Modernisation as an Organising Language for Higher Education in the South African Public Administration: Implications on Public Policy Interventions

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to elucidate the notion of modernisation as an organising language for Higher Education in the South African polity landscape with a view of exposing its limitations on authentically addressing matters that are genuine to the society. That is done by outlining modernisation as an ontological premise and a reflection on how such is reigning as an organising language in Higher Education landscape with specific reference to Public Administration. The argument put forward is that in as much as modernisation remains the bases of the epistemological foundation of acquiring knowledge over the time, there are quite complex phenomenal manifestations that require the discourse to consider areas that are less navigated within Higher Education structuration. Such areas require a multiplicity or plural discourse engagement that is not necessarily confined within the modern science rational conception. That in it will eventually have implications on public policy interventions as the frameworks in use are informed by the epistemological foundations that are currently restricted within the rationality of modernisation. The paper is conceptual in nature and attempts to engage on the philosophical stand of knowledge generation within Higher Education landscape in South Africa specifically within the field of Public Administration and practice with the exposition of the complexities of the policy landscape within a defined polity. The conclusion therefore is that modernisation as an organising language for Higher Education does have limitations that need to be dealt with through considering ontological stances that can complement it in relation to African realities informed by the exogenous status of the continent. On that basis Africans will be moving towards the emancipation from the modernisation grip.

Keywords: Modernisation, organisation language, higher education, public policy interventions

1. Introduction

English (2002) cited the work of Lakatos (1999) wherein a question is posed while reviewing Leibnez (1646-1716) to the effect that the notion that there is a field as a totality, which is unitary, coherent, and all-encompassing to solve an epistemological problem; a dream about constructing a machine into which any question could be put with a corresponding answer of "true" or "false" (see also Gunther, 2004; Levinas, 2011). Lakatos (1999) reminds us that, "Leibnez (1646-1716) was not a stupid man", but that it had not occurred to him that for a machine to be capable of answering any question put to it, it would have to possess a data base larger than the universe (English, 2002). On the other hand Fideler (1998) relate to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749-1832) philosophy of science to the effect that for a human being to know nature, one ought to be nature itself; same contention by Max-Neef (2007) in that for one to understand love, one need to be in love. Similar to the argument by Nyamnjoh (2012) to the effect that epistemic position about Africa should have bothered to be locally narrated (see also Brock-Utne, 2000; Nyamnjoh, 2004; Mamdani, 2005). Ironically, modern public administration practice is analogically regarded as a bureaucratic machine (Feguson & Lohmann, 1994; Schein, 2004; Rosca & Moldoveanu, 2010) that can be rationally dealt with through modern scientific engagement. Yet the challenges it faces in reality remain complex to befit a machine related approach (Cilliers, 1998; Nkuna & Sebola, 2012). However, a logical response to this problem is to create boundaries or a field in which the database and the universe are analogous (English, 2002) with the continuing need to maintain this correspondence and to avoid the Leibnezian dilemma by first defining the field and then to formulate questions to fit. That is the point which English (2002) refer to as scientificity or *pos* that accomplishes this tautological requirement of which this article argues within the realm of language that is used to epistemologically transmit such. In much as long as such language is within the modern conception that only give meaning only to the world of science, dealing with policy landscape phenomena that is outside such realm will be a dream becoming a nightmare.

In engaging in this argument, this article begins by outlining the background and rationale of the debate in that

acquiring the knowledge of public administration practice, the epistemic endeavour need to take precedence. That is followed by engaging on the notion of modernisation as an epistemological ontology that the current knowledge generation is stuck within Higher Education landscape in South Africa and Africa in general. It is further argued that such modernisation has become the organising language for Higher Education in South African Public Administration field of study to an extent that acquiring a discipline does not necessarily relate to ideally prepare one to confront realities within the practice due to the disregard of the African context that is characterised by diversity and multiplicity. An exposure based on literature of how South Africa has transcended from one macro-policy position to another since its democratic founding is provided as an indication of such dilemma that need to be addressed through an epistemic logic informed by African realities that are within the exogenous realm of its people.

2. Background and Rationale

Students of Public Administration require the ability to deal with the phenomena that is within the realm of the super-abstract (Farmer, 1995) or rather complex in nature (Haynes, 2003; Heylighen, 2007; Teisman & Klijn, 2008; Habtemichael & Cloete, 2010; Nkuna & Sebola, 2012); Barnett (2000) however refers to such as super-complexity (see also McKenzie, 2000; Delanty, 2001). The modern world is super-complex in character and it can be understood as a milieu for the proliferation of frameworks by which the world is understood, that are often competing with each other (Max-Neef, 2005). That should be built within the expectation more firmly into graduate programs or within the epistemological landscape in general. Wherein according to Farmer (1995) the super-abstract consists of sets of abstractions or theory providing valuable information about a first-order set of abstractions or first-order theory (see also Allis & Koetsier, 1995; Barnett, 2002). Public administration theory itself is a first-order set of abstractions or generalisations about public administration practice that remain complex in nature (Heylighen, 2007; Teisman & Klijn, 2008; Nkuna & Sebola, 2012). Haack (1982) as cited in Whetsell (2012) argues that it is commonly supposed that one is obliged to choose, in the theory of knowledge, between two fundamentally opposed models being the foundationalist, according to which the rest of human knowledge is supported by the foundation of a relatively small class of epistemically privileged beliefs, and the coherentist, according to which the various parts of knowledge are mutually supportive. It is such foundationalism and coherentist that English (2005) referred to as the point of scientificity, or *pos* in representing a place in history where educational administration was founded as a science; wherein a *pos* creates a field of memory and a field of studies. Such has been epistemologically sustained in its claim for scientific status by a line of demarcation or what English (2002) refer to as *lod*, which is supported by truth claims based on various forms of correspondence (see also Barnett, 2000; Nyamnjoh, 2012). These forms of correspondence have been interrogated and abandoned, and have since given way to coherentism and finally to tests of falsification (see also Barrett, 1969; Milne, 1991). As falsification has shown to contain serious flaws when compared to the actual history of scientific discoveries, the entire project of a distinct and unitary field known as educational administration is seriously cast into doubt (Barrett, 1969; English, 2002). These models of knowledge represent two extreme kinds of theories both suffering logical defects along the epistemological continuum with ones that are reductionist and the other circular (Whetsell, 2012). The condition which Osberg, Biesta and Cilliers (2008) regard as representational epistemology or which could also be called a 'spatial epistemology' since it depends on a correspondence between knowledge and reality. For present purposes, neither one can promote the theory-pluralism or epistemological pluralism (Barnett, 2000; Farmer, 2010; Nyamnjoh, 2012) that is necessary to address the multifaceted public problems which the study of Public Administration grapples with like in the case of South Africa or Africa as the whole. Of course Haack (1982) in Whetsell (2012) contends that "foundationalism" and "coherentism" do not exhaust the options as there remains a logical space in between"; within this "logical space" rests what can be referred to as a third metaphor, being that of the crossword puzzle, more so if such have to apply within the African epistemological context (Nyamnjoh, 2012). In this metaphor every element of belief in the form of "word" in the system of knowledge being the "puzzle" is justified by both its interconnectivity with previously established "intersecting entries", as well as its basis in "experiential evidence" being clues in dealing with an endeavour (Whetsell, 2012) like that of Higher Education for Public Administration in a polity like that of South Africa. Thus, justification is warranted both by mutual "integration" with other propositions in attempts to define a feature of coherentism and support provided by "experiential evidence and background beliefs" of the defining feature of foundationalism being the epistemological base adopted at a given time.

These triggered the rationale of this article to elucidate on the notion of modernisation as an organising language for Higher Education in the context of a polity like that of South Africa with a view of exposing the extent to which such have limitations in circumstances where policy articulation and interventions within the society are conceived. The argument is that such modernisation language obscure creativity within the epistemological landscape in Higher

Education due to rationally imposed methodologies that cannot gain legitimacy within the mainstream scientific analogies that disregard the local realities within the African context of public administration practice. Mamdani (1996) refer to this as a theoretical impasse between modernists and communitarians being Eurocentrists and Africanists that does not lie in choosing a side and defending an entrenched position (see also Mamdani & Diouf, 1994; Nyamnjoh, 2004; Sivaramakrishnan, 2012). The logical space that exists between the extremes as referred to by Haack (1982) in Whetshell (2012) remain the area that need navigation beyond what (Max-Neef, 2007) regard as areas never navigated. Just like Johan Van Goethe's (1749-1832) contribution to science that came to be acknowledged over a century of his demise (King & Henel, 1958; Holdrege, 2005); a lesson that Africa is turning a blind eye in relation to the need for exogenous epistemology for Africans (Nyamnjoh, 2012). The notion being exposed here is that time to concede on the limitations of modernisation, which accordingly constitute the *pos* and the *lod*, in the arena of epistemology will never came at the right time like when polities like that of South Africa and Africa in general are having problematiques in the policy landscape like now.

3. Modernisation as an Epistemological Ontology

In modern or Western societies schooling is almost invariably organised as an epistemological practice in that educational institutions present knowledge about the world 'outside' and for that very reason they rely upon a representational epistemology (Mamdani, 1996; Brock-Utne, 2002; Osberg *et al*, 2008; Nyamnjoh, 2012). That is the form of language built on European culture and tradition and delivered in European language instead of African tradition and culture (Mamdani, 1996; Brock-Utne, 2002). This is an epistemology which holds that knowledge 'stands for' or represents a world that is separate from human knowledge itself. Since the object of knowledge is assumed to exist in a separate space from the knowledge itself, this epistemology can also be considered 'spatial'. Hence in an African context, where modernisation has been misconstrued as a panacea for uplifting the continent from its diverse cultural richness and pride that has been regarded as barbaric in terms of Western standards (Mamdani & Diouf, 1994; Mamdani, 1996; Osberg *et al*, 2008; Nyamnjoh, 2012), it remains critical to contextualise modernisation whenever one contend to venture in a discourse that relate to such. That is of course in line with the basis of colonisation that the continent was subjected to over centuries. That created an element of anxiety on authors that have to write on matters of "modernisation" "modernity" "modernism" to pay particular attention to the notion that each time one need to expound on that, a need to begin by first by outlining what is meant by modern becomes a necessity (Overman, 1996; Stacey, 1996; Cilliers, 1998; Richardson, 2001; Cunningham & Weschler, 2002; Nkuna & Sebola, 2012). Modern is explained as referring to our presently ingrained cultural values, the dominant theory in use in both society and academy: "causality, determinism, egalitarianism, humanism, liberal democracy, necessity, objectivity, rationality, responsibility, and truth" (Cunningham & Weschler, 2002). It is the notion that has dominated the epistemological conception of pedagogical state in countries (Brock-Utne, 2002; Nyamnjoh, 2012), including that of the education of Public Administration within the Higher Education landscape in South Africa. Research methods in many areas of social science in the past have been rigidified by dogmatic adherence to one or another research tradition (Whetshell, 2012; Nyamnjoh, 2012). Such has also find expression in the practice of various fields that are within a modern world of conception that embraces a situation where boundaries and hierarchies can be rationally determined within various disciplines (Max-Neef, 2005; Nyamnjoh, 2012). Public Administration as a discipline is also caught up within such evolution and it has reached a level that complexities or problematiques can hardly be responded to through analytical frameworks that are derived from such schematic positions.

The *pos* and *lod* remained components of knowledge discourse in the name of scientific discoveries of the past and they are still dominating (English, 2002; Nyamnjoh, 2012). Although scholars like Max-Neef (2005) in outlining the foundations of disciplinarity classify such along the levels ranging from complication to complexity; Contemporary Science with its strong positivism tends to trivialise the nature of boundaries and hierarchies (Richardson, 2001) especially within the practice of public administration whereby some aspects are dealt with do not assume objective values like it tend to be in rational science (see also Nyamnjoh, 2012). Boundaries are supposedly real and the ability to recognise them as such is regarded as a straightforward exercise yet is not the case within the practice of public administration, more so where the phenomenon being dealt with is complex (Richardson, 2001; Richardson & Lissack, 2001; Nkuna & Sebola, 2012). It is only through Complexity thinking mode that one is forced to review conceptions of what natural boundaries are (Richardson & Lissack, 2001) among systems as they interact with each other in the practice of public administration. Questions to contend with are: Are they real in some absolute sense? Or are they no more than, and no less than, social constructs? Are some boundaries more real than others? Or are all boundaries equal? If one were to view the spatiotemporal evolution of a complex system, it would be observed that different structures wax and wane. In complex

systems different domains can emerge that might even display qualitatively different behaviours from their neighboring domains. A domain herein is simply defined as an apparently autonomous structure that differentiates itself from the whole (Richardson & Lissack, 2001). The apparent autonomy is illusory, however all domains are emergent structures that persist for undecidedly different durations like in public administration practice. A particular domain, or structure, or subsystem, may seem to appear spontaneously, persist for a long period, and then fade away just like the way macro-policies are abandoned after each other in the case of South Africa. Particular organisations or industries can be seen as emergent domains that are apparently self-sustaining and separate from other organisations or industries. Therefore engaging on complicating complexity will remain a myth as boundaries and hierarchies within complex systems like that public administration practice are undeterminable to suite the modern ontological stand. There is a need for shift beyond modern scientific analysis within the field and practice of public administration, more so if such is characterised by interactions that are manifesting themselves locally in a rich fashion and emergent nature. The level which each discipline occupy within the hierarchy also determines what Farmer (2010) refer to as an organising language. That implies the way the epistemological process pedagogically dealt for purpose of knowledge transmission and generation within such field. Considering the contention by English (2002) and Whetsell (2012) above, this article put forward an argument that such organising language has a bearing on the extent to which such disciplines are able to have meaningful interventions within their respective phenomenal stances using Public Administration as the case in point in South Africa.

4. Organising Language in Higher Education

Having considered modernisation within the epistemological ontological base of knowledge generation within the South Africa context, it is of essence that matters of organising language on respective disciplines that are basic in transmitting such to societal utility be dealt with. For it is argued that it is such organising language that eventually determine the systematic socialisation within the society as the whole along the epistemically privileged beliefs, and the coherentist, according to which the various parts of knowledge are mutually supportive (English, 2005; Osberg *et al*, 2008; Whetsell, 2012; Nyamnjoh, 2012). Venturing in any discourse within a specific field like that of Higher Education is premised on the organising language that serves as the basis of communicating the facts required for the generation of knowledge in that area and in most appropriately relevant to such field (Mamdani & Diouf, 1996; Evans & Abbott, 1998). Given various ontological basis from which knowledge generation is premised from, the organising language of Higher Education in South Africa determine to a large extent to which such knowledge will found expression on dealing with phenomenal issues that Higher Education is purported to deal with, being the upliftment of the societal standard of knowledge bank that that can keep it abreast with challenges that need to be dealt with towards realising the welfare issues within such society. But like it has been expounded to earlier in terms with Osberg *et al* (2008) contention, the tendency of separating knowledge that stands far from human itself in aspiring to have objective knowledge being what English (2002) regard as scientificity, assert the position that is engrained within the system of Higher Education in South Africa being that of modernisation. Nyamnjoh (2012) strongly assert that the result has been education through schools and other formal institutions of learning in Africa to be largely as a process of making infinite concessions to the outside being mainly the Western world (see also Brock-Utne, 2002). Such education has tended to emphasise mimicry over creativity, and the idea that little worth learning about, even by Africans, can come from Africa; yet on the other side, as mentioned earlier, one can only understand reality only by being part of it. Such stagnation or rigidity, or what Nyamnjoh (2012) refer to as static dichotomies that become absolute as the phenomena being dealt with is beyond the rational complication to complex phenomenal landscape just like that of public administration practice.

5. Complex Phenomenal Landscape

Although organisms and social systems belong to the same category of systems in general, simple analogies are misplaced since all systems, just like public administration practice, unlike machines and organisms use communication to process meaning (Luhamann, 1988); it is no mean feat to either precisely delineates what constitutes complexity or even define the very term "complexity" (Chu, Strand & Jelland, 2003; Nowotny, 2005; Goldstein, 2008) especially in public administration practice in a polity that is within African context. Like many other scientific theories, complexity theory is not a unified and homogeneous perspective (Teisman & Klijn, 2008; Zimmerman *et al*, 2009). Complexity is notoriously hard to define and measure as it emanates from a variety of perspectives and can surface in various forms of interactions and has its roots in well-developed disciplines including physics, mathematics, biology, chemistry, engineering, meteorology and astronomy (Nowotny, 2005; Zimmerman *et al*, 2009; Habtemichael & Cloete, 2010). It is because of this diversity of sources that it has not been easy to formulate an integrated theory of the concept and that

eventually locate such outside the modern conception of seeking a unified description. Such manifestations are ideal in African polities due to the richness in terms of diversity. The term "complexity" however, does not only explain one kind of system behaviour; but a set of characteristics that can be identified in most natural systems, including organisations and their processes (Dolan, Garcia & Auerbach, 2003). Boisot (1999) in Mason (2007) refers to complexity to be known as a collection of theories that makes up its body of knowledge with a variety of concepts being used to describe it.

The conceptual difficulties result from at least three crucial factors involved in the study of complex systems (Goldstein, 2008). The first has to do with exponential explosions of new findings across huge number of fields and from a great many countries including South Africa. Complexity theory is essentially trans-disciplinary in nature, representing the confluence of research from around the world in such ideationally and methodologically varied fields. Public administration practice also involves societal interactions wherein a social human nature has the internal structure with feedback loops. The existence of an internal structure within the system or agent makes it to be reflexive and have purpose that cannot be predicted as various agents bring with them emotions and personality traits in the practice of public administration. Within the African context, such is embedded in diverse cultures that have become the object of imperialist mockery, rejection and manipulation (Nyamnjoh, 2012). That eventually asserts the need for Public Administration epistemological language to veer beyond modernity that is within the realm of scientificity.

The science of complexity studies the fundamental properties of nonlinear-feedback networks and particularly of complex adaptive networks (Stacey, 1996; Dooley, 1997) that characterises African societal landscape and South Africa in particular. Stacey (1996) further refers to such as complex adaptive systems that consist of a number of components, or agents, that interact with each other according to sets of rules that require them to examine and respond to each other's behaviour in order to improve their behaviour and thus the behaviour of the system they comprise. A complex system is not constituted by the sum of its components, but also by the intricate relationships between these components (Nowotny, 2005; Heylighen, 2007; Zimmerman *et al*, 2009). With reference to public administration practice, that connotes that systems can be understood through intricate interactions among its constituent components. Cilliers (1998) further espouse that complexity is not located at a specific identifiable site of the system because it results from interaction between components of a system and it is manifested at the level of the system itself. The range of public administration practice, with due consideration of its locus and focus, is not located within a specific identifiable site due to its normative nature and having to deal with the societal welfare which do not fit well within an objective rational analysis.

It has become a tendency for complexity writers to clarify it in distinct from complicated (Cilliers, 1998; Perona & Miragliotta, 2003). "Complicated" originally means "of things knotted, entwined with each other", while "complex" means "of things which interact among each other." Zimmerman *et al* (2009) however refer to "Complex" as implying diversity or a great number of connections between wide varieties of elements like that of public administration practice. To understand a complicated system, one need to divide it into sub-elements and study each part separately and independently just like a machine hence a contention that may be the conception of public administration machinery might be dislocated in the current world. This has been notably became a trend in the practice of public administration and the policy landscape in South Africa although the integrated approach in planning with outcome based approach is signaling possibilities of differentiated prospects. No matter how big the complicated system might be, all one need is a complicated procedure to study that system and modern or traditional science based on Newtonian and Cartesian logic can be of assistance in dealing with such a system to a certain level (Zimmerman *et al*, 2009). If the practice of public administration is complicated, all what is needed is a complicated procedure to roll it and that can be easily done by promulgating legislation after legislation and regulations after regulation to an extent which even matters that are managerial in nature are afforded a status of legislative portfolio like they are in South Africa after 2009 dispensation. A prototype example is the establishment of portfolios on Planning, and Monitoring and Evaluation in the presidency. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation are within the elementary scope of management (Smit & Cronje, 2004) and within ideal public administration practice it is categorised as such. It is on that contention that complex systems like that of public administration practice are made up by single elements which have intimate connections, counterintuitive and non-linear links and such need to premise the organising language within the discipline to address problems in practice. Understanding the functioning of each single part does not imply to understand the whole system (Perona & Miragliotta, 2003; Zimmerman *et al*, 2009) in that such system is defined by relationships and networks rather than their constituent elements. The many natural rules coupled with normative values within public administration practice that influence systems behaviour, and multiple intricacies for dealing with turbulent environment, remains a factor to be dealt with (Dooley, 1997; Cilliers, 1998; Dolan *et al*, 2003). Public administration practice is characterised by interactions within environment dimensions both in terms of feed-backs and feed-forwards, so its boundaries connect the system with its environment rather than separate it contrary to what modern science provide. The interaction among constituents of the

system and the interaction between the system and its environment are of such a nature that the system as a whole cannot be understood by analysing its components (Mitleton-Kelly, 2006; Zimmerman *et al*, 2009). The relationships are not fixed, they shift and change often in a self-organised manner with human systems that are naturally having an internal structure (Stacey, 1996), but machine type systems, however intricate are complicated (Mitleton-Kelly, 2006). Interactions among the components define the whole system, just like public administration practice as it is in South Africa hence a need to deal with it beyond modernisation as its organising language.

6. Public Policy Articulation and Interventions

Having provided the theoretical frame of the argument, it is intricate to zoom in the relation to the *loci* that have triggered the debate being that of the South African polity. Democratic South Africa under the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC) has a long history of radical politics and action as a liberation movement against white domination (Turok, 2008). Its achievement in transforming the political order remain unique in the world; but the imperatives of achieving and maintaining state power in unfavorable circumstances imposed major constraints upon it and led to controversial policy shifts around growth-development choices, with unintended consequences. Within the complexity thinking context such shifts remain necessary for the system of governance to be kept alive (Nkuna & Sebola, 2012) as the point of equilibrium in the form of stability is associated with death of the system (Stacey, 1996; Cilliers, 1998). In the dawn of South African's negotiated settlement the ruling party embarked on preparations for the assumption of power in government as stakes were clear that majority of South Africans were going to vote for the party. Policy positions informed by discussion documents like "Negotiations - A Strategic Perspective" of 1992 (ANC, 1992a) laid foundations that has later informed all policy bifurcations that the party opted as well as the "Ready to Govern" policy document of 1992. The basic objectives of those policies were fourfold in that they were *firstly*, to strive for the achievement of the right of all South Africans, as a whole, to political and economic self-determination in a united South Africa; *secondly*, to overcome the legacy of inequality and injustice created by colonialism and apartheid, in a swift, progressive and principled way; *thirdly*, to develop a sustainable economy and state infrastructure that will progressively improve the quality of life of all South Africans; and *fourthly*, to encourage the flourishing of the feeling that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, to promote a common loyalty to and pride in the country and to create a universal sense of freedom and security within its borders (ANC, 1992b). These objectives were however not mutually exclusive goals as the future of the country by that time depended on harmonious and simultaneous realisation of all objectives as outlined. From the complexity thinking point of view that can be referred to as the edge of chaos (Stacey, 1996) as at the time no one was sure as what will be the outcome of the negotiations. The whole process as a system looked for possibilities and creatively locates itself through non-linear bifurcations as at end there were compromises made by role players for negotiated settlement. The advancement of the majority of people's will, in the medium-and-long-term, release hitherto untapped and suppressed talents and energies that were supposedly to both boost and diversify the economy (ANC, 1992b). But the assertion here remains that those involved in the process had modernisation as an organising language hence the policy hoping tendencies as it will be outlined in the ensuing paragraphs. This assertion is done on the backdrop of other scholars like Ndletyana (2013) attribute this failure to level of ideological contestations in that such policy inconsistency reflects. Developing the economy was in turn; provided the basis for overcoming the divisions of the past without creating new ones and had a detrimental effect on the state of a situation South Africa is finding itself. *Finally*, the achievement of a genuine sense of national unity depended on all South Africans working together to overcome the inequalities created by apartheid. The dream that may remain impossible as long as modernisation that is informed by the Western Enlightenment is an organising language within the diverse society like that of South Africa. Yet the re-entry of policy imperatives of "Ready to govern of 1992" and the RDP of 1994 brought about the old centrist language of the ANC (Ndletyana, 2013) which is within the ontological space of modernisation. A brief synopsis of each of the macro-policies that South Africa has embarked upon since the inception of democratic dispensation is outlined below with the critical mode of being biased to modernisation.

6.1 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

The founding policy intentions of the ready to govern provisions were encapsulated to Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that served as an election manifesto of the ruling party during the first democratic elections (Adelzadeh, 1996; Blumenfeld, 1996; Turok, 2008). The policy found its expression in statutory governance through the pronouncement of the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994. The RDP was the primary vehicle through which the new Government of National Unity (GNU) sought to address these challenges (Blumenfeld,

1996; Turok, 2008). In the early days of the GNU, the programme, which set out a broad framework for socio-economic reform, attracted virtually universal political support. Turok (2008) attributed this to insufficient preparation of economic policy in exile and much independent policy work inside the country, there were many different strands pressing their case in the numerous discussions in the broader movement. Eventually that led to assertions to the effect that the ANC has long been fraught with policy contradictions that stems from the multiclass nature and consequently the ideological diversity of the organisation (Ndletyana, 2013). The openness of the RDP to different interpretations was both its strength and its weakness; it enabled all major social, political and economic interest groups to unite in support of the programmes broad aims; at the same time, it obscured the lack of consensus about specific and often controversial policy issues (Blumenfeld, 1996; Turok, 2008). It is argued that such different strands are the character of Africa and South Africa in particular that have been denied a space due to the modernizing language. The unitary conception of development programs were forced in within the modern ontological thinking which have limitations in dealing with African diversity. Consequently, after the first year, when the GNU's general incapacity to deliver on its election promises in the developmental field became apparent, the RDP became an equally potent symbol of that failure. It unsuccessfully attempted to reconcile the original Keynesain approach to the RDP with a set of policy statements and recommendations that were inspired by the neo-liberal framework that had long been the alternative offered, even if in different variants, by big business, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, and, not least, the apartheid state itself in its twilight years in the form of the Normative Economic Model (NEM). Nyamnjoh (2012) refers to such as an attempt by Africans to please their colonial masters which do not at all assist Africans in general (see also Brock-Utne, 2002). But however, within two years the programme had become so discredited that the separate ministry responsible for RDP created in the President's own office was abolished. That is what this article regards as a temptation of having to contend with analytical frameworks that were dominant at the time of transition without venturing on un-navigated terrains that could have been informed by the realities on the ground within the African context.

6.2 Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR)

The key policy framework which has determined the trajectory of the post-apartheid economic transformation is the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) policy that the Department of Finance, now the National Treasury, introduced in June 1996 (Heintz, 2003; Turok, 2008). The GEAR policies were launched in an environment in which the rand was depreciating and foreign exchange reserves were at an extremely low level. The strategy proposed a set of medium-term policies aimed at the rapid liberalization of the South African economy and underscored the shift from a redistributive, state-led economic trajectory towards one led by the private-sector with the state receding somewhat into a regulatory or intermediary role (Ndletyana, 2013). The low acceptance mode of GEAR by trade union federations eventually relate to the commitment on the will of practitioners that had to ensure that it is reduced to practice (Weeks, 1999; Turok, 2008; Ndletyana, 2013). The state of readiness of the public practitioners to drive implementation of such policies remains a matter to be questioned in relation to the organising language that has been inherited from the colonial past.

6.3 New Growth Path and National Development Plan (2030)

Introduction of the New Growth Path during 2009 that culminated to the development of the National Development Plan (NDP) which also could not survive evoking contentious debate from the union federations and alliance partners (Simkins, 2010). Comprehensive as it is the NDP run the risk of being another ambitious project introduced by politicians that can suffer power implementation due to administration antagonism by practitioners that are stuck within the organising language of modernity. That assert the issue on debate that in as much as politicians may introduce grand policies, as long as administrators are within the analytical frameworks that is informed by the rational modernisation language inherited from the colonial masters, progress in developing Africa and South Africa in particular remain a dream slowly becoming a nightmare. Such grand macro-policies also embrace the New Public Management (NPM) paradigmatic position that is dominated by neo-liberal connotations that is fixated within the modern conceptions.

7. Conclusion

The article has attempted to reflect on the notion of limitations of modernisation as the organisation language within the epistemological landscape of public administration which eventually have a consequence towards policy interventions within the complex arena like that of South Africa. The rationale of the debate was driven by the ongoing debate on the

limitations of science within the complex reality policy landscape like that of Africa with South Africa being the case in point. Modernisation as an organising language was related to complex public policy landscape through clarification of complexity thinking against complicated systems. The macro-policy strands that have characterised the South African polity since the inception of democracy had served as reference point to elucidate the fact that modern conception within a diverse society renders very little in terms sustaining policy interventions. The conclusion therefore is that, as long as African do rid themselves from the limitations of the modern conception of the west within the practice of public administration, the dream of having effective and sustainable policy interventions that will address the African realities is far from sight. That can only be achieve through reconsideration of the organising language that inform the epistemological position of Public Administration within Higher Education for purposes of aligning such to African context that is by nature diverse.

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