevailed in the 20th century. Those trends were striving to develop Public Administration alongside a positivist ontology of science. Such development strove to come out with simple universal guidelines for public administration. It sought a unified rational theory of Public Administration that can be applied across the board. Given its normative basis, this has proved to be a futile exercise for public administration; it became impossible to have unified principles applicable across the spectrum of both field and practice.

## **APPROACHES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

There are several ways to study the phenomena of public administration (Kumar, 2002). Those ways can be fundamentally identified as storytelling or narration (White, 1999). Knowledge about public administration is basically a story grounded in language and discourse expressed in narrative form through conversations. Kumar (2002) identified traditional approaches, new approaches, scientific approaches, a mechanistic behaviour approach, and an ecological approach. Fox and Miller (1995) refer to such approaches as public administration theoretical endeavours being sought from political science, philosophy, economics, organisation theory, sociology, social psychology, and any other related sciences that can assist. Traditional approaches comprise of the historical approach, legal approach and institutional approach. New approaches are classified as, systems approach, and structural-functional approach. Scientific approaches comprise of comparative methods, new techniques and case methods. Each approach is emphasised in the discussion of modern approaches to public administration in the ensuing paragraphs. A distinction is made between modern approaches to public administration and postmodern approaches in relation to their applicability in developmental local government.

## **MODERN APPROACHES TO PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

In discussing modern discourse or dominant mainstream public administration, it is important to first outline modernity or modernism. In other literature these are referred to as the orthodox (Fox & Miller, 1995). Modernity is characterised by rationalisation, centralisation, specialisation, bureaucratisation, industrialisation and urbanisation (Bogason, 2004). It is this urbanisation that has characterised the evolution of local government in some parts of the world including pre-democratic South Africa. Modern also refers to our presently ingrained cultural values, the dominant theory in use in both society and the academy: causality, determinism, egalitarianism, humanism, liberal democracy, necessity, objectivity, rationality, responsibility and truth (Bogg & Geyer, 2007).

Modernity is a distinctive core of assumptions and beliefs about the power of human subjects and human reason that have constituted a dominant mindset of the West for the last five hundred years or more, a period of many technological, social, political and economic miracles. Modern science is based on a rule of reason, establishment of rational order and emergence of a freed subject but it has fallen short of its goals (Arias & Acebron, 2001). Public administration theory is a paradigm case of modernity (Fenwick, 1995). Yet a paradigm is the set of preconceptions that is brought from the past to each new situation to be dealt with (Stacey, 1996), or a lens through which the world is looked at and it therefore determines what is perceived. Modernity's view of a centred subject, the unconstrained subject engaged in the epistemological project in which truth and values require grounding in self, has led to distinctive features of rationalisation and reasoning in public administration theory (Fenwick, 1995).

Much of public administration theory embodies the rationalisation spirit that the Enlightenment celebrated: calculating or instrumental rationality that Weber describes and purposive rationalisation that Habermas depicts (Fox & Miller, 1995). This rationalising is manifest in attempts to develop a public administration discipline along scientific and technological lines. Public administration has developed throughout various stages informed by various scientific bases. Based on the ideas of Newton and Maxwell or Darwin and Linnaeus, science developed and refined not just specific theories of gravity and electricity or evolution and classification, but large scale ways of thinking on which inquiries are based in many other disciplines, including the social, political and administrative sciences (Daneke, 1990).

To define public administration, for example, Woodrow Wilson relied on the exclusivity of politics and administration, the indivisible administrator, and objectivity of law (Dobuzinskis, 1997). To enable Wilson to proclaim that politics and administration belong to different spheres, he applied to public administration a positivist dogma, that facts are separate from values. That is in line with what the French philosopher, Auguste Comte (1798-1857), said about positivism as a secular religion for humanity which planted the seeds of mainstream social science (White, 1999). He rejected theological and metaphysical explanations of human behaviour in favour of scientific ones. He believed that human behaviour obeyed laws just as rigorous as Newton's laws of motion. More than a few public administration writers followed the lead of positivists such as Herbert Simon who sought to focus the attention of the field on relatively narrow and well defined empirical questions, which seem readily amenable to scientific investigation, rather than a broad and enduring question of political philosophy, which is difficult or even impossible to reduce to an empirically testable hypothesis (Spicer, 2001).

The positivist tradition fosters an engineering mentality toward use of knowledge in administrative and policy settings that this article argues has been engrained in the state of public administration in South Africa (White, 1999). Whereas this is appropriate for solving simple, well-structured problems, it fails to explain the logic of how formal knowledge of administration or public policy is used to solve complex, ill-structured problems like those in local government. A well-structured problem has few decision makers or stakeholders, a limited number of alternatives, a well-defined problem area, and agreed upon values to direct action. In contrast, an ill-structured problem has many decision makers, numerous possible alternatives, competing definitions of the problem, and conflicting values to guide decision making (Mouton, 2009). Effective solutions of ill-structured problems involve a type of knowledge and action that is not captured in a positivist conception of science. But a question to be answered is whether such problems may be solved through positivist notions such as the feasibility of separating politics from public administration (Mafunisa, 2003; Thornhill, 2007). In the ensuing paragraphs some modern approaches which reflect the elements of modernism or mainstream public administration are highlighted. These approaches are the mechanistic behaviour approach, behavioural approach and systems approach.

### **Mechanistic Behaviour Approach**

The mechanistic behaviour approach emphasises the machine-like behaviour of public administrators (Kumar, 2002). It is based on the discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton (Heylighen, Cilliers & Gershenson, 2007), which are based on a belief that the universe is completely deterministic (Habtemichael & Cloete, 2010). Its philosophy is simplistic. Such behaviour is a result of scientific management movement and observance of bureaucratic rules and procedures. Scientific management theorists like F.W. Taylor and others, were aspiring to develop a best way to do the job (Fox & Miller, 1995). It assumes that a given job can be broken down into its constituent parts, with each measured, timed and analysed irrespective of context; and that there is an objectively best way of doing the job, again irrespective of context (Fenwick, 1995). To design and implement management methods, Fredrick Taylor relied on fixed time and space, the primacy of physical reality, and simple causal relationship (Morcol & Wachhaus, 2009). Weber developed a rational bureaucratic image of specialisation; clear lines of authority and rule-based procedures mirrored the ideals of logical empiricism in the scientific community. Weber envisioned a sociology that would combine a concern for objectivity with an understanding of a meaning for human action for those involved – a combination extremely difficult to achieve (Denhardt, 2008).

Scientific management aimed largely at organising work at shop-floor level and administrative management sought to develop principles for an organisation as a

whole. It was concerned with developing universal principles and methods that can apply to each and every organisation or institution. This is seen through an attempt to develop principles of administration by theorists such as Gulick and Urwick with their POSDCORB acronym, and Simon with proverbs of administration. POSDCORB stands for the functions of the chief executive, namely, planning, organising, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting (Coetzee, 1988). Theories developed through scientific management are rationalistic and mechanistic. The central concern was to achieve the best performance of physical activities (Stacey, Griffin & Shaw, 2000). The focus was on actions of parts rather than interaction of parts. These theorists were within the ambit of modern scientific discourse based on causal links. Mouton (2009) refers to such as dealing with “simple programmes”. Programmes are simple when it is possible and usually quite easy to capture a programme theory, using a logical model, in a single, linear causal path, often involving some variation on five categories, namely, inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impact. The conceptualisation of structures and systems in developmental local government reflects this approach. For example, a Weberian bureaucratic structure remains a basis for developing meaningful organisational arrangements. Municipal structures continue to have some elements of a mechanistic approach. Clear functional demarcations are in place and elected councillors are expected to perform activities as outlined in relevant legislation. Mechanistic approaches in their modern context remain a basis of theoretical framework for public administration. But by itself the mechanistic approach lacks much in addressing the turbulent phenomena of developmental local government.

## **Behavioural Approach**

The human relations school is associated with Mayo (Fenwick, 1995). The school assumes that a social group, and in particular interpersonal relations of a work group, is just as important as the actual organisation of the job in determining output and performance. The well-known Hawthorne studies in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s appeared to demonstrate that solidarity of work group at the Western Electric Company, and for that matter seemingly benign interest shown in groups by researchers, had a greater impact on output than physical conditions or economic incentives. The assumptions of the human relations school run counter to scientific management. It emphasises the group rather than the individualistic approach. The Hawthorne studies experiment underscored a fundamental truth, obscured for some time by scientific management, namely, that employees constituted its basis, and that attitudes, behaviour and morale within primary groups ultimately depended on industrial effectiveness and productivity (Kumar, 2002). The study came to realise the existence of internal and non-rational elements of human behaviour in a work environment. Interrelations between workers and groups may exist beyond provisions of organisational structure. Local governments consist of human beings that have interrelations. The behavioural approach recognised those

interrelations within a linear rational perspective. The interrelations in the phenomena are more like interactions. Interactions do not conform to rational modern interpretations as they have feed-back loops and are unpredictable. The spontaneous rise of community protests in South African municipalities bears witness to this.

## Systems Approach

Scientific management was challenged by systems thinking theorists (Heylighen *et al.*, 2007). The origin of general systems is traced to the thinking of the biologist, Von Bertalanfy in the 1920s (Dooley, 1997). He put forward the idea that organisms, as well as human organisations and societies, are open systems (Bevir, 2009). They are systems because they consist of a number of component subsystems that are interrelated and interdependent on each other. They are open because they are connected by feedback links to their environments, or supra-systems of which they are part. Senge (1990) refers to business and other human endeavour also as systems. They are bound by the invisible fabric of interrelated actions, which often take years to fully play out their effects on each other. A number of theorists from various disciplines began to think and write about the unification of science in their quest for a body of concepts lending unity or organisation to studies undertaken in various disciplines, and they developed the concept of 'system', which has since then become a basic conceptual asset of general systems theory (Kumar, 2002). The concept of 'system' has been borrowed from the natural sciences where it is used to refer to clearly defined sets of interactions. The term has been defined as a complex whole, a set of connected things or parts, an organised body of material or immaterial things, and its analysis is concerned, not so much with individuals as such, but rather the roles that individuals play and their interactions (Bevir, 2009). The concept of 'system' has been adopted in the establishment of local government municipalities as enacted through the *Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*. Processes, tools and approaches in developmental local government are systems, inclusive of individuals or agents. In terms of policy programmes intervention, Mouton (2009) refers to programmes that have systematic features or alternative causal strands as complicated programmes. Complicated programmes are characterised or distinguished in literature by interventions implemented through multiple agencies; interventions with multiple simultaneous causal strands and interventions with alternative causal strands. It has to be mentioned that in South Africa, scholars such as Schwella (2000) were propagating for this approach to reign over Cloete's generic process. The new systems theories developed along three pathways over much the same period of time (Stacey *et al.*, 2000). Systems thinking theories which were developed are General Systems Theory, Cybernetics, and Systems Dynamics and will be discussed as follows.



## General systems theory

The growing tendency in general systems theory is to describe human organisations within a broad framework of systems thinking (Kumar, 2002). A system in that context is an assembly of interdependent parts which may be referred to as subsystems, whose interaction determines its survival. Interdependence means that change in one part affects other parts and thus the whole system. The changes in one of the municipality departments or municipal entities will eventually affect other operations within the whole municipality-operating system. The central concept of the general systems theory is that of homeostasis, which means that the systems have a strong tendency to move toward a state of order and stability, or adapted equilibrium (Stacey *et al.*, 2000). They can only do this if they have permeable boundaries that are open to interactions with other systems. They display the property of equifinality, which means that they can reach homeostasis from a number of differing starting points along a number of differing paths.

The systems history and context is not an issue. What is important is its current state of relationship with other systems and clearly defined boundaries. Public administrators assume the role of controlling a system towards a point of equilibrium. The point of equilibrium would be when municipalities objectively achieve constitutional objectives. Administrative processes, tools and approaches as systems are marshaled towards a common predetermined objective. The introduction of Integrated Development Planning (IDP) partially assumed a notion of systems thinking. It is assumed that through proper integration of phases for planning stages a system of local government can be marshaled towards a point of equilibrium.

## Cybernetic Systems

Cybernetics, which was defined in 1948 by Nobert Wiener as the science of communication and control in the animal and the machine, demonstrates that purposefulness can be accounted for by formal models in which corrective feedback loops have been built (Dobuzinskis, 1992). Cybernetics is an interdisciplinary study of a structure of regulatory systems. It is closely related to control theory and systems theory (Heylighen *et al.*, 2007). It is an approach that seeks to control an organisation by using feedback without understanding the feedback structure of the organisation itself (Stacey, 1996). It sees effective regulators as those that cause a system to be largely self-regulating, automatically handling disturbance which the environment bombards it with. Cybernetic systems are self-regulating, goal-directed systems adapting to their environment (Stacey *et al.*, 2000). The system comes with built-in checks and controls. Once set in place it can operate automatically as long as all parts are performing properly. Planning and budgeting systems in public administration serve as examples of cybernetic systems in that quantified targets are set for performance at some point in future through forecasts.

## Systems dynamics

Dynamics is the study of how a system changes over time: classical dynamics establishes laws of motion through time for physical bodies; thermodynamics establishes laws of heat dissipation over time; population dynamics establishes the patterns of change in a population over time; economic dynamics attempts to establish and explain patterns of economic development over time; psychodynamics tries to explain the human behaviour patterns over time that are generated by contradiction and tension, for example, by the need to be part of a group and yet be a free individual, by the feeling of love and hate for the same person (Stacey, 1996). Mathematical models of a system are constructed, consisting of recursive, non-linear equations that specify how system states change over time (Haynes, 2007).

Systems dynamics theory recognises amplification, feedback (positive or negative) and non-linear responses. A system moves from being self-regulating to self-influencing, being self-sustaining or self-destructive. Instead of a system moving towards equilibrium, it follows a small number of typical patterns or archetypes (Stacey *et al.*, 2000). Public administrators have to recognise those patterns and identify leverage points at which action has to be taken to change them so as to stay in control. The major criticism is that they are solely cause-effect approaches.

Schwella (2000) was debating the support of systems thinking, regarding those limitations as fallacies that have also encroached on public administration. Application of those modern theoretical approaches needs to be complemented by thinking beyond rational ontology to reduce a tendency of sticking to rigid interventions. Institutions develop what may be perceived as good policies and processes, only to find that they can hardly be implemented because they cannot be synchronised with realities on the ground. Rationality begins to fail the moment systems become turbulent and become chaotic beyond a realm of positivist theoretical propositions. Inferring causality does not mean that a particular event, or a string of events as in a programme, necessarily constitutes a sole cause of another event or events, or that the fact that an event or set of events causes some other events under certain conditions does not mean that it will always do so, confusing causality with law likeness (Mouton, 2009). The latter is another reminder that programmes have different effects under different circumstances of implementation, target group variation and contextual variation. Local government needs to be viewed in that perspective given its developmental nature that is contrary to the state of the equilibrium notion of modern discourse.

## NEED FOR A THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

Scientific research has two general goals: to increase knowledge and to increase an understanding of the world in which we live in (Hanekom & Thornhill, 1994). The increase of knowledge is usually achieved through the discovery of facts and general laws while understanding is increased by constructing explanations of the knowledge discovered and by arranging the knowledge and explanations into systematic generalisations, or into theories. Such theories can be used to predict and bring reforms. There is still not a unique, simple criterion or litmus test to decide if a theory is scientific or not (Chu, Roger-Strand & Fjelland, 2003; Daneke, 1990). Scientific activity across the range from botany to particle physics and epidemiology is too diverse. Rather than looking for a universal criterion for being scientific, it is often better to ground criteria in the aim of the theory. There are three aims central to a theory, namely, a predictive component, an explanatory component, and a control component. The predictive component attempts to predict the future behaviour of a system given a set of observational data about it. The explanatory component deals with theoretical understanding of a system. The control component provides guidelines and control mechanisms for the intervention and manipulation of systems. The theoretical framework provides the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that inform discourse or research in a given field (Alasuutari, 1998).

Local government as a sphere of government with its developmental mandate in particular requires a theoretical framework that must encapsulate it to be pragmatic. Public administration has developed over time to provide such theoretical framework both in academia and in practice (Thornhill, 2007). It remains the social process charged with the implementation of the objectives and ideals of a society. Public administration is more a field of activity that involves complex interactions within the public sphere to realise the welfare of a society. Local government in South Africa presents a different working practice that requires different application of theoretical forms in use. The new form of governance becomes confrontational as municipalities have to realise the mandatory constitutional objectives through developmental duties. In realising those objectives, there are also principles and guidelines that must be adhered to as also provided for by other spheres of government coupled with the turbulent environment created by the desire to provide for basic services that society did not have access to for years. Section 51 of the *Local Government Municipal Systems Act* 32 of 2000 provides for the basic principles of local government administration. Such basic principles are provided for in terms of section 195 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, which are a high standard of professional ethics; efficient, economic and effective; development-oriented; impartial service provision; response to people's needs; public participation; and good human-resource practices. These principles form the basis

of the practice of South African public administration and developmental local government praxis. Public administration has, however, since its earliest historical roots as a discipline in the United States of America (US) and even during its development in Europe, a focus directly related to events in its area of operation (Thornhill, 2007).

Science always endeavours to determine how contemporary practices and theories could improve the real world. A theory represents a mental view of a system of ideas or a statement used as an explanation of a group of facts or phenomena and is itself based on facts and values (Alasuutari, 1998). In implementing developmental local government public administration as a theoretical framework represents such a mental view of a system of ideas. Yet there is nothing as practical as a good theory (Bourgon, 2007). There is also nothing as dangerous as a theory that lags behind the times and yet remains a yardstick for making decisions and passing judgment. Theoretical paradigms in the South African public administration may be derived from the debate on Minnowbrook and Mount Grace, together with a state of discipline as outlined by Cameron and Milne (2009) coupled with the neoliberal policies South Africa adopted after 1994. Both the Minnowbrook in America and the Mount Grace in South Africa are known as watershed conferences that tried to reshape Public Administration in times of turbulence. The theoretical frameworks adopted in dealing with the phenomenon of developmental local government in South Africa must be able to provide an explanation that assists decision makers in passing judgment. Local government therefore needs to be approached from certain theoretical frameworks. The challenge is that there is no unified theoretical framework that can address this phenomenon by itself and more so if such theoretical frameworks have to address unstable turbulent phenomenon characterised by complex interactions. This is exacerbated by the normative nature of public administration that makes it impossible to develop a unified set of normative guidelines that can be applicable across a diverse society. Public administration needs to adopt theoretical frameworks that are based on fundamental normative guidelines but at the same time are able to address gaps that modern mainstream public administration has failed to address over the century.

## **STATE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DISCOURSE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

South African public administration has its principled base from Section 195 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, which subscribes to the normative foundations as discussed in the previous paragraphs. It takes practitioners to ensure that developmental local government is implemented on the basis of those principles. The tools and approaches of developmental local government must be guided by those principles together with the mental framework in place. However,

the debate is still raging on the acceptance of a profound theoretical framework on the teachings of Public Administration Education in South Africa (Van Dijk & Thornhill, 2011). During transition in the early 1990s, very little work was done by the African National Congress (ANC) as the ruling party, on the nature of either post-apartheid public service or public administration (Cameron, 2009). The ANC was understandably focused on the issue of political power which was obviously consolidated in the majority.

The normative foundations with various legislative prescriptions and the theoretical framework in use provide a schema, which consists of a set of rules that reflect regularities in experience and enables a system to determine the nature of further experience and make sense of it (Stacey *et al.*, 1996). It contains rules indicating how the system should respond to its experience, which may include extending, modifying, or changing the rules which comprise it. The main stream public administration provides such schema. South African public administration debates have been dominated by Cloete's (2008) generic processes perspective until the introduction of the Initiative Public Administration of 1999 that brought about the systems theory approach. But the argument in focus in this article is that such debates were caught up in a rationality cage of positivist ontology that is limiting a developmental local government notion. To articulate further on this notion, it is proper to present a brief outline of the Mount Grace debates as unveiled in South Africa in ensuing paragraphs.

## **MOUNT GRACE DEBATES**

The state of public administration discourse in South Africa is partially derived from the proliferation of Mount Grace debates. It is subtly put forward by Schwella (2000) that South Africa, at the time of the Mount Grace debates, was characterised by rapidly changing and highly dynamic contexts as a result of marked changes since the 1990s. Cloete (2008) muses how Public Administration and Management transformation principles accepted in Mount Grace 1 are actually contained in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, with a caution that there is uncertainty as to whether there is any causal relationship (Cameron & Milne, 2009). While government never lost sight of its constitutional and development role during the transition to the new dispensation after 1994, it is generally accepted that NPM reforms were influential in South Africa (Cameron, 2009). Unlike the Minnowbrook conference in the United States of America, participants in the Mount Grace conference in South Africa interacted and engaged with the state and had an opportunity to contribute to the shaping of new public administration (Cameron & Milne, 2009). Extensive policy and interactive consultancy work for government was achieved on commissions, allowing academics to contribute to solving real life problems. Deliberations at academic *fora* were easily translated to shape approaches in practice. For example, most experts serving on the 1998

Presidential Review Commission (PRC) were academics drawn from various universities or contributors to a well-known macro-economic development strategy, Growth, Employment and Redistribution. Although Mount Grace 1 did not specifically call for the introduction of NPM, some presented papers argued strongly for a Public Management approach in the discipline of Public Administration (Cameron & Milne, 2009). These have led to further deliberations from other quarters. For example, Tshikwatamba (2007) argues that Public Management carried out the equivalent of a coup over Public Administration.

NPM is a general approach to regulation in stark contrast to the traditional managerial model; strongly market-oriented, it promotes self-regulation, and trusts that the regulated and the government can become partners (LeMay, 2006). The rational-choice underpinnings of NPM are problematic to the continued legitimacy of democratic institutions in heterogeneous societies such as South Africa in attempting to maintain an inclusive polity. The NPM approach has also dominated the introduction of developmental local government through the 1998 White Paper on Local Government together with the state's neoliberal approach. Given the complex environment of South African public administration, the ordinary causal effect approach of NPM conception on its own is absolute. Although Schwella (2000) in the Mount Grace II debates has cautioned against these modern fallacies, it needs to be mentioned that he was advocating for systems thinking within a rational paradigm. Rational paradigms start to breakdown when faced with unpredictable and unstable conditions (Combe & Botscheme, 2004) as they tend to be rigid recipes within unpredictable phenomena. South Africa comprises a diverse society and such diversity is protected by the Bill of Rights in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*.

Application of constitutional basic principles governing public administration in South Africa triggers diverse reaction to various agents within the greater society. These filter down to developmental local government which by definition is the state of being. But public administration is developed from various strands with diverse approaches. Those varying approaches determine the content and focus of discourse and how practitioners derive the schema. Due to the eclectic nature of public administration, drawing from theoretical strands of those approaches became necessary. But reducing and adhering solely to a single one in dealing with public administration phenomena becomes what has been referred to in this article as a theoretical disaster.

## **POSTMODERN APPROACH IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Postmodernism is ambiguous as a concept, and it has created much controversy. It is recognition that the Enlightenment's promises of universal truth, justice and beauty will not be realised in modern society. Beyond this it is difficult

to give the concept a unitary definition, no matter how comprehensive it might be, because of the diversity of themes and ideas. Postmodernity has been considered as being either epochal, in replacing modernity as a current time frame, or epistemological, in its relation to other interpretations of social structures, and Newton (1996) considers the implications of both uses of the concept for the study of organisations (Barnet & Crowther, 1998). It is, however, considered most fully by Lyotard (1984) who questions the use of modernist meta-narratives which legitimate society as existing for the good of its members with consequent presumption that the whole unites the parts as an expression of common good. Postmodernism means that there is no single discourse that can unify all forms of knowledge, there is a need to cope with a multiplicity of discourses, many different language games – all of which are determined locally, not legitimated externally (Cilliers, 1998). There is no single theoretical approach or framework which can address a given phenomenon on its own without the application of other theoretical approaches or frameworks from other disciplines with different interpretations and those interpretations need to be informed by the realities of that given phenomenon which are determined closely or locally. This is close to the eclectic nature of public administration, although eclectic is more the borrowing of theoretical strands from other disciplines. Postmodern theorists argue that administration should be dispersed and fragmented, capable of accommodating conflict, multiplicity and difference, decentralisation and autonomy. With greater participation and the localisation of politics and administration, policy makers put less emphasis on centrally established development goals and programmes, and there is also a gradual reorientation from the knowledge needs of the national government to those of localities (Jun & Revira, 1997).

The postmodern sensibility stresses perspectivism. Things are always understood from a sense of incomplete and biased perspective in that those affected can understand the phenomena better than any outside observer can. The postmodern sensibility stresses textual mediation; understandings of the world are mediated through texts and there is a need to be attentive to how discursive practices help constitute the partial perspectives relied on for making sense of the world. Fox and Miller (1995) published their first stab at what postmodern analysis of public administration might mean. To them postmodernism means a number of radical changes in our understanding of the world. It involves movements from centripetal to centrifugal; from centralisation to fragmentation; from meta-narratives to disparate texts; from grand theories to more or less circumstantial evidence; from commensurability and common units to incommensurability, that is, difference rather than likeness; from universals to hyper-pluralism, that is, to fragmentation instead of generalised units of analysis; from Newtonian physics to Heisenberg's quantum physics, that is, from causal theory to unpredictable analysis of the microcosms, where the intervention of the researcher is felt (Fox & Miller, 1995).

Postmodern conditions are characterised by fragmentation: an overarching rationale or vision is replaced by processes of reasoning, and we see trends towards decentralisation, individualisation and internationalisation. There is currently a considerable debate taking place on the subject of postmodernity in social sciences. Postmodern thinking needs to complement modern public administration. Modern thinking has laid a foundation for public administration. Like Sokal (1996) who states that if there is anyone who believes that the laws of physics are mere social conventions, he/she is invited to try transgressing one from the windows of his twenty-first floor apartment. Postmodern thinking is, however, complementary to modern scientific discourse by reflecting on the other side of the coin. A postmodernist view of organisations such as local government institutions is that they are sustained by rules governing their existence and by resource appropriation mechanisms which apply to them rather than by any real need from the people who they purport to serve (Barnet & Crowther, 1998).

Postmodern thinking, just like modern thinking, is characterised by various traditions such as the radical tradition, the postmodern tradition and hermeneutics. The radical tradition is the most radical position of French postmodernism represented by Lyotard (1984) and others. In the extreme relativistic position, they state that each one creates his/her reality and rejects the possibility of judging one reality as more real than the others since no independent criterion exists on which to base judgment. Things cannot be precisely defined because they have multiple and unstable meanings (White, 1999). There is no enduring truth to anything and no standards by which to judge truth, so there can be no precise definitions and certainly no true knowledge. The other postmodern tradition forms the core of the second and well-known postmodern tradition. It recognises the complexity of scientific activity and sees science in the context of traditions establishing their own standards of what is acceptable science. Hermeneutics also provides a third postmodern tradition. Its interest in study is interpretation of texts, extending its research techniques not only to literature, but to arts, jurisprudence and, more recently, the social sciences. Hermeneutics is a theory of interpretation in history, religion, art, law and literature (White, 1999). It is the art of the science of interpreting the meaning of texts or textlike entities, and it offers general principles for determining validity of interpretations of meaning. These strains of postmodern thought do not appear in a vacuum but within and in response to a changing society with new and evolving characteristics (Arias & Acebron, 2001). In a post-modern society, economic relationships adopt new meanings and management needs to take new directions. Bourgon (2007) viewed this from the point given the demand for accountability across all levels of government, that there is a growing need to find a new balance between conflicting lines of tension. As society becomes more complex, the need for flexibility continues to grow.



## MODERNISM VERSUS POSTMODERNISM

It is imperative to draw a line between modernism and postmodernism. A simple distinction of the two will assist in understanding their application in a discourse coupled with the elaborations made above. Underlying the distinction between modernity, or foundationalism, as some choose to name it, and post-modernity is what Bernstein (Arias & Acebron, 2001) called “Cartesian anxiety”. Fox and Miller (1995) draw a distinction between modernism and postmodernism by outlining what are general traits of modern culture versus postmodern culture. Those oppositions share entropic principle; their differences may be variously expressed as follows: integration versus disintegration; centralisation versus decentralisation; centripetal versus centrifugal; totalisation versus fragmentation; meta-narratives versus disparate texts; melting pot versus salad; commensurable versus incommensurable; the impulse to unify versus hyper-pluralism; universalism versus relativism; and Newton versus Heisenberg (Fox & Miller, 1995). These oppositions present the ontology with which developmental local government can be dealt.

If developmental local government is viewed from the ontological base of modern discourse, then it can be dealt with from a logical positivist perspective. There can be a grand meta-narrative and unified theory that can address developmental local government, for example, the notion of the IDP scenario being uniformly applied across the country. If developmental local government is viewed from a postmodern ontological base, then there is no unified theoretical discourse that can in itself deal with it uniformly across the country. It means there can never be one best way of implementing developmental local government. Just like Public Administration itself as a discipline, an eclectic form of discourse that will accommodate the fragments of reality are necessary. Each local government is unique and has its context that requires a situational narration of the challenges it faces. In essence practitioners in local government need not operate on a recipe-based approach; instead there is a dire need for professional creative and innovative practitioners to deal with the turbulent phenomena of developmental local government.

## CONCLUSION

The introduction of developmental local government within the South African dispensation created a need to realign the theoretical strand within public administration. Theories remained tools of dealing with phenomena as they arise. South Africa has, however, provided for principles governing its public administration within its constitutional establishment. Those principles are in place to guide any theoretical disposition to be applied in practice. The normative nature of public administration contributes to the subjectivity in applying any theoretical strand with positivist ontology. The theoretical debate in South Africa, however, took a

different position during the Mount Grace 1 and Mount Grace 2 conferences. NPM based on mainstream public administration discourse dominated the debate. Such discourses are applied at best with minimal success. Approaches that are mechanistic, behavioural, behaviour and general systems approach laid a foundation for the theoretical strand of public administration and they still play a role in developmental local government. The challenge is that they are based on a linear positivist ontology of the Newtonian rational science. South African public administration is dominated by NPM aspects stemming from the current debate and neoliberal approaches adopted by government. The NPM is dominated by a rational modern discourse looking for a simple way to do the job. There is a need to go beyond prescripts of modern paradigms to postmodern paradigms informed by complexity theory. The postmodern approach has also developed through various traditions that manifest themselves in society. If developmental local government has to be viewed from the postmodern perspective, therefore, there is no unified discourse on its own that can give meaning to it. Local narratives offer the best explanations of developmental local government. Therefore developmental local government is a complex reflexive system that needs to be dealt with differently.

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# FROM PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TO GOVERNANCE: SCIENCE OR IDEOLOGY?

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## ABSTRACT

Governments have been launching major public sector reforms. Traditional public services are under pressure to transform and seem to be evolving – but into what? In the 1970s one could generally talk of public administration. In the 1980s came the new move to the New Public Management (NPM), and some to Public Administration and Management. Recently some authors have argued that there is a further shift from the NPM to governance. Although public sector reforms are influenced by global precedents, local dynamics necessitates specific responses from politicians, academics and public officials. This much is so in South Africa where evidence shows that theory played a secondary role in the *praxis* of public administration. Instead, that *praxis* is dictated by political agendas and what is taught at traditional universities and the universities of technologies are uncritically supportive of these agendas. The aim of this article is to provide a content analysis of the ongoing shift from the concept of public administration to governance by looking at the theories and approaches that have dominated the public administration arena from the traditional administration approach to the current governance approach. The article also seeks to investigate the reasons for this shift.

## INTRODUCTION

In the article titled *Research in Public Administration and Management: A view on pragmatic research undertakings*, Hanyane (2005:48) writes that “the discipline of Public Administration and Management requires a process of re-conceptualisation and re-thinking of its focus and area of operation”. As Hanyane (2005:48) further argues, for public administration to survive as a discipline, researchers in the field have to observe certain responsibilities and respond to the challenges presented in a postmodern world. He is also of the opinion that “...other forms of research inquiry (paradigms) must be promoted” (Hanyane, 2005:48). In the *Public Administration Dictionary* Fox and Meyer (1995:2) define administration as “the execution of activities by persons charged with common objectives” while management is “the act or art of managing, the conducting of something as a

business, especially the executive function of planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, controlling, and supervising any industrial or business project or activity with responsibility for results" (Fox & Meyer, 1995:77).

In the *Oxford English Dictionary of Current English* Soanes and Stevenson (2003:587) define governance as "the act or manner of governing, of exercising control or authority over the actions of subjects; a system of regulations". Public administration is concerned with procedures and translating policy into action, while management has to do with achieving the set objectives with maximum efficiency but also responsibility for better results, and governance appears to be a synthesis of various connotations that appeared over many centuries of the etymological evolution of the phenomenon. The aim of this article is to look at the shift from public administration to governance and whether it is influenced by science or ideology. Perhaps for reasons of coherence in thought, it is important to succinctly reflect on the meanings of science and ideology as they are key concepts that undergird the essence of the discourse in this article.

## CONCEPTUALISATION FOUNDATION OF THE DISCOURSE

Before unpacking the concepts that will be discussed in this section, it is important to first understand what a concept is. According to (Pauw, 1999:11) a concept is a 'tool of thinking and (they) inform action or practice'. In explaining what a concept is, Pauw (1999:11) distances it from a 'word' and a 'term'. For him "words accumulate their meanings" from use in contexts and therefore may have different meanings whereas a term consigns to "one or more words with a fixed meaning in a specific discourse" (Pauw 1999:11). Therefore it is important to note that to understand the meaning of concepts, it is important to understand their contextual settings. Maserumule (2004:76-78) is of the opinion that concepts are used to lay bare philosophical and ideological suggestions, and "if they are used incorrectly, particularly in developing policies, the thinking that undergirds them would be inexact". The following unpacks concepts that undergird the conceptual foundation of the discourse in this article.

## SCIENCE

Science is a critical tradition that strives to find, systemise and share new knowledge and insight about things that are not obvious. The question whether public administration is a science is a highly contested one. However, some scholars believe that it is science. Pauw (2001:133) explain public administration as that part of science that strives to find, systematise and share new knowledge and insight about factors of the non-political executive functions of the state that are not immediately apparent (Pauw, 2001:33).

## IDEOLOGY

Ideology is a comprehensive system of concepts and beliefs, often political in nature, held by a group or individual (Hunt, 1985). Karl Marx in Eagleton (1991:3) explains ideology to be “false systems of political, social and moral concepts invented and preserved by ruling classes out of self-interest”.

## FROM PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TO GOVERNANCE

Nicolas Henry (in Thornhill, 2006:793-806) is of the opinion that scholars of public administration should know that the discipline is static, but dynamic, because a new direction has emerged since the 1980s in response to the political changes and responses to the increasing needs and demands from society. In an attempt to put together a call for the shift away from public administration it is important to comprehend what a paradigm is and how it relates to Public Administration. The idea of a paradigm in the social science was introduced by Thomas Kuhn in 1970 in his work titled *Structure of scientific revolutions*. Kuhn’s work elevated scholarly debate in intellectual circles. For Babbie and Mouton (2006:6), a paradigm is the “authority of a certain theoretical tradition” and therefore a paradigm shift directs the efforts of scientists away from solving the serious administrative problems there are to the study of theories.

According to Schuyler (in Van Jaarsveldt, 2010:28) “a paradigm shift occurs when difficulties begin to appear in functioning of existing paradigms in that they cannot function properly anymore”. Van Jaarsveldt (2010:28) is of the opinion that in Public Administration new paradigms should be developed to solve new problems. There are those scholars that proclaim that Public Administration cannot be given paradigmatic status because it does not have universally accepted theories, and can be regarded as more of an art than a science. Gulick and Urwich (1937:191) argue that the theoretical foundation of Public Administration is not appropriately determined and expressed. It is the researcher’s view that Public Administration is indeed a science and supports Pauw’s conception of what a science is, and that Public Administration indeed strives to find, organise and share new knowledge and insight about factors of the non-political executive functions of the state that are not instantly obvious (Pauw, 2001:133).

## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

In the *Public Administration Dictionary* Fox and Meyer (1995:105) refer to public administration as the executive branch of government; civil service; bureaucracy charged with the formulation for, implementation, evaluation and modification of government policy. Fox, Schwella and Wissink (1991:2) are of the view that public administration can be defined as “that system(s) of structures and processes, oper-



ating within a particular society as an environment, with the objective of facilitating the formulation of appropriate governmental policy and the efficient execution of the formulated policy". These terms therefore refer to government and its relationship with society promoting government policy responsive to societal needs. According to Pauw (1999:22) Public Administration investigates public administration, which he refers to as the "organised, non-political, executive functions of the state". In the *Handbook of Public Administration*, Rabin, Hildreth and Miller (2006:5) are of the opinion that the 1880s were the starting point of public administration. For many scholars in Public Administration Woodrow Wilson's essay, 'The study of administration', published in 1887 in the *Political Science Quarterly* laid the foundation for a study of Public Administration. This view Maserumule (2011) strongly contested in the thesis titled *Good governance in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD): A Public Administration perspective*. In the pages of this edition Basheka also contests the view that Wilson is the father of Public Administration as an academic discipline.

Wilson's essay set the tone for a separate field of administration while advocating that Public Administration was worth studying. The views that Wilson held in 'The study of administration' led to many controversies, interpretations and ideological bases for reforms in administration in the 19th century (Prasad *et al.*, 1989:3-4). Various authors, including Nicolas Henry in his book *Public Administration and public affairs* wrote widely on the development of Public Administration. Frank J. Goodnow (1900) and Leonard White (1926) wrote on the politics/administration dichotomy from 1900-1926. In his book *Politics and administration: A study of government* Goodnow argues that administration should be separated from politics (Shafiritz & Hyde, 1992:7-9). It is Luther Gulick and Lyndal Urwick in the publication 'Papers on the science of administration' who proposed the seven principles of administration and gave students the anagram POSDCORB. It was at this time that Public Administration was threatened with being absorbed into other branches of administrative sciences such as business administration. In South Africa the development of Public Administration education went through many stages. According to Cloete (in Van Jaarsveldt 2010:56) the University of the Free State was the first to create a Department of Public Administration separate from the Department of Political Science in 1962. Cloete also states that the first courses in Public Administration presented at the University of Pretoria were a number of randomly selected facets by lecturers in agreement with students and officials working in various state departments and municipalities.

For Maserumule (2011:4) despite the "recognition of public administration as an important variable in the contemporary development paradigm, its theoretical and pedagogical focus as a field of study lacks developmental perspective". Here Maserumule argues that as an academic discipline, Public Administration is

limited to administration, which merely studies government activities or functions. It ignores the development dimension or approach to the study of government. The Mount Grace debates arrived at the same conclusion. According to Mthembu (2001:2) a shift from public administration to public management is highly admirable, since South Africa, like other countries, is not immune to the impact of globalisation on the public service. He also adds that public management appears to be a strategy aimed at meeting the challenges of globalisation and promoting professionalism, accountability, transparency and a service oriented public service (Mthembu, 2001:2).

## MANAGEMENT

During the 1970s scholars and practitioners were searching for alternatives with which to develop Public Administration. In South Africa the debate on whether management should be included in the study of Public Administration started in the 1980s. The discussion on management focused on the intricacy of the public sector (Thornhill, in van Jaarsveldt, 2010:73). In his 1985 article titled 'Public Administration or Public Management – another perspective or why not Public Administration and Public Management' Shwella refers to the fact that although the term public management is used internationally it is still evaded in South Africa. His article marked the shift in the study of Public Administration in South Africa. It was Cloete (1997:197-200) who stated that management as a concept in Public Administration is very important because it is crucial to the success in providing goods and services to the people. Various authors differ with Cloete on the basis that the public sector is different from the private sector.

Drawing from the twentieth-century philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Pauw (1999:14) explains that the philosophical perplexities and theoretical problems are caused by language, and if one is not critically aware of the orthodoxy of language it can lead to various invalid conclusions and absurdities. He goes on to say that "terms and concepts are unfortunately also subjected to fashions in the sense of fads". For Pauw (1999:15-17), the first problem started when new names were given to the subject of Public Administration, for example Public Management and Public Administration and Management. The assumption by Cloete (in Pauw, 1999:15-16), is that 'public administration' should be freed from politics and directed by the same motives as those of business administration/management and that the teaching and training of public managers should be the same as that for private business managers". Pauw disagrees with Cloete in the contention that the word 'management' is not necessarily of a higher order than the word 'administration' because 'administration' in the term 'public administration' was never meant to refer to paperwork. What stands out in Pauw's arguments on 'management' and which is true, is that 'management' has been considered more glamorous than 'administration' in certain countries (for instance, South Africa) at a certain point

in time, but this is hardly an academic reason to change the name of a subject (Pauw, 1999:16).

## NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

In the 1980s a new managerial approach to public administration, commonly known as the 'New Public Management' (NPM), came to the fore (Perry & Kraemer, 1983; Pollit, 1990; 2000). The NPM has been randomly referred to as a 'paradigm', a 'movement', a 'reform programme' and even as an 'industry' (Paterson & Mafunisa, 2005:540). It became popular during 1979 when Margaret Thatcher came into power and with her macro-economic policy of reducing public expenditure with various public sector reforms (Frederickson 2005:112-115). Thatcher ushered in an administrative reform agenda that included privatisation, deregulation, and the re-conceptualisation of the appropriate role of a government in the economy and society.

The implementation of NPM was not only restricted to developed countries, but has also expanded to developing and transnational societies, in Asia, Latin America and Africa. In South Africa the NPM was seen as an administrative agenda that included privatisation, deregulation and the re-conceptualisation of the appropriate role of a government in the economy and society. The *Batho Pele* framework in South Africa aligned itself with the global trend of adopting the NPM philosophy. Emphasis was on the 'reinvention of government' and infusion of private sector ideas into the public service, therefore referring to citizens as customers or clients. It is the researcher's view that the ideological and value-based assumption of the NPM is based on the presumption that management can be applied to both the public and the private sectors and that it is possible to use the economic market as a model for political and administrative affairs. The NPM is just another management fad, a trend, another thing promising everything. It is nothing more than a set of management gear found to be appropriate for the public service. NPM is the practical result of the normative idea of the 1980s based on the assertion 'that private is better than public'.

For Schwella (1999:337-338) the 1990s were momentous for South African Public Administration with the New Public Administration Initiative (NPAI) that originated from the Mount Grace conference that was held in the Magaliesburg in November 1991. The NPAI was a response to the transformation that took place in South Africa during that time. The Mount Grace Papers (1991:5-24) that were read at the conference indicated that Public Administration should focus on scientific analysis, explanations and predictions (Van Jaarsveldt 2010:74). The Mount Grace conference should be noted for its effort to make sure that the field of Public Administration will be appropriate in South Africa and to strengthen the link

between theory and practice. But the question that needs to be asked is whether the Mount Grace Resolutions were carried out to achieve what they sought to achieve. Nkuna and Sebola are grappling with this question in their article, which is part of this edition.

The Mount Grace II conference was held in 2000 and the debates were published as a continuation of the Mount Grace I conference held in 1991 (Thornhill 2006:801). According to Thornhill (in Van Jaarsveldt 2010:16) the conference presentations focused on current affairs and the challenges facing the discipline, the training needs of public servants, and meeting the changing needs of South African society. It is also at this conference that Cloete states that “Public Administration and Management will have to deal with consequences of globalization especially the more developed societies”. Then there was a further shift to the governance phenomenon.

## GOVERNANCE

In its original sense the word *governance* means ‘steering’, or simply, navigating, giving direction. Governance has become a leading theme in policy development discourse and social science scholarship. Although the phenomenon is well established in South Africa, and despite the popularity of the phenomenon among both theoreticians and practitioners, there is still a lack of conceptual consensus. It has multiple meanings and there is a good deal of uncertainty in its different usages. Governance was popularised in the 1980s by two of the main supporters and financiers of development, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after they had realised that the macroeconomic and fiscal policy reforms as applied to developing countries failed to produce the expected economic outcomes.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 set off the disintegration of the Soviet Union which resulted in the decay of the political and economic coalition of the Eastern bloc and paved the way for a discussion on how a government has to be structured in order to achieve (economic) development, hence a discussion on governance (World Bank, 2002). In the World Bank’s 1992 publication on *Governance and development*, governance is characterised by predictable, open, and enlightened policy making (that is, transparent processes); a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions; a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law (World Bank, 1992:1-13). With the IMF governance is mainly concerned with macro-economic stability, external viability and orderly economic growth in member countries.

Maserumule (2005:200) explains that the concept *governance* is as old as human civilisation and that “scholars in development studies and other related disciplines are cautious to commit themselves to a single definition though in many instances semblances of similarities of perspectives regarding its meaning do exist among them”. In South Africa, governance is a topic of great national interest and was the subject of the so-called King Reports I, II and III. According to Lubatkin *et al.* (2005:867-888), the theoretical foundation of corporate governance is based on agency theory, transaction cost economics, resource dependence theory and stakeholder theory. Over the last few years corporate governance has become a growing area of public interest and academic research. Marvin King’s conception of governance is largely biased towards the private sector’s corporate governance dynamics.

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) makes reference to governance, both political and corporate governance. Barrett (in Koma 2009:456) observes that the development of corporate governance has influenced the analysis of political governance. Well-known scholars in the field have supported the notion of the stakeholder’s business whereby the board is not only responsible to the firm’s shareholders but to all those who have a stake in the firm, from the employees, consumers, suppliers and society at large (Wixley & Everingham 2002:1-2). In the corporate approach to political governance, the emphasis rests on increasing accountability and greater participation. In 1992 the King Committee on Corporate Governance was formed in South Africa, in line with international thinking, and considered corporate governance from a South African perspective (Dekker 2002:1-3). This Report marked the institutionalisation of corporate governance in South Africa, and also aimed to promote corporate governance in South Africa, and establish recommended standards of conduct for boards and directors of listed companies, banks and state-owned enterprises and stressed the need for companies to become a responsible part of the societies in which they operate.

At the University of Johannesburg, the Department of Public Governance and Management officially began in 2006 after being part of the Department of Political Studies. According to Auriacombe (2012) the reason for this was “to provide autonomy and disciplinary integrity to each discipline and also to accommodate the Bachelor of Administration that was merged from Vista University [which is now defunct] into a separate department”. On the question of why they are called the Department of Public Governance and Management and not Public Administration and Management, Auriacombe (2012) motivated that “in terms of an academic paradigm, Public Administration is outdated”. Another reason according to her that led to them choosing that name for their department is because the “King reports emphasises good governance and corporate governance mechanisms and not public administration processes” (Auriacombe 2012).

Despite all the motivation that Auriacombe put forward, their curricula still teach their students Public Administration and Management, blended with Politics and they are doing that despite the fact that Auriacombe so fervently states that “as an academic paradigm Public Administration is outdated”. Should they therefore not have been called the Department of Public Administration and Management instead or should they not have re-curriculated their qualifications? Also adding to the confusion is the fact that as mentioned above, Auriacombe (2012) states that as a department they had to break away from Political Studies “to provide autonomy and disciplinary integrity to each discipline ...”, yet when one looks at the table of content and goes through the content of two of their first year modules, *Introduction to governance institutions, structural landscape and operations (PMG1A1)*; and *Introduction to regional and local governance institutions and functions (PMG1B)*, it could effortlessly be mistaken for any module to be taught in Politics as well.

To this the question is whether the University of Johannesburg is shifting the focus back to the famous essay of Woodrow Wilson? Does it also smash the politics-administration dichotomy in the name of governance, considering the names given to these modules and also their content? Another important question is what exactly does Auriacombe mean by ‘paradigm’ when in her thought-provoking statement she said that “Public Administration as an academic paradigm is outdated”? Because as mentioned previously in this article, Public Administration is the scientific study of public administration and a paradigm “is something that scientists of a discipline agree upon and that guides their research” (Vyas-Doorgapersad 2011:237). Or as Kuhn (1970) puts it “a paradigm turns out to be essential to the development of a science”. Or as Botes (1988:17) states, “when a paradigm is discovered, all scientific efforts are directed towards the development of that paradigm”. It is evident from the above conceptions of a paradigm that it informs science. An adoption of the designation Public Governance and Management at the University of Johannesburg appears to be largely ideological adventurism rather than a genuine pursuit for science.

Hanyane (2012) concurs. He contends that what happened at the University of Johannesburg can be called the *paralysis* of Public Administration. It is the researcher’s opinion that the same confusion that exists now between Public Administration and governance also existed between Public Administration and Management in South African public administration scholarship. According to Pauw (1999:9-11), giving new names for the subject, such as ‘Public Management’ and ‘Public Administration and Management’, added certain value positions, and certain directions for university curricula. Pauw goes further and states that J.J.N. Cloete was also of the opinion that in South Africa, the teaching and training of public managers should become the same as that for private business managers

(Cloete, in Pauw, 1999:1). According to Pauw, Cloete specifically influenced the Afrikaans-speaking academics and students of Public Administration. It is the researcher's view that the confusion is good because it strengthens the future of the discipline. When Auriacombe (2012) in her explanation also mentions that the King Reports emphasise good governance and corporate governance mechanisms and not public administration processes, did she thus mean that Public Administration as a science to be taught in their department should be replaced by governance just because the famous Professor Mervyn King, (then Judge Mervyn King) emphasises good corporate governance processes and not public administration processes? Did they take into account that the same principles as proposed by the King Reports are also enshrined in Chapter 10, section 195 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108, 1996*?

Could what is happening at the University of Johannesburg's Department of Public Governance and Management not be what Maserumule (2010:78) calls *Ipsedixism*? In his article published in the *Journal of Public Administration* titled, *The Impact of Ipsedixism on Public Administration scholarship*, Maserumule (2010:78-80) defines *ipsedixism* to be "he himself said it, so it ought to be". Academic *ipsedixism*, according to Maserumule (2010:80), is about "scholarship fixation to a particular dominant intellectual paradigm simply because Professor X is its proponent". He goes further to state that *ipse dixit* "refers to an unsupported or dogmatic assertion or statement usually said by a person of standing and that the acceptance of such assertion or statement as part of the epistemology is determined solely on the basis of one's authority, glamour, prestige, rank or popularity" (Maserumule, 2010). Frederickson (2005:300) refers to almost the same trend when he states that, "one must be cautious of the activities of those academics called concept entrepreneurs" because according to him they will 'promote the use of certain terms or concepts in a way that will further their careers and reputations but not necessarily the subject'. If what is happening at the University of Johannesburg's Department of Public Governance and Management indeed has to do with the phenomenon of academic *ipsedixism*, or 'concept entrepreneurship', it will be a serious challenge for the discipline and for Public Administration scholars in an effort to guarantee continuous and sustained contribution to the growth or generation of knowledge that the country needs in order to achieve its goals and objectives, including the clarification of concepts in an attempt to ensure their correct and proper application.

The researcher concurs with Rhodes (2000:3-5), that governance is a "power word, a dominant descriptor, and the current preference of academic tastemakers...", and that therefore there has been a rush to change the names of departments and institutions. One of South Africa's own government departments fell prey to that. The previous Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) in 2009

changed its name to Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA). That is despite the fact that their “business” is still the same and also the fact that the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108, 1996*, only makes reference to public administration and also in Chapter 3 only talks about Co-operative Government. The motive for the change in name is not clear, but the assumption is that it was done because it was ‘chic’ to do so. Could the department not have been named Co-operative Government and Traditional Affairs instead? Or is it that to them also, governance is regarded as synonymous with public administration? It continues to create more confusion about the meaning of the governance phenomenon especially because in South Africa the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) is still there. Also the previous South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) in 2008 changed their name to Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA), because their focus is mainly on training public servants in the interest of better service delivery for all South Africans. It is therefore the researcher’s view that governance is burdened with political, philosophical and ideological contestations.

## CONCLUSION

As a field of study and as a practice, public administration has been influenced by many approaches and paradigms, all of them aimed at improving the functioning, effectiveness and efficiency of public institutions for better service delivery. In future, if the discourse on governance were to open new opportunities for resolving the current crisis of livelihood and governability anywhere, it seems necessary to move away from standard blueprints of governance that are applicable everywhere, and towards encouraging the creativity and originality of people in real social settings; away from the ‘technification’ of institutional reform and towards a more open debate on the needs and change in specific institutions and programmes; away from the preference for analysing institutional reform and towards a more clear recognition of the interrelatedness between the three spheres of government. In essence, whichever concept is chosen, there is a moral obligation to try to work out what the practical consequences of the concept would be. It is true that public administration is very important in the lives of people and that Public Administration theorists can hardly stand aloof from public administration in some sterile and neutral position outside society. Therefore the researcher poses the following questions: Are Public Administration academics failing to put together a science that can solve societal problems, for example fraud, corruption and nepotism? Is it true that academics are failing practitioners because Public Administration is failing to give answers? In conclusion, it is the researcher’s opinion that Public Administration is in a state of “*constructivism*”, based on the fact that we all conceive of the external reality somewhat differently based on our unique physical and social experiences with the world and our beliefs about them.



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# WHY THE PAST MATTERS: STUDYING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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## ABSTRACT

The state of the public sector in South Africa is heavily influenced by particular histories of state administration related to the legacy of apartheid and the nature of the political transition to democracy. We suggest, however, that there is a paucity of scholarly work in the discipline of Public Administration which takes into account this legacy and the manner in which the public sector is embedded in broader social, political and economic relations. This has had significant consequences for the particular models of public administration adopted. In making our case for the importance of applying a historical lens to the study of the public sector, we draw on research on the incorporation of the former Bantustans into provincial government administration in South Africa.

## INTRODUCTION

This article argues that the state of the public sector in South Africa is heavily influenced by particular histories of public administration related to the legacy of apartheid and the nature of the political transition to democracy. While this theme is explored in a number of scholarly texts in other fields, there is a paucity of work in the discipline of Public Administration which takes into account this legacy, especially in relation to thinking about appropriate models of public sector management in the current period.

## FROM DESCRIPTIVE TO ANALYTICAL RESEARCH ON THE STATE

In 1991 a number of scholars from the discipline of Public Administration, anti-apartheid activists recently returned from exile, and those sympathetic to the democratic struggle in South Africa met at a conference venue in Magaliesberg, just outside Johannesburg. The focus of the Mount Grace Conference deliberations was the character of the post-apartheid public service, the nature of appropriate public sector training for the new administration, and the state of the public administration discipline that was to serve it.

In reflecting on the state of the discipline, participants argued that the current theory, teaching and practice of Public Administration were in crisis. Specifically, teaching and practice was ‘too descriptive: lacking sufficient analytical, explanatory and predictive techniques; ...reductionist: restricting and reifying Public Administration to one view of the administrative processes only...’ (Cameron & Milne, 2009:386). Delegates resolved that “more rigorous scientific analysis, explanation and prediction of governmental and administrative phenomena supplementing their mere description is necessary. An open and critical debate on explanatory models for this purpose should be encouraged...” (Cameron & Milne, 2009:386).

Yet there has been no scholarly renewal in the field since then. Based on an overview of journal articles from 1994 to 2006 in two prominent academic journals in the field of public administration in South Africa, (*Journal of Public Administration and Administratio Publica*), Cameron and Milne conclude that there was “very little theory development in the discipline”. Further, “most research was descriptive and normative and there was very little testing of validity or causality” (Cameron & Milne, 2009:391).

Cameron and Milne suggest that the poverty of research on the public sector, at least in the discipline of Public Administration, is linked to the ‘move towards Public Management in the discipline’ which leads to ‘a narrow focus on skills and techniques at the expense of research’ (Cameron & Milne, 2009:293). The reasons for the paucity of analytical work on public sector institutions are complex, and deserve to be addressed in a dedicated paper. Two additional factors are worth noting, however. In the first place, public administration/public management generally, but especially in South Africa, is often positioned as a vocational pursuit such that the importance of research and scholarship is downplayed. This has been compounded by the entanglement of public sector research and consulting in many of the universities that has often blunted the critical edge of such work.

There has, thus, been an overconcentration in the public administration literature on pedagogical concerns or on the description of administrative and management techniques needed for a post-apartheid public service. While a discussion of these techniques and approaches is of value, there is little attempt to discuss them in relation to the form of the South African state or the character of the South African political economy. Yet these factors may be crucial in understanding why some initiatives work and others do not. There is a danger, in other words, of essentialism and/or reifying the administrative system in thinking about the performance of departments and agencies.

A key deficit in this literature is the lack of attention paid to the histories of public sector organisations. Von Holdt's study of Baragwanath hospital is a rare exception in this regard (Von Holdt, 2010). More usually, public administration scholars pay too little attention to the formal and informal norms and networks within organisations and to the nature of state-society relationships. Further, public administration scholars, though this is true of political scientists too, have paid little attention to how organisations emerge, the models that inform their establishment, to how they have changed over time, in terms of their structure, their leadership and the personnel that staff them, and how this influences how power is exercised, how decisions are made and what gets done.

Supporting the development of an analytical and historical lens is key to both the discipline (scholarship) and practice of public administration, particularly in training a cadre of skilled strategists and management in the public sector. Without it, we cannot practice the 'art of the possible'.

## POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

For more than twenty years the field of African studies has been reinvigorated by a host of scholarly works interested in the character of African politics. Of particular interest has been the failure of democracy in the period after independence to understand the institutional 'crisis' of the state as well as the relative decline of African economies from the 1960s. By the beginning of the millennium a consensus was beginning to emerge among historians that the 'the nature of the contemporary African state is in large part due to the legacy of the colonial era' (Haynes, 2002). Crawford-Young cast this relationship in zoological terms: "in metamorphosis the caterpillar becomes butterfly without losing its inner essences" (Crawford Young, 2004:2). In a similar vein, the colonial state becomes a postcolonial one while retaining its original DNA.

The colonial state during its phase of construction in most cases created entirely novel institutions of domination and rule. Although we commonly describe the independent polities as 'new states', in reality they were successors to the colonial regime, inheriting its structures, its quotidian routines and practices, and its more hidden normative theatre of governance. (Crawford Young, 2004:15)

The value of postcolonial literature for the study of the public sector in South Africa is that it helps us to situate elements of contemporary political phenomena (corruption, neo-patrimonialism, institutional failure, for example) in the *longue durée* of the colonial state. The extent to which the 'original DNA' of the apartheid administration has been retained has varied by region and by institution. Take,

for example, the provincial governments which incorporated former homeland administrations. Profound changes in conceptions of who constitutes the country's citizenry, changes in the leadership of staff managing public institutions and so on have produced a range of new institutional norms and values. These organisations have been subject to significant changes in the structure and formal *modus operandi* post 1994. At the same time there has been a continuity of informal structure and process – in particular a continuity in the way in which bureaucracy is embedded in social relations at odds with the ideal of an impartial Weberian state.

These formal changes in structure and policy took too little cognisance of the enduring nature of the apartheid administration and the manner in which it was embedded in broader social relations. In making our case for the importance of an historical analysis we will now explore the integration of the former homelands into the new provincial set-up. We will suggest that the uneven character of public sector performance at provincial level is partly a function of their relationship to former homeland administrations and administrators. This is likely true of local governments too. The viability and the fortunes of post-apartheid, local and provincial governments owes a lot to the history of their emergence, in particular, to the process of integration of former black and white local authorities.

## ADMINISTRATION OF THE FORMER HOMELANDS

By the end of apartheid, the territory of South Africa was governed and administered by an astonishingly complex puzzle of governments, agencies, departments and legislatures. Over and above the Dr Seuss-like arrangements of the Tri-Cameral parliament – three houses of parliament, a President's Council and the myriad of white and black local authorities – the homelands (Lebowa, QwaQwa, Bophuthatswana, KwaZulu, KaNgwane, Transkei and Ciskei, Gazankulu, Venda and KwaNdebele), collectively, consisted of 14 legislatures and 151 departments (Picard, 2005:293).

Homeland administrations grew quickly between 1965 and 1970. By 1971, 3 581 black Africans served in the Transkei civil service, and an additional 2 000 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 (Picard 200:301). The bloated system was due in part to the duplication in setting up administration for each of the homelands.

In contrast, there were only 60 352 officials directly employed in apartheid South Africa's official four provinces (the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, Natal and the Cape) in 1993, and only 349 832 officials in the entire apartheid-era bureaucracy, including at central, provincial and local government levels. Collectively, homeland officials were the least qualified and experienced. White senior managers often consisted of those officials that had been transferred from the South African civil service because they were below grade. These civil servants were joined by black officials, usually drawn from the ranks of the chefferie (or traditional system), who were prized for their obedience and loyalty rather than their education and competence (Picard, 2005:297). For the rest, homeland administrations consisted of tens of thousands of black, poorly trained subalterns, either performing menial or basic administrative tasks (Picard, 2005:295).

Before 1980, there were no trained black personnel working as senior managers in the Bantustans. Bantu education and the limited opportunity for black South Africans to obtain tertiary education supplied few skilled managers to the homeland administrations. Further, the nurturing of a skilled, black bureaucratic class was a perceived threat to the apartheid state, and to the privilege of the white civil service. In the 1980s, apartheid reformers attempted to deal with the major human resources deficit in the homelands, and counter the perception that increased black employment was a threat to the survival of the state. Their efforts were unsuccessful. Yet the façade of the homelands as independent states had to be maintained. This required the active collaboration of local political elites (Picard, 2005:297).

As the apartheid state progressively ceded power to the homelands, so the Bantu Authority System provided more opportunities for the accumulation of wealth to the traditional elites as well as to senior bureaucrats and South African companies. Significantly, chiefs received official salaries and occupied strategic positions that often fused judicial and administrative functions – in what Mahmood Mamdani famously described as a 'clenched fist' of indirect rule (Mamdani, 1996). Access to land and control over licenses and the granting of concessions, in particular, created huge opportunities for corruption.

In a historical analysis of corruption in South Africa since the Transvaal Republic, John Hyslop, drawing on Roger Southall (1982), notes that, "homeland government became a by-word for corruption and incompetence. Official extortion in relation to everything from the issuing of trading permits upwards was rife. Homeland leaders presided over massive patronage networks" (Hyslop, 2005:783). Nepotism flourished. In KwaZulu-Natal, for example, those with royal lineage had privileged access to the civil service (Picard, 2005:297). In short, the very organisation of the homeland system, as well as the reason for its emergence, discouraged the establishment of predictable, impartial and rule-driven bureaucracies.



The resultant, ineffectual state of the bureaucracy (lacking in technical and managerial capacity, often corrupt, and lacking in adherence to formal procedures), further entrenched a culture of patronage. Individuals and communities turned to accessing state resources by the drawing of personal networks within the bureaucracy and traditional leadership (Gibbs, 2011). In this context political brokers emerged (some of them traditional leaders), with later consequences for the manner in which local government politics played out in post-apartheid South Africa.

## TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

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. What was to be done with these officials in the democratic period?

While the ANC had a number of highly educated and trained leaders, few had experience in running a modern state, and certainly insufficient numbers to populate the administration. Further, argues Hyslop, the ANC now required the political support of the black middle-class administrators of the former homelands (Hyslop, 2005). The homeland elite had strong bargaining power in the negotiations of the early nineties (Picard, 2005:301), becoming a strange ally to the white apartheid civil service in seeking job security in the new administration.

The dilemma facing the ANC was compounded by the situation in the public service outside the homelands. In 1992, a survey of senior public servants in South Africa showed that 80% of them were Afrikaans-speaking and 77% supported the National Party (Picard, 2005:302). There were only two black persons in senior management (at the lowest grade) in the Department of Finance. Even the Department of Development Planning, which was in charge, in part, of the provision of public goods to black South Africans, had only six black senior managers. All of them were Indian (Picard, 2005:302). How could such a staff complement be trusted to execute the new democratic government's mandate?

Homeland officials were, thus, largely retained when they were merged into the new provincial governments of the democratic period. Black homeland officials were progressively promoted as the ANC administration privileged affirmative action and demographic change in the transformation of the apartheid-era public service. 'After 1994,' Picard writes, "affirmative action needs were quickly met through the integration of homeland administrators into the new provincial

system. Testing and the establishment of qualification criteria defined by the government, which many advocates of civil service reform saw as necessary in order to address the past limitations of the homeland system, were simply not implemented" (Picard, 2005:307).

## CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE

There were several damaging consequences of this arrangement. In the first place, apartheid-era corruption continued. John Hyslop writes, for example, that 'most central government departments have shown a fair degree of functionality in the new era, and corruption has been relatively contained' (Hyslop, 2005:785). This, he suggests, has not been true of the nine new provincial administrations. "Here there was a clear correlation between the level of systematic corruption [in the new provincial administrations] and the degree of administrative continuity with the old homeland administrations" (Hyslop 2005:785).

Second, the service delivery improvements that were supposed to follow from rationalisation and integration did not occur. This has had further consequences for the nature of state-society relationships. In post-apartheid South Africa a far wider set of groups in the former homelands now comes into contact with the state (Gibbs, 2011). Yet, the state continued, in the 1990s, to be ineffectual in providing services to a broad base of rural citizens in areas such as the Transkei. Gibbs argues that, coupled with the political culture of patronage entrenched under the homeland system, local ANC politicians at municipal level have stepped in to play a role in political and economic brokering for poor, local communities. With expanded, development projects in the rural areas implemented in the 2000s facilitated by a healthier fiscus, further space opened up for local officials to play this role. While this has provided a number of impoverished communities with access to resources, it has perpetuated neo-patrimonial styles of politics in these areas (Gibbs, 2011).

In the early years of the transition from apartheid to the democratic dispensation, the focus was on political settlement and stability. Understandably perhaps, less attention was paid to the way in which new institutions of government would be developed and structured, and how these changes might deal with the legacy of the homeland system.

A 1992 planning document written by Job Mokgoro pointed to the problems that the new Government of National Unity would inherit from the homelands. Mokgoro noted that, 'little could be done with the homeland civil services because no preparation had been made for training and retraining homeland bureaucrats' (Mokgoro, unpublished paper, in Picard, 2005:299).

## AN AHISTORICAL CRITIQUE

Since coming to power in 1994, however, the ANC government has been a forceful agent on the post-apartheid scene. This is especially true in respect of the reform of the South African public service. Curiously however, the challenge of public service reform in South Africa was not referenced to the issue discussed above. Instead, minds were focused on something else. In line with broader international trends in public administration, especially in Britain, the United States and New Zealand, a number of public sector reform initiatives in South Africa were shaped by New Public Management (NPM) thinking. Proponents of NPM sought to change what they saw as *bureaucratic*, law-driven administrations into an innovative and adaptive public service that could respond to increasingly globalised and complex societies.

Fitzgerald, for example, suggested that the apartheid state could be characterised as a, ‘bureaucratic, law-driven, hierarchical, multi-layered, departmentally fragmented, inward-oriented, racial Oligarchy’ (Fitzgerald, 2005:512) – characteristics NPM sought to change. To what extent was this analysis apposite for the former homelands – now largely incorporated into the provincial administrations of the Eastern Cape, North West, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal? We have seen how the bureaucracy functioned more through informal procedure and networks than a rule-driven hierarchy. Further, as noted by Wendy Ngoma in a study of education provision in the Eastern Cape, NPM “never questions the issue of skills and competencies. Rather, it assumes managers have the training and the required competencies to lead and direct change” (Ngoma, 2007:235).

NPM ‘techniques’ were neither applied wholesale nor uncritically by the ANC government, especially in relation to its political roots in ‘neoliberal’ critiques of social democracy. In South Africa, however, its adoption took too little cognisance of recent history, especially the nature of former homeland administrations. Further, how could public sector reforms (such as an increasing focus on the skill and discretion of public sector management) be meaningfully embedded in these provinces?

To what extent have new public management approaches interrupted apartheid-era logics or merely unwittingly reproduced them? For example, the introduction of NPM in the environment just described may have exacerbated corruption and poor service delivery by giving increasing autonomy to leaders implicated in patrimonial networks. Picard notes that “focus in the provinces should have been on organisational development and capacity building, particularly amongst former homeland leaders” (Picard, 2005:308). Yet, even the apparently neutral interven-

tion of 'capacity building' and skills development may be highly political, as Von Holdt shows in a discussion of health provision in South African public hospitals (Von Holdt, 2010:12).

Furthermore, the incorporation of former Bantustans into the post-apartheid state created an unfortunate and worrying association. Affirmative action in the public sector was seen to coincide with the deterioration of public service. In the same way that the HIV/Aids epidemic coincided with the end of apartheid, establishing a shocking association between freedom and death (Posel, 2005 & Steinberg, 2008), so the deterioration of the quality of public service apparently coincided with the inclusion of blacks as public service managers and officials.

It is little wonder, therefore, that in the current situation, questions of skill and training in the public service have become so politicised, resulting, as Von Holdt shows, in respect of the nursing profession, in an 'ambivalence to skill' (Von Holdt, 2010). This politicisation is likely a major obstacle to the implementation of minimum, compulsory qualifications for public servants in South Africa and an associated national school of training to provide them. Yet, racist charges of black incompetence and the defensive reactions they meet in government lead us away from one of the key issues.

What would have been an appropriate model of governance for the provinces, in relation to their recent histories – histories largely defined by a deficit in skills produced by the apartheid logic and by neo-patrimonial networks? This is the key challenge, made harder still by political compromises in the early years of transition. Yet the focus on 'bureaucracy' as the main problem distracts us from this history. To the extent that analysis was undertaken in the discipline of public administration, it lacked appropriate historical and sociological depth. As a result it fixated on the bureaucratic character of administrations instead of engaging with a broader body of literature on the nature of the political economy and the way in which administrations were embedded in social networks.

The failure to think beyond normative arguments, or beyond "rational inputs and outputs paradigms" (Ngoma, 2007:ii), namely how the public sector should function, has led policy makers away from providing answers suited to South Africa's particular history.

## CONCLUSION

This article has briefly presented the history of the incorporation of the former homeland administrations into provincial government in support of a broader argument. We have suggested that the state of the public sector in South Africa today must be understood in light of the particular and largely exceptional history of

both the pre-apartheid state and the transition from apartheid. It has suggested that constraints, especially in provincial and local government, are further related to the unwitting effects of compromises made during the original constitutional settlement. What ruptures and continuities, for example, have been created in the contemporary South African public sector (organisational culture, norms and values, for example) with the administration of the pre-apartheid state?

The adoption of a greater historical lens has consequences not only for our analysis of the public sector, but for the practice of public administration. How are we accounting for the differentiated experiences of provincial and local government for example? Inquiry into the performance of institutions cannot simply be reduced to questions of leadership or to techniques of organisation. We have suggested that insufficient attention has been paid, both in policy design and in writing on the state and public administration, to the history of the South African public sector, and in particular to the specific histories of the institutions it comprises.

The article has argued for a form of scholarship and analysis of government that pays attention to the recent history of the country and its institutions. The failure to do so means the borrowing of models and solutions (best practice), for example, largely drawn from other people's histories and circumstances.

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# HEGEMONY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SCHOLARSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA

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## ABSTRACT

South African scholarship, as a result of the colonial and apartheid context within which it developed, is disciplined by a hegemonic discourse formulated by a 'complex' with linked centres of persuasion interior or exterior to its desired true self. This complex spawns hegemonic limitations that are directly related to the inner beings of various scholar communities as they quarry new paths of intellectualism requisite for a democracy such as South Africa. This article examines this aspect of limitation. The axiomatic point of departure for this examination is the view that hegemony as, strictly speaking, with all things, is an inherently interpretative undertaking grounded in the mortal existentiality of an ideology (to be defended). In the South African context, apartheid and colonialism become a lived background against which scholarship and its hegemonic silences and nuances are foregrounded. The South African lived apartheid and colonial experience provides the main theatre of analysis with the public administration and management scholar community, a 'group' in close proximity with matters of government and statecraft, as an abstraction of the general.

## INTRODUCTION

South African scholarship growth and development is stifled because most 'scholars' are hegemonically compliant and/or contrasted. The 'instrumental value of ideas' that are still caught in academic cocoons with very little sense of outreach or exposure to the larger public sphere of being South African attest to the hegemonic firmament governing most outlets for opinions, opinion making and ultimately socio-cultural reconstruction and nation-building. The centrality of scholarship in the production and dissemination of knowledge, particularly in 'linked academic-institutional-media complexes' (Peet, 2002:54), necessitates a need for the examination of the hegemonic limitations. It is envisaged that the outcome of this examination will trigger an ongoing repositioning of South African intellectuals to be 'true civil servants of the emerging humanity' (Schurmann, 2003:166), and to appreciate the need to start embracing the fact that their scholarly outputs, behaviour and organisations are a means through which they educate

themselves, pass on traditions and sense of their logic and aspirations (Mbye, in Frierson, 2010:3).

The axiomatic point of departure for this examination is the view that hegemony as, strictly speaking, with all things, is an inherently interpretative undertaking grounded in the mortal existentiality of an ideology (to be defended). In the South African context, apartheid and colonialism become a lived background against which scholarship and its hegemonic silences and nuances are foregrounded. Further to this, it is submitted that political neutrality in (reflective) scholarship is at best a harmless naiveté, and at worst a malevolent deception for hidden agendas, often entrenching some undefined and yet 'manufactured consent' with hegemonies that still need to be deconstructively melted into one that is 'national' (Herman & Chomsky, 1994).

By clarifying the political functions of culture-constructing tools, such as academic journals, in particular, and other public discourse media spaces, the concept of 'hegemony' can aid 'scholars' who quarry paths towards the reconciliation of apparent contradictions between the power wielded by 'the dominant' and 'established', and the relative autonomy of the subordinated and/or subjugated. This article will explore the meaning of hegemony and 'othering'. This will be done in the context of weaving their relationship with scholarship and thus the ascendant and/or latent limitations. The South African lived colonial experience provides the main theatre of analysis with the Public Administration and Management scholar community, a 'group' in close proximity with matters of government and statecraft, as an abstraction of the general.

## UNDERSTANDING HEGEMONY

Gramsci defines hegemony as the spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is historically caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. The fundamental of the dominant is so mechanical that such groups muster capacities of imposing direction on an identified terrain of social life to extents where the subordinated are manipulated to board the dominant 'fundamental' express. In the fundamental express, a social order constructed upon a manufactured aura of 'moral authority' that legitimises domination, is accepted as a pillar of acceptance in the 'academic-institutional-media complex'. Gramsci (1971:12)



An academic-institutional-media complex is herein construed to be the carefully constructed interrelationships between academia (and its outputs), institutions that are established to produce, disseminate and promote the consumption thereof, almost in a proffered manner, the produced knowledge. When prefaced otherwise, for example, 'state-institutional-media complex', it defines the head protagonist. In the 'complex', institutions are explained by power and interest, ideas that they profess, the worldviews of individuals manning or managing them, and the nature of the domestic politics (Peet, 2002:55). The principal interest of hegemony in institutional complexes is that organisations persist over time, exerting effects even after the configurations of power; interests and ideas existing at their formation have changed (Keohane & Martin, 2003:98). The transgovernmental relations impact of issue-based advocacy and global political economy networks have isolated knowledge generation and ideational institutions and their mechanisms as targets to wage knowledge-based ideological and hegemonic warfare (Keohane & Martin, 2003:98).

Peet (2002:56) further explains hegemony as prevailing 'common sense' formed in culture, diffused by civic institutions, that informs values, customs and spiritual ideals and induces spontaneous consent to the status quo. In this definition, it is clear that at its best hegemony should respond to material necessities by constituting a complex of convictions and beliefs from which concrete (social, institutional, community) goals are proposed to collective consciousness. The resultant and 'collected' 'conscience' can be packaged as a historical bloc within which mental images that bind strands of the 'common' identity of a hegemonic class are developed and sustained; particularly by 'intellectuals' and/or scholars.

In this 'complex', a set of 'values', 'norms', 'beliefs', 'sentiments', 'merits' and 'prejudices' that support and structure the existing distribution of (knowledge) are quarried within what the dominant group considers liberatory and edifying (Lears, 1985:569). The vulnerability of communities, including scholar communities, to the 'complex's' impact, can make them be unquestioning of the often dominant integration propaganda emanating from within the power structure that permeates the consciousness of the individual and thus society (Marmura, 2010:69). The 'consent' within which an agreeable hegemony may operate creates in the context, conditions of 'forced consciousness' or the systematic misrepresentation of dominant social relations in the consciousness of subordinate classes, with the 'other' while 'othering' those that seem to be outside the parameters of 'established' consent (Wanjohi, 1997:120; Little, 2012:1).

The position of those that are 'othered' normally creates a 'rebellious' and/or 'oppositional', if not adversarial action that has the potential to define future inter-

actions and transactions between what would otherwise have been a collaborating community. In such conditions, space for 'critical' thinkers to develop the kind of tradition where they can look at one another for both intellectual camaraderie and ongoing critical intellectual feedback is obligatory. It is at this juncture of the argument that an explanation of the 'other', 'otherness' and 'othering' is necessary. *Othering* is a process that identifies those that are thought of as being different from oneself or the 'mainstream', and it can reinforce and reproduce positions of dominance and subordination (superordinateness) as well as subjugation (subjugatedness) (Johnson *et al.*, 2004:1). Central to its construction is the asymmetry of power relations, whereby only the dominant group is in a position to impose the perceived value of its identity and to devalue the particularity of others (their otherness) (Staszak, 2008:2). It is therefore the 'construction of difference' and the assigning of 'value to difference' (Rottenberg, in Harris, 1998:25) where difference is expressed in hegemonic essentialisms.

It can also be construed to be the apparent identity of what appear to be cultural units – human beings, ideas and philosophical systems, social organisations – that are maintained only through an active process of *exclusion, opposition and hierarchisation*. It is a phenomenon that maintains its identity in semiotic systems only if other units are represented as foreign or other through a hierarchical dualism in which the 'first' is privileged or favoured while the 'other' is de-privileged or devalued in some way (Cahoone, 2003:1)

Given its fundamental vector of differentiation, othering manifests itself *individually* through attitudes and everyday behaviour, *institutional and/or systemic* through organisational practices and rules woven into a 'social' system; and *culturally, ideologically and hegemonically* through values embedded in the culture of the dominant and/or established (Henry & Tator, 2002). In systemic terms, it assumes space in the realm of policy manipulation, procedure definition and practice that has as a direct consequence the conscious promotion and sustenance and/or entrenchment of 'differential' advantage, often earned through a 'manufactured' social capital (Henry, 2004). Its essence is the definition and securing of one's own positive identity through the stigmatisation of the 'other'.

Except its presumption that the 'dominant' and/or 'established' should be the norm that sets the standard out of which 'other' 'groups' must be judged and/or conform (Dominelli, 2004), it objectifies the 'subordinate' whereby they are treated as cipher and non-persons. Bullis and Bach (1996) further argue that the objectified will, in an othering context, be further treated as interchangeable parts that have no feelings or emotions, are incapable of reflective thought, and are passive and unable to make or manage their choices.

The mobilisation therefore, of 'components' of the 'complex' into a 'civil society force' that is 'dubiously' funded and 'resourced' as well as given 'exposure' is critical to define a 'hegemony' defending interpretation of the 'historical experience' of an unfolding 'new' South Africa. In this mobilisation the 'mental logics' that are foregrounded as 'co-ordinates' with which 'society' is legitimised, create among those that 'formulate', a 'group' of self-declared 'master scholars'. This 'group', whose position remains attached to the original 'historical advantage' they enjoyed as 'others' were 'subjugated' to being mere 'consumers' of 'their think' can only 'reconcile' in conditions where the vectors of solidarity are mostly valorised as 'special interests' of the 'self-superordinate' group, conveniently disguised within the 'minority interests' discourse; whose 'universality' is a product of a 'consent-manufacturing' process that spontaneously locks the status quo.

The established nomenclature of dominance and coercion is in such instances reinforced through 'discursive practice' (Foucault, 2008:41) and passionate 'group identity'. Like any 'distinct group', the in-group consenting would thus develop a vocabulary that marks 'boundaries of permissible discourse', 'discourages the clarification of alternatives' and creates 'institutional' complexes that make 'difficult' the location of original thought as a compulsory service of great scholarship. Given the capacity of the dominant groups to generally 'read the press' of their 'group' and listen to the radio of their 'group', thus constantly reinforcing their allegiance, the danger of learning and believing more and more that their 'group' is right and its actions justified becomes real. At the same time, and this is where scholarship dearth begins, such hegemonic propaganda contains elements of criticism and refutation of 'other groups' which will never be read, heard and/or refereed by a member of the 'othered' group (Ellul, 1965:213).

The mere fact that hegemony includes the enrolment of 'others' in the exercise of your power by convincing, cajoling and even coercing them that they should 'want' what you want (Marmura, 2010:63), requires the existence of visible and invisible, tangible and intangible sets of group and/or social networks that are harnessed towards an 'agreed' thought pattern and/or value system. The state, defined as 'a nation in its collective and corporate capacity' (Chikane, 2012), is in most instances the institutional complex within which such networks are variously connected. In the emerging 'complex' of state, the nexus of hegemonic consent is fast becoming the province of private organisations such as the church, trade unions, big capital and its mega communication mechanisms, strategic think tanks, professional associations, and civil society bodies that are diffused in the substructures of 'social collaboration'. Pyramidal in the civil society sector are politically constructed coalitions such as political parties and 'movements for change'.

The 'complex' has hierarchies that define 'access' to 'public exposure' of ideas in an otherwise 'freedom of speech' defined environment. The contest to influence 'the state-institutional-media complex' defines interests as the main currency in the market of hegemonic politics. The often discrete location of power centres occupied by 'authoritative' actors makes hegemony a profoundly ideological endeavour reliant on shifts in the intellectual 'territorial gap', a province of scholars, from the level of the individual to that of the state (Marmura, 2010:63). These 'shifts', and given that scholars in academic disciplines have in common membership to it, and their acceptance of certain rules which enables them to hold together, entrench the differential character of hegemonic contexts. Miller (1958:19) submits that even if these 'differentials' (or diversities) become settled, others, and on the basis that the ambitions of individual scholars will be sufficient to ensure that no society is ever uniform or even in its texture, will arise. Scholarship and/or intellectualism is thus the arena of political agendas, the price of these agendas, and, historically speaking, the residue of past political agendas; but there are parts of it in which the political agenda element is hardly noticeable and yet profoundly operational and attractive to hegemonic manipulation (Mathebula, 2012:7).

While hegemony is herein presented as a static, closed and yet dynamic system of the dominant, it creates perpetual conditions for counter-hegemonies to emerge. The autonomous character of 'human interactions' with any phenomena is always a guarantee that new forms of consciousness outside the set parameters of permissible discourse and interaction will emerge. The natural realignment of othering and re-othering forces, particularly in conditions of seismic transformations such as the one that happened in post-colonial/apartheid South Africa, will broaden opportunities for the formation and/or reformation of new and historical blocs of influence which will be hegemonic in character. Notwithstanding its non-biotic nature, the inherent character of a hegemony gives it an ability to self-organise, sense and respond, lead and adapt, seed, select, and potentially destabilise its threats, by whatever means, including being intellectuacidal (Mathebula, 2011:838).

The hegemonising is therefore flexible and cunningly adaptive to any condition, especially where no defined 'national ideology' exists. In Africa, where post-colonial political, social and moral theories are not embedded in a crystallly defined ideology, the opportunity for those that are dislodging erstwhile colonial and apartheid ideologies to backslide becomes a natural comfort zone, intellectually speaking. 'Resistance identity' reawakening that is pressured by the absence of a post-social revolution ideology that should not only characterise society and give countenance to the ensuing scholarship (social) milieu (Nkrumah, 1970:58) creates an intentionally integrative hegemony that can reverse any counter-hegemonic gains of the ascendant transformation effort. The continuum character of the 'National Demo-

cratic Revolution' ideological firmament, which obtained in South Africa after the 1994 democratic breakthrough has had, and as unintended consequences, the creation of space for old order defending socio-political and economic coalitions to impose hegemonies that obfuscate any notion and hope for genuine redress across the board.

The embourgeoisment of 'manufactured consent throughout the linked academic-institutional-media complexes that are in many ways repositories of the different kinds of shifts going on in the world (society) as expressed intellectually, is fast becoming a socio-political liability capable of redefining the ideological prism of the dominant (Hooks & West, 1991). The social-matrix that constitutes this embourgeoisment of knowledge has at its apex intellectuals who by nature are supposed to either lead the insurrection of subjugated knowledge or filter from established knowledge those silences that are at work to consolidate the class, gender, race and hegemony of the dominant (Hooks & West, 1991). The insurrection and filtering process will create in the hegemony and/or counter-hegemonic space, a certainty of diversities that will have as a definite outcome the 'adherence' of the intellectual community and society. The relationship of the various 'others' with 'the variously positioned' 'power centres' that define 'victor and victim' in the permitted space of discourse will determine the hegemonisation or otherwise of scholarship.

South African scholarship is therefore disciplined by a hegemonic discourse formulated by a 'complex' with linked centres of persuasion interior or exterior to itself. Despite the post-1994 liberatory firmament that allowed for the 'multi-racialisation' and/or 'non-racialisation' of the 'complex', scholarship continues to be frustrated by severe hegemonic limitations. It is a known fact that in post-1994 South Africa, problems and upheavals in higher education, and thus laboratories of formal scholarship, reflect the influence of a highly contested terrain from which in the contemporary period a multi-racial (middle) class appears to be emerging (Habib & Bentley, 2008:263). The foundational rationale behind these limitations is the continuing 'structural' control of key 'institutions' and 'tools' of scholarships legitimisation in the 'media' complex. The almost and apparent lack of commitment to embrace the 'new' from the 'subjugated' positions South African scholarship on a 'thorny' hill that should be 'valiantly' challenged.

While the general South African society has gone through a Truth and Reconciliation Commission process, the crux of social engineering and design housed in the academic-institutional-media complex has had a 'leave of absence' and/or available-without-consent-presence in the tasks of reconciling how South Africa re-imagines theories about its post-colonial and post-apartheid self. The continuing

reproduction of power relations within these complexes is one of the most ignored aspects of South Africa's road to a post-colonial and post-apartheid 'national' consensus. The ongoing vector of race in the analysis, design and construction of a 'national consensus' is a function of what hegemony should prevail in the ultimate (Chipkin, 2007). The diversities in these complexes become, therefore, the keynote of social condition and ultimately scholarship.

## WHAT OF SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship is the act of generating new knowledge that should alter the way individuals think about the societal challenges within which a solution can be found. It usually emerges through theoretical analysis and empirical research as base conduits. In social science parlance, scholarship should create constructs, theoretical or otherwise, that accurately reflect underlying conceptual variables and their interrelationships. Scholarship is thus about the courage to make the truth of our own suppositions and the realm of our own goals into the things that most deserve to be called into question (Heidegger, 1977:116). Given that the fundamental of scholarship is theoretical transformation, it follows that its essence should be the establishment of (a new) science by detaching it from the (ideology and) hegemony of its past, and revealing this past as (ideological and) hegemonic (Foucault, 1989:5). In its advanced state, good scholarship establishes causal relationships by disentangling confounds, ruling out, without vitiating their existence, competing explanations, and maintaining sound discipline-internal consistency (Ordenez, Schweitzer, Galinsky & Bazerman, 2009:82-86).

The profound implication generating prowess of scholarship does not only alter and/or shift the established frontiers of theory and practice, but also attracts the attention of academic journals as conduits and mechanisms for its conveyance and dissemination. In the 'academic-institutional-complex' referred to, scholarship has as its loci institutions of higher learning, particularly universities, policy think tanks and in-institution research units in the 'state' and private sector complexes. As an output of the 'complex' scholarship is produced, legitimised and distributed within the scholar community through peer reviewed instruments, and in the main journals.

The professoriate, who not only have tenure, which insulates them from many forms of pressure, but also work in a realm where intellectual freedom is a core value and where challenging the prevailing wisdom is common and often prized, is at the apex of the scholarship pyramid in institutional terms (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007:178). These 'professors' and/or academics have a scholarly obligation to create environments in which curious and budding scholars with open minds

and different, especially hegemonic, perspectives are encouraged to vet 'established' patterns of thoughts. (Ordonez, Schweitzer, Galinsky & Bazerman, 2009: 82-86).

The quest, therefore, to create human talent that catapults society into occupying the heights in science and technology (Naisbait & Naisbait, 2010:146) should be the preoccupation of true scholarship. As indicated earlier in the article, scholarship, at its height, can never be ideologically and/or hegemonically neutral. Just as the ideological impact of colonialism and apartheid have distorted the vector of intellectual analysis and discourse, so too the originative historical background of our scholarship engages the sense of our conceptual mortality interior to the possibility of conceptual formation itself. Along with the covert privileging sub-context of the colonial and apartheid 'othering' manoeuvres, you would also find an obscure and rather enigmatic clash of agendas, hegemonic or otherwise, which, furthermore, have not been, even to themselves and in all their consequences, explicitly declared or even articulated (Serequeberhan, 1994:3).

The constant threat to suspend the continuous accumulation of 'established' knowledge, interrupting its slow growth in order to force it to enter a new era by cutting it from its originative historical background and motivation (Foucault, 1989:5), will, in highly hegemonised scholarship contexts, always be seen to be coming from the previously dominated and institutionally 'othered' scholars. In the scholarship realm of South Africa, Morrow (2008:265) argues that over the many years, through formal and informal mechanisms, and with many internal tensions, white people were able to bank large deposits of 'social capital'. This intellectually biased social capital accumulation has now become a resource from which sections of the 'established' scholar community continue to draw strengths more than the 'other' 'subjugated' and yet potent scholar. The coincidence of 'the established' with race and 'foreign' nationals explains the marked correlation between the emerging 'othering' in academia, and the contest for the control of 'journals' by the 'variously othered' groups in the same scholarship community.

## **HEGEMONY AND DISCIPLINE IDENTITY: THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COMMUNITY**

In the diminishing relevance of race as criteria for access, the hibernator prowess of the social engineering stratagem conceptualised around the perpetual superordination of one class (mainly race-defined) over the other, has found an operational space in the realm of hegemonic dominance. The general encounters between and among the 'established' and 'being established' in the Public Administration and Management scholarship community has in recent times exposed

the depth of socio-cultural schisms that were mediated through status quo maintenance. In these experiences, a microcosm of what obtains in the national, the historico-cultural horizon out of which 'this scholar community' reflects issues of 'peer' respect, legitimisation and ordination were foregrounded to the extent whereby 'naming' and 'labelling' replaced genuine discourse on the discipline and its merited professoriates.

The contestation for 'dominance', 'control' and access to the oldest scholarship legitimisation tool in public administration and management, the *Journal of Public Administration* (JOPA), exposed the 'watermarked' divide between colleagues, promoter and protégée, mentor and mentee, and fellow South Africans. In this unfolding saga, the post-1994 'othering' construct that defined access and legitimisation in terms of historical advantagedness and disadvantagedness, has had the unintended consequence of creating visible and associational 'scholar communities' that genuinely and/or maliciously embraced these definitional constructs. Further to that, in this construct, a 'race', 'whiteness' and 'blackness', watermark was thus imprinted on the 'legitimately' agreed upon merit transition process that would have obtained in the continued governance of the public administration scholarship community and its tools of peer legitimisation; the professional association, its journal and related advantages of being a member.

It is in the reaction of 'othered' sections of the public administration scholarship community that the adopted and yet unwritten preamble for in-scholarship community co-existence that 'the association and its journal belongs to all who can 'legitimately' write in it and that no 'grouping', 'institution' or 'hegemony' can justly claim authority over it, unless it is based on the will of all in the discipline, was put into question (Freedom Charter, 1955). The cohesive strength of this watermarked preamble, which has reduced the capacity of the 'established' to shift at will the direction and gear of its 'narrow' 'group' interest hegemony, has also adjusted the template precedent in the identity dynamics of the newly illuminated cultural intelligentsia that is shifting the paradigmatic frontiers of organic public administration scholarship (Davies, 2011).

In the reconfiguration of these power relations, and after almost a decade-old wait for a demographically compliant, and in this instance academically meritorious, transition to be ushered in, a resistance identity developed to levels where the very soul of the association and the journal become catastrophically endangered. Castells (2004:9) explains *resistance identities* as (social) and hegemonic actors, who feel excluded, stigmatised or otherwise 'oppressed' by the logic of domination. They respond to persecution (whether real or imagined) through the construction of a defensive identity, one which 'reverses and/or advances the value



judgment while reinforcing the boundary which separates them from the emerging and/or dominant institutions, hegemonies and ideologies. This is also sloganeered as the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded, strictly speaking in reciprocal proportions.

This crisis of resistance identities, capsuled in historico-cultural politics, stretches not only to the 'self-othered' group rights and public administration scholar community-building, but also the academic-institutional-media complex consensus itself; the triumph of the erstwhile apartheid divide and rule philosophy. Notable, and in most instances survival-driven, divisions are evident in the multi-dimensional nature of these resistance identities. The programmatic axis for such 'groups' remains the stratification of the 'complex' in order to achieve narrow 'old boys' club' objectives that are nefarious in content and yet noble in 'own group' preservation terms. The modus operandi adopted by the resistance identity 'group' is to focus on clashes over institutional and symbolic power as derived from those organs of state that are still questionable in the degree of transformation they are delaying or fast-tracking in the scholar community.

The geographic and communal space within which 'the self-othered' operates has shifted from 'racialised' claims of supremacy to claims of undefined merit protection and 'new found' understanding of democratic majorities, where minorities are now becoming majorities in direct correlation to the 'social capital' they command, hegemonically speaking. In so doing the whiteness and/or blackness is a deracialised and reinscribing new form of inequality perpetuation in the arrangements of the ascendant pecking order. The social residual of such behaviour will and potentially is borne by the young of the 'self-othered' groups as manifest in the non-promotion linked mobility of these young scholars in the in and out of the public administration scholarship community, with interesting destinations and associational communities. A critical self-inventory of the 'self-othered' needs to scrutinise the social positions, class location and cultural socialisation of members of the public administration scholarship community, and this should not be for the nostalgic preservation of the general 'group' but for the sake of a new regime of truth.

The South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM) experience has thus far shown that the in-country scholarship is marked, and in fundamental ways, by its experience of and confrontation with colonialism and apartheid, anti-colonialism and anti-apartheid. This almost metaphysical in character experience creates challenges in the 'sourcing' space of scholarship and by extension creates a contestation to monopolise the 'primary' source space in academic referencing. Hegemonically speaking, it is in academic content primary

'sourcing' that the potency of scholarship in the creation and sustenance of societal power relations via the cultural silences of knowledge is experienced. The academic legitimisation tools, with peer review as their proffered currency, have since become a new terrain of struggle to control the knowledge heartbeat of society and thus government, as the proximate consumer of the public administration scholar output.

In fact Sithole (2011: on-line) argues that 'established scholars often abuse 'the power', institutional or otherwise, to try to suppress versions of knowledge which contradict their hegemonic standpoint, while promoting knowledge (and conditions) with which they ideologically, socially and theoretically agree. There should therefore not be doubt that this is really what lies behind the noise and litigations around the contestation over the production (and by extension curricula) of public administration and management knowledge. The concretising tendency of 'some' in the 'community' to present themselves as the only 'scholars' and 'repositories' of the theory and practise should also be viewed against this backdrop. Although this article holds no brief for the 'historically othered', it subscribes to the view that the 'scholar' behaviour in South Africa remains intertwined with the many injustices it should actually pronounce on (Sithole, 2011: on-line).

Mwaniki (2012) further argues that the peer review mechanism of accredited journals is a sure way to wage a hegemonic struggle against those who are supposed to be 'othered' 'in' or 'out' of the occupied spaces of the 'Mafia of Sciences'. In this struggle, he submits, the editors of journals, especially when they have a demonstrable history of ideological agreement and joint affiliation to a 'particular' philosophy of life, know the scientific biases of reviewers to whom they refer incoming manuscripts, and if they for some hegemonic reason want an opinion to be side-lined from the 'mainstream' of thought, they simply send it to those reviewers who they know have opinions that are opposite to those argued, for its rejection. Concomitant to this process is the control of 'publication' space away from 'subjugated scholars' thus limiting their natural ascendance into the professoriate at institutions of higher learning, and removing them from their legitimate role in the societal modernisation endeavours controlled by academia, as well as rendering them peripheral to the dynamics and dialectics of power.

The reasons for resigning from the *Journal for Public Administration* editorial committee by 'others' in the field as well as the valiant pursuit for the removal of Professor John Mafunisa as the ascendant editor of the *Journal for Public Administration*, including the 'self-resourced' court challenge to the 2011 SAAPAM elective conference (South African Association of Public Administration and Management – Gauteng Chapter, Chairperson's Report, 2011) presents a sieve within

which phenomena could be observed within the scholar community in particular and scholarship in general. *Firstly*, it displayed paucity of (black) infrastructures for intellectual activity; *secondly*, it showed the chronic inability of the 'established' to afford new (black) intellectuals their hard-earned respect, even if they were promoted by the very respected in the 'establishment'; *thirdly*, there is still a deep distrust and suspicion of the new (black) intellectual, purely on the basis of uncertainty over the real ideological and/or hegemonic orientation of the independent new (black) intellectual; and *lastly* the chronic belief that non-racialism can exist outside the predominance of both 'whiteness' and 'blackness' as reasoned consciousness (Hooks & West, 1991).

The Mafunisation<sup>1</sup> of journal editorship has now become a rallying point within which the non-racial honesty and transformatory character of scholars in the field is being evaluated and measured. While it is still a vexing question of our times, as to why there is ruction in the appointment of a deputy editor of the journal of ten year's standing, who has credentials deserving of celebration by colleagues and mentors alike, the continuing behaviours of the variously 'othered' scholars is fast impacting on critical variables of the 'intellectual and scholarship quotient' South Africans have thus far accumulated internationally; more specifically the racism variable. Answers to this question should be embraced as the starting point in our quest to be genuine in the reconstruction and development of the public administration scholarship community's' soul. It is only until these questions are adequately answered that the *Journal of Public Administration* editorship will be a matter of natural progression with no questions asked about othering issues such as 'demographic representativity' of leadership. In the reconciliation of the in-public administration community's 'self-othered' groupings, the public administration scholarship community needs to transition into an intelligentsia that has an institutionalised critical consciousness that makes its own 'refugees' in their intellectual province of birth. A call for the patriotic scholars and scholarship who are only loyal to the correctness of truths about its past as imagined in the future is thus made.

Phago (2012:1-2) defines these 'patriotic' scholars as individuals who are engaged in teaching, researching or community involvement. He, however, cautiously implies that such scholars are identified through the following six qualities:

- *Firstly*, since scholarship involves critical thinking and reasoning, they are expected to question (and not just accept) and interrogate theories, models and frameworks in their disciplines, in this context, Public Administration.

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<sup>1</sup>Mafunisation refers to a condition where a time-groomed editor's succession is questioned in a scholarship community not on the basis of merit and excellence but on 'othering' concocted reasons that are reminiscent of the erstwhile 'race-based' othering criterion found in countries and societies that had 'race' as a condition for classification in order to be legitimate in respect of access; similar to South Africa pre-1994. It has developed as a result of the rejection, on paper and otherwise, of the editorship of Professor John Mafunisa of the Journal of Public Administration.

- *Secondly*, scholarship is about knowledge production. Whenever scholars engage (discuss or write) in scholarship functions, one of the main goals is to expand the boundaries of knowledge and to make a discipline (in this case Public Administration) relevant in a particular environment and context. The production of knowledge could assist with the answering of theoretical academic questions and solving of practical problems faced within (the public service).
- *Thirdly*, scholarship is about mentoring and guiding those interested in scholarship functions to find their footing. For example, in the context of higher education, scholars are expected to supervise and promote postgraduate students towards completing their studies, thereby transferring research and supervision skills to the students.
- *Fourthly*, scholarship means that a scholar is well vested with classical (Public Administration) literature and continually keeps abreast with disciplinary developments. Seminal publication must be available for all those who are interested in being scholars in the discipline.
- *Fifthly*, scholars need to command respect within the community of scholarship. South Africa's National Research Foundation's (NRF) research rating programme is also an attempt to determine the standing or the level of respect scholars command within their discipline.
- *Sixthly and lastly*, scholarship is about expertise and specialisation. Without specialised skills of identifying and solving scientific (or knowledge) problems, scholarship cannot thrive.

The periodisation of South African democratic breakthroughs that is reflective of the ideological influences to scholarship justifies the conclusion that the scholarship community is in itself locked in a relationship with what each ideological influence stood and/or stands for: either in support or opposition. The 1948 National Party-led 'democratic breakthrough' which ushered in the institutional space for the systematic sub-ordination and subjugation of non-apartheid supporting scholarship, created a particular 'entitlement' tradition in society and all its organic units (Mathebula, 2012:1). Hierarchies of 'othering' and otherwise could not have escaped the 'ideational' plank that followed the cue in national policy about forms of human objectification and ciphering as evidenced in the textural topologies of access that still decorate South Africa. The criminalisation of discontent with 'national' policy direction, which would in any event be a result of true scholarship, distorted the ideational market to levels where the philosophical foundations of what defines today's public administration in South Africa were on the offensive against the 'institutionally' objectified, albeit in subtle terms.

Plausible as it is, the scientific development of public administration, which created institutional stabilisation theories and approaches grounded on the material conditions obtaining in South Africa, routinised and canalised inter-scholar relations by means of institutions, norms and networks (Maharajh, 2011:75). The formalisation of apartheid as an ideological firmament for socio-political co-existence created, in these inter-scholar relationships a condition where justification of policies of the day

needed to be backed-up by research; an opportunity exploited by some in the 'established' other as manifest in recorded scholarly work found in the series of the Journal of Public Administration. The career paths of most of the variously 'othered' scholars include senior positions in the bureaucracy that not only institutionalised 'social othering', but 'othered' its public administration-specific research funding, and higher education consumption.

If we accept Geoff Hodgson's definition that 'markets are social institutions, which organise the process of exchange and thereby impose constraints as well as being enabling in their effects' (1998), it should then follow that the market for intellectual outputs in the Public Administration scholarship domain would have been manipulated by its 'compliance' with reigning ideological constructs. Scholars who quarried intellectual solutions could also not have been able to escape the constraints and therefore limitative firmament, a danger that post-apartheid scholars are not immunised against.

As collateral of the dominant apartheid era racial Fordism, defined as a system that focused on extending industrialisation by means of the production of (previously imported) sophisticated consumer goods for the white South African market (Maharajh, 2011:79), scholarship output began conforming to the developing market. It is therefore correct to argue that the cogent praxis of apartheid-era scholarship morality, a network of principles and rules for the guidance and appraisal of conduct (Nkrumah, 1970:58), has and will always be the scientific justification of what the ideology stands for; and in the same vein the cogent praxis of the anti-apartheid morality 'complex' is, or should have been, the 'scientific' justification of what an alternative should be.

It is the submission of this article that graduates and scholars interior to these contexts cannot be conceived outside this combinative ideological and hegemonic grip. As a consequence, scholarship in South Africa will, if unchecked by its custodians, scholars and/or intellectuals, find itself in the muddy terrain of 'political correctness', 'hegemony defence', and ('new or old') 'ideology advancement and sustenance', at the altar of pure scientific legitimation.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Whereas the universality of a correlation between hegemony and scholarship is accepted as an axiom of intellectuality, the growing centrality of conceptual uprisings against hegemonically-established theoretical constructs is fast becoming a precursor to new knowledge generation. These uprisings have an operating continuum of activities that span from the outright rejection of illegitimate scholarship to the

repudiation of hegemonic dictatorship by the 'dominant' through to inter-scholar collaboration as a reasoned in-scholar community social contract. In such contexts, though, the social contract is expected to consort with the fact that the intellectual ferment of a society is critical to the manner in which such a society re-imagines itself as a condition for national identity definition. It is through the preservation of scholarly indigenous knowledge systems that a hegemony and ideology of coexistence, and therefore public administration, develops.

Further, because of the mere fact that interests in society cannot operate in a mechanical or predetermined manner because people organised around them take charge of how they are marshalled and managed, the importance of those that 'record' the 'interrelationships' of these interests cannot be undermined in any social or otherwise transformation endeavour; like the one South Africa is in. Scholars, as the pinnacle community abrogated with the role of being custodians of the thinking aspects of man, are not only fundamental to humanity's existence but also instructive to the construct of all its hegemonic nuances. Hegemonic scholarship, as argued in this article, is thus a nocturnal reconnoitre among astral clusters of human interests, aloft from the customary haunts of thought and national visioning.

South African scholarship work and its collective insurgency must thus be rooted in the specificity of its originative life and history for it to make sense to 'all'. As a consequence, the public administration scholarship community must realise that the creation of new and alternative practices results from the heroic efforts of collective intellectual work and communal resistance(s) that shape and are shaped by hegemonic modes of cultural fusion (or the limitations and manipulation thereof).

As the enlightened of the various witnesses in the unfolding cultural-intellectual revolution as manifest within the fluid academic-institutional-media complex's, hegemonically or otherwise, ideational space, the public administration scholarship community needs to construct a 'scientific discipline identity' that not only de-hegemonises itself as it quarries a counter-hegemony, but also straightens the mind-sets interior to its development. In so doing, the discipline's vital bearing on the wider historico-political culture of its scholarly merit will advance its scientific obligations of transgressing the discursive frontiers of scholarship, as bequeathed by institutionalised hegemonies in its past.

In this endeavour, the risk of being ideationally confrontational with the transformational dictates of our scholarship operational spaces, government and matters of the state should be a theatre of learning and sharing among colleagues in ways that refuse the continuation of 'othering' tendencies harboured in the inner

beings of a 'select' few in the community. While actions and activities by this 'select few' reminds 'some among the community' that domination and domineering and oppression and oppressing continue to shape a substantial part of our 'everyone-ness', it should also bring us into greater solidarity and a community that is 'scientifically distinct in matters of social transformation and discipline identity'.

The development, therefore, of a self-critical inventory that outlines those areas within which our capacity to be intellectually demeaning and thus difficulting inter-scholar relations must be prioritised for further research and recordal. There is a further need to create, in the 'spaces' of intellectual discourse platforms, a space for emerging and 'institutionally established' scholars to interrogate phenomena behind the vanishing objectivity in scholarship and academic legitimisation. To achieve this, an honest in-community redefinition of 'peer' in terms of who and their character needs to be foregrounded as a topic of engagement by the public administration and management community. This activity has become, and as a result of the shenanigans around matters of SAAPAM, more of a 'survival kit' to salvage the already 'self-contaminating' peer review spaces and processes as argued earlier in this article.

In the execution of this assignment, the public administration and management scholar community should take heed of the underlying truths about its history and future, particularly the diffusion impact of such truths. The extent to which this community creates and/or resuscitates memories of its future in respect of 'new and old establishment' interactions, and on the basis of 'accumulated' and 'accumulative' social capital wealth, will create a definite 'us' and 'them' no court order will heal, a definite reversal of the principles underpinning the fragile race relations that should pillar the Mandela and De Klerk-led national accord that is crumbling elsewhere in the geopolitical space called South Africa. It is thus the submission of this article that in matters of the humanities the concentrate of subjectivity among scholars triumphs over objectivity at the imbecilic altar of human ego.

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# PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SCHOLARSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA: AN INEVITABLE POSTULATION OF PROSPECTS

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## ABSTRACT

This article postulates for the quality of Public Administration scholarship. To support this postulation, a discussion on the transformation of higher education is undertaken. Further, an ingemination of scholarship functions is undertaken in an effort to contextualise Public Administration scholarship within the broader understanding of the expectation of what constitutes scholarship. A synthesis of scholarship functions is done to describe what qualities Public Administration scholars should identify with, in their quest to undertake scholarship activities. Finally, a postulation of Public Administration scholarship prospects is drawn to argue for the need to introduce a standardised professional framework. Such a framework is necessary in ensuring that Public Administration scholarship sustains itself.

## INTRODUCTION

The prospect of public administration scholarship in South Africa is an uncertain one. This is partly because developmental programmes for prospective scholars are not formalised by the relevant academic departments in higher education institutions and associations such as the South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM) to capacitate developing scholars. The formalisation of such programmes could have positive effects in an attempt to sustain quality scholarship in Public Administration. This claim is advanced because the product of scholarship at the highest level of the discourse is scholarship itself.

The purpose of this article is to postulate the prospects of Public Administration scholarship in South Africa. This postulation is undertaken with the need to professionalise Public Administration as a discipline. In order to address these concerns, a discussion on the transformation of the higher education landscape is undertaken, since this has a bearing on scholarship, including Public Administration scholarship. The discussion on the transformation of the higher education landscape is used as a basis for understanding the generic challenges in this sector. This

discussion is followed by an interrogation of the three functions of scholarship (teaching, research and community engagement) in which, *inter alia*, Public Administration scholarship is embedded. Finally, a framework to enhance and sustain the quality of scholarship of prospective scholars in Public Administration is postulated.

## **TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE**

A discussion of the transformation of the South African higher education landscape is necessary to provide an understanding of the concomitant scholarship challenges. This discussion is based on the fact that the higher education sector comprises several academic disciplines including Public Administration. In this regard, the context of Public Administration scholarship is emphasised. During June 2000, the Council on Higher Education released a report entitled 'Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the equity, quality, and social development imperatives of South Africa in the 21st century'. The Report quoted the Minister of Education's request in commissioning the task team for the transformation agenda of higher education:

The need for the set-up commission is to develop a set of concrete proposals on the shape and size of the higher education system and not a set of general principles which serve as guidelines for restructuring. I cannot over-emphasise the importance of this point. Until and unless we reach finality on institutional restructuring, we cannot take action and put in place the steps necessary to ensure the long-term affordability and sustainability of the higher education system. (Council on Higher Education, 2000: 4)

The emphasis by the minister on the above articulation regarding the transformation of higher education also has reference to the merger of higher education institutions. Similarly, Jansen (2004:293-296) saw the basis for the higher education policy after 1994 as the report by the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) in which the size and shape of higher education was determined through the mergers and incorporations of universities and technikons. The above-mentioned assertions of the minister served as indicators of the need for the merging and incorporation of higher education institutions.

Jansen (2004) stated that the merger outcomes were contingent on the political forces initiating, shaping, and sustaining the mergers. The operations of these political forces were at the higher echelons of government departments. However, in the report prepared for the Council on Higher Education, Hall, Symes and Luescher (2004:67-68) posit that a policy framework on mergers and incorporations remained vague on issues that were regarded as critical to the success of the transformation of

higher education. In fact, the majority of higher education institutions levelled much criticism against the Ministry of Education at that time.

Some of the critics include Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007:5-7), who pose a question on what the higher education landscape should be aiming to achieve. In an attempt to answer this question, these authors considered the following three perspectives:

The significance of graduate output: Sustainable economic growth in other countries is done through education and training, especially of higher education. The production of research is usually through higher education institutions.

Output targets and policy: While the Department of Education had specified a Programme and Qualification Mix for each institution of higher education, translating broad national goals into meaningful institutional targets and the actual output were still lacking.

Developments in the relationship between state and higher education: While the relationship between state and higher education had been controversial and highly contested by academic communities, there had been a change in the state's approach. This change sought to reinforce the call for the higher education sector to be responsive and was required to highlight the need to develop as clear as possible an understanding of what was expected of the sector.

Achieving successfully in these three perspectives, especially with regard to the significance of graduate output, positions the focus on the relevance of education that is able to respond to scholarship needs. In this regard, the quality of graduates could benefit disciplines, thereby improving the prospects, forecasts and sustainability of those disciplines. Badat (n.d.) undertook a study titled 'Transforming South African Higher Education, 1990-2003: Goals, Policy initiatives and critical challenges and issues' in an attempt to contextualise the process of the transformation of higher education. The transformation context included the following:

- The fragmentation of a higher education system which produced (through teaching and research) white and male privilege as well as black and women subordination in all spheres of the society.
- Teaching and research embedded within the policy of separate development. Higher education is required to address and become responsive to meeting the needs of scholarship, the development of human resources, and the contribution towards democratisation of the state and society.
- The transition of South Africa which is occurring in the context of globalisation and the global economy which are largely dependent on knowledge and information.

Quality scholarship could enable South Africa to address its developmental challenges, improve its scholarship prospects and engage with other countries in the world. Such a generic approach should be able to filter through different disciplines including Public Administration. The general discussion of transformation of higher education remains vague without focusing attention on disciplinary Public Administration aspects that define scholarship activities. These aspects as argued by Badat (n.d.:4) receive attention below.

## **INGEMINATING SCHOLARSHIP FUNCTIONS**

Wessels and Van Jaarsveldt (2007:104-118) argued about the role of higher education in developing and retaining the best managers from a South African perspective. In this article, the authors provide an extensive discussion on the fundamental purpose of institutions of higher education. In this regard, key issues raised on the purpose of quality scholarship in the context of a higher education institution include the following:

- to create knowledge for its own sake
- to build research and education capacity for the scholarly community
- to provide general education for all students or society in general
- to meet the market demand for the education of specialists
- to develop competencies that the public service in South Africa requires from its middle and senior management cadres.

In order to clearly understand arguments by Wessels and Van Jaarsveldt (2007) on the above purpose of scholarship in higher education institutions, three scholarship dimensions emanating from their article are highlighted. These dimensions are teaching and learning, research and development, and community service or engagement. Scholars are expected to fulfil these three scholarship dimensions in order to be regarded as successful. Each scholarship dimension is considered separately below.

## **SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING (IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR)**

Policy developments, especially since 1994, have been the key drivers for teaching and learning in South Africa. According to the Council on Higher Education (2004:95-96), the appointment of the Commission on Higher Education in 1995 was necessary to identify the context in which the improvement of teaching and learning could be undertaken. The broad context included the following concerns:

- The desire to steer South Africa along a high skills and high growth path of economic development

- The mechanism of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to bring academic and vocational education into closer alignment within a single coordinated system of qualification which would allow articulation between them
- Modularisation of curricula to allow for the acquisition of skills within a flexible time frame, and facilitate portability of learning in a system of credit accumulation and transfer
- Erosion of disciplinary boundaries in favour of inter-disciplinarity, multi-disciplinarity or trans-disciplinarity to serve as the basis for reconstituted, relevant and responsive curricula
- An outcomes-based approach which would enable cross-field outcomes from a variety of knowledge forms and would provide background-specific content in favour of generic, transferable skills.

The above-mentioned aspects are necessary to understand the context and the trajectory which teaching and learning in South Africa are taking. To further understand this submission on the broad context of teaching and learning, a concept clarification (of teaching and learning) is undertaken in this article. This type of a discussion is imperative in outlining how these concepts could be understood (or even confused) in the context of higher education and Public Administration in particular.

Teaching, which is a process undertaken to facilitate learning, can be regarded as two sides of a coin. Kilfoil (1995:61) articulates her views on teaching with a metaphor of a scaffolding of academic support, which is not permanent, but serves a particular purpose of learning to the learner. Mitra (2008:8) states that there are two inter-related meanings to the concept learning: first, it is regarded as a change in behaviour after a process which has been intended to cause a changed behaviour is followed. Second, learning is a continuous process of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes which are able to contribute to a change in the behaviour of a student. In these brief definitions of teaching and learning as separate but closely related concepts, the following important observations can be made:

- Teaching and learning can mainly be separated for academic purposes and not for practical reasons.
- The teaching process cannot be complete without learning taking place.
- For teaching and learning to take place, there must be a teacher and a learner.
- A teacher has distinct roles as a parent (nurturing, supporting or caring) and as a resource (source or sound board) in facilitating a learning process.

Therefore, from these observations above, it is clear that teaching and learning in the higher education landscape (in disciplines such as Public Administration) require high level teaching and learning skills. Institutions of higher learning have a challenge

to ensure quality provision of teaching and that learners learn for their sustainability and good prospects. An anecdote from the University of South Africa's (Unisa) teaching and learning is given below.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING: AN ANECDOTE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

It is necessary to provide a practical example of how a higher education institution operationalises the concepts of teaching and learning as described in this article. In this regard, Unisa is observed as an example in attempting to understand the functions of a university in incorporating these concepts. A point of departure in understanding Unisa as a teaching and learning institution is to acknowledge the uniqueness of Unisa as the only open distance learning (ODL) institution in the South African higher education landscape. Unisa does not clearly define teaching as a concept, but it does define the term 'tutoring', which is associated to teaching.

Tutoring is described as a "broad range of teaching, coaching, mentoring and monitoring activities that guide students through their courses, mediating the packed learning process and facilitating the learning processes" (Unisa, 2008:3). This definition does not contradict Kilfoil's view above and could be useful in the formulation of an official Unisa definition of teaching. With regard to learning, Unisa (2008:1) officially defines it "as an active process of construction of knowledge, attitudes, and values as well as developing skills using a variety of resources including people, printed material, electronic media, experiential and work-integrated learning, practical training, reflection, research, and other methods. Learning is also associated with personal change and empowerment as an aspiration to improve oneself in order to help others."

The definition of learning also does not clash with the literature cited in this article, but further embraces the concept of values as well as the learner's participation in society after learning has taken place. This conceptual clarification is necessary in the quest to understand the complexity of interpreting the context in which higher education institutions interpret and practise teaching and learning. These definitions are also pertinent in understanding how teaching and learning could be understood differently by various higher education institutions as well as by disciplines such as Public Administration. The impression is that the understanding of teaching and learning is not cast in stone and requires a contextual or situational definition.



## SCHOLARSHIP OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

One of the reasons for the establishment of higher education institutions in South Africa has always been to ensure that education is offered at the highest level and that quality graduates are produced. In contemporary society, the offering of the highest level of education at the universities focuses on master's and doctoral qualifications. This requires specific qualities from scholars in various disciplines such as Public Administration in order to recruit promising master's and doctoral candidates and to guide them successfully towards completion of their studies. Quality graduates who are produced should be able to contribute to society in various innovative ways in the developmental quest. Emphasis is placed on the need to ensure that master's and doctoral work in South Africa is more research-oriented rather than involving course work that follows syllabi as this approach has the potential to strengthen the quality of the scholarship.

The Council on Higher Education (2004:107) reports that from 1948, research priorities became increasingly identified with state security. This approach has largely influenced the research and development agendas of science councils and some universities. The Council on Higher Education (CHE) further argues that in historically black universities (HBUs), quality research and development activities have been precluded and this means that research and teaching were also not aligned. The CHE (2004: 109) provides a list of strategies endorsed in the White Paper on Higher Education of 1997, as well as in the National Plan on Higher Education in promoting research. The list of strategies and priorities includes the following CHE (2004:109):

- Increasing postgraduate enrolments and output with priority access to blacks and women in master's, doctoral, and postdoctoral programmes
- Improvement of the individual institutional research output and quality such as through quality assurance measures
- Developing centres of excellence and niche areas with demonstrable research capacity or potential, while at the same time sustaining the existing capacity
- Focusing on research collaborations and partnerships, especially in research and postgraduate training
- Articulation and coordination of research activities needed across the national system
- Provisioning of the national research plan, *inter alia*, to set priorities for research and postgraduate training
- Establishing research funding strategies and mechanisms to add value to research priorities, to reduce fragmentation, and to build capacity in higher education research.

These discussions regarding priorities and strategies highlight realistic long-term challenges which need to be addressed within the higher education research land-

scape. In this regard, Public Administration scholarship is no exception. In fact, the CHE further states:

[The] research output in South Africa is facing some challenging prospects when juxtaposed to other middle income economies. The total research output between 1994 and 2004 has remained static with observed decline since 1997. These challenges are attributed to the difficulty by higher education institutions being unable to recruit emerging scholars on the one hand, while the current publishing scholars are ageing on the other hand. Accordingly, a combination of age and race data suggest that there is a crisis awaiting higher education research in which a white cohort over 50 years moved closer to retirement with little evidence of a commensurate emerging black cohort waiting. CHE (2004:80,113).

- In view of the above-mentioned challenges raised in 2004, the following four themes to improve research and development were further identified CHE (2004:113):
- The responsiveness of higher education institutions to national research goals, interpreted through levels of collaborations between higher education and industry or government
- Research output and the implications of the new institutional landscape for research output patterns
- Scientific productivity and potential blurring of institutional research boundaries
- Patterns of postgraduate enrolment.

In order to understand the future of the higher education landscape in South Africa, it is important for these themes to be understood. In particular, the theme regarding the patterns of postgraduate enrolments and their progress in completing their qualifications is relevant for understanding the quality of scholarship in diverse disciplines, including Public Administration. Since higher education scholars are required to possess higher university qualifications, it becomes imperative to argue for quality research master's and doctoral academic offerings. In emphasising this statement, Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007:5) contend that while the production of graduates at all levels remains the function of higher education institutions, the South African higher education sector remains an undergraduate system. This situation, if not changed speedily, could undermine efforts directed at achieving quality teaching and learning, research and development, as well as community service activities. In other words, quality scholarship development and prospects could be compromised. Research and development can arguably be regarded as the epicentre of scholarship which embeds teaching and learning as well as community engagement. This is because quality research should inform the needs of the community as well as teaching contents for the students. The desired results (especially at postgraduate level) are quality candidates that are able to respond to the scholarship needs of higher education. In this regard, a postulation of prospects and forecasts of scholarship maintains

positive outlooks since quality scholarship serves to sustain and stabilise higher education landscape.

## **SCHOLARSHIP OF COMMUNITY SERVICE**

It is argued that well-rounded scholars should undertake the three core functions: teaching and learning, research and development, and community outreach activities. Community outreach activities are intended to contribute to the public good. However, this area remains the most undefined one in comparison with teaching and research. Similarly, the CHE (2004:134) mentions that the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) has identified community engagement as a key area of quality assurance. The following community engagement suggestions are implemented by higher education institutions:

- Policies and procedures for the quality management of community engagement
- Integration of policies and procedures for community engagements with those of teaching and learning, as well as research, where appropriate
- Allocation of adequate resources to facilitate quality delivery in community engagements
- Regular review of the effectiveness of quality related arrangements for community engagements.

Once some of the above examples are in place within higher education institutions, institutions should craft their individual community engagement systems which could be integrated into teaching and learning as well as research activities. This assertion in that, once the components of teaching and learning as well as research are undertaken, higher education institutions should be required to put in place their community engagement systems in order to contribute positively to the public good.

In understanding the transformation of the higher education landscape, the above assertions on the South African higher education functions are necessary. Various authors (such as Badat, n.d.; Council on Higher Education, 2004; Jansen, 2004; Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007; Wessels & Van Jaarsveldt, 2007) emphasise that the prospects of higher education in South Africa require focused attention in an effort to make scholarship sustainable. It is clear from the discussions on scholarship that while the focus of higher education should be on the production of quality postgraduate qualifications, the current situation is that the emphasis is on undergraduate qualifications. It appears that higher education therefore may not sufficiently prepare quality scholars. This means that research and development activities are not being undertaken at the required scale which should contribute in improving the quality of scholarship. Similarly, the shrinking academic staff due to age in comparison with the low intake of new academic staff components is a cause for concern (cf. Council on

Higher Education, 2004:80,113). In other words, the function of university scholarship cannot be seen to be an oversimplified activity. As illustrated with an anecdote regarding how Unisa interprets teaching and learning concepts, the differentiation in the understanding of a scholarship function of different universities and different disciplines is unavoidable. Subsequently, agreeing on a universal meaning of these scholarship functions is a complex matter. The question that arises from the above discussion seeks to understand what scholarship entails especially in the context of Public Administration.

## **WHAT IS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SCHOLARSHIP?**

Not all individuals who are engaged in teaching, researching or community involvement should be regarded as scholars. From the foregoing discussions, a Public Administration scholar should be able to identify with the following six qualities:

- Scholarship involves critical thinking and reasoning. Scholars are expected to question (and not just accept) and interrogate theories, models and frameworks in their disciplines, in this context, Public Administration.
- Scholarship is about knowledge production. Whenever scholars engage (discuss or write) in scholarship functions, one of the main goals is to expand the boundaries of knowledge and to make a discipline (in this case Public Administration) relevant in a particular environment and context. The production of knowledge could assist with the answering of theoretical academic questions and solving of the practical problems faced within the public service.
- Scholarship is about mentoring and guiding those interested in scholarship functions to find their footing. For example, in the context of higher education, scholars are expected to supervise and promote postgraduate students towards completing their studies thereby transferring research and supervision skills to the students.
- Scholarship means that a scholar is well vested with classical (Public Administration) literature and continually keeps abreast with disciplinary developments. Seminal publication must be available for all those who are interested in being scholars in the discipline.
- Scholars need to command respect within the community of scholarship. South Africa's National Research Foundation's (NRF) research rating programme is also an attempt to determine the standing or the level of respect scholars command within their discipline.
- Scholarship is about expertise and specialisation. Without specialised skills of identifying and solving scientific (or knowledge) problems, scholarship cannot thrive.

The above aspects are mentioned in an attempt to synthesise the discussion regarding scholarship functions. This is necessary since this synthesis makes provision for

what a Public Administration scholar should be able to do whenever scholarship responsibilities are discharged for disciplinary sustainability.

However, in view of the arguments that scholarship in the South African higher education landscape requires urgent and focused attention to ensure sustainability, a discussion to postulate the prospects and forecast of scholarship of Public Administration is undertaken. Such a postulation is inevitable; hence the need to ensure that a framework to sustain quality scholarship is developed and maintained. Failure to develop a framework could render Public Administration scholarship prospects unreliable and of dubious standard. The goal is to ensure that quality candidates (scholars) are produced by the system to ensure the sustainability of the discipline. Achieving such a goal would be interpreted as improving the prospects of the quality of Public Administration scholarship in a sustainable manner.

## **POSTULATING THE PROSPECTS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SCHOLARSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The question arises whether the prospects of Public Administration scholarship in South Africa are sustainable. Since this is a question that is relevant to the future of this discipline, a postulative approach is suitable for a proper response. This is a necessary discussion since Public Administration scholarship is evolving and care should be taken to ensure that a relevant framework informs fulcrum scholarship activities for this sustainability. To answer this question, attention is given to discussions from several recent journal articles on Public Administration scholarship. A framework is postulated in an attempt to sustain and preserve Public Administration scholarship.

Scholars of note who recently discussed the scholarship of Public Administration in South Africa include Maserumule (2010), Cameron and Milne (2009), Wessels (2008), Khalo (2006) as well as Clapper (2005). Maserumule's (2010:78) argument is about the necessity of placing emphasis on knowledge generation through Public Administration scholarship in order to effectively address issues within the public sector. His emphasis is premised upon what he termed intellectual capital that is able to address the needs of a developmental state in South Africa.

Cameron (2009:389) considered a discussion on the state of the discipline in South Africa and focused more on the scholarship of research. What could also be taken into account in this regard is to identify the necessary variables such as demographics, competencies and skills as well as qualifications of those scholars. Such an exercise could assist in charting a way forward and planning for the future of the discipline. According to Wessels (2008:8), a review of South African literature on public administration research has shown that the history of Public Administration schol-

arship is interwoven with the history of the political transformation of the country. This assertion appears to be in view of the discussion on the transformation of South African higher education landscape, since it reveals that the classification of higher education into race before 1994 was central to directing the scholarship activities of the higher education landscape.

Further, Khalo (2006:564-567) and Wessels (2008:7-10) argue that the future of Public Administration scholarship lies in the development of what they call 'the big questions'. This means that deliberations (such as through convening gatherings or engaging in online discussions) and consensus on the scholarship focus in Public Administration in South Africa are essential. In this case, the development and mentoring of emerging scholars could be streamlined since an agreed scholarship agenda would be made known to the scholars in the field. In this regard, quality graduate outputs at the postgraduate level should be aimed at ensuring that future scholars in Public Administration are relevant and vested with the qualities of scholarship. While it may be important to develop programmes (both undergraduate and postgraduate) which empower practitioners, it is equally imperative to accord quality scholarship in the discipline of Public Administration. It is clear that these authors are concerned with the quality of existing Public Administration scholarship to sustain and augment the discipline. This type of discussion is necessary as it provides an opportunity to reflect on and also plan for the future of the discipline.

Clapper (2005:184-185) laments a lack of critical theory in Public Administration scholarship since 1994 and that scholars have not been able to maintain the critical distance necessary for critical theory development and research. This could either mean that before 1994, the scholarship of Public Administration was vibrant and has started to deteriorate since or it could be that Clapper's reference is short of sufficiently engaging the pre-1994 literature to inform whether indeed there has been some vibrancy. Despite this criticism on Clapper's assertions, heed should be taken of his further warning that these uncritical minds of scholars have resulted in the endorsements of public administration agendas as determined by political interpretations and not by the scholarly functions of teaching and learning, research and development as well as community engagement. Indeed, Clapper (2005) is concerned here with the implications and consequences of poor scholarship which pose a threat to the survival of the discipline. This is a necessary scholarly debate which needs further attention to ensure that Public Administration parlance is maintained.

What is embedded in this discussion in general with most scholars is the quality of graduates that should be produced through Public Administration scholarly engagement. Such a concern could provoke the need to professionalise the discipline, as in other disciplines such as law, accounting and finance. In countries such as the United States of America, some courses have been professionalised and are accredited (cf.

Cameron & Milne, 2009). The relevance of the South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM) should be questioned to ensure that, as a professional body, academic members possess pertinent scholarship qualities. For instance, postgraduate training may focus on the development of key characteristics required by scholars both in higher education institutions and outside. Such a consideration could serve to address the future needs of Public Administration scholarship and sustain the prospects of the discipline. Further, this discussion is necessary to provide an understanding of how regulatory bodies (professional bodies) exist to ensure that quality standards are maintained.

The notion of an inevitable postulation in this article suggests that whether a framework of Public Administration scholarship is provided or not, the discipline will continue to develop and evolve. But, as Louw asks in the pages of this edition, evolve into what? This question is a subject for a separate discussion. What should be considered in this discussion is to postulate the type (quality) of scholar that should be produced. This postulative approach in this article is an attempt to argue that the future of Public Administration in South Africa will, among other things, depend on the quality of postgraduate students of today. Some of these postgraduate students who are currently registered or have just completed their master's or doctoral studies require relevant mentoring programmes which are aimed at improving the quality of scholarship for the future of the Public Administration discipline. While an empirical study is necessary to provide figures on the number of graduates per institution as well as employment records of postgraduate students in higher learning institutions which offer Public Administration curricula at the postgraduate level, it is necessary to break the ground in commencing the debate on the framework for quality scholarship. The following proposal for a Public Administration scholarship development framework is briefly advanced:

- Provide formal mentorship programmes for postgraduate students and developing academics. Role models are necessary to the development of academics to engage in issues of scholarship.
- Arrange for the scholarly writing workshops. These workshops should be intended to enhance writing skills in which established academics have an opportunity to mentor and guide developing academics on specific aspects of academic development.
- Establish research groups/teams. The establishment of sustainable research groups within the field of Public Administration could assist the development of emerging scholars since there is skills transference among group members.
- Establish programmes for collaborative teaching and research with other local and international institutions. The utilisation of the exchange programmes within Public Administration schools and departments in South Africa and abroad could assist in the improvement of the scholarship quality.

While these aspects are postulated to enhance the quality of scholarship in the Public Administration discipline, this article serves to further this debate on the need to professionalise the discipline, in order to maintain quality scholarship. A separate study is needed to pay special attention to the actual framework which could lead to a generic model of Public Administration scholarship professionalisation.

## CONCLUSION

In this article the prospects of Public Administration scholarship in South Africa were postulated. A discussion of what constitutes scholarship was advanced. It was argued that the posterity of Public Administration scholarship requires interventions for the positive prospects of the discipline. Such a scholarship would serve as a baseline for generating standards and providing support to emerging scholars. It was further postulated that Public Administration prospects require that the field be professionalised at its highest level of scholarship practices to ensure its sustainability.

Without relevant professional scholarly standards (in terms of teaching and learning, research, and community engagement), the quality of scholarship could inevitably be compromised. Such a compromise could lead to poor scholarship and jeopardise the discipline's prospects. Therefore it could be of interest to scholars in Public Administration to devote their attention to a discussion regarding Public Administration scholarship qualifications and competencies. In other words, a debate regarding a framework for Public Administration scholarship is essential to serve as a guide for the future development of quality scholarship in the discipline.

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# DETERMINING THE ROLE OF ACADEMICS IN TEACHING AND IMPROVING OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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## ABSTRACT

Public administration studies government functions including the implementation of government policies. It prepares public officials for careers in the public sector. As it is diverse in scope, it aims at advancing management and policies so that the government can function effectively. To better perform their functions, values such as equality, fraternity and democracy need to be inculcated in public officials. It is important to note that Higher Education Institutions need to intervene in training public officials in order to promote human development. This, in turn, poses an interesting paradox for Public Administration. Concerns such as the relevancy of public administration teaching and learning remain a huge challenge. Therefore this article examines the role of academics in improving public administration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This will be done by exploring the current challenges that public administration faces in the South African context. This article proposes the concept *democratic curriculum* as a solution to public administration challenges. To better explore this concept, this article further defines democracy and curriculum.

## INTRODUCTION

The debate on the relevancy and what should be included in a curriculum is a continuous one. Current developments and political factors affect public administration and therefore have an impact on the teaching of Public Administration. Academics have conflicting views with regard to their role in teaching and learning. This requires academics to keep abreast of latest developments in their field. In the 1980s Cloete, Gildenhuys and Thornhill assessed the Public Administration curriculum. Maserumule (2005) argued that the Public Administration and Management curriculum at technikons and universities is the same and the teaching approach follows a traditional paradigm. Cameron and Milne (2009) concluded that the Mount Grace 1 had little impact on Public Administration and Management teaching, learning and research. Sindane (2011) laments the dearth of highly qualified black academics. This article aims at determining the role of academics in teaching to improve

Public Administration. Based on these points, this article discusses the current challenges that are faced by academics and the rethinking of the *democratic curriculum*. This article will conclude with a way forward.

## **BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In order to understand the importance of assessing or evaluating the Public Administration curriculum, it is essential to provide a brief history on this subject in South Africa. Coetzee (in Gildenhuis, 1987:145) confirms that the establishment of Public Administration as a discipline in South Africa became prominent in the 1960s with Afrikaans as the medium that universities used. Books by Cloete, the South African Institute of Public Administration and the *South African Journal of Public Administration* contributed a great deal of scholarly information in this regard. Cloete is regarded as a co-founder of Public Administration in South Africa. Cloete (in Gildenhuis, 1987:93) provides the history of the establishment of teaching and training in South African Public Administration departments.

Cloete highlights that in 1959 a four-year diploma course (National Diploma in State Finance) was offered to train officers in the public service. In 1965 a diploma course in Public Administration came to the fore. This diploma was offered by the Pretoria Technical College and students had to pass Public Administration 1, 2 and 3. These diplomas were offered by all South African technikons in 1987. Cloete further explains that teaching in Public Administration at university level was first provided by the Transvaal University College. This college was part of the University of South Africa until it became the University of Pretoria in 1930. Students were expected to write exams on subjects for the Bachelor of Economics (Public Administration) degree. Public Administration courses were then offered in Political Science departments. In 1962 the Orange Free State University created its own Public Administration department. The Department of Public Administration in the University of Pretoria was created in 1964. Cloete confirms that in 1987, twelve South African universities had Public Administration departments separate from Political Science. In 1965, the University of Pretoria was the first institution to give students who did not study public administration an opportunity to obtain a master's degree in Public Administration. It is evident that the University of Pretoria was making much progress because in 1965 they offered a Diploma in Advanced Public Administration. The University of Zululand had an Institute for Public Service Training. It offered qualifications such as a Diploma in Public Administration, a Diploma in Local Government and Administration, a Diploma in State Financing and Auditing and a Diploma in State Finance and Auditing. These increasing numbers of qualifications and student numbers caused some challenges.

Cloete asserts that in other instances inexperienced lecturers with limited knowledge were appointed, and the prerequisite of admitting students indiscriminately resulted in accepting students who were not doing administrative work. An inadequate supply of literature suitable for South African students caused some challenges (in Gildenhuis, 1987:90-99). Cloete failed to propose an intervention that could be used to train those lecturers. Freysen (in Gildenhuis, 1987:164) proposed that Public Administration needs to have more than one paradigm to facilitate teaching and research. Thornhill (in Gildenhuis, 1987:273) admits that in other instances students enter the labour market with limited knowledge and lack of skills in using the tools of the trade; many full time students are expected to perform challenging tasks which they cannot do and the state of flux that the public service is encountering hinders the part of relevancy in teaching. Therefore, an urgent need for more relevant, appropriate and effective capacity building for service delivery in South Africa is essential. This was already identified nearly two decades ago in the Mount Grace 1 resolutions, which stated that the current theory, teaching and learning of Public Administration in South Africa is in crisis. This crisis includes, among others, that:

- Public Administration is too descriptive and lacks sufficient analytical, explanatory and predictive techniques
- It ignores other dimensions of and approaches to government
- It suffers from racial and gender imbalances historically associated with apartheid.

Therefore the current theory of Public Administration is outdated for a developing state such as South Africa. Cameron (2009) rightly concluded in the recent assessment that there is little evidence of positive impact from the Mount Grace 1 processes on Public Administration and Management teaching, learning and research outputs and outcomes in South Africa. Marais (in Maserumule, 2005) observes that most learning material and books in the field of Public Administration written and developed since 1967 gyated around Cloete's generic administrative processes/functions. This is so because until recently, as Marais (in Maserumule, 2005) observes, "most professors/lecturers in Public Administration at the universities and technikons were former students of Cloete and therefore his teaching had an unbelievably long lived influence on them". Sindane (2011:11) is of the opinion that there has also been a striking dearth of highly qualified black academics at universities. For example, the former Vista University which had the largest number of black academics in Public Administration, hardly had a black academic at doctoral level or professional level by the year 2000. According to Sindane the latter statement suggests that highly qualified whites from the apartheid regime have spearheaded and referred the transformation of the discipline. Based on the arguments above, a research question can then be asked: what is the role of academics in teaching Public Administration in the 21st century? This article examines the role of academics in teaching and improving public administration.

## ROLE OF ACADEMICS IN TEACHING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Weigert (1998:4) states that institutions of higher education have multiple purposes, which are teaching, research and service. Academics cannot only focus on research, teaching and learning and community engagement. Eggins (undated:1) identifies the various aspects relating to the academic profession including growth in student numbers, time, workload, contracts, specialisation, teaching/research nexus, transformation of teaching and learning, the wide range of roles and boundaries blurring and the enhancement of academic practice. McKernan (2008:141) shares a similar stance that curriculum designers are experiencing challenges with regard to work load and that they do not have time for research and curriculum development. Wessels (2011:77) acknowledges that the increase in student numbers at Unisa has resulted in heavier workloads and academics opting for assessment methods that are not always ideal.

Apart from what these authors have identified, academics are involved in consulting and trying to establish themselves at societal level. Wamsley (1996:358) argues that the field of public administration suffers from false consciousness. This false consciousness is distinguished in two dimensions: firstly, academics and practitioners lack consciousness of their actual place in the societal order. Secondly, academics lack consciousness of their immersion in normative and philosophical questions and their relevance. Wamsley stresses the importance of reaching a common normative grounding. This can be made possible by dismissing our false consciousness. Nabatchi, Goerdel and Peffer (2011:30) argue that the field fails to recognise itself as “*de facto* arbiter” of political conflict and consequently as a discipline responsible for shaping societal affairs and the field suffers from a bureaucratic pathology that reduces its abilities to do the first”. This article highlights the important role that academics in the 21st century need to play to improve teaching and learning in public administration.

Denhardt (2001:526) posed this crucial question: “what personal commitments do we make as public administration educators?” We can simply answer “so many commitments”. In a South African context, Sindane (2011:16) posed these two questions: Does teaching seek to educate the students with respect to theory, practice or both? What is the Public Administration educator’s role and commitment, and how does s/he perceive this role and commitment – especially in light of academic imperatives of teaching and learning, and research and community service?

Mubangizi and Theron (2011:46) recommend that there should be greater input from the humanities in Public Administration teaching programmes, calling for an

interdisciplinary approach which encourages inputs that inculcate people's skills which are currently lacking in the curricula. The interdisciplinary approach has gained favour in recent years. It is believed that academics can learn from each other while contributing to skills shortages. Academics cannot function in isolation. Public administration practitioners can be encouraged to have greater input in Public Administration curricula at conferences and workshops (Mubangizi *et al.*, 2011). Van Dijk and Thornhill (2011:17) share a similar stance with Mubangizi and Theron by arguing that it is an accepted academic practice to involve practitioners during the curriculum development stages. The involvement of practitioners will assist academics to align theory and practice. This might imply that these practitioners should be involved during the curriculum design stages. Academics need to work together in planning, designing and developing curricula materials. Salmon (2005:206) points out that "research has the potential to inform decision making and policy making at macro national levels, but dialogue between policy makers, researchers and practitioners is starting to have an impact". During curriculum stages, policy makers, researchers and practitioners can have a dialogue and discuss curriculum matters. Holtzhausen and Du Toit (2009:173) propose that all academics need to be involved in curricular development. They believe such an intervention will result in improved curriculum across modules as lecturers would be sensitive to various aspects. This can be practical if academics are willing to take a hike. Moreover, Salmon (2005:202) highlights an important point, that usually teaching and learning is an individual and traditional craft, therefore most academics fail to see beyond their own craft and continually maintain existing and familiar pedagogical approaches which are confined along their disciplinary lines.

O'Neil and Jackson (1983:129) argue that in curriculum development there should be an overt commitment to openness and sharing among committees. It appears that the status and disciplinary responsibility of individuals coupled with subtle interpersonal forces may preclude an effective inception to the resolution of the shape, method of operation and content of the proposed curriculum. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the individual academic to ensure that the curriculum designing committee is representative and includes academics and practitioners. Svanstrom, Lozano-Garcia and Rowe (2008:342) acknowledge that integration of different perspectives into education such as multi-disciplinarity needs to be encouraged. Therefore, the Public Administration and Management curriculum should be interdisciplinary in nature, learning some aspects from other disciplines. This might result into a holistic and balanced perspective. Davies and Devlin (2007:5-6) are of the opinion that multi-disciplinarity recognises that there are many discrete and autonomous disciplines. Each individual or academic can contribute from her/his perspective. For example, students cannot study public finance in a theoretical vacuum; academics from public administration and management can collaborate with academics from financial management or accounting to develop a curriculum that will enhance stu-

dents' skills. It is necessary for academics to acknowledge the fact that there is co-existence in a number of disciplines.

What implications does multi-disciplinarity have for teaching and learning? Students will be better equipped for challenging tasks in the public service. If a student is grounded in only one discipline, it will be difficult to be open-minded and see things from different perspectives. To some extent students will be enabled to be change agents to shift policies, practices and societal norms. Svanstrom, Lorenzo-Garcia and Rowe (2008:342) argue that "education should therefore give a depth in the disciplinary knowledge while also providing opportunities for interdisciplinary thinking and action". However, Ashford (2010:9) sees multi-disciplinary research and teaching as many disciplines brought together with several disciplinary focuses and dealing with more than one traditional concern. Ashford argues that it is possible to have one academic who has been trained in many disciplines (Ashford, 2010).

Greater input from Public Administration academics with regard to government research, panel discussions, committees and public hearings is essential. How often do academics attend public hearings? Due to their workload it is difficult for academics to participate in those forums. Research groups can be formed with practitioners whereby ground-breaking research can be produced. Eggins (undated:6) states that projects can be established to consider particular problems and a team of researchers can be formed. Teams can be interdisciplinary and the knowledge drawn can be from diverse sources.

## **RE-THINKING DEMOCRATIC CURRICULUM**

Holtzhausen and Du Toit (2009:169) define curriculum as "a plan for the process of learning and teaching and can be seen as a process for determining learning outcomes and the learning content". This will make provision for assessment criteria and methods of facilitating learning and the technology that will be used. McKernan (2008:13) defines curriculum as an ideal in the form of a proposal that it represents some worthwhile plan for leading people out of ignorance and thereby resulting in further growth through education. McKernan strongly believes that curriculum is not exclusively theoretical but is mainly practical and should involve the actions of humans. Apart from the definitions provided, various factors are taken into consideration during the curriculum development stages, and these factors include the concerns and priorities of society at a particular time, the social and cultural preoccupations of the particular student being taught (Quicke, 1999:16). McKernan (2008:31) stipulates that political, economic, social, legal and technological change in cultures have caused the curriculum to be modified, adapted and radically altered in educational institutions. The Higher Education and Training Department also requires certain standards from Higher Education Institutions. Council bodies such as the Coun-

cil on Higher Education (CHE) ensure that quality is promoted by Higher Education Institutions. Flowing from these policy guidelines, it is recommended that academics consider designing and developing a democratic curriculum.

When assessing Public Administration curricula in selected Higher Education Institutions, Mubangizi and Theron (2011:43) reached a conclusion that in some institutions the Bachelor of Public Administration focuses on the technical while other institutions encourage the democratic curricula. When defining democratic curriculum, Mubangizi and Theron believe that it emphasises localism, public control and accountability. This implies that participation and collective decision making must be encouraged and promoted. Henderson and Kesson (2004:13) stipulate that democracy will mean embracing diverse perspectives. This implies that the curriculum workers “walk their moral talk during the judgment process”. Henderson and Kesson (2008:13) highlight that it is important to be a democratic curriculum leader. The democratic curriculum leader seeks ways to introduce and support teaching for authentic inquiry learning, to introduce and support teacher-led professional development and to redesign educational programmes to ensure that they support teaching for authentic inquiry learning and professional development.

Drenoyianni (2006:407) affirms that democratic education implies using a participatory approach in curriculum development and building curricula upon the needs, social realities, interests, concerns and aspirations of the school and community at large. We strongly believe that a democratic curriculum is more relevant in the South African context. Considering the challenges that public administration faces, there is an urgent need to implement the democratic curriculum. Nabatchi, Goerdel and Peffer (2011:29) once posed a question, “does public administration have the governance capacity to address effectively the seemingly insurmountable problems that characterise dark times?” They believe that the answer to this question is a no. Maserumule (2005:20) stipulates that the Public Management curriculum that was introduced in 2000 aimed at training students to learn skills in a theoretical vacuum. He criticises the use of study manuals because they are not peer reviewed. Mubangizi and Theron (2011) respond to this by proposing the use of a democratic curriculum.

## **WHAT IS DEMOCRATIC CURRICULUM?**

The first common ground between curriculum and democracy is that they are both concerned about the shape of society, and this is an ideological concern. Curriculum, democracy and politics include theories and ideology. Every curriculum-making process or political theory must adhere to the rules of procedure dictated by respective underlying ideologies. In the pages of this edition Maserumule explains the position of an ideology in the continuum of knowledge. A curriculum can be explained as



a programme of studies which is often referred to as 'curriculum praxis' (Goodlad, Sironnik & Overman, 1979). Curriculum praxis exists wherever there is education, formal or informal, taking place. Transmission of knowledge for continuity and survival from the old to the young, whether in humans or animals, has always taken place and followed such definite schedules (Ocheng, undated: 62).

Secondly, there is curriculum as a field of study which is a reference to the curriculum-building activity itself, referred to as curriculum praxeology. Curriculum praxeology emerged in the 19th century from an attempt to study education and to explore educational problems in their own right and not as a philosophical problem or psychological or sociological phenomena. Developments in the constituency of praxeology have driven most of the progress in education since the 19th century, including drawing a close link between curriculum and democracy. Democracy here, to use the definition given by Dewey (1936), the champion of democracy in education, is the order of society in which all people can develop their individual freedom by collectively participating in defining their common good. To support Dewey's view (Becker & Raveloson 2008:4) explain '*democracy*' as a term that comes from Greek and is made up of two other words *demos* = people and *kratein* = to govern, to rule. "Democracy" can then be literally translated by the following terms: *government of the people* or *government of the majority*. Democracy, as a state form, is to be distinguished from monarchy, aristocracy and dictatorship. One may have already heard about the most common definition of democracy as proposed by Abraham Lincoln: '*the government of the people, by the people and for the people*'. To put it another way one can say that a government comes from the people; it is exercised by the people, and for the purpose of the people's own interests.

After definitions of both democracy and curriculum, it can then be deduced that a democratic curriculum is a curriculum that is developed, formulated and designed by the curriculum developers, practitioners and community representatives in order to inform education that is relevant to the current affairs of the country and can benchmark internationally. To support this definition a question was asked: how does democracy relate to curriculum or teaching? Henderson and Kesson (1999:73) provide an answer by acknowledging three factors which are: teaching in a democratic workplace, the creation of democratic classrooms, and teaching for democratic citizenship, which imply building a democratic society. They point out an interesting point that democracy is a value system, a method of associating with one another, a way of confronting problems together and a means of validating human dignity. The perception today about the concept democratic curriculum is that a curriculum in a democratic society always reflects the definition of democracy, which that society has accepted as legitimate and true. Similarly, attempts to challenge the validity and legitimacy of a society's dominant definition of democracy always find expression in

attempts to challenge the form and content of the society's curriculum. Any attempt to probe the future relationship between democracy and the curriculum must be partially constituted by an attempt to understand its history (Carr, 1998:323).

In a democratic society, morality is subject to clear rules derived from the concept of democracy itself. Those rules essentially include respect for the freedom of every individual within society, equality of treatment for all and adequate scope for participation in the government of society. Several things of consequence to curriculum planning follow from this, especially in Public Administration development. First, Public Administration academics must make adequate provision for moral development, as a matter of consequence of the democratic context for which the curriculum planning and provision is being undertaken. This poses an important question: how can Public Administration academics promote a democratic curriculum?

Collaboration between Higher Education Institutions: Van Dijk and Thornhill (2011:16) acknowledge that it is impossible to create a uniform undergraduate curriculum due to the absence of a Public Administration and Management profession. At their own discretion, Higher Education Institutions decide on what to include in their undergraduate curriculum. Kettunen (2005:36) states "if the evaluators come from the same degree programme, the strength of the evaluation resides in the evaluation of the learning objectives and educational content. If evaluators come from other subject areas, degree programmes, fields of education or institutions, the strength of the evaluation is found in the collaboration among administrative units."

Discussion forums aimed at academics: Beane (1997:12) refers to the following three concepts: multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary. Beane argues that with the multi-disciplinary approach, various projects from different disciplines have been used and knowledge has been shared to develop appropriate curricula. For example in Africa, Open Electronic Resources have been established to ensure that academics share their resources. How many academics are aware of Open Electronic Resources? Kettunen (2010:35) proposes the importance of a benchmarking approach. Higher Education Institutions can consider creating a conducive atmosphere to promote communication within the institution, aiming at enhancing quality.

Inviting practitioners as guest lecturers: Hendriks (2011:71) believes that practitioners can add value in teaching and learning. He argues that practitioners can contextualise and enlighten case studies to complement or substitute normal deductive analytical approaches. Hendriks (2011:72) further highlights that in most instances practitioners are employed to fill vacant posts in Higher Education Institutions. Therefore he recommends that there is an urgent need for practitioners to become fully integrated into the academic community.

## WAY FORWARD

Over the past twenty years or so the study of Public Administration and Management has provided a scholarly focus entirely on technological development at an international level. As a result there was an exclusion of the psychological and philosophical dimensions of the field (Murray 1997:4). According to Ventriss (1991:4-13), public administration and management as a practice, was conceived as an antidote to political corruption. Thus its educational emphasis has been on preparing students for performing the functional tasks that assure the principle of economy and efficiency. It is generally believed that through rational means, corrupting influences and practices can be curbed and the legitimate ends of government fulfilled. Schools of Public Administration and Management concentrate on preparing students in the technical aspects of the profession. Murray (1997) argues that they do a good job of preparing students on how “to do public service” but not on how “to be public servants”. It is important to guard against complacency, especially when Schools of Public Administration and Management are expected to establish and provide programmes that are relevant to the challenges of the 21st century (Hanyane, 2005:41). This issue is important in South African universities especially in the wake of the transformation of higher education. Public Administration and Management programming should therefore be:

- non-anecdotal
- conducted systematically and periodically
- inclusive of all students and stakeholders
- representative.

Teaching public administration should do with what is wrong with practitioners as it does with what is wrong with scholars. Academics must thus talk and listen to the stories of practitioners and students of the discipline and give sense and perspective regarding organisational and academic lives, respectively (Kuye, 2002:10-11). Scholarship in the discipline must take the form of a cooperative scheme of Public Administration and Management studies with multi-tracking mechanisms. It must be accepted that not all students will fit into the stream of programming but, at the very least, they will be empowered with the vital, practical tools needed to survive in the workplace of the 21st century. Using skills acquisition and case study methods are probably the way to go.

## CONCLUSION

The debate on the relevancy of and what should be included in a curriculum is a continuous one. This article provided a brief history on Public Administration as a discipline in South Africa. It has been identified that public administration practitioners can be encouraged to have greater input in Public Administration curricula at

conferences and workshops. Moreover, the authors examined the concept 'democratic curriculum' and have pointed out an interesting factor that in order to teach Public Administration effectively and for the role of academics to be meaningful, 'democratic curriculum' should be seen as a value system, a method of associating with one another, a way of confronting problems together and a means of validating human dignity.

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# THEORISING A DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTAL STATE: ISSUES OF PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY PLANNING AND VIO- LENT PROTESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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## ABSTRACT

South Africa's impoverished settlements have in recent years been increasingly beset by violent protests that are, allegedly, about service delivery. However, the majority of these violent protests have paradoxically occurred exclusively in impoverished settlements where some services were delivered, disrupting the underlying infrastructure and existing services. Thus, the root causes of these violent protests remain contested, with views ranging from those that accept them as services-based to those portraying them as politically-motivated. This article analyses the service delivery planning approaches to distil the implications of the decisions as to which services are delivered or not delivered, and to theoretically situate the reasons underlying South Africa's violent "alleged" service delivery protests. It demonstrates that South Africa has adopted a regulatory planning approach which emphasises the attainment of "the optimal allocation of resources between all of the competing needs or uses within a society", leading therefore to the delivery of "impure public goods" for poor communities. The article argues that the advocacy planning approach is more suited to the impoverished settlements because it attempts to mobilise and channel resources to new or neglected uses, achieving in the process the legitimisation of new social objectives or a major re-alignment of existing objectives. Whereas the regulatory approach enforces reliance on private markets, the advocacy approach instigates for "the planner (who) represents the interests of a particular social group", with allegiances and responsibility solely dedicated to its needs.

The article asserts that the advocacy planning approach would ensure that service delivery for impoverished settlements allows for equal access for all in terms of quality and quantity in accordance with four fundamental principles of 'joint-supply', 'non-rivalness', 'non-excludability' and 'non-rejectability'. The article concludes that South Africa's service delivery planning approach lacks a 'public entrepreneur' who would ensure that state agencies commit infrastructure expenditure to underpin the delivery of services as 'pure public goods'. Theoretically, the article claims that the decisions as to which services are delivered or not delivered are at the core of the reasons for the recent violent protests.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Developmental states, by their definition, lead development (Edigheji, 2010). A democratic South Africa's rhetoric of establishing a developmental state, people-centredness and people-driven development entails the application of democratic ideals and principles, especially on a local scale (Edigheji, 2010; Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010). Given the imperative to redress colonialism and apartheid legacies, South Africa needed "national strategic planning to ensure policy coherence and co-ordination and the effective allocation of resources" in order to meet its developmental needs (Edigheji, 2010:24). But democratic governments have since at least 1996 faced a tenuous balancing act involving "the reinforcement of dynamics between basic needs provision, economic growth, rigorous civil society participation and initiative, and democratised state serving the needs of all citizens" (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:561). Hence, the developmental state debate about South Africa has insisted on its democratisation qualities as well as upholding public participation, political pluralism and acceptance of mutual accountability in development planning (Mitlin, 2004; Bodibe, 2008; Kollapan, 2008; Cebekhulu & Steyn, 2009; Edigheji, 2010).

South Africa's transformation agenda entailed the establishment of a local state that meets the basic needs of all citizens "through more effective service delivery" and "a functional public service" (Tshandu, 2010:47). Simultaneously, the local municipality is a scale of experience that precipitates public decisions and judgments of government performance as "defined by the day-to-day activities of people in the ordinary business of their lives" (Taylor, 1995:285). Maharaj (1996) observes that localism is not an inactive object of the globalisation of the world-economy, because localities are contested arenas of everyday life in capitalist societies and are not merely subservient recipients of products of external social forces. This article adopts, therefore, a relational analysis of the concept of state as a social relation and a site, product as well as agent of social and political struggles and transformation (Oldfield, 2002). The impact, or lack thereof, of service delivery at the municipal level describes the local state of the societal relations of contact, or non-contact, with the state policies, programmes and projects. Therefore, "local state delineates the state's impact upon society, involving all the myriad forms of political and bureaucratic control, including the existing state apparatus with its several parastatal organizations and public corporations that impact upon society" (Picard & Garrity, 1997:66).

The 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was conceived to build citizenship through public participation in decision making of service delivery, but was virtually superseded by the 1996 Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) plan which prioritised fiscal austerity above redistributive justice (Smith, 2004; Tshandu, 2010). With that policy shift, individualism thwarted "the relevance



of conventional social policies and the scope of local solidarity with regard to service delivery” (Jaglin, 2008:1897). As a result, local authorities were increasingly confronted with the public market and private market dilemma, which underscores policy conundrums in balancing “efficiency and equity (who gets what and where) objectives in service delivery” (Smith, 2004:375). The local politics debate about service delivery came to be captivated by efficiency at the expense of equity considerations (Jaglin, 2008). The adoption of regulatory service delivery planning by the local developmental state agencies, especially the local government, showed that the democratic state capitulated and failed to achieve a judicious balance of technical and process-centred planning (Smith, 2004; Jaglin, 2008). Commercialisation of basic services such as water supply, for instance, amid stark historic disparities and inequities, attests to the virtual circumvention of advocacy service delivery planning. Simultaneously, public participation in development planning was increasingly undermined as “class forces in national economies” failed to consolidate decision-making power, while external domination through the powerful global markets attained hegemony (Erwin, 2008).

Unsurprisingly, Mafunisa (2010:486) eloquently notes, “how governments should maintain a balance in their welfare approach by mainly attending to the increasing needs of the poor or by dealing with sophisticated needs of the globalised world remains one of the main challenges of the 21st century”. Globalisation “has profound and complex impacts” that curb “the freedom of action of the nation-state” (Erwin, 2008:28). As per ongoing rhetoric, the African National Congress (ANC) is “oriented towards benefiting the masses” through “collective and state-led actions, rather than depending on existing economic structures and relying solely on market forces” (Erwin, 2008:27). A democratic developmental state should be able to simultaneously foster effective public participation in development planning while negotiating and navigating the harsh complex global processes, which tend to circumscribe “the possibilities for a human-oriented development” (Habib, 2008:43). Given that investors tend to vote with their feet, “states cannot be overly interventionist without losing in a globalising world”; equally, a neo-liberal market agenda alone cannot be sufficient in delivering public services in a starkly unequal society (Jahed & Kimathi, 2007:52). Macro-economic reforms do restore economic stability, but they tend to have detrimental effects on state capacity to provide for basic social and public services (Mukhithi, 2008).

In South Africa where inequalities are glaring, free markets alone would exacerbate the disparities (Jahed & Kimathi, 2007) and inevitably foment popular discontent as well as attendant democratic performances of protests couched in violence. If public participation includes “the determination of levels of service, budget priorities, and the acceptability of physical construction projects”, as well as direction of “government programmes towards community needs, building public support, and

encouraging a sense of cohesiveness within society" (Fox & Meyer, 1996:20, in Mzimakwe, 2010:502), then current violent service protests in South Africa should be authentically analysed within the context of service delivery planning.

Public participation should create "a sense of ownership where citizens are given an opportunity to express their views" (Mzimakwe, 2010:501), thereby nullifying the violent service protests recourse. Given that the integrated development planning is designed to enforce public consultation and involvement in service delivery planning, violent protests should suggest that the decisions that are made about what services to provide may not be reflective of the public needs, aspirations, uncertainties and fears. A democratic South Africa provides for public participation in local government service delivery through a variety of instruments including the 1996 Constitution, the White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery of 1997, *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*, and the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*.

Beyond increasing public confidence in the functionaries' service delivery goals through ongoing interactions, public participation should also serve as a basis for conflict management, educational campaigns about public needs and government priorities for collective welfare of society, rather than the gratification of individualistic interests (Mzimakwe, 2010:507). If the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) provide for public participation that promotes democracy, citizenship, empowerment and normative dialogue in service delivery planning, why would South Africa's impoverished informal settlement public choose to resort to violent service protests, denying their local public functionaries and politicians space for political deliberations?

The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA, 2009:18) locates the failure of local government service delivery in "political parties that undermine the integrity and functioning of municipal councils through intra- and inter-party conflicts and inappropriate interference in councils and administration". The National Spatial Development Perspective emphasises that "all government actions involve choices" which can potentially become "ad hoc and misdirected" (Republic of South Africa, 2006: 11). Given South Africa's glaring inequalities, as well as the hegemony of free market forces (Jahed & Kimathi, 2007), the choices of which services to deliver in the impoverished settlements is all the more complex, necessitating public participation and political deliberations. Theoretically, authentic analysis of the violent service delivery protests, amid globally acclaimed democratic constitutional norms and principles of public participation provided for in South Africa, should involve critical examination of the local service delivery planning. Indeed, South Africa's governance of service delivery planning "symbolises a more sophisti-

cated form of neoliberalism by virtue of how the state restructures in order to adhere to a private market logic in the provision of public services”, which is “particularly dangerous in a society that is replete with inequalities and has a young track record in the democratisation of service delivery” (Smith, 2004:382). The violent service delivery protests raise questions of public accountability because public participation in the integrated development planning is designed to cultivate public accountability that would thwart the thirst for violence in service delivery protests by creating “a sense of ownership where citizens are given an opportunity to express their views” (Mzimakwe, 2010:501). For this reason, violent protests should suggest that the decisions that are made about what services to provide may not be reflective of public needs, aspirations, uncertainties and fears.

This article examines the concept of a developmental state’s service delivery planning to theoretically situate the reasons underlying South Africa’s violent service delivery protests. It demonstrates that South Africa’s regulatory service delivery planning, which emphasises the attainment of the optimal allocation of resources between all of the competing needs or uses within a society, leads to the delivery of pure private market, rather than pure public, goods. This hegemonic planning approach underwrites IDPs allowing service delivery planning to conveniently circumvent popular public needs, aspirations, uncertainties and fears, thereby creating apathy, frustration and anger among impoverished communities who cannot afford the cost of consumption.

Inevitably, IDPs have sought to provide public services through private markets as pure private goods that are divisible and exclusive. Driven by professional technocratic engineers who strive for efficiency above equity and cost-recovery for shareholders’ profit over political redistribution and popular dialogue, IDP service delivery planning has alienated the public by closing down the scope for political deliberations and thwarting the potential for joint-supply, non-rivalness, non-excludability and non-rejectability. Conversely, advocacy service delivery planning, which is suited to impoverished settlement communities, provides for mobilisation and channeling of resources to new or neglected uses, achieving in the process the legitimisation of new social objectives or a major re-alignment of existing objectives. It instigates for the planner who represents the interests of poor social groups, with allegiances and responsibility solely dedicated to their needs, aspirations, uncertainties and fears. The IDP regulatory service delivery planning lacks such a public entrepreneur planner and is, therefore, responsible for exacerbating the dangerous divisions in South Africa’s social fabric, eroding public accountability and fomenting the public apathy, frustration and anger necessary for violent protestations.

## DEVELOPMENTAL STATE'S SERVICE DELIVERY PLANNING

Conceptions of the developmental state are varied, ranging from the neo-classical, neo-liberal minimalist to the neo-Keynesian orthodoxy (Jahed & Kimathi, 2007). The ANC's June 2007 Policy Conference and December 2007 National Conference held an economic interventionism perspective of "a powerful" developmental state (Turok, 2007; Bodibe, 2008; Erwin, 2008; Habib, 2008). Whereas labour prefers to define it as the state that "plays an active role in the development process to transform the economy from low- to high-value adding economic activities" (Bodibe, 2008:35-36), the ANC-led government conceives it as the state "that can make a decisive structural transformation and intervention within a political economy, and then sustain those changes over time and against powerful counter-forces in the global economy" (Erwin, 2008:30). A developmental state is expected to redefine the process of accumulation within the national economy (Erwin, 2008:30) and to be "internally coherent and purposive" and to be "embedded in social ties either with capital or labour/social movements" (Bodibe, 2008:36). Bodibe (2008:36) concurs that such a state's "embedded autonomy" would translate into "strong ties and linkages between state and other actors that are continuously evolving and renegotiated". But Habib (2008:43) presents a rather strong view of a developmental state's key trademark as "its ability to direct the behaviour of private investment". Overall, these conceptualisations of a developmental state "assume a mixed economy, a strong state, and state interventionism in the economy" (Turok, 2008:9), ignoring public participation and suggesting therefore that such a powerful economic interventionist state would be expected to delivery public services to a passive citizenry. This observation necessitates the conceptualisation of a developmental state away from a power hungry state by democratising it.

The key to a developmental state, far from a power hungry state, is in building partnerships that consolidate adequate power through which the pervasive global economic system could be transformed. But Erwin's (2008) view that such functions require the state to command "massive resources" reverts to the notion of a powerful interventionist state. In most of Africa, this model of a powerful developmental state has degenerated into autocratic regimes and state agencies. The characterisation of a developmental state for South Africa has to deliberately portray it as a development facilitator and partner. Ideally, it has to perform four tasks: facilitate development by providing social and economic investment capital; promote productive partnerships among development actors; ensure coherence, integration, order, legality and stability by establishing adequately clear legislative and regulatory frameworks; and create a conducive local development environment wherein the poor are adequately supported and capacitated to take and productively make use of the opportunities available, and in order that they are able to effectively deal with the threats they face in their everyday lives. Such a developmental state would accept that the efforts of

the citizenry have to be met with sympathetic state support, rather than being made to wait on the unreliable market forces. Public participation is therefore central to a democratic developmental state, which would hold that delivery of public services is contingent upon the full exercise of citizenship.

According to Habib (2008:43), “one of the trademarks of the developmental state is its ability to direct the behaviour of private investment”. The primary objective of a democratic developmental state should be to foster societal development through public participation in an “internally coherent and purposive” manner (Bodibe, 2008:36). Given its simultaneous qualities of embeddedness with both capital and/or social movements, as well as insulation, a developmental state should be able to assume development planning responsibilities and to drive public service delivery, purposefully (Jahed & Kimathi, 2007; Bodibe, 2008; Mukhithi, 2008). A democratic developmental state should ably guide “capital towards new activities while maintaining broad-based support, including from workers” (Makgetla, 2007:31). It has the ability to ensure public participation in development planning, thereby emphasising the inseparability and mutual constitutive nature of the economic and political processes (Mukhithi, 2008). Whereas it may not be necessary to be excessively conscious whether a state is developmental or otherwise, “states have a critical role to play in fostering development” (Jahed & Kimathi, 2007:52), especially in circumstances such as those in South Africa where over 1.2 million households live in about 2 700 informal settlements. The democratic developmental state’s strategic capacity “is in its ability to lead in the definition of a common national agenda, to mobilise all of society to take part in the implementation of this agenda and to direct the country’s resources – including those of the state and private and social capital – towards this shared programme” (Mukhithi, 2008:45). Such a state embodies public participation, drawing on “participatory and integrated planning processes to undertake pro-poor, redistributive and proactive interventions” (Levin, 2008:29) that incalcate a sense of public accountability.

International experience shows that “the provision and distribution of infrastructure (too) is not neutral” (Turok, 2007:24), especially because market-driven investments are unreliable and volatile, with a realistic potential to exacerbate inequalities (Erwin, 2008). States too have struggled to direct investments because the attendant decisions are complex and unpredictable while there are “no simple rules to attract investments” (Erwin, 2008:28), especially into informal settlements. However, economic theory acknowledges the decisive nature of the role of the state in development, and a democratic developmental state should therefore “make a decisive structural transformation and intervention within a political economy, and then sustain those changes over time and against powerful counter-forces in the global economy” (Erwin, 2008:29, 30). But a democratic South Africa’s progressive governments have, fully aware of the stark public service delivery backlogs in the impoverished set-

lements, allowed for commodification of basic services (Bodibe, 2008). Contrary to public service policy pronouncements, the ANC-led state has proceeded with “privatisation, downsizing and corporatisation”, redefining the role of the state and alienating poor communities from access to basic public services by disconnecting and undercutting the marginal ones that existed, as well as imposing cost recovery (Bodibe, 2008:39, 40).

Conversely, a developmental state for South Africa should “rectify inequality in the provision of social and economic infrastructure” (Turok, 2007:24). Indeed, “much of the post-1994 service delivery improvement was achieved by the state rather than the market” (Bodibe, 2008:40). Post-1994, South Africa increasingly sought to replace the Weberian state model with an entrepreneurial one (Habib, 2008), thereby abandoning impoverished settlements’ service delivery to corporatisation, commercialisation and private market forces. Whereas post-1994 South Africa became more of a regulatory-welfare state, providing social protection to over 15 million beneficiaries by 2011, the state-society relations have remained “very tenuous, characterised by tension and a tinge of mistrust” (Bodibe, 2008:41). The ANC-led state’s spending on social assistance rose to R62 billion annually in 2007, despite urging against the dangers of welfarism and dependency (Turok, 2007). This state orientation has engendered a societal dependency syndrome, service delivery apathy, frustration, anger and violence. Lately, there has been a concerted effort to shift towards a developmental state model that is democratic, especially at the local level. However, the democratic developmental state quality is absent in South Africa’s IDP local developmental state, thus allowing for so much public disaffection, amid monumental social and economic infrastructure investments. Even if the violent protests were fomented by political opportunism, a democratic local developmental state would have failed to engender public accountability among the majority (Mukhithi, 2008).

## **STATE AGENCIES: PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

In a democratic South Africa alternative service delivery models for meeting constitutional mandates have increasingly involved corporatisation, commercialisation and privatisation of public service delivery, which has demonstrably failed in informal settlements (McDonald & Pape, 2002; Budds & McGranahan, 2003; Smith, 2004; Spalding-Fecher, 2005; Jaglin, 2008). The transformation agenda of meeting basic needs of all citizens through effective service delivery and a functional public service (Tshandu, 2010) acknowledges that societal inequalities “will not be addressed through the operation of the market” (Levin, 2008:28). South Africa has established legislation in order to put into pragmatic effect the constitutional mandate of service delivery (Smith, 2004), including “high-quality education and health care, adequate housing, water, sanitation, energy and transport” (National Planning Commission,

2011:5). Local government is conceived as the primary state agency driver for decentralisation and fast tracking service (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010).

The local government service delivery mandate is provided for and supported through a variety of instruments including the Constitution, the White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery of 1997, the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act* 117 of 1998, and the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act* 32 of 2000. Chapter 2 of the Local Government Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations of 2001 provides for integrated development planning (Republic of South Africa, 2001). The Regulations stipulate in Chapter 4 Section 15(1)(a) that “in the absence of an appropriate municipal-wide structure for community participation, a municipality must establish a forum that will enhance community participation in -- (i) the drafting and implementation of the municipality’s integrated development plan” (Republic of South Africa, 2001:17). Local municipalities are mandated to design IDPs and to “create ‘new spaces and places’” for participatory decision-making, policy implementation and service delivery (Bontenbal, 2009:182).

The *Local Government Municipal Systems Act* 32 of 2000 affirms the developmental nature of the municipalities in Chapter 5 by establishing the requirements for integrated development planning (Republic of South Africa, 2000). Four aspects thereof (Sections 23, 25, 26, 29) establish the “centre of power” within which political relevance and legitimacy of social development planning resides. Section 29 (Subsection 1) deals with the process that the municipality must follow in order to (b) “allow for – (i) the local community to be consulted on its development needs and priorities; (ii) the local community to participate in the drafting of the integrated development plan” (Republic of South Africa, 2000:40). Such public participation should increase public confidence in the functionaries’ service delivery goals through ongoing interactions, and serve as a basis for conflict management, educational campaigns about public needs and government priorities for collective welfare of the society (Mzimakwe, 2010). Additionally, the Community Development Worker Programme (CDWP) was implemented in 2004 as a national mandate to fast track service delivery in various local municipalities (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010). It was touted as “a panacea to service delivery backlogs” and a national transformative agenda “pace setter for inclusive endogenous development geared towards sustainable service delivery” (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:561, 562). The CDWs are expected to safeguard the “needs of local communities” and to deepen participatory democracy, especially in public service delivery planning (Levin, 2008:34).

South Africa’s provisions for public participation are benign, but in practice communities have remained passive because the state reinvented itself and the imperatives of fiscal discipline and the private markets (Bodibe, 2008; Tshandu, 2010). Mzi-

makwe (2010:513) describes the informal settlement communities in South Africa as “a living example of passive consumers of the services”. Impoverished communities have not engaged their rightful democratic spaces in local government service delivery planning, leading to unmanageable conflicts and violent protests (Van der Waldt, 2007:28; Mzimakwe, 2010:514). If IDP service delivery planning promotes performance of citizenship and ongoing dialogue, why would so many in South Africa choose to resort to violent service protests that thwart scope for political deliberations and mutual social learning? Public participation should generate mutual communication, information and an education exchange process, as well as public accountability, wherein the public and their functionaries learn on an ongoing basis because public needs and aspirations as well as local government challenges and priorities are not fixed targets (Nygaard, Berry & Gibb, 2008; Mzimakwe, 2010). According to Nygaard *et al.* (2008:17-18), “ownership of a commodity is a function of the extent and form of control over various attributes”. South Africa’s comprehensive IDP blueprints are, however, devised by professionals and erroneously accepted by relevant institutions as reflective of “consensus of the majority on how to solve social problems” (Mzimakwe, 2010:513). If through participation “the public are able to satisfy their needs, and even their demands, by observing the rules of the game of democracy, then there is all the more reason to support the game, and indeed nurture it” (King, 2002, in Mzimakwe, 2010:513). Recent violent protests should therefore raise concerns about the IDP service delivery planning cultivation of public accountability, because in most instances existing public services are destroyed and/or disrupted. The qualities of inclusivity and integration are key pillars that inculcate public accountability. These violent protests assert, therefore, the need for normative, participatory service delivery planning, theoretical transcendence and cultural pluralism. The violence of protests demonstrates that IDP planning failed to impose the state’s “will on the populace” or “to mobilise society behind its programmes” (Bodibe, 2008:41) because post-1994 public investments in social and economic infrastructure have been massive.

The ANC-led state has “broadened access to public and private services for many citizens” (National Planning Commission, 2011:12). The National Planning Commission Report finds that “development is being held back by too little investment in new infrastructure, and a failure to maintain existing infrastructure” (National Planning Commission, 2011:27). It observes that South Africa has “under-invested in infrastructure for over a generation”, where the Net Capital Formation as percentage of GDP declined from about 18% in 1980 to 6% in 2010, whereas the Gross Fixed Capital Formation by the public sector as percentage of GDP dropped from about 15% in 1975 to around 7% in 2010, reaching lows of 4% in 2000 and 8.6% in 2009 (Gordhan, 2011).



Under the hegemony of regulatory service delivery planning, these public under-investments imply virtual stagnation of service delivery, disinvestment and discontinuation for the impoverished settlements. Consequently, service delivery in impoverished settlements has been synonymous with dilapidated skeletons of dysfunctional ghost infrastructure amenities. The National Planning Commission Report argues that “poor social services and ineffective policing make communities feel even more powerless”, causing in the process social fragmentation that involves crime and violence (National Planning Commission, 2011:34). As already pointed out above, Mzimakwe (2010:513) describes the impoverished informal settlement communities in South Africa as “a living example of passive consumers of the services”. These poor communities have not engaged their rightful democratic spaces in local government service delivery planning, precipitating the unmanageable conflicts and violent protests. Inescapably, the public sector now requires frequent community interactions in order to boost public service delivery (National Planning Commission, 2011) and to inculcate public accountability.

## **LOCATING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY PLANNING WITHIN MODERN PLANNING**

The ‘goodness’ of the concept of planning has led to uncritical acceptance and practice, assuming the inevitability of public services delivery. Beyond its contestations and crisis, the concept of planning is slippery, elusive and complex (Dale, 2004; Theron, 2008). Being normative, future-oriented and focused on anticipation and reduction of future uncertainty, planning is conceived as “an attempt to reduce the uncertainty about what will happen in the future through the management of change, in order to realize desired objectives” (Theron, 2008:64). Constructions of the typologies of planning are generally based on three criteria: the planning goals, the planning activities and the operational levels of planning activities (Dale, 2004). The planning goals classification distinguishes between wartime planning, anti-cyclical planning and development planning (Dale, 2004). The planning activities classification emphasises the design of the planning exercise, professional positions and role of stakeholder participation in planning to distinguish between socio-economic planning, natural (environmental) planning and engineering planning (Dale, 2004). The operational level of planning activities deals with the spatial scales at which planning is exercised, such as international, national, regional, town, household, family and individual planning, resulting into three operational levels of activity, sectoral and integrated-area planning (Dale, 2004; Theron, 2008). Municipal integrated development planning straddles the three criteria of planning goals, activities and operational levels. Conceptually, the IDP planning should encapsulate an integrated-area, socio-economic, environmental (natural resources) and engineering development planning, pointing to a degree of planning sophistication that no municipality in South Africa would ever achieve.

Broadly, IDP planning should encompass a judicious balance of both technical planning and process-centred planning (Dale, 2004; Theron, 2008). Given that policy analysis and policy planning straddle the two broad categories, while economic planning and physical development planning reside in the former when the roots of interpretative (communicative) planning and collaborative planning are firmly planted in the latter category (Dale, 2004), IDP planning that is biased to any one extreme will frustrate service delivery. With its lip-servicing of public participation, the IDP planning's exclusive bias towards engineering decision making has to be blamed for the current "crisis of planning" across South Africa's municipalities, the failing public accountability and poor service delivery. In the absence of a tenable theoretical interpretation of the recent violence that has disrupted the existing infrastructure and services clouding the perfectly constitutionally acceptable democratic performance of protest, IDP planning that thwarts scope for political deliberations about service delivery decisions amid emotive and stark historical inequalities should be seen as the underlying precipitator. Successful IDP planning should integrate people-centred development and social learning, in order to prioritise the ideal of a holistic approach, public participation and a normative, humanist people-centred, development and service delivery planning (Theron 2008). Amid the seeming irrationality of surviving squalid informal settlement conditions of impoverishment in Balfour, Ficksburg, Ermelo, Zandspruit and so on, IDP planning should address the deep-seated uncertainties and fears of such communities.

Goodall (1987), Smith (2004) and Jaglin (2008) distinguish between the two broad service delivery planning approaches of regulatory and advocacy, respectively aligned to technical planning and process-centred planning. The former seeks to deliver pure private market goods, and the latter hopes to provide for pure public services. Regulatory service delivery planning emphasises the attainment of "the optimal allocation of resources between all of the competing needs or uses within a society", whereas advocacy planning attempts to mobilise and channel resources to new or neglected uses in order to achieve the legitimisation of new social objectives or a major realignment of existing objectives (Goodall, 1987:21, 237-238). Whereas regulatory planning relies on private markets, advocacy planning depends on a public entrepreneur planner representing the interests of a particular social group, specifically the poor, with allegiances and responsibility directed solely to their needs (Goodall, 1987). Theoretically, public services drawn from state agencies' investments made according to advocacy service delivery planning cannot be subdivided for sale to individuals because there is virtually no market for them, but they provide for equal and open access for all members of the public in terms of quality and quantity. The four interrelated principles that underwrite such public service provision are joint-supply, non-rivalness, non-excludability and non-rejectability (Goodall, 1987). Collectively, these principles imply that delivery of services to one person establishes the

possibility of supply of an identical quality and quantity to all other people at no extra cost; that one person's consumption of services should not bear adversarial effects on another's consumption; that delivery of such services to one person entails provision for everybody; and, that once delivered, such services must be fully and equally consumed by all (Goodall, 1987).

South Africa's Municipal and IDP Managers are not public entrepreneur planners, and IDPs do not encapsulate the collectivism entailed in the four principles of advocacy service delivery planning. Whereas "the choice of which goods are provided, and which are not, is primarily a political, even ideological, decision" (Goodall, 1987:383), IDP planning has placed decision making under the technical engineers' control (Smith, 2004; Jaglin, 2008). Public services delivery to impoverished settlements hopes to use private markets to perform delivery of impure public services. These settlements are synonymous with failed skeletons of dysfunctional and unusable service amenities because poor people are unable to afford the cost of consumption. With public services delivered as pure private market goods and the stark inequalities, South Africans do not receive homogenous or equitable quality and quantity consumption, notwithstanding sufficient quantity and quality from the production and supply-side. For these reasons, the public has understandably grown impatient, apathetic, frustrated and angry.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY PROTEST PARADOXES: LEGITIMATE OR "POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED?"**

Letsoalo and Molele (2011) quote a recent secret Cabinet memorandum which warns that poor service delivery posed a security risk for South Africa. Acknowledging that "over the past few years there has been an increase in the number of violent service delivery protests across the country", the secret memorandum notes that "the no delivery and slow delivery of services poses a security risk" for South Africa (Letsoalo & Molele, 2011:2). The violent protests included those that occurred on the heels of the 2011 local government elections, among which were the hotspots of Balfour, Ficksburg, Ermelo and Zandspruit (Sosibo, 2011a). Whereas some commentators argued that the protests were underwritten by ANC infighting and squabbles, including those involving tenders (Deklerk & Sosibo, 2011), the Cabinet memorandum affirms that they were legitimate service delivery contestations (Letsoalo & Molele, 2011).

There may have been undertones of fighting for access to resources, ANC list irregularities or struggles for access to jobs and tenders (Dube & Sole, 2011; Sosibo & Nkosi, 2011). But all such protests were legitimately about lack of or poor service delivery to impoverished settlements, which are evidently arenas of squalid unbearable living conditions. Unfailingly, the protesters carried messages of dissat-

isfaction with water, housing, electricity, sanitation and such other basic public services (Deklerk, 2011; Deklerk & Sosibo, 2011; Dube & Sole, 2011; *E-News Channel*, September 05, 2011; Sosibo, 2011a; Sosibo & Nkosi, 2011). The dehumanising living conditions of these informal settlements where there has been no water supply for years and where residents were still using self-maintained bucket-system toilets (Sosibo, 2011b) cannot be understated. After years of constitutional pronouncements of basic socio-economic needs as human rights, these violent protestations cannot be misunderstood and misread for political opportunism. The majority of protesters were still without a roof, adequate shelter or toilet (Sosibo, 2011b).

These violent protests could have involved both internal ANC squabbles and legitimate struggles of the marginalised (Deklerk & Sosibo, 2011). Alexander is quoted as saying that “the service delivery rebellion is a protest against powerful institutions and individuals whose failings have intensified the suffering of the poor” (Deklerk & Sosibo, 2011:16). Whereas the violent protests may have been precipitated by political motives, the necessary cause should be the poor public service delivery. Paradoxically, existing transportation, electricity supply and education services would have been disrupted as tarred roads were burned with tires, electricity meters destroyed, schools disrupted while library and books were looted and torched. The Ficksburg destruction was estimated at R760 000 (Sosibo, 2011a). The attendant destruction of public amenities and services is unjustifiable, but further informal settlements in Tembisa, Mbombela and Soweto befell the same fate of a paradox of destruction in the name of services (*E-News Channel*, 30 September 2011; *SA FM*, 24 August 2011). These violent paradoxical protests about public services should suggest therefore that IDP planning has failed to foster public accountability.

Pillay observes that “the protests were generally caused by three interlinking factors, namely a lack of basic services, a lack of access to a livelihood and the disjunction between councillors and communities” (Sosibo & Nkosi, 2011:16). Sosibo (2011a:10) concludes that the pre-election protests in Balfour, Ficksburg, Ermelo and Zandspruit were about “the lack of housing and service delivery”. Substantively, Bodibe (2008) points to the popular service delivery revolts as the consequences of social service cost-recovery, privatisation of water, and outsourcing of electricity and commodification of housing. Political opportunism by itself would have failed to precipitate the level of violence and protestations witnessed, if IDP planning had inculcated public accountability. Mzimakwe (2010:516) affirms that “citizens develop a sense of patriotism and purpose when they are allowed to make a contribution to civic affairs”; and, no amount of political engineering would have drawn such violent paradoxical protestations out of the public whose sense of accountability was ingrained through public decision making in the IDP planning. This article blames the violence on the IDP’s regulatory service delivery planning and elevation of technical engineers’ decisions above political deliberations.

It is not by default that President Zuma (2011:3) pronounced that government seeks to fast-track service delivery because many people “are still waiting”. For the first time, the 2011/2012 budget has allocated funds directly to cities for the upgrading of informal settlements (Gordhan, 2011), which are home to 1.2 million households. The Secretary-General of the ANC, Gwede Mantashe, acknowledges that violence occurred exclusively in informal settlements where some services have been delivered. This paradox points to the disjuncture in the relationship between the public and the service delivery planning. The IDP regulatory service delivery planning is partial because it treats the public as recipients of, rather than makers or partners in, service delivery. Consequently, government efforts to deliver public services are weakly perceived and poorly appreciated. The violent service delivery protests demonstrate that violence inevitably encroaches into a perfectly constitutionally provided performance of democratic rights, if the public feel a sense of apathy, frustration and anger.

## CONCLUSION

This article points to a paradox and disjuncture in the relationship between the protesting public and the service delivery planning. It argues that the recent service delivery revolts may have involved political opportunism, but that they are unavoidably the consequences of social service cost-recovery, privatisation of water, outsourcing of electricity and commodification of housing engendered through the regulatory service delivery planning approach underwriting the IDP. The article asserts that political opportunism by itself would have failed to precipitate the level of violence and protestations witnessed, if IDP planning had inculcated public accountability through active performance of citizenship on a local scale. To this extent, the article suggests that post-1994 South Africa’s search for a developmental state has not been adequately democratic, despite the numerous benign legislation provisions for public participation, because the citizenry’s sense of patriotism, purpose and contribution to civic affairs seems to have been increasingly eroded. It therefore blames the violent protests on the IDP’s regulatory service delivery planning and elevation of technical engineers’ decisions above political deliberations. Unsurprisingly, the impoverished informal settlements are presently a world apart from “the laudable standards and benchmarks” (Kollapan, 2008:32) set through public service delivery policies and legislative provisions. Equally, the 1994 democratic spirit of patriotism is increasingly evaporating into thin air as social exclusions of the public from service delivery planning are becoming a norm.

The article affirms that the IDP regulatory planning is shifting the locus of decision making away from the public to the technical engineers, thwarting the scope for political deliberations about redressing the injustices of the past. It shows that regulatory planning does not “respond to public reason” nor provide “substance to democracy”

(Kollapen, 2008:30). The article concludes therefore that IDP service delivery planning does not “give local government back to the people” (Mzimakwe, 2010:504) because its approach lacks a “public entrepreneur” who would ensure that state agencies commit infrastructure expenditure to underpin the delivery of services through public participation. It recommends that IDP service delivery planning should be tempered with a dose of advocacy planning for impoverished informal settlements, which should bridge the divide and tension between the public and the service delivery planning because the decisions of which services are delivered or not delivered are, theoretically, at the core of the reasons for the recent violent protests.

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# DISCOURSE ON THE CONCEPT OF A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE IN SOUTH AFRICA: A DECONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

**D**espite the fact that the commitment to position South Africa as a developmental state has been part of the strategic policy objective for the transformation of the state and governance for some time now, the discourse on the concept is enmeshed in misconceptions. It is distorted and conflated with other concepts. Much of what is bandied about as signifying a developmental state is not consistent with the authoritative scholarship on the conceptualisation of the concept. The discourse largely lacks epistemological insight. It dangerously displays little understanding of the originative historical context of the concept. The paradigm from which the discourse on a developmental state is framed is porous, so much so that the concept is used to mean anything that its users want it to mean. A few examples of misconceptions inherent in the contemporary discourse on theorising South Africa as a developmental state are that it is a ‘democratic state’ – where the contention is that these concepts are synonymous – or is the antithesis of democracy, a ‘service delivery state’ or ‘soviet-type socialism’. Some go even deeper in daring to suggest that all states are developmental. This thinking provides an opportunity for intellectual opportunism stretching the discourse to the extreme by exemplifying the apartheid state as a model of a developmental state. It ventures into the realm of speculation “merely [purporting] to take an interest in objective reality while it really operates outside the object which it pretends to deal with” (Mader, 2011:420) – meaning, for the purpose of this article, contradicting the “sequence of ideas” (Marx, 1975-2005:162) that undergird the conception and evolution of a developmental state.

## INTRODUCTION

**T**his article elaborates on misconceptions used to structure the discourse on the concept of a developmental state in South Africa in order to correct them. It uses authoritative literature to reconstruct the discourse, which, as the article argues, is fraught with misconstruction at various conceptual levels. This exercise is important in that a discourse that evolves from misconceptions of concepts is false. For, as Pauw (1999:11) puts it, concepts are “tools of thinking”. They shape our thoughts. Their correct usage is important to improve our thinking (Maserumule, 2004:77) and

to undergird the 'epistemic imperative' of the discourse, which, according to Babbie and Mouton (2006:642), is concerned with "commitment to truthful knowledge". The article adopts a deconstructive approach. It is therefore not only concerned with criticism of the contemporary discourse on the concept of a developmental state, but is also a critique. As Evans (2005:1048-1049) explains, the distinction between these concepts is that criticism "is confined to arguments about particular theories, philosophies, beliefs, ideologies and regimes" whereas a critique "is more concerned with investigation into ways in which claim to truth are achieved, legitimated, and presented as the authoritative guide for action". In deconstructing the discourse criticism seeks to wither "the claims of one's opponents and competitors by disturbing the social and cognitive networks that surround and strengthen those claims" (Fuchs & Ward, 1994:482). A critique focuses on the analysis of the activity of interpretation. To systematise the logic of the article, attempts are made to first understand the possible reasons for misconceptions in the discourse. This is achieved by analysing the relationship between knowledge (science) and power (politics) and the epistemological implications of their intersection on the meaning of concepts.

## **EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE (SCIENCE) AND POWER (POLITICS) ON THE MEANING OF CONCEPTS**

Does confluence of science and politics necessarily presuppose ideologisation of knowledge to sustain relations of domination for self-serving hegemonic ends? This question is pertinently important to the issue that this part of the article seeks to examine with the intention to make sense of the misconceptions associated with the discourse on the concept of a developmental state in South Africa. It is asked because the liberal logic of the theory of knowledge dichotomises science and politics as antithetical to each other. Its proposition, as embedded in modernism, is that "knowledge can flourish only in the absence of power" (Evans, 2005:1050). Torgerson (1986:34) characterises this line of thinking as "a dream of the abolition of politics" in science. It necessarily presupposes that politics distorts science, and therefore cannot co-exist as the constitutive elements of knowledge. The epistemological disposition of this line of thinking is positivist in character and spawns scientism as the paradigm for the theorisation of knowledge. Its proposition is that "science and only science could find answers to any and all the questions that human beings might ponder" (Bauer, 2004:644).

The epistemological evolution of this paradigmatic disposition is traced to 17th century science (Bauer, 2004:644). It became "prevalent in the Enlightenment of the 18th century and was reasserted with the advent of positivism in the 19th century" (Torgerson, 1986:34). Bauer (2004:644) explains that scientism assumed hegemonic proportions in Western culture "toward the end of the 19th century" through to the

20th century. In the logic of scientism science and politics do not intersect whereas the meanings of concepts are determined through logical positivism as value-free. The science–politics dichotomy as an epistemological paradigm became untenable in the 20th century. As Bauer (2004:644) explains, science failed “to satisfy public curiosity about mysterious phenomena that arouse wide interest”. This exposed the limitation of scientism as an epistemological paradigm and, in the words of Thabo Mbeki (2012:02), brought back “the fundamental issue immanent in all philosophical discourse, from ancient times, to date – what is knowledge?” In examining this question in the context of this article, it could be asked whether it does serve the purpose of reality to imagine knowledge as free of politics. Harold Lasswell (in Torgerson, 1986:33) offers an answer: “it is not easy to imagine a world free of politics”.

Apart from its spiritual dimension, human existence is inherently political, and is as such determined. Largely in the human sciences the objects of scientific inquiry are the subtext of politics. Johnson explains that “theories are shaped by political agenda”. This necessarily means that, as Johnson (2007:96) further explains, “all knowledge is ‘situated’, and will affect others, and will help open or shut down different possible futures”. Science and politics are intertwined as the constitutive elements of knowledge. To think about science and politics in binary terms as mutually exclusive of each other breeds grounds for, as Thomas Huxley (Mbeki, 2012:06) puts it, “irrationally held truth [which] may be more harmful than reasoned errors”. Such epistemological irrationality is characterised by contextless theoretical propositions that lack rigour and relevance to societal realities. It ignores the fact that science does have a “deep and complex relations with politics, the structure of power, and social values” (De Beer, 1999:436). Torgerson (1986:51) writes that science and politics cannot be “conceived as being completely antagonistic”. This is expressed in Babbie and Mouton’s (2006:542) contention that “the real question is not whether knowledge (science) and power (politics) are linked, but more importantly, how they are linked.” In this Mouton appears to have shifted from an earlier position as propagated in the contribution to the book *Reflective Public Administration – Views from the South*, where he strongly refuted a relativist proposition that “knowledge is inherently ideological because all beliefs and ideas are socially determined”(Mouton, 1999:272).

A link between science and politics presupposes that knowledge and power intersect. Such intersection does have profound epistemological implications on the meaning of concepts we use to frame the discourse on various societal aspects. Jansen underscores this in his 1992 book *Knowledge and Power in South Africa*, where he defines knowledge as “codified social discourse which arises to both legitimate domination and mobilise resistance” (Jansen, 1992:06). He further makes a very interesting observation in the same book that “we live in a period which increasingly recognises the reciprocal relationship between knowledge and power” (Jansen, 1992:22). The

intersection of knowledge (science) and power (politics) is no longer an issue for contestation. At issue ought to be the purpose of such intersection, which should be to seek truth as a public good from which society could derive significant benefits for its development (Bauer, 2004).

The article argues that the intersection of science and politics is an epistemological necessity as it largely contextualises knowledge and asserts its relevance to society. Those in the industry of knowledge cannot just, with a sense of aloofness, conveniently retreat to the usual excuse that power (politics) is necessarily inherently bad for knowledge (science) as a justification to pursue scientific endeavours for their own ends, with some justifying the relevance of scholarship by abusing the notion of academic freedom. The value of knowledge lies in its contextual relevance to societal issues – which are ingrained politics. At the launch of Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) in 2011 the Deputy-President of the Republic of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe, offered profoundly instructive words perspicuous about what knowledge should be by reflecting on what it should not be. He said:

In thinking and acting autonomously, in objectively reflecting on social dynamics, it is critical always to pause and test abstract ideas against the reality of life. Shorn of this, theoretical engagement on its own can become an empty vessel, enthralled by its own noise and adding little value to societal endeavours. (Motlanthe 2011:17)

If pursued for public good, power (politics) can influence knowledge (science) to ensure that its “utilitarian ends benefit humanity” (Teffo, 2011:25). This means that power (politics) does not always necessarily corrupt knowledge (science); instead it could enhance its “epistemic imperative” (Mouton, 1999:270). So, the discourse that perpetuates the epistemological praxis of dichotomising science and politics as antithetical to each other is anachronistic in theorising knowledge in the 21st century. The perversion of knowledge is the consequence of ideologisation of science for narrow or self-serving hegemonic ends, not that of intersection between knowledge and power. Politics corrupts knowledge if the intention is to ideologise science to sustain relations of domination for self-serving ends. In this sense, as Babbie and Mouton (2006:545) explain, the function of ideology in science is that of “... wilful and intentional abuse of scientific knowledge in the service of domination”. As implicated in the contention above, what Babbie and Mouton underscore in their perspective is but one definitional aspect of ideology as conceptualised in a negative sense in terms of its functional end.

Ideology can also be of epistemological value “in the social construction of meaning[s]” (Mumby, 1989:291). Gerring underscores this in the article ‘Ideology: A definitional analysis’, where he studies various definitions of ideology to explain its different meanings and what he calls its “semantic promiscuity” (1997:957). Like-

wise, in *The Meaning of ideology in modern Japan* Gluck (2003) demonstrates that, by linking ideology to epistemology, science and politics can confluence to make sense of certain thoughts that undergird the evolution of society. This coheres with Geertz's characterisation of the function of ideologies in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, where he describes them as "maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of collective conscience" (1964/1973:218-219).

The tendency to circumscribe the meaning of ideology to the liberal thesis that confluence of science and politics is necessarily and inherently a *faux pas* trivialises its signification in the continuum of knowledge (Maserumule, 2011:209). Ideology is the function of philosophy whereas philosophy is the theoretical basis of a particular social order (Nkrumah, 1970:66). In this the proposition is that ideology, philosophy and theory are the properties of knowledge. Ideology *per se* is not the antithesis of knowledge. It corrupts knowledge only if it is, as argued above, used for self-serving ends rather than societal development. And this, indeed, often happens. Much of the misconceptions on various societal aspects are attributed to the ideologisation of science, "which occurs when scientific knowledge is mobilised to legitimate and serve the interests of one group in society at the expense of other groups" (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:545). The intersection of knowledge (science) and power (politics) distorts the meaning of concepts that are used to structure the discourse, if the motive is to ideologise science or knowledge for self-serving hegemonic ends. It asserts the contextual relevance of concepts if the intention is to enhance the "epistemic imperative" (Mouton, 1999:270) of the discourse.

Against this background the question is, to what extent and for what purpose does the structure of power, politics and social values set the paradigm for the discourse on the concept of a developmental state in South Africa? Is it for seeking the truth for societal development or ideologisation of science to serve narrow party political and personal interests for self-serving hegemonic ends? If the latter is the case, does it explain the contextual foundation of misconceptions in the discourse on the concept of a developmental state? These questions are asked within the context of the fact that "the interpretation of politics and politics of interpretation are intimately related" with "the outcome of reading always [being] the product of the struggles about the ideological and ethical assumptions and implications of writers and readers" (De Beer 1999:436). In the following part of the article the discourse on the concept of a developmental state in South Africa is deconstructed to provide answers to the questions asked above.

## **DECONSTRUCTING THE DISCOURSE ON THE CONCEPT OF A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE**

As Unger (2001:14) puts it in the book *False Necessity*, "in the vast majority of historical situations" in the making of society through politics, "the struggle over what

[that] society will become in the future” has always been characterised by endless contestations rooted in binary discourse theorising the state along the ideological paradigm of either socialism or capitalism. But, as Hobsbawm (2010:56) observes, “socialism has failed; now capitalism is bankrupt – so what comes next?” In other words the question is, as Sklar (1988) puts it, is there anything beyond capitalism and socialism? These questions are necessarily about how to reinvent the state, which Shiva (2002:19) in *Water wars* explains as “the real issue of our time”. In *Aftermath – a New Global Economic Order*, Calhoun and Derluigi sum it up aptly: “perhaps the most significant choices to be made in the contemporary crisis involve the future of development – not just in the core countries that produced the crisis but also in the rest of the world” (2011:07).

As a young democracy, South Africa is particularly confronted with these questions, which, in political economy terms, are concerned with choices that need to be made following the global economic crisis. The discourse on this aspect is at its peak, which largely gravitates towards confluence of thoughts that the future of development lies in the concept of a developmental state, which is, however, not necessarily a new concept in theorising the state. It predates the global financial crisis, although it is only now that this concept is invoked with much *tempo* as an alternative paradigm in contemplating the future of nation states, especially in the developing countries (Vickers, 2007), after the successful experimentation with it in the East Asian countries, coupled with the global financial meltdown as emanated in the United States (US) and the Euro-crisis in Europe. It is said that these Euro-American crises exposed the limitations of neo-liberalism as the ideological template for the new world order (Mbeki, 2012). Much has been written about the concept of a developmental state in terms of its history, philosophy and theory which undergird its ideological foundation. This article deconstructs the discourse on the concept of a developmental state from a South African perspective. But, perhaps for reasons of contextualisation, it is important to preface this exercise with a reflection on the meaning of discourse as a unit of analysis in this article, its function, and the source of its influence.

## Meaning of discourse – its function and source of influence

In *African Renaissance – the New Struggle* Magubane invokes the Foucauldian phraseology in contextualising the importance of discourse: “discourse is power, because it is from such discourse that policy options are formulated” (1999:24). This means that discourse is connected to a political project; it is about what can be said, and thought, [and] also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority” (Ball, 1990:17-18). It is a “carrier of conviction in the form of careful, rationalised, organised statements backed by recognised validation procedures, bound into discursive formations, and made within communities of experts” (Peet, 2002:56). In the realm of politics, discourse is the medium of knowledge for policy choices. To make

sense of a particular political project, which, for the purpose of this article, refers to a developmental state, it is important to understand the discourse that undergirds it. For, as Ball contends, “the discourses construct certain possibilities for thought; they order and combine words in particular ways and exclude or displace other combinations” (1990:17-18).

In a discourse the meanings of concepts are the consequences of “institutional practices, power relations and social position” (Ball, 1990:18), of “dominant groups in their efforts to remain dominant” (Bacchi, 2000:52) in their preferences of the truth. To the extent that this epistemological praxis is disproportionate in the industry and theatre of ideas, the phenomenon talked about here is intellectual hegemony. As Gramsci argues “hegemony belongs to those who enjoy the greatest ideological resonance in society” (in Kondlo & Maserumule, 2011:79), which is the ruling class. In as far as this is concerned, Marx and Engels (1970:64) explain that “the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material force* in society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual force*”. An intellectual hegemony can either contextualise knowledge (science) to maintain its relevance for societal development or ideologise knowledge (science) for hegemonic ends. In the latter sense intellectual hegemony subjugates the role of those that are intellectually trained to engage in what Carol Bacchi (2000:52) calls “constitutive abstraction” – an exercise in making – but not part of the constitutive core of the ruling class. As she further explains:

Discourses are powerful; they provide meanings that assist particular groups to maintain positions of influence; but they are not an overarching structure operating outside of history. People use discourses in these accounts; some ‘shape’ discourses that help maintain their positions of authority and influence; others intervene and contest representations that uphold the power relations they want to challenge. (Bacchi, 2000: 55)

The ANC is the dominant actor in the intellectual process of determining the meaning of a developmental state in the context of South Africa. Using Marx and Engels (1970:64) phraseology, the ANC is “the ruling *material force* in society, [and] is at the same time its *intellectual force*. Its ideas are the ruling ideas, for it is a ruling class. Wittingly or unwittingly the dominance of the ANC inevitably prescribes “conceptual schema attached to [its] specific historical, institutional and cultural contexts” (Bacchi, 2000:52) in the discourse on a developmental state. The ANC is therefore the source of influence in the discourse on the concept of a developmental state in South Africa. To this extent the question is whether this influence is exerted to contextualise the discourse on this concept to assert its relevance to South Africa’s uniqueness for societal development or whether it is for ideologising it for hegemonic ends. The attempt to answer this question is pursued within the context of a reflection on the evolution of the concept of a developmental state in the thinking of the ANC.



## CONCEPT OF A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE AND THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Despite the fact that, as Ben Turok (n.d: on-line) explains, the ANC cadres in exile entertained ideas that are associated with a developmental state in the assertion that “the victory of the ANC should create a situation where monopoly capital would be challenged in the new South Africa and the socioeconomic challenges of poverty and unemployment should be overcome through a major state intervention in the economy”, this concept was conspicuously absent in the discourse that guided the multiparty negotiation process in the early nineties. The fundamental preoccupation of the discourse then was on creating a democratic state rather than a developmental state. In this the question is, why did a concept as important as a developmental state, which was implicated in the discourse of the ANC in exile, appear to have suddenly vanished in its political memory especially at such critical time in the early nineties when the attempt to reinvent the South African state and to determine the type of society that it should become was pursued through an inclusive process of multiparty negotiation on the future of the country? Was this because a national democratic project then was more important than a developmental state project? If the answer to this question is positive, a further question is: did we not miss the opportunity to seize the strategic political advantage of the inclusiveness of the multi-party negotiation process to forge a national consensus on a South African developmental state and its vision? These questions are asked particularly within the context that, as Kondlo argues, a developmental state is not a product of some obscure team of party pseudo-intellectuals, who know it all because they are accredited by only ‘one god’ – their own party. In a deeply divided society such as South Africa, the developmental state cannot be the outcome of the hegemonic project of a single party; it can only be the product of collective efforts of a united polity (rather than a fractured polity) – the collective will of a people united around a single purpose (Kondlo 2010:06).

The approach in building the post-apartheid state appears to have been based on the assertion that democracy is a condition for development rather than its outcome. But, democracy in conditions characterised by inequities in socio-economic gains is not sustainable, particularly in the context of South Africa with the history of many decades of systematic marginalisation of black people. Despite the observations made above regarding the absence of the notion of a developmental state in the discourse on the construction of a democratic state during the multiparty negotiations in the early nineties, the idea of it became implied in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which the ANC came up with when it assumed power in 1994 as the policy framework for socio-economic transformation. The concept *developmental state* is not specifically used in the RDP document. Peet (2000:54) defines RDP as a “leftist, basic-needs-oriented economic policy”.

The RDP offered a clear picture of the ANC's strategic policy orientation and thinking on the developmental trajectory that the country should pursue, which its alliance partners largely agreed with. It envisioned the type of state that ought to be in the centre in driving socio-economic transformation and growth. This thinking is consistent with the concept of an activist state that intervenes decisively in the economy to maximise the redistributive effect of socioeconomic gains, which is a developmental state. With the introduction of Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) in 1997 the development policy paradigm in South Africa became fiercely contested. The South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) rejected GEAR on the basis that it is a neo-liberal paradigm for economic growth founded along the fundamentals of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Most activist intellectuals rejected GEAR largely along the same lines. With GEAR the ANC preferred a reformist approach embedded in neo-classicism, "a doctrine which associates the ideal state with free play of market forces" (Fine 1992:73). Peet (2002:54) explains GEAR as a rightist neo-liberal policy, whose strategic outlook is premised on privatisation, deregulation and trade liberalisation. In the article titled 'Ideology, discourse, and the geography of hegemony', Peet argues that, with the adoption of GEAR, the economic policy of the ANC "was disciplined by a neo-liberal economic discourse formulated by an academic-institutional-media complex with linked centres of persuasion inside and outside the country" (2002:54). As is the case in the RDP, the concept *developmental state* is not specifically mentioned or used in the GEAR document.

GEAR engendered contestation in post-apartheid South Africa that laid bare the ideological contradictions in the Tripartite Alliance. They obfuscated the policy praxis of the ANC government. Maserumule (2010) extensively reflected on these ideological contestations in his contribution to the book *The Zuma administration – Critical Challenges* (Kondlo & Maserumule, 2010). The SACP and COSATU charge that the ANC has abandoned RDP, which in many respects gravitated more towards the socialist developmental path. As the charge further goes, by adopting GEAR the ANC embraced neo-liberalism – an ideological paradigm that assumed the proportions of orthodoxy. Neo-liberalism supplanted socialism. It gained ideological credibility following the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in the 1980s. Mahao (2009:76) observes that neo-liberalism is "extolled by leading theoreticians as signifying the end of history and ideology because, in the view of its exponents, humanity has at long last reached the summit of history and ideological development, beyond which it cannot traverse". This is propounded in Fukuyama's book *The end of history and the last man*. The thesis of this American philosopher and scholar is that neo-liberalism marks "the end of history as such, the end point of man's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (Fukuyama, 1992:04). He contends that it is only the market economy and

a democratic political system that can bring about sustained economic growth and development. This is characteristic of the resoluteness of Euro-American scholarship on development thinking rooted in the uni-polar paradigm of neo-liberal orthodoxy.

Neo-liberalism influenced the epistemological foundation of developmental studies, which as Genzler (in Gordon, 2004:79) explains, “emerged in elite, First World universities as an attempt to offer their vision of modernisation over the Marxist ones of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Communist China, and Cuba; their model was resolute: a capitalist economy and elite (oligarchical) democracy”. This development approach is embedded in a positivist paradigm of thinking premised on the fallacy of single realities rather than multiple theoretical propositions from which the social world could be constructed and understood (Mqolomba, 2011:56-57). The thesis in this paradigm is that there is no alternative to neo-liberalism. This is a “fundamental pedagogy of big lies” (Macedo, 1983:183-204), which unfortunately the development logic in most countries subscribed to. The ANC government’s adoption of GEAR could therefore be understood within the context characterised by the preponderance of the neo-liberal thought that had assumed ideological hegemony. It gained credence on the basis that the socialist development path in Third World countries failed. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank dictated to the developing countries the development model premised on the liberation of markets as against state-led intervention.

Thinking about development along uni-polar paradigms is not new in the political economy discourse. It reiterates the modernisation theory of the 1960s “that the Western economic and political liberalism represented the good society itself, and that it constituted the broad historical convergence point of diverse development trajectories” (Leftwich, 1993:605). In this, Leftwich agrees with Mqolomba (2011:56), whose characterisation of the epistemology of development is that, “though there have been gradual shifts in the thinking on development ranging from development as an economic growth (1950s) to development as economic growth and poverty alleviation (1960s) to development as economic growth, redistribution and structural change (1980s and 1990s), much of the development discourse, as led by the Bretton Woods institutions, has been dominated by linear and uni-polar lenses” exemplifying the global hegemonic power of the West and the attendant intellectual imperialism.

With these confluences of factors, along with the reality of inheriting a nearly bankrupt state, the ANC did not seem to have had any option but to succumb to a neo-liberal path to growth by adopting GEAR. As a nationalist movement and a ruling party post-1994, the ANC is in an alliance characterised by an ideological divide, hence the contestation on the national development trajectory as defined in the GEAR strategy. This contestation largely assumed the character of being pursued

for self-serving hegemonic ideological ends and often holds the development of the country at ransom. This is a South African development complexity. To this end one is compelled to ask the question that most prefer the convenience of ignoring: is the Tripartite Alliance post-1994 still relevant and a necessary political arrangement for the development of the country? This question is asked in the context of the fact that in invoking the concept of a developmental state the intention appeared to be to bridge the ideological divide characterising the political economy discourse within the Tripartite Alliance rather than a genuine conceptual paradigm from which thinking about development could be systematised to ensure coherence of thought on the type of state that South Africa should become.

The concept of a developmental state in the economic thinking of the ANC appears to have only been specifically mentioned in 2002 in its 51<sup>st</sup> National Conference Resolutions, as adopted in Stellenbosch. It was introduced at the time when the contestation on GEAR was at its peak. Gumede (2008:91) explains that, in adopting the developmental vision, “the ANC looked east [and] did so through the lens of a mistaken analysis that East Asian economies, including those in Taiwan, Japan and South Korea, were successful because they adopted orthodox *laissez-faire* economic policy with minimal state involvement”. Perhaps the reason for this could be found in Leftwich’s (1993:630) hypothesis that, “given the recent demise and implausible prospects of the state socialist path to development, successful developmental states are likely to pursue ‘market-friendly’ strategies”, which “will need to include a far-reaching programme of economic empowerment in order to bring the economically marginalised more fully into productive economic activity”. The ANC’s GEAR approach to building a developmental state could be understood in the context of the foregoing.

Despite its wide rejection, GEAR appeared to have contributed immensely to the stabilisation of the South African economy, which endured the global economic shocks much better than most established economies. In fact, at the time of GEAR, South Africa achieved a significant economic growth which, however, did not translate into socio-economic gains. In theorising the post-1994 South African state the questions that need to be asked are, what is that which was good in GEAR that ensured economic growth and what is that which was wrong in that growth, which did not immediately translate into socio-economic gains for the majority of South Africans? Could it be possible that GEAR was prematurely judged before fully realising its maximum outcomes which would have resulted in socio-economic equity? A fundamental question related to this question that needs to be answered beyond the ideological confines of the Alliance strictures is, did GEAR really fail? Is it not that the problem was with the government’s failure to muster state capacity to influence the market to ensure that its economic activities contribute towards socio-economic equity? These questions are asked in the context of the fact that a closer analysis of the

ANC's continued consideration of the concept of a developmental state seem to suggest a need for stricture measures to discipline the market. Is this because the markets did not keep their end of the bargain that, in exchange for a liberalised business environment, they would invest in socio-economic development? Or perhaps, with the concept of a developmental state, the ANC had realised that the neoliberal economic discourse that disciplined its basic needs policy orientation is not sustainable? These questions cannot be fully answered in this article. They are raised as important niche areas for further strategic reflection in separate intellectual endeavours.

In the contemporary discourse a need to style South Africa as a developmental state is intensely underscored far beyond its earlier consideration largely as a conceptual framework to harmonise ideological contestations in the Tripartite Alliance. Netshitenzhe (2011:06) explains that it is in the National Conference of the ANC in 2007 in Polokwane that "the ANC for the first time elaborated extensively in its Strategy and Tactics document on the desire to build a developmental state". The discourse on a developmental state now seems to be pursued with more substance on what ought to be its meaning in the context of South Africa. In its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of 16-18 February 2011 themed *Fostering Excellence, Innovation and Monitoring of Public Administration in a Developmental State*, the South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM) contributed significantly to the discourse on a developmental state in South Africa. The scholarly output of this conference is published in Volume 46 Number 1 [March Edition] and Number 4 [December Edition] of the *Journal of Public Administration*. SAAPAM is the community of intellectuals in scholarship and practice that recently repositioned itself in the industry of knowledge to promote excellence in the theory and praxis of governance. The establishment of MISTRA in 2011, whose mission is to theorise the post-1994 South African state, also contributed significantly in shaping the discourse on the concept of a developmental state. These communities of intellectuals fill the void characterised by political rhetoric and speculative engagements in the public intellectual discourse. MISTRA is a think-tank comprising highly respected intellectual personalities organised into a thinking network for high-level engagements on strategic ideas that pertain to the development of the country.

In engaging with the concept of a developmental state, the intention this time around seems unadulterated. There is a sense of frankness in invoking the concept in the public policy discourse. The intention appears to genuinely use it as a conceptual framework in the search for answers to socio-economic challenges of poverty and unemployment that still characterise post-apartheid South Africa. This is clear in the extent to which the ANC now appears amenable to intellectual influences beyond the hegemonic core of its centre of intellectualism and "a neoliberal economic discourse formulated by an academic-institutional-media complex with linked centres

of persuasion inside and outside the country” (Peet, 2002:54). Is this because of the sporadic community uprisings termed service delivery protests with a fear that if they cannot be attended to they might evolve into a disproportionate scale of Arab-spring? This question is a subject for a separate discussion. In this article the intention is to, as pointed out above, deconstruct the discourse on the concept of a developmental state to elaborately reveal misconceptions associated with it. In moving towards this end it is important to make sense of the ANC’s conceptualisation of a developmental state. This is because, as argued above, the ANC is the dominant actor in the intellectual process of determining the meaning of this concept. More so that much of the discourse on a developmental state in South Africa is largely a rejoinder to the ANC’s understanding of the concept, or what ought to be its contextual meaning, as prescribed by the conceptual schema attached to its historical and ideological traditions.

## **MAKING SENSE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS CONCEPTUALISATION OF A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE**

The ANC’s conceptualisation of a developmental state, following its extensive elaboration in the 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference in 2007, indicates a conceptual shift from the understanding of the concept in the East Asian sense, whose initial consideration gravitated more towards orthodox *laissez-faire* economic thinking (Gumede, 2008:91). It seems to have now invoked its ideological traditions as a frame of reference in conceptualising the concept, which subsumes “a string of philosophico-political dissertations on the theme of the rights of peoples of self-determination, the rights of man to freedom from hunger and human dignity, and the unceasing affirmation of the principle of one man, one vote” (Fanon, 1965:47). The ANC’s conceptualisation of a developmental state now represents its national democratic project, not only in a procedural sense of democracy, but also, more importantly, in a substantive sense. It factors in the ideological traditions of its revolutionary epistemology as ingrained in the neo-Marxist concept of a national democratic revolution. In the National Governing Council Statement of 2005 the ANC pronounced that its central task is to build a developmental state with the strategic, organisational and technical capacity to advance the national democratic revolution. These aspects were elaborated in the 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference of the ANC in 2007 in the characterisation of a South African developmental state.

The strategic capacity refers to the ability to provide leadership in defining a common national agenda, and also, more importantly, engage the citizenry in the process of implementing such agenda. This means that, in the context of South Africa in terms of the ANC’s conceptualisation of a developmental state, a national agenda cannot be the outcome of what Mkandawire (2012) terms ‘choiceless democracy’. As Netshitenzhe responded to the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection Inaugural Annual Lecture on 29 March 2012 at the University of Witwatersrand on *Building*

*the African State in the Age of Globalisation*, “South Africa has transcended choiceless democracy” in its conceptualisation of a developmental state. The African National Congress (2007) argues that the nature and character of the strategic orientation of a South African developmental state should be characterised by “people-centred and driven change, and sustained development based on high growth rates, restructuring of the economy and socio-economic inclusion”. The organisational capacity of the state refers to structures and administrative systems capable of facilitating the realisation of a common national agenda as determined through various strategic means employed in its definition. The technical capacity is concerned with the amount of expertise and skills available critically important in translating “broad objectives into programmes and projects to ensure their implementation” (African National Congress, 2007).

The conceptual perspective of the ANC on a developmental state along these variables is consistent with the authoritative literature that evolved largely as a rejoinder to Johnson’s conception of the concept. Such literature added a democratic dimension to the concept. This is clear in Evans’s (1995) concept of ‘embedded autonomy’ – a co-operative governance praxis where the state as part of the society engages all the role-players in the developmental processes, but remains independent of vested interest. Mkandawire (2001:27) defines a developmental state “as social constructs brought about by states and societies”. Evans (1995) and Mkandawire (2001) deviate from Johnson’s conceptualisation of a developmental state as a “soft authoritarian state” (Edigheji 2006:03). They appropriate to it a conceptual context that bears relevance to democracy. Their conceptual perspectives are backed by empirical evidence as evolved after the Cold War, which demonstrated that democracy is reconcilable with development.

In South Africa the concept of a developmental state is now largely, because of the ideological influence of the ANC, conceptualised in democratic terms. This perhaps explains the conceptual praxis in the contemporary discourse in South Africa of prefixing *democratic* to *developmental state* – hence the concept *democratic developmental state*. As Netshitenzhe (2011:08) puts it, “there is a consensus [in the ANC] that the state [it] seeks to create [is] a democratic developmental state”. Tanesini’s (in Bacchi, 2000:45) formulation to characterise the influence of the structure of power, politics and social values cannot be more apt in terms of its explanatory value regarding the foregoing: “to make a claim about the meaning of a certain word is to make a claim about how the word ought to be used, it is not to describe how the word is used”. By prefixing democratic to developmental state in the discourse the ANC makes a claim about how the concept ought to be used and understood in South Africa. In this the structure of power, politics and social values set the paradigm for the discourse on the concept of a developmental state, where its ‘democraticness’ is underscored.

A developmental state is defined in terms of policy goals, institutional attributes and embedded autonomy. The policy goal variable in defining a developmental state from the ANC's perspective is influenced by, as argued above, its liberation philosophy – which is about the creation of a better life for all, addressing the legacy of apartheid colonialism and patriarchy, and more importantly, achieving socio-economic transformation. It emphasises that the socio-economic challenge of “poverty, unemployment, and inequality will not be overcome without major intervention by the state” (Turok, n.d: n.p). This is consistent with its national democratic project. The concept of a democratic developmental state did not, however, originate in the ANC. It evolved in the 1980s following the wave of democratisation after the end of the Cold War, which engendered a penetrating debate on the confluence of democracy and a developmental state as occasioned by the fact that the latter emerged and prospered in an authoritarian context (Gumede, 2011:01).

The usage of the concept of a democratic developmental state as prescribed by the ANC appears to be for the purpose of asserting the contextual relevance of the concept to ensure that it serves a democratic developmental order. In this it appears that the ideological hegemony of the ANC in prescribing how the concept of a developmental state in South Africa should be understood is not for self-serving ends. It seeks to contextualise the concept to the democratic character of the South African society. The intention is seemingly to ensure that the South African model of a developmental state should be a product of the country's unique historical circumstance, much as the East Asian model is. This approach in conceptualising a South African developmental state is important in that it ensures learning from, rather than copying, the experiences of the countries that have already experimented with the concept in their unique historical circumstances. The article now reverts to its purpose of deconstructing the discourse on a developmental state to elaborately reveal misconceptions inherent in the rejoinders to the ANC's conceptual logic of the concept. To systematise the logic of this exercise, the question that this part of the article asks as it moves to its summit is, what is the character of the discourse on the ANC's conceptual logic in defining South Africa as a democratic developmental state?

## CRITICISM AND CRITIQUE

A growing body of knowledge on a South African developmental state is emerging, largely as a rejoinder to the ANC's conceptual logic of the concept, as discussed above. This much is exemplified in scholarly writings titled around the concept democratic developmental state in the discourse on a developmental state in South Africa. In 2010 the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Press published a book *Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa – Potentials and Challenges*. This book is an addition to a plethora of other scholarly writings whose approach to the discourse on the concept of a developmental state is prefixed with



democratic (see Dassah, 2011; Edigheji, 2005; Gumede, 2009, 2011; Maphunye, 2009). Beyond the South African scholarship, as referred to in the foregoing, White makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on a democratic developmental state, on which most of the contemporary writings are based.

In the HSRC Press book, as referred to above, despite the fact that its title follows the conceptual logic of the ANC, which underscores the democratic dimension of a developmental state, the discourses in the different chapters do not specifically use the concept democratic developmental state. It is only the introductory chapter that does, logically presupposing that the different chapters in the book are concerned with a democratic developmental state. However, this is not the case. The discourse in other chapters of the book is thin on the democratic part of a developmental state. This engenders conceptual disjuncture and obtrusiveness in the coherence of the discourse. It wittingly or unwittingly presupposes that conceptually democratic developmental state is synonymous to a developmental state. This is clear in much of the attempts to define a democratic developmental state where the variables of its conception are not necessarily different from those that definitionally undergird a developmental state. These concepts are largely used interchangeably. This trivialises the significance of a variable democratic as prefixed to developmental state.

Edigheji (2010:12) argues that a democratic developmental state in South Africa should be defined “by both its ideological orientation and the institutional arrangements that are constructed and deployed to underpin the realisation of the developmental project”. This conceptual framework Mkandawire established in a paper titled ‘Thinking about developmental states in Africa’, as presented in Tokyo in 1998, and which was subsequently published in the Cambridge Journal of Economics in 2001. This paper is part of the authoritative body of scholarship where the concept of a developmental state is defined in terms of an ideology-structure nexus. Ideologically, a developmental state is defined as the state “whose underpinnings are developmentalist in that it conceives its mission as that of ensuring economic development, usually interpreted to mean high rates of accumulation and industrialisation” whereas “the state-structure side of the definition emphasises [institutional] to implement economic policies sagaciously and effectively” (Mkandawire, 1998: on-line).

In the context of Mkandawire’s conceptual framework, it is submitted that a developmental state is a state which is able to set developmental goals, and create and sustain a policy climate and an institutional structure that promotes development. This much is clear in the conceptualisation of a developmental state in much of the existing authoritative body of scholarship. But, can the same definition be used to define a democratic developmental state? If so, what then is the significance of prefixing democratic to developmental state if the concept democratic developmental state

is synonymous with developmental state? The tendency to use the same definition to define these concepts presupposes tendentiousness in the character of the discourse that evolved as a rejoinder to the ANC's conceptual logic of defining South Africa as a democratic developmental state. The use of conceptual variables in the definition of a developmental state relating it to some aspects of democracy leads to even more confusion in the discourse, where some conflate this concept with a democratic state. The discourse is enmeshed in misconceptions.

Mkandawire (1998: on-line) states that developmental states are "social constructs brought about by states and societies". In the concept of "embedded autonomy", which underscores the importance of social forces as the basis of a developmental state, Evans concurs with Mkandawire's social orientation of developmental states. Evans (2009:09) contends that "developmental states must be vehicles for socially defining and choosing societal goals, in addition to being instruments to achieve them". It is this "function that puts effective participation in democratic deliberation at the top of the list of the capabilities the developmental state must foster" (Evans 2009:09). Mkandawire (1998) and Evans (1995, 2009) challenge Johnson's argument that "developmental states are necessarily authoritarian, or at least semi-authoritarian" (Sandbrook 2005:551). However, their contention does not suggest that the concept of a developmental state is synonymous to that of a democratic state. At the same time they are not propagating that a developmental state is the antithesis of democracy. Their point is that a developmental state, despite its originative historical context in authoritarianism, is reconcilable with democracy, hence the concept of a democratic developmental state, which evolved to signify this verity. Its usage by the ANC is to underscore this point. In reacting to the ANC's conceptual logic of defining South Africa as a democratic developmental state some still subscribe to Johnson's perspective based on the false assumption that there is no intersection between a developmental state and democracy.

Öniş, the Turkish political economist, is one of those influential scholars whose writings seem to perpetuate this thesis, which much of the existing empirical evidence falsifies. In the article titled *The logic of the developmental state*, Öniş (1991:121) asks a suggestive question: "where democratic values and institutions as well as widespread political participation emerge as central objectives in their own right, is the transfer or replicability of the East Asian state forms of developmental state desirable in the first place?" But, this question is, in terms of its formulation, inherently problematic as, to the unwary, it might be misleading. The issue is not about replicating the East Asian model of a developmental state, but about building our own based on South Africa's unique historical circumstances. It is paradoxical that Öniş would ask this question while he made a very important argument critically instructive for the discourse on a developmental state. He writes that "the East Asian model of a developmental state is the product of unique historical circumstances"

(in Gumede, 2011:18). This gives a clue to the discourse that developmental states in other countries also inevitably evolve from, or are influenced by, their own unique historical circumstances. The point that this article therefore underscores to challenge the rejoinders to the ANC's conceptual logic of defining South Africa as a democratic developmental state is that the issue that should inform the discourse should not be about replicating the East Asian model. Instead, the focus should be on learning from it and considering lessons learned within South Africa's own contextual uniqueness, taking into account her historical circumstances.

In answering the question he asked, as referred to above, Öniş states that in "countries which have experienced a long trajectory of democratic development it would be inconceivable for the state to withdraw entirely from the distributional realm and focus exclusively on growth and productivity" (1991:121). But, the issue is not about pursuing one set of goals at the expense of others, that is, either democratic or developmental goals. It is about maintaining an appropriate balance between economic growth, social development and consolidation of democracy. This much is feasible, as White (1988), Heller (1999) and Rodrik (2004) demonstrate in their studies. So, the argument that a developmental state and democracy are antithetical displays little understanding of the evolution of the concept since its emergence in East Asia. It is based on the contention that, "since East Asian developmental states were created during undemocratic periods, the developmental state in South Africa must [therefore] necessarily be autocratic" (Gumede, 2011:01). This is a false argument. It is based on the ignorance of the empirical evidence and the literature that evolved as a rejoinder to Johnson's origination of the concept, which adds a democratic dimension in its re-conceptualisation. Any argument in the conceptualisation of a developmental state that "calls for reducing the emphasis on building a democracy in favour of pursuing growth" (Gumede, 2011:01) is anachronistic in the 21st century. Based on empirical evidence, scholars such as Evans and Mkandawire tried as much as they could in their writings to demonstrate the point that a developmental state and democracy are reconcilable. They could co-exist. In South Africa Netshitenzhe has been very consistent in communicating this message in much of his writings and public platforms. A developmental state is not the antithesis of democracy.

In a contribution to the book *The democratic developmental state: Politics and institutional design*, White (1998) looks at how a democratic developmental state is constructed. Using empirical evidence associated with the attempts to reinvent the state following the wave of democratisation in the 1980s and 1990s, White concludes that "democracy and development are mutually reinforcing" (Robinson & White, 1998: on-line). This much Sandbrook (2005) authenticates in his article on the 'Origins of the democratic developmental state', where, using a Mauritian case study, he reiterates White's contention that "democracy is reconcilable with a developmental state" (Sandbrook, 2005:552). Using Botswana as a case study, Taylor (2002) concurs

with White (1998) and Sandbrook (2005). That democracy and a developmental state could co-exist is therefore an established fact in the existing body of literature. Using White's (in Gumedé, 2011:01) phraseology, this article argues that "the democratic developmental state is not a rare bird on the development scene as its aims [are not] contradictory and difficult to achieve: autonomy and accountability; growth and redistribution; consensus and inclusiveness".

Much of the discourse in South Africa on a democratic developmental state is based on the fact that democracy and development are not mutually exclusive terms. Fakir (2005) argues that the tendency to understand democracy and development in binary terms is based on a false dichotomy. So does Edigheji (2010:08) in the contention that "the debate on the binary between development and democracy is based on a wrong premise; there is, in fact, nothing irreconcilable between the two". Much as these perspectives are correct, it is also important, for reasons of correctly capturing the history of this concept and its theoretical evolution in the contemporary discourse, to acknowledge its originative historical context – lest its rich history is lost. The fact is that the concept of a developmental state did not evolve in a democratic context, but it later turned out that it is reconcilable with democracy. It is therefore wrong to argue that a developmental state cannot be associated with democracy; as much as is also wrong to conflate this concept with a democratic state where the contention is that these concepts are synonymous. A state could be democratic without being developmental or it could be developmental without being democratic. The contention of the article therefore is that a developmental state and democratic state are not synonyms. Their philosophical and theoretical foundations are not the same. These concepts are, however, not antithetical to each other. The "post-1960 success stories of economic growth in the Third World – Brazil, South Korea, Taiwan, and more recently, Thailand and Indonesia" (Leftwich, 1993:613) are the consequences of a diversification of East Asian authoritarian politics (Bond 2007). This means that the major success stories of development in the East Asian countries "have not occurred under conditions remotely approximating continuous and stable democracy: quite the opposite" (Leftwich 1993:613). Based on this observation Leftwich concludes that "it is not a democratic state, although it would be desirable if it could as well be that, but a developmental state which is key in ensuring successful sustainable development" (1993:613).

Following Leftwich's logic, the article argues that democracy is not necessarily a condition for development. This is a historical fact that cannot obtrusively be dismissed as sequencing fallacy (Carothers, 2007), which Lipset (in Kim, 2010:97-125) explains as implying "development first and democracy later". In concurrence with Leftwich, Sandbrook (2005:552) observes: "the developmental states of South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore have followed a different trajectory: beginning as authoritarian

or semi-authoritarian developmental states in the 1960s and 1970s, and democratising under popular pressure in the 1980s and 1990s". However, this should not be misconstrued as a suggestion that necessarily a developmental state cannot evolve in a democratic context. As the article argued above, it is wrong to pursue this line of thinking as it is fallacious. The point that this article makes is that the contemporary discourse on a developmental state should be wary of contradicting the "sequence of ideas" (Marx, 1975-2005:162) that undergird its originative historical context in terms of its conception and historical evolution. The fact that the developmental states in other countries such as Mauritius followed a democratic trajectory does not expunge from history that its evolution in East Asia was in a totally different context – authoritarianism. To downplay this historical verity in the contemporary discourse presupposes 'ahistoricity' of the concept. South Africa is a democratic society. The attempts to style the country as a developmental state inevitably follow a trajectory that represents this verity. As pointed out elsewhere in this article, the foregoing explains the ANC's usage of the concept of a democratic developmental state to frame the discourse on the developmental state in South Africa. But to pursue the discourse in a manner that de-historicises the theorisation of the concept, thus also in the process suggesting that a democratic developmental state means that a democratic state is synonymous to a developmental state, is a distortion of facts, which dangerously displays little knowledge of the concept. It lacks epistemological insight into the originative historical context of the concept, as is the case with the discourse that characterises a developmental state as a service delivery state. This is conceptual reductionism. The Democratic Alliance's (DA) liberalist and nihilist position on the developmental state, along with that of liberal scholars in South Africa, is reminiscent of Anglo-American scholarship jettisoning the concept as Soviet-type socialism in the East Asian context that the ANC invokes to serve its neo-Marxist ideological outlook. The concept is dismissed as "utopian or ideological" (Gumede, 2001:01). This is largely a reaction for political-point scoring as it is not based on anything theoretically and empirically valid. To reject a social construct purely on the basis that it is an ideological output does not make any sense. It is based on the false assumption that ideology is necessarily the antithesis of knowledge. The theorisation of knowledge in the 21st century belies this logic. As argued above, ideology is one of the constitutive elements of knowledge. If pursued for societal development rather than to sustain relations of domination for self-serving ends, ideology could be of epistemological value "in the construction of meaning[s] (Mumby, 1989:291).

The Anglo-American scholarship failed to sustain its rejoinder against a developmental state as Soviet-type socialism with any semblance of theoretical and empirical verity. It failed to provide a convincing answer to the question that Dore (1986:01-06) asked in *Flexible rigidities: Industrial policy and structural adjustment in the Japanese economy, 1970-1908*: "why on earth, then, should Japan, an economy which almost flaunts its rigidities as a matter of principle, be the most successful among the OECD

countries at dynamically adjusting to these challenges – absorbing the oil-price rises, controlling inflation at a low figure, and shifting the weight of its industrial structure away from declining to competitive industries?” With the paradigm of engagement on the concept being porous, the discourse on a developmental state in South Africa is butchered. Anything goes. If the discourse on the concept is allowed to continue in this fashion, or follow this logic, anything can mean anything that its user wants to mean to serve the biases of individual preferences for self-serving ends rather than the pursuit of knowledge as a public good to add “value to societal endeavours” (Motlanthe, 2011:17; see also Bauer, 2004). It runs the risk of rendering the concept meaningless. This breeds grounds for intellectual opportunism.

As Netshitenzhe (2011:06) observes in his article ‘The challenge of building a developmental state’, there are already fallacies masquerading as facts among scholars in South Africa that all states are developmental states. I personally encountered this argument at the launch of the centenary seminar lecture series at the University of Free State where I presented a paper that traces the emergence of the concept of a developmental state in the ANC’s economic thinking. A question directed to me in reaction to my paper was, is there any state that is not a developmental state? This question presupposes that all states are developmental, a thinking that is gaining momentum following how the government of the developed nations such as the United States (US) intervenes in their economies to lessen the burden of the global financial crisis. The most outrageous argument I was exposed to, relating to the foregoing, is that the apartheid state is an example of a developmental state. In the article referred to above, Netshitenzhe (2011:06) explains the argument that all states are developmental as a suggestion that a developmental state is a universal concept “applicable to the evolution of economies and politics over centuries”. He correctly argues that this view is fallacious as its basis “ignores the fact that the category of a developmental state in social sciences is a recent phenomenon theorised *post facto* by economist and political economist to explain the riddles of growth and development trends of such magnitude and consistency that countries have climbed from one rung of industrial and socio-economic development to another within one generation – qualitatively bridging the gap between themselves and the most developed countries” (Netshitenzhe 2011:06-07).

The contention that all states are developmental states, which Netshitenzhe (2011:06) strongly argues is “a false assumption”, is embedded in the naivety of conceptual reductionism defining a developmental state as simply an interventionist state. This is a subtext-approach to conceptualisation that reduces the wholeness of a concept to certain specificities that on their own distort its meaningfulness. It is based on the misreading of Johnson’s 1982 publication *MITI and the Japanese miracle: The growth of industry policy 1925-1975*. The conceptualisation of a developmental state

only on the basis of the variable of interventionism fails to pay attention to the purpose of the state's intervention in the economy, which is to achieve growth and equity. The interventionist character of the apartheid state sought to establish a racist society constructed on the basis of marginalising black people in the economy, also in terms of their access to social services. In the article 'The developmental state: Odyssey of a concept', Chalmers Johnson (1999) tried as much as he could to correct misconceptions associated with contextless invoking of 'interventionism' as a variable in the definition of a developmental state. He explains that:

the issue is not of state intervention in the economy. All states intervene in their economies for various reasons...The United States is a good example of a state in which the regulatory orientation predominates, whereas Japan is a good example of a state in which the developmental orientation predominates. A regulatory, or market-rational, state concerns itself with the forms and procedures – the rules, if you will – of economic competition, but it does not concern itself with substantive matters. (Johnson 1999:17, 19)

With such clarity from the original scholarship, which has been part of the body of knowledge for three decades, the question is why misconceptions in the discourse on the concept of a developmental state still persist? This exposes the tendentious character of South African scholarship in its engagement with the concept of a developmental state. The definition of a developmental state without any sense of context is misleading. The reasons for such interventions determine whether a state is either developmental or not. The tendency to define a developmental state in terms of its conceptual subtexts is continuously gaining momentum in South Africa, which, if they are not properly and sufficiently contextualised, may spawn more misconceptions in the discourse. In a recently released National Development Plan, which projects the strategic development vision of the country, as produced by the National Planning Commission (NPC), the concept of a developmental state is suddenly not specifically used. Instead, what appears often in this voluminous document is the phrase capable state, which is a subtext of the concept of a developmental state. Is this how, henceforth, the country prefers to structure the discourse on the concept? But, as argued above, the subtext-approach to conceptualisation reduces the wholeness of a concept to certain specificities that, on their own, distort the meaningfulness of intellectual phenomena. By editing out the concept of a developmental state in the National Development Plan and replacing it with capable state, are we not venturing into the realm of conceptual reductionism? This question merits extensive interrogation in a separate discussion.

## CONCLUSION

Largely presented as a criticism and a critique of the rejoinders to the ANC's conceptual logic of defining South Africa as a democratic developmental state, this article elaborately reveals misconceptions used to structure the discourse in this regard. Its

purpose is to correct those misconceptions. It uses authoritative literature to reconstruct the discourse. This exercise is located within the attempts to understand the possible reasons for misconceptions in a discourse, which is pursued by analysing the relationship between knowledge (science) and power (politics) and the epistemological implications of their intersection on the meaning of concepts. The outcome of this analysis is that knowledge (science) and power (politics) intersect. However, contrary to liberal epistemology, such intersection is not always a source for misconception of scientific concepts. Through ideology as its instrument, politics could, if pursued for public good, influence knowledge (science) to ensure its contextual relevance to social reality. It distorts meaning of concepts if it is pursued for self-serving hegemonic ends. The intersection of power (politics) and knowledge (science) determines the meaning of concepts. In the context of the foregoing it is asked whether the consideration of a developmental state by the ANC as a social construct is a genuine pursuit for theorising the post-apartheid state or an ideological exercise for self-serving hegemonic ends. This question is answered in a positive sense in the context of the first part of the question. Thereafter attempts are made to make sense of the ANC's conceptualisation of a developmental state. It is against this background that the discourse, as evolved largely as a rejoinder to the ANC's conceptual logic on this concept, is deconstructed, and, using authoritative literature, reconstructed to ensure that the sequence of ideas that undergird its originative historical context and conceptual evolution remains the epistemological foundation of the paradigm of engagements. This is important in salvaging the discourse on the developmental state as it is largely degenerating into distortions and misconceptions, rendering the meaningfulness of the concept meaningless. The article raises controversial issues and various questions for further consideration in separate intellectual endeavours.

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