

Society, State, Nation and the People in the Democratic South Africa: Two Decades of Illusions in The Practice of Public Administration, Development Planning and Management

Dr. N.W. Nkuna

*Prof. J.P. Tsheola

Department of Public Administration &*Department of Development Planning & Management, University of Limpopo

Doi:10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n2s1p613

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to provide a conceptual argument in that as South Africa transcended beyond its democratic dispensation, an opportunity was missed in the process leading to transition to define a society, state, nation and the people for sustaining the democratic founding for purposes of public administration practice, development planning and management. That is done by critically portraying South Africa as a society, state, nation and locating the people for governance purposes within a democratic founding. It is argued that attempts are made to rewrite the history of the country with a view of bolstering its societal status, nation, state and the people without a profound context. South Africa has become what it is today due to its history that remains its defining factor if it has to locate its society, state, nation and the people. Having lost that opportunity during transition, governance has become so unwieldy in that those assigned with authority in the governance landscape, tend to confuse the roles of society, nation, state and the people and that eventually strain the fragile democracy by distorting the facts and the role of constitutional apparatus that are instrumental to the country's democratic founding. The conclusion is rather pessimistic in that as long as these issues are not properly located within the governance landscape; the democratic dispensation remains vulnerable for demise just like other democracies within the African continent with the potential of the middle class hijacking it from the vulnerable poor majority being the people that public administration practice has to serve.

Keywords: Society, state, nation, the people, democratic founding, public administration practice, development planning and management

1. Introduction

Cole (1994) put it that the prospect a new non-racial democratic South Africa was in a political horizon in that the direction of the country's future development will critically depend upon policy choices made at the time after transition to democracy. Compromises reached between the President F.W de Klerk's National Party (NP) and Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) with the 26 political parties that were represented during negotiations for the future of South Africa that was at the time when the country was in a turn that could not be reversible (Fukuyama, 1992; Cole, 1994; Beall, Gelb & Hassim, 2005; Turok, 2008; Alphonse, 2010; Buttler, 2012). Such created a hype with those that were dissenting in the name of Concerned South Africa's Grouping (COSAG) which was led by Mangusuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) which colluded with the right wing extremist Conservative Party (CP) in creating chaos that obstructed engagements on issues that would have delivered the democracy that is built on a solid foundation (Cole, 1994; Beall *et al*, 2005; Turok, 2008; Maharaj, 2008) without overlooking some of the important aspects like defining society, state, nation and the people in the democratic dispensation for governance purposes (Stinson, 2009). In putting forward the argument, this article begins by providing a synopsis of the problem with background and rationale for engaging the debate on such aspects for governance in the democratic South Africa after two decades of democracy. That is followed by partially reflecting on the ruling party's transition to government through the negotiated settlement with a view of justifying an assertion that an opportunity to redefine itself in the context of society that eventually formed a state with a unified nation has been lost despite provisions made within the country's constitutional founding. The ontological stand of the argument is informed by the epistemological position of systems thinking with biasness towards complexity theory and chaos propositions in that each system is defined through the context of its history (Leonard, 1991; Stacy, 1996; Cilliers, 1998; Nkuna & Sebola, 2012) that cannot be wished away hence South Africa had to recognise the injustices of its past in terms of the preamble of its constitutional founding. Same elements of deconstruction and hermeneutics are invoked to complement the conundrum within the phenomena of public administration, development

planning and management practice in South Africa that is veering towards the pathology of political hegemony by the ruling party that portrays the danger of reinventing apartheid within a democracy.

2. Synopsis of the Problem

Mutahaba (1989) while referring to other states in the Southern Africa that acquired their independence earlier to the fact that what happened and seemed to be so obviously attainable only twenty years within their democratic dispensations have become so difficult to date, with so many explanations being given to an extent that to catalogue them will be as good as developing a voluminous manuscript (see also Cole, 1994; Mamdani, 1996; Beall *et al*, 2005; Amoah, 2012; Nyamnjoh, 2013). The question remains that if South Africa is not going that route in an improvised fashion in this regard? The conclusion drawn is that as long as the post-apartheid South Africa does not find its way in locating these issues properly within the governance landscape, the democratic dispensation will remain vulnerable to demise and fade away just like experiences of other African states. This debate is of course taking place within the backdrop of contentions within the discourse that the progress South Africa has made within its second decade of democracy is apprehensive by pessimists to the effect that it is following the route of other failing states in Africa (Maserumule & Phago, 2014), while on the other hand Maphunye, Ledwaba and Kobjana (2014) argue that despite the minimal gains such as the attainment of franchise and human rights, public accountability remains the Achilles heel and major stumbling block towards substantive democratisation (see also Tsheola, Ramonyai & Segage, 2014). Just like the metaphoric expression by Mutahaba (1989) to the effect of one dwelling in the forest and end-up neglecting the trees; or the continuation of an African Lawino song (Nyamnjoh, 2013) where in all progress made will be bolstering the grip of the colonial masters even at the stage of democratic dispensation.

3. Rationale and Justification

The build-up towards the negotiated settlement of the democratic South Africa has been characterised by lot of speculations from various formations that wanted to secure space within the outcome of the process within ethnic tribal lines (Cole, 1994; Turok, 2008; Buttler, 2012) like Inkatha Cultural formation of 1975 that eventually changed to be the political party predominantly for the Zulu ethnic group. Such was an element of protectionism of the ethnic group survival after liberation (Cole, 1994; Turok, 2008). That in it justify the argument of locating society, state, nation and the people for governance purposes as change was unavoidable. This is somewhat created a state of turbulence within the country due to trepidation from such role-players as they were not sure as to what will be their stake on the outcome of negotiated settlement (Cole, 1994; Turok, 2008; Clapman, 2012; Buttler, 2012) due to the threat to positions that were strengthened by the apartheid regime of having a divided society (Stinson, 2009) that was ethnically defined through states and nations afforded status of self-governing states (Cole, 1994; Turok, 2008). The major role players within the process being the ANC backed by the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) formations and labour as well as the ruling NP at the time created the pull and push forces that participated during the negotiated settlement and become so intense to an extent that the winner after transition has to contend with compromises that were made during the negotiations like the "sun set-clause" (Cole, 1994; Wolpe, 1995). Those compromises found expression within the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 200 of 1993 as repealed and eventually in the final Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, from now on to be referred to as the Constitution of 1996.

Interestingly, Wolpe (1995) visualise at the time that it might surely be too soon that only one year after the election of the Government of National Unity (GNU) to be expected to be able to provide a meaningful balance sheet of a *systemic* process of transition which has only just begun. Ironically, at the same time the neighbouring Zimbabwe was on the verge of experiencing turbulence during early 2002 as another time and context seem to suggest that certain mechanisms and processes of societies in transition show similarities even in very different circumstances (Melber, 2003). The question remain that what lessons has South Africa drawn from other African states that have acquired independence earlier? Hence it is not surprising that instead of drawing from such experiences, South Africa followed the route of maintaining guidance by the West to come out with various policy models that are predominantly informed by the colonial masters that storm into the country with a view of assisting the newly found democratic dispensation to settle. The intentions of such moves by the West remain an issue questionable as from another angle it might be argued that the rush was premised on ulterior motives to maintain their grip in the Southern part of Africa even after democratic dispensations.

4. South African Democratic Founding

Dealing with a democratic developmental state that among its elements are the people that constitute a society, state and nation with a Constitutional suffrage became a bone of contention as the ruling party approaches its second decade being in office with the rubric of democracy remaining a contested notion (Tsheola et al, 2014) despite hallow rhetoric that politicians afforded it especially if a clear distinction is not made for such elements for purposes of governance (Beall et al, 2005; Van Donk, Swilling, Pieterse & Parnell, 2008). The preamble of the Constitution of 1996 do provide for the establishment of a society that can heal divisions of the past based on democratic principles; with an open society with government based on the will of the people and building a united democratic South Africa which will able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations. That eventually set a tone for concepts "society, state, nation and the people". However, such conceptions were not contextualised beyond the constitutional preamble that was meant to heal the divisions of the past as the immediate history provide for such on ethnic lines with states and nations within the state. Of course that was in line with the analytical position of scholarship authority at the time that could not open space for critical conceptions and contextualisations beyond everyday language for governance purposes. For example Cloete (1993) defined society as a number of human beings who belong to an association established to protect and protect particular interests. Of course that draws closer to the everyday usage of the concept that simple means people in general living together in communities or a particular community of people who share the same customs and laws (Hornby, 2012). Cloete's (1993) definition as derived from the everyday language conception was premised on the notion that in every community there are innumerable societies which are private institutions that are created without the consent of any public authority. Yet even community remain a notion that requires another discourse for purposes of locating it within the governance landscape in a democratic polity (Cavaye, 2002; Nkuna, 2013). Such definitions are somewhat misplaced given the context of the South African constitutional founding that embraces building of a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. The constitutional founding sought the South African society distinct as to the narrow conception by Cloete (1993) or beyond the everyday language usage in that what constituted society during apartheid era juxtaposed drastically that came to be after the democratic founding; same as state, nation and the people that would gain sovereign recognition within the family of nations. It has however emerged that Cloete's (1993) definition was veering towards issues of civil society than a single broader society that encompass a nation within a defined state and the people.

However, it is argued that such narrow conceptualisations did find expression within the Constitution of 1996 despite the provision of an open society with government based on the will of the people and every citizen equally protected by the law, hence in many ways South African society remains deeply divided by race, ethnicity and economic inequality (Stinson, 2009). The conception of "society" and "the people" in the Constitution of 1996 necessitates engagement in the discourse for operational purposes as governance out there involves interactions that are dynamic and complex in nature (Nkuna & Sebola, 2012). Therefore, it also remains questionable whether the ruling party, as a major role player in governance, has grasped the loci or draw a line on the notion of these aspects within government mandatory context in the supposedly post-apartheid South Africa without invoking some aspects of apartheid legacy that are fundamental to Africans due to a diverse character of the polity; hence the dictum of "unity in diversity" as well government of "the will of the people" wherein every "citizen is equally protected by law". The answer that may be, it need to be stated that it is of paramount importance that in as much as the apartheid regime was designed for specific purposes by the colonial masters, there are however other aspects that are basic to human systems that could not be wished away as they are grounded within indigenous nature of Africans in general as well as the existence of human kind in general (Leonard, 1991; Stacy, 1996; Cilliers, 1998; Nkuna & Sebola, 2012). The notion that Africans are by nature evolve through endogenous family kinship with a traditional leadership system (Schapera, 1967), is not of the apartheid making; it is the nature of human kind as social beings that existed within the form of society that modern civilisation came to abuse for other purposes especially in South Africa and Africa (Leonard, 1991; Mamdani, 1996; Amoah, 2012; Nyamnjoh, 2013). That has within a broader conception, been regarded as the colonial conquest of Africans in body, mind and soul that has eventually led to real or attempted epistemicide through the decimation or near complete killing and replacement of indigenous epistemologies with the epistemological paradigm of the conqueror in full to an extent that Africa lost an articulation in founding its own society, state, nation and the people for governance, development management and planning beyond independence. Of course one need not lose sight to the effect that such phenomenal landscape was predominantly clouded by other parties that were within themselves undergoing transformation towards the state of readiness to participate in the new democracy.

5. From Liberation Movement to Political Party

The anatomy of national liberation movements in South Africa, and Africa generally, and the characteristics which informed them, differed from those that emerged elsewhere (Mamdani, 1996; Taylor, 1997; Martin, 2003; Alphonse, 2010; Amoah, 2012). More so colonisation in South Africa was referred to be of a special kind (ANC, 1997) in that the colonisers were living together with the colonised. Colonial domination led to different forms of organisation and mobilisation which were self-generated in many instances and spontaneous in nature due to having to survive under oppressive conditions (Nkuna & Sebola, 2012). With Christianity on the other hand that has tended to stress acceptance of injustice and oppression as simply a side effect of political organisation (Martin, 2003). That has arguably become the form of escapist theology that has legitimised suffering while reinforcing an oppressive theory of justice to Africans. In South Africa, the ANC started its non-violent struggle in 1912 against the institutionalised racism and disfranchising of black majority by white minority of settlers (Turok, 2008; Linde & Burrell, 2010; Alphonse, 2010; Buttler, 2012). The movements' objectives were set up in the 1955 Freedom Charter, and mainly revolved around ending the apartheid rule and create a democratic society free of racial discrimination (Turok, 2008; Everrat, 2009; Alphonse, 2010; Buttler, 2012). It need to be mentioned that even at that time of framing and adoption of the Freedom Charter, there has been part of the movement that broke away to form the Pan African Congress (PAC) as they could not agree with the principled position of the charter (Cole, 1994; Turok, 2008; Maharaj, 2008; Buttler, 2012). The party was however banned in 1960 and a campaign of violent repression and formation of its armed wing "Umkonto we Sizwe" came into play (Taylor, 1997, Turok, 2008; Linde & Burrell, 2010; Buttler, 2012). The four pillars of the movement's struggle at the time was internal mass mobilisation; international mobilisation, underground work and military struggle, were combined with secret negotiations between government and ANC in the end of the 1980s (Cole, 1994; Melber, 2003; Turok, 2008). It remained a question as to whether the movement had in mind at that time that the envisaged four pillars of the struggle was intended to be realised within a diverse society like South Africa as the movement was also gaining support for their cause by international sanctions against the apartheid regime (Cole, 1994; Turok, 2008; Alphonse, 2010; Buttler, 2012) through the support of the United Nation's (UN) member countries that were against the regime.

The World Trade Centre negotiations within the auspices of CODESA resulted in an Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1993 that culminated to the first democratic elections that took place during April 1994 wherein the South African society as the nation casted their votes together on equal capacity as the citizens of a single state (Fukuyama, 1992; Suttner, 2003; Turok, 2008). ANC won such elections and have been in power ever since and that systematically position it as the ruling party to be in a state of hegemony to an extent that there is a phenomenal blurring lines in defining the society, state, nation and the people as distinct to the political party due to its mass based ideological approach (Stinson, 2009; Ndletyana, 2013) with the party's structures aligned to that of government. However, the attainment of political power in 1994 was therefore a major advance but not a complete victory because economic power and access to resources are still not a reality for the majority (Taylor, 1997, Turok, 2008; Stinson, 2009; Alphonse, 2010); of which such majority cannot be clearly articulated in the polity of South Africa due to lack of clarity on the society, nation, state and the people within a hostile political hegemony of the ruling party with a blurring lines between state and political party (Stinson, 2009; Ndletyana, 2013). Therefore there are still other issues that need refinement to ensure that the government mandate that was translated to the final Constitution of 1996 is realised. It is that process a liberation movement like the ANC had to ensure self-transformation to be a ruling party of the legitimate democratic state like South Africa in post 1994 with the aspiration of being developmental.

6. South Africa: The Society

The intrinsic function of public administration, development planning and management is the governance of society with purpose of governing, and thus government and governance are the core concepts that help to organise the study (Raadschelders, 1999). Given the challenges facing contemporary societies, it is not surprising if Bergman (1985) put that "as a society, we walk a tightrope between limbo and extinction. We're on a threshold of survival, in a society threatened as never before to find the way, with less and less margin for error. The decades ahead to the year 2000 and beyond, as were the decade's just past, can be interrogative, presumptuous, or insane. And we have to create our own flight plan, because this Earth didn't come with one telling us how to get to the future safely. The winds of change are blowing across this land. We are a nation that cannot afford many more crash landings, yet we keep putting untrained pilots in the cockpit and thinking we will all somehow come out all right, no way and no longer". This statement was made at the time when the debate was going on as to what the state of society will be by the year 2000 within the nations created. This tells the extent to which society and governance of the state in different circumstances like that of the transition to democracy in

South Africa beyond narrow scholarship contention at the time. Of course Bergman (1985) statement was more to the impact of science and the relevance here is of principle in that do the society that is sought to be for a given form of government that is close to accurately reflect the realities on the ground within that state or the other way round. In as much as society in everyday language refer to people in general that are living together in communities with policies in place that shares common customs and values for a purpose (Hornsby, 2012); it remain a contention if South Africa has transcended to be a democratic single unified society post 1994 that have managed to put in place as an element of the state with a government that is capable to withstand the winds of change that are blowing across the land so as not to afford the nation more and more crash landings, to use Bergman's (1985) words. The on-going credible elections that put in place regimes are not similarly like putting untrained pilots in the cockpit and thinking that things will all somehow come out all right without crash landings. However, the essence here is an attempt to locate the South African society that came into being in the post-apartheid South Africa in relation to the mandate given to government to steer the new democratic state founded after 1994.

6.1 *Conception of South African Society*

Still a profound by Cloete (1993), a society, or a human society, is a group of people related to each other through persistent relations, or a large social grouping sharing the same geographical or virtual territory, subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. Although there are some commonalities with the version of the Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary (2009) that provide for society as large group of people who live together in an organised way, making decisions on how to do things and sharing the work on what needs to be done, it can also refer to all people in a country or several similar countries. The latter part connotes a society that is beyond nationhood or national identity that exists within a defined state like South Africa while the initial is in line with the ideological position of the ruling party in disregarding the factoring of the dominant cultural expectations that eventually become a drawback in locating the single South African society. As mentioned earlier that due to scholarship authority of the time, Cloete's (1993) definition of society partially found expression through the democratic founding with the latter part not being afforded formal authoritative space within the governance landscape due to the ruling party's political hegemony yet that is paradoxically provided for in the Constitution of 1996. Of course the Constitution of 1996 provides for the establishment of such society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights that is also open in nature. Such connotation sound close to the divided societies that were defined through ethnic lines in the apartheid South Africa as its openness and fundamental rights do protect diversity that cannot fit well within modern conception veering towards institutionalisation, more so if such society will eventually lay a premise for a nation and national identity (Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez, 1997; Stinson, 2009).

Although classically, society is a collective concept and nothing else in convenience for designating a number of people (Chodorov, 1959; Meyer *et al*, 1997); the fact that it remain open and have a democratic base with the value aspect within diversity makes it dynamic to locate it within a dispensation that is grounded on the human rights like that of South Africa. However society is different from these other collective nouns in that it conveys the idea of a purpose or point of contact in which each individual, while retaining his identity and pursuing his private concerns, has an interest (Chodorov, 1959) like it is the case in South Africa. While a family is held together by family ties, a crowd consists of a number of people bent on some common venture, such as a baseball game or a lecture. Society, on the other hand, embraces the father and the son, the doctor and the farmer, the financier and the labourer a host of people following all sorts of vocations and avocations, pursuing a variety of goals, each in his own way and yet held together by a purpose which is in each of them (Chodorov, 1959). But society is still a word, not an entity.

6.2 *The South African Society surfacing*

In as much as a given society may be described as the sum total relationships among its constituent members; the template of South Africa's experiences of organising mass mobilisation against apartheid, national domination and racial capitalism informs current social relations and the type of transformation that surfaces overtime (Taylor, 1997; Meyer *et al*, 1997; Rolandsen, 2007; Alphonse, 2010) with much of the historical legacy lifted by democratic transition (Suttner, 2003; Beall *et al*, 2005; Buttler, 2012). Particularly if the phenomenal state of a given time is defined through its history (Leonard, 1991; Stacey, 1996; Cilliers, 1998; Von Holdt, 2010; Nkuna & Sebola, 2012) that characterised by complexities with the variation and selective retention that provide the basis for recursive interaction between meaning processing and action; and, a temporal perspective holds that the dialectic tension between two opposites provides the evolutionary motor that instils social systems within dynamics (Poole & Van de Ven, 1999; Borghoff, 2011). In the social

sciences, a larger society often evinces stratification and/or dominance patterns in subgroups that adopt an isomorphic shift depending on circumstances even though they are within a defined space that can qualify a state (Meyer *et al*, 1997). Insofar as it is collaborative, a society can enable its members to benefit in ways that would not otherwise be possible on an individual basis; both individual and social or common benefits can thus be distinguished, or in many cases found to overlap and become more intricate if it is left within a shadow (Meyer *et al*, 1997; Stinson, 2009) like in the case of South Africa where it had not found an expression for state governance.

A society can also consist of like-minded people governed by their own norms and values within a dominant, larger society. This is sometimes referred to as a subculture, a term used extensively within criminology (Cole, 1994). More broadly, a society may be described as an economic, social, or industrial infrastructure, made up of a varied collection of individuals. Members of a society may be from different ethnic groups, such as Vatsonga/Machangana, VhaVenda, BaSotho, Zulus, Xhosas, Ndebele, Swati, and Afrikaans in the case of South Africa. Of course Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) was propagating for the protection of the Zulu ethnic group to have a fair share in the post-apartheid South Africa (Cole, 1994) that was indirectly strengthening the position of the White minority to resist change as well as the intention was to create separate state of the Zulus which the major role players in the process being the NP and ANC were not prepared to compromise beyond that hence IFP had to re-board the electoral train just few days before it took off without them. Therefore the provision of society within the South African context is still in limbo with the vulnerability of it to be left hanging within informal or shadow arrangements that are hallow in principle. That can be equivalent to the time bomb as it occasionally surface in the discourse and in reality like the sporadic xenophobic attacks as well as dissatisfied communities in terms of demarcation of municipalities with some informally exerting tribal hegemony within the governance landscape at the local sphere of government.

7. Is there a South African Nation?

It is ideal that the focus of each liberation movement is defined by its constituency and distinguish its members within the "us" from "them" point of view (Taylor, 1997; Rolandsen, 2007). However, the ANC was grounded on the principle of national unity using non-racialism, democracy, anti-discrimination and non-sexist as its criteria. That has been the principle adopted by other liberation movements like the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and SACP. Such principle may be misleading towards the comprehension of the notion of a nation and its evolution like that of South Africa given its diversity and its founding history. This is also exacerbated by the fact that as early as 1882, Ernst Renan (1823-1892) while delivering a lecture on the meaning of a nation, proposed at that time that to analyse an idea which, though seemingly clear, lends itself to the most dangerous misunderstandings (Renan, 1882) in referring to the state as vast agglomerations of men found in China, Egypt or ancient Babylonia, the tribes of the Hebrews and the Arabs. The unending struggle to free human beings from all forms of oppression has even left the ANC intellectuals uncertain and divided about the value and significance of the achievement of representative democracy in 1994 (Stinson, 2009; Buttler, 2012; Ndletyana, 2013) yet indeed the South Africa of 2014 is in many ways different to that of 1994 when the country has just emerged from its apartheid past (Maphunye, 2014). Of course the goals and strategies of these movements emerged from their vision of seeking a just society with the rejection of any form of identity that could be divisive yet the Constitutional dispensation of 1996 that came out through the negotiated settlement provided for the Bill of Rights that paradoxically provide for protection of different formations ranging from ethnic based to language and cultural orientation (Taylor, 1997; Stinson, 2009). Then the issue of a just society also remain elusive for both contextualisation and operationalisation within the landscape of a constitutional dispensation that South Africa came to be.

7.1 The mushrooming of the nation of its kind

Everrat (2009) put that it is worrying that no-one, including the ruling party seems to know what a normal post-apartheid state looks like, or how one will know when that is reached. It is such sentiments that Cole (1994) raised during the build-up to the long awaited all inclusive elections for the whole country as the nation. It is the same phases of regular elections that Maphunye *et al* (2014) are curious to establish whether it had ensured accountable and representative governance with consolidated democracy or have just worsened the situation. Many indulge in demographic reductionist games, and see 'normal' to be a state where every sphere of life and sector of the economy is an exact mirror of the racial make-up of the country. Such contention that Senge (1990) articulate that the danger will be that if such reflection will be through a broken mirror that will eventually fail to expose the bigger picture as the whole. Not non-racialism at all, but also not 'wrong', given the need for the redress and transformation (Everrat, 2009). But South Africa has been in a 'transition' or undergoing 'transformation' since 1994 overwhelmingly, and appropriately, based on racial redress while at the same

time creating worse inequality than ever (Stinson, 2009). How will one know when South Africa has stopped becoming and has arrived still remain a question to be answered? The ideological focus was to highlight the material, emotional and psychological deprivation caused by apartheid and racial capitalism (Cole, 1994; Taylor, 1997; Everrat, 2009) and as a consequence issues of locating the reality of having a society, state, nation and the people were overlooked with illusions that it will take care of itself despite assertions in the constitutional founding. As Poole and Van De Ven (1999) affirms that organisational theories attempt to capture a multifaceted reality with a finite, internally consistent statement and they are essentially incomplete. The space that regimes takes during the phases of marshalling South Africa from its democratic founding found itself in one way or other being dominated by thinking paradigms that were informed by those finite and essentially incomplete theoretical dispositions despite that the Constitution of 1996 provide for the South African state as a sovereign state in the family of nations. The on-going debate in the discourse by the main actors such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the SACP, in the macro-economic policy landscape of the country from the adoption of the Reconstruction and Development (RDP) after 1994 that culminated to the introduction of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy during 1996 bears testimony to the effect that common grounding is far from sight as there appears to be confusion on matters of society, state and that of the people or organisations.

The regime of 2009 has introduced the National Development Plan (NDP) through the Growth Path, which is also failing to have a smooth landing within the ruling alliance with a threat of reaching a point of bifurcation (Stacey, 1996; Cilliers, 1998; Farmer, 2007; Nkuna, 2013) that might veer away from the point of equilibrium (Cilliers, 1998; Nkuna & Sebola, 2012; Nkuna, 2013). The policy landscape is characterised by evidenced misconception on what the state can do for the nation versus the society and the people due to the dislocation within the context that once a policy is passed through mandatory government structures becomes the state matter beyond the political party. The issue of theoretical lenses applied always surface wherever these role players convene for a common purpose (Farmer, 2010) with the trade union federation often questioning the rationale despite the tripartite relations in place. Of course good theories in this regard are by definition limited and fairly precise picturing that does not attempt to cover everything and would fail to meet the parsimony criterion if it did (Poole & Van De Ven, 1999). The scope of conditions are one means of expressing the limitations of theories and less evident but as effective, is reliance on a limited and carefully prescribed set of assumptions and explanatory principles. These assumptions and explanations however, implicitly state what is relevant and what is not and they determine the operative scope of a theory by specifying what can be explained or understood and what must be regarded as not of interest for the theory or as irrelevant.

It also need to be mentioned that theories always constrain the theorist's field of vision; one of the canons of good theory construction is to recognise those limitations (Whetsell, 2012). On this basis, to provide exposition of a nation and the state that South Africa have become to be, such divergent theoretical assumptions need to be considered without the danger of relying on a single one that in most cases belongs to dominant paradigm or ontological stand of the time (Nkuna & Sebola, 2012). At the same breath it is dangerous to rely on a theory that lags behind the times and yet remains the yardstick for making decisions and passing judgment (Bourgon, 2007, Nkuna & Sebola, 2012). Therefore in determining whether South Africa has settled as both the nation and state, there is a need for careful theoretical reflection that will serve as an accurate yardstick for the purpose. The problematiques as they are currently surfacing might need constant visitation with rigor as to whether such has been achieved with the background of the etymology of a nation for modern conception and contextualisation.

8. Matter of Nationalism and Nationality

Nationalism is one of the most powerful but elusive political forces of the time - here in South Africa as elsewhere (Barber, 1987). Within the South African state, powerful nationalist movements have competed with each other, and yet there are still legitimately asked whether there has been, or indeed is, a South African nation? But Barber (1987) continued to assert that before facing that question directly, there is a need to first offer a classical statement on nationalism, the approach this article has adopted despite that Barber's (1987) assertions were made before the founding of a democratic South Africa, the principle applies. He referred to the citation of Hans Kohn (1945) who wrote that nationalism is a state of mind; it is a new idea which fills man's brain and heart with new thoughts and new sentiments, and drives him to translate his consciousness into deeds of organised action. Therefore if the state of minds of South Africans are still stuck within the ideological notion of locating nationalism within the ethnical, traditional and cultural defined nationality like it is being phenomenal among some of the Venda ethnic group that are boasting with the stickers that articulate the slogan of the apartheid era homeland state of "shumela hayani" that directly translate to everything one do must benefit the tribe. Such phenomenal dispositions are of cause found to be odd in relation with the democratic

founding with incidents like that of the Vha-Venda Lobby Group that gave the Chief Executive of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) gifts in order for him to increase the recognition of the Vha-Venda ethnic group within the national broadcasting space (Macube, 2014; Mahlangu, 2014). Such has also surfaced during the rape trial of the then Deputy President of South Africa, now sitting President wherein his supporters were chanting the slogan of 100% Zulu boy. That in essence was affirming that whatever process that unfolded during the trial in the democratic society had a strong ethnic undertone that is being ignored hence it is argued that this is a time bomb waiting to explode.

Nationality is therefore not only a group held together and animated by common consciousness, but it is also a group seeking to find its expression in what it regards as the highest form of organised activity, a sovereign state (Barber, 1987); of which in this case would be a South African state as nationalism demands the nation state. Kohn (1945)'s assertion has rightly forced the discourse to consider not only the nation in isolation, but also to consider it in relation to the state, and the relationship between the two (Barber, 1987). Therefore nationalism is an ideology that proclaims the nation-state as the ideal foundation for political stability which maintains an overriding claim on the loyalty of its citizens (Cloete, 1993). In essence nationalism can tie together citizens of the state to spur them on to exert themselves for a common benefit, being their welfare in this case. That transcends beyond ethnic and tribal lines within a nation state, hence the contention of the rainbow nation in the case of South Africa although according Beall *et al* (2005) the romance of the transition has faded and the miracle metaphor is evoked only infrequently.

On the other hand a nation is a body of people of common origin, language, historical association, culture, customs, symbols and possibility also religion (Cloete, 1993). That may also refer to a community of people who share a common language, culture, ethnicity, descent, and/or history. In this definition, a nation has no physical borders and community is roped in as a factor of defining the nation of which the issue of community warrant a separate discourse in relation to this as it is also immense (Cavaye, 2002; Nkuna, 2013). However, it can also refer to people who share a common territory and government by implication it can be the inhabitants of a sovereign state irrespective of their ethnic make-up like that of South Africa. From the international relations point of view, a nation can refer to a country or sovereign state with nationality therefore becoming a membership of a nation or sovereign state, usually determined by citizenship, but sometimes by ethnicity or place of residence, or based on their sense of national identity. But the question still remains as whether is by chance South Africa managed to locate itself as a state.

9. Is there a South African State?

The proliferation of the administrative agencies that starts from the assumption that these agencies are a part of the modern constitutional order, brings about an administrative state (Einstein, 2008). But however, Von Holdt (2010) put it that in the case of Africa the literature on the state is quite sharply divided between broad-sweep generalisations about Africa as a continent of failed states, exemplified by what Ferguson (2006) wherein calls for the 'dubious recent culturology' of Chabal and Daloz (1999) and the attempt to identify a record of relatively effective states through a more nuanced analysis of specific states such as that of the likes Mkandawire (2001). But for Africa in particular, the states as they exists were designed by the colonial masters for purposes of exerting their rule for ulterior purposes (Mamdani, 1996; Nyamnjoh, 2012). The most noticeable characteristic is the degree to which nation states use the state as an instrument of national unity, in economic, social and cultural life. The nation state promoted economic unity, by abolishing internal customs and tolls that are endogenous to African evolution. Nation states typically have a policy to create and maintain a national transportation infrastructure, facilitating trade and travel. This notion tempt the authors to refer back to the classics of Marxism in that the state is a product and manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class contradictions within the society (Lenin, 1976) in that it arises where, when and to the extent that class contradictions objectively *cannot* be reconciled. Yet, conversely, the existence of the state proves that class contradictions are irreconcilable, hence the birth of nation states like that of South Africa that could hardly fit in within the modern description of a state. The nation state is a state that self-identifies as deriving its political legitimacy from serving as a sovereign entity for a nation as a sovereign territorial unit. The state is a political and geopolitical entity while the nation is a cultural and/or ethnic entity. The term "nation state" implies that the two geographically coincide, which distinguishes the nation state from the other types of state, which historically preceded it. On the other hand the administrative state is in Dwight Waldo's (1913-2000) classic public administration that democratic states are underpinned by professional and political bureaucracies and that scientific management and efficiency is not the core idea of government bureaucracy, but rather it is service to the public. Therefore, in terms of the constitutional founding of 1996, the Republic of South Africa is one sovereign, democratic state founded on the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and advancement of human rights and freedoms; non-racialism and non-sexism; supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law; and universal adult suffrage, a national common voters roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government to ensure accountability,

responsiveness and openness.

Chodorov (1959) however, put it that the state is not, as many political scientists would make it, an inanimate thing as it consists of people or human beings, each of whom operates under an inner compulsion to get the most out of life with the least expenditure of labour. They differ from other human beings only in the fact that they have chosen the political or predatory means of satisfying their desires rather than the economic or productive means. The fiction that the state is an impersonal institution, something society constructs for its own benefit, serves to hide, even from its members, the nature of its composition (Chodorov, 1959), hence the alleged spate of corruption, maladministration, and nepotism by those holding office within the state apparatus in South African government. Yet, if it were not for the economic advantages it grants to favoured blocs, and if it were not for the emoluments and honorifics of political position, there would be no state; there the state are people. The South African people are themselves a state. As outlined somewhere the challenge would therefore locating the people.

Nation states have their own characteristics, differing from those of the pre-national states (Barber, 1987). For a start, they have a different attitude to their territory, compared to dynastic monarchies in that they are semi-sacred, and non-transferable. They have a different type of border, in principle defined only by the area of settlement of the national group, although many nation states also sought natural borders like rivers or mountain ranges. They typically had a more centralised and uniform public administration, development planning and management practice than its imperial predecessors in that they are smaller with populations less diverse. The modern state however has four main characteristics (Barber, 1987; Botes, Brynard, Fourie & Roux, 1996). *Firstly*, it occupies a precise space in terms of geographical location. There are borders that constitute a territory in that one has to enter a state by crossing such borders. *Secondly*, it has a government which claims sovereignty with a fully-fledged administrative system in place. *Thirdly*, it is recognised a sovereign by other states of the international community in that it can govern its affairs within its own right. *Finally*, there is a machinery of government that is manned by government servants within the institutions of the state. Therefore governments exist because they have the resources to translate the citizens' needs into collective action to cater for the society (Raadschelders, 1999). Whatever era or area, citizens had some kind of government that will continue to exist for an undetermined period of time only if it is able to meet the most basic expectations of its population that comprise of the people. It is matter of such society, nation, state and the people that this article argues to the effect that it had not yet found proper articulation in South Africa.

10. Does South Africa Have One People?

The words society and community are used often interchangeably by politicians and government officials (Cloete, 1993; Cavaye, 2002; Masango, 2002; Nkuna, 2013) and such become more blurring when the issue of the people and society come into play. 'People', just like 'nation', is an ever present feature of modern political landscape hence such orders are characterised by a peculiar form of attaining legitimacy in that they rest on the ultimate moral bedrock of 'the people' (Poza, 2011). On the other hand, while attempts are made in understanding democracy from the everyday language usage, that simple means rule of the people, one immediately run into a problem of how, in practical terms, to define the people (Birch, 1993; Beetham, 1999; Van Beek, 2005; Tsheola *et al*, 2014). However, in terms of the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2009) the word people is used to refer to persons in general or everyone, informally to the group of people that one is speaking to; but "the people" refer to a large number of ordinary men and women who do not have positions of power in society. The latter are the people that the governance within a defined polity is intending to serve or various political formations alleged to be representing for governance purposes. The South African Constitutional founding provide for both "people" and "the people" through its preamble. Provision is made of "we, the people of South Africa" and "the will of the people" as well as that of "our people". Such has been crafted carefully to accommodate the diversity through the provision "united in our diversity" prefix within the constitutional preamble which is rather paradoxical for operationalisation purposes in that it is not the people that mandate government, but citizens that are also diverse in nature. It is such diversity that creates a challenge in locating the notion of one South African people for governance purposes while at the same time affords them the space of their cultural traditions and customs without bias. So far the ruling party have failed such test in relation to the governance of South Africa as a state of such omissions tend to surface informally during service delivery confrontations as well as during the assumption of responsibility and accountability issues.

Instead in this debate people and the people are contrasted to citizens as there is a folly of confusing the two especially when it comes to participation requirement for governance purposes. A citizen refer to a person who is a member of a particular country and who has rights because of being born there or because of being given rights thereof as distinct to people or the people. Such qualification in the case of South Africa is provided for in terms of section 3 of

the Constitution of 1996 in that there is a common South African citizenship wherein all citizens are equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship; and equally subject to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. On that basis therefore citizens are the ones that have a mandatory authority to the formation of government that eventually assume that of state mandate of governance of the people. Therefore it is illusionary for actors within the governance landscape to claim full representation of the people instead as it is only citizens that participate through the mandatory processes.

11. Conclusion

This article has attempted to conceptually address issues of Society, State, Nation and People in the democratic South Africa as it transcends beyond the second decade within the arena of the practice of public administration. The commission that characterised the transition to democracy has left the ruling party to live with compromises of the negotiated settlement. Such compromises have obscured the space of the parties to articulate on the notion of society, state, nation and people for authentic democratisation in South Africa. Therefore, the onus rest with the ruling party on finding its way through governance as well as operationalisation of such aspects without invoking or scratching the wounds of the past. Due to the nature of a blanket provisions in the constitution, the matters are open for informal manipulation by other formations in the society that might create a state of chaos in the making. Such informal exploitation of those matters finds its way through to the formal governance and therefore creates instability. More so if the ruling party stamp its political hegemony by not entertaining such issues whenever they surface. The conclusion drawn therefore is that if South Africa is not prepared to confront those aspects to the level of constitutional provision without suppressing them, the fragile democratic founding might be the making of gloom future for the country.

References

- Alphonse; B.A. 2010. *From a liberation movement to a modern democratic party*. Sweden. Olof Palme International
- Amoah, L. G. A. 2012. Constructing a New Public Administration in Africa: Reflections on Philosophical Clarity and the Process-Oriented Turn. *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 34(3): 385–406
- Barber, J. 1987. *Is there a South African Nation?* The South African Institute of International Affairs Jan Smuts House
- Beall, J., Gelb, S & Hassim, S. 2005. Fragile stability: state and society in democratic South Africa. *Journal for Southern African Studies*, 31 (4): 681-700
- Beetham, D. 1999. *Democracy and Human Rights*. London: Blackwell Publishers
- Bergman, J. 1985. *Accomplishments of Science by the Year 2000*. In Burke, J; Bergman, J and Asimov, I. The impact of science on society. Washington, DC. Langley Research Centre: 31-55
- Birch, A.H. 1993. *The concepts and theories of modern democracy*. London: Routledge
- Borghoff, T. 2011. The globalization of firms as social systems. *Chinese Business Review*, 10(9), 744-767
- Botes, P.S., Brynard, P.A., Fourie D.J. & Roux, N.L. 1996. *Public Administration and Management: A guide to Central, Regional and Municipal Administration and Management*. Cape Town. Kagiso Publishers
- Bourgon, J. 2007. Responsible and respected government: towards a New Public Administration theory. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 73(1): 7-26
- Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary. 2009. Third Edition. New York. Cambridge University Press
- Cavaye, J. 2002. The role of government in community capacity building. Queensland, Australia. Department of Primary Industries
- Chodorov, F. 1959. *The Rise and fall of Society: An Essay on the Economic Forces that Underlie Social Institutions*. New York. The Devin-Adair Company
- Cilliers, P. 1998. *Complexity and postmodernism: Understanding complex systems*. London. Routledge
- Clapman, C. 2012. From Liberation Movement to Government: Past legacies and the challenge of transition in Africa. The Brenthurst Foundation. Discussion Paper 8/2012
- Cloete, J.J.N. 1993. *Democracy: Prospects for South Africa*. Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers
- Cole, K. 1994. (Ed) *Sustainable development for a democratic South Africa*. London. Earthscan Publications Ltd
- Everatt, D. 2009. *Nationalism, class and non-racialism in the 1950s and beyond: the search for convergence*. Paper presented to the Yusuf Dadoo Centenary Conference: Marxism, Non-racialism and the Shaping of South Africa's Liberation Struggle University of Johannesburg, September 2009
- Fukuyama, F. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York. Maxwell Macmillan International.
- Hornby, A.S. (Ed) 2012. Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary. International Student Edition
- Lenin, V.I. 1976. *The State and Revolution: The Marxist Teaching on the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution*. Peking. Foreign Languages Press
- Leonard, D.K. 1991. *African Successes: Four Public Managers of Kenyan Rural Development*. Los Angeles. University of California Press

- Linde, A & Brunnell, 2010. *From a liberation movement to a modern democratic party*. Alexandria Conference
- Macube, B. 2014. No wife for SABC boss. Sowetan of 23 June 2014
- Maharaj, M. 2008. *The ANC and South Africa's Negotiated Transition to Democracy and Peace*. Berlin. Borghoff Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management
- Mahlangu, I. 2014. Chief slams "gift wife" for SABC boss. Sunday Times of 22 June 2014
- Mamdani, M. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of late colonialism*. London, Princeton University Press
- Maphunye, K. J. 2014. South Africa: A unique democratic transition? Paradox and prospects. *Journal of Public Administration*, 49(1): 140-160
- Maphunye, K. J., Ledwaba, M. L & Kobayana, M.K. 2014. Democracy without Accountability, or Accountability without Democracy? "Born Free" perspectives of public representatives in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration*, 49(1): 161-179
- Martin, E.J. 2003. Liberation Theology, Sustainable Development, and Postmodern Public Administration: Struggle and Neoliberal Threats. *Latin American Perspectives*, 30(4): 69-91
- Masango, R. 2002. Public Participation: A critical ingredient of good governance. *Politeia*. 21(2): 5265.
- Maserumule, M.H & Phago, K. 2014. The Path Traversed – 20 Years of Democracy in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration*, 49(1): 1
- Melber, H. 2003. (Ed). *Limits to Liberation in Southern Africa: The unfinished business of democratic consolidation*. Pretoria. HSRC Press
- Meyer, J.W., Boli, J., Thomas, G.M & Ramirez, F.O. 1997. World Society and the Nation - State. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(1): 144-181
- Mutahaba, G. 1989. *Reforming Public Administration for Development: Experiences from Eastern Africa*. New York. Kumarian Press, Inc
- Ndletyana, M. 2013. *Policy incoherence: A function of ideological contestations?* In Pillay, U., Hagg, G & Nyamnjoh, F. State of the Nation: South Africa 2012-2013. Addressing inequality and poverty. Cape Town. Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)
- Nkuna, N & Sebola, M.P. 2012. Public administration theoretical discourse in South Africa and the developmental local government: A need to go beyond modern thinking. *Journal of Public Administration*, 47 (2):
- Nkuna, N. 2013. Contextualising community participation for giving effect to the local government turnaround strategy in South Africa. *South African Association of Public Administration and Management*. Conference Proceedings of the 2nd Limpopo SAAPAM Chapter Conference held on the 15 and 16 August 2013, Polokwane, The Ranch Hotel
- Nyamnjoh, F.B. 2012. Potted Plants in Greenhouses: A Critical Reflection on the Resilience of Colonial Education in Africa. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 47(2): 129–154
- Poole, M.C & Van De Ven, A. 1999. Using paradox to build management and organisational theories. *Academy of Management Review*. 14(4): 562-578
- Pozo, L.M. 2011. The Essence of the People: Citizenship, Class Accommodation and the Construction of Political Identities in Britain, c. 1640-1850. *Critical Sociology*, 37(6): 797-815
- Raadschelders, J.C.N. 1999. A Coherent Framework for the Study of Public Administration. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 9(2): 281-303
- Renan, E. 1882. *What is a Nation?* A lecture delivered at the Sorbonne, 11 March 1882. 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation, Oeuvres Completes (Paris, 1947-61), 01:887-907. A translation in Zimmern, A (ed.). *Modern Political Doctrines*. London. 1939: 186-205
- Rolandsen, O.H. 2007. *From Guerrilla Movement to Political Party: The Restructuring of Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Three Southern States*. Oslo. Centre for the Study of Civil War/International Peace Research Institute
- Schaperera, I. (Ed). 1967. *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa: Studies in Culture Contact*. London. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd
- Senge, P.M. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation*. United States of America. Doubleday
- Stacey, R. 1996. *Complexity and Creativity in Organizations*. New York. Berret-Koehler Publishers Inc.
- Stinson, A.T. 2009. *National Identity and Nation-Building in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Political and International Studies. Rhodes University
- Suttner, R. 2003. *Cultures of the African National Congress of South Africa: Imprint of Exile Experiences*. In Melber, H. 2003. (Ed). *Limits to Liberation in Southern Africa: The unfinished business of democratic consolidation*. Pretoria. HSRC Press
- Taylor, V. 1997. The Trajectory of National Liberation and Social Movements: The South African Experience. *Community Development Journal*, 32(3): 252-265
- Tsheola, J.P., Ramonyai, N.P & Segage, M. 2014. Twenty years of faltering democracy: Service planning and public participation in South Africa. *Journal of Public Administration*, 49(1): 392-405
- Turok, B. 2008. *From the Freedom Charter to Polokwane: The Evolution of ANC Economic Policy*. Cape Town. Avusa
- Van Beek, U.J. (Ed). 2005. *Democracy under construction: Patterns from four continents*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers
- Van Donk, M., Swilling, M., Pieterse, E. & Parnell, S. (Eds). 2008. *Consolidating Developmental Local Government: Lessons from the South African Experience*. Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Von Holdt, K. 2010. Nationalism, Bureaucracy and the Developmental State: The South African Case. *South African Review of Sociology*, 41(1)
- Whetsell, T.A. 2012. Theory-Pluralism in Public Administration: Epistemology, Legitimacy, and Method. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 43(5): 602– 618
- Wolpe, H. 1995. The Uneven Transition from Apartheid in South Africa. *Transformation*, 27: 88-101