THE MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FERMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE IMPERATIVE TO PROFESSIONALIZE THE MBA AND OTHER RELATED MANAGEMENT QUALIFICATIONS: A CATALYTIC IDEA WHOSE, TIME HAS NOT ONLY COME BUT REQUIRES SERIOUS CONSIDERATION FROM BOTH THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS

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Abstract
This article attempts to place the cat among the pigeons, in an attempt to open up a debate and discussion hitherto, narrowly approached by South African Business Schools. Business Schools in South Africa have historically shirked their responsibilities, in placing this issue on the agenda and discourse of MBA degrees and other related management qualifications to professionalize. The question arises will such professionalization serve the greater good, allow for the utmost integrity and guard against decisions and behaviour that advance narrow ambitions, that harm the enterprise and the societies it serves. On the other hand South Africa has recently seen and witnessed in the popular press, Minister Trevor Manuel’s blunt admittance at the Government Leadership Summit that our government should stop blaming apartheid for its repeated failures, amid the heartbeat of corruption, greed, laziness, incompetence and nepotism created by some of our democratic leaders within the ambit of South African politics, within its bureaucracies and indeed within the private sector. Manuel has confronted and courted tremendous criticism from various quarters within the African National Congress political alliance structures. This article therefore, attempts to discuss these issues from the perspective of MBA qualifications and other related management qualifications, that can give some impetus to the very integrity that is required within the body politic, the bureaucracy, the private sector and within the public sector as a whole, given the all embracing reality that corruption and other forms of blatant abuse of power on the part of both public and private sector managers in general, has become the order of the day, and blatantly endemic in South Africa. Professionalization will in some way allow for integrity, honour, high and impeccable values and stymie the further emergence of corruption among managers within the public and private sector systems within South Africa. The paper therefore, under this background will attempt to articulate and discuss in a balanced fashion and manner, the importance of the issue of professionalization of management qualifications, using Minister Manuel’s attack on corruption, the criticisms advanced in respect to his thesis, the Harvard Business School’s article and campaign in 2009 to turn management into a formal profession. The reality that corruption has created its own political economy and the culture of incompetence undermines South Africa’s future. The basic premise of this paper, is therefore, to
simply posit that owing to the management and leadership ferment in South Africa and, the imperative to professionalize the MBA and other related management qualifications: A catalytic idea whose time has not only come but requires serious consideration from both the private and public sectors.

Minister Manuel’s Thesis
According to Manuel (2013:5), “the civil service holds the key to transformation and therefore, passing the buck has to give way to accountability. In most developing countries the senior civil service becomes a self-serving elite, interested only in its own welfare, its own empowerment and its own bank balance.” This is exemplified by the huge inequalities in many developing countries, were senior civil servants become part of the elite. They are all well educated, have access to economic opportunities, receive remuneration many times greater than the average income in the country and, therefore, become an obstacle to change in society. Manuel further reiterated unequivocally (2013: 5) that “public service is a calling and a responsibility. It is a choice exercised. We choose to serve and accept that we will be comfortable, or we enter the private sector in pursuit of wealth, we cannot do both.” In a developmental state the civil service must be professional, skilled, adequately remunerated and rewarded, but humble and show the greatest amount of humility. Humility towards the poor is the greatest attribute of a civil servant. The National development Plan (NDP) has elevated the task of building a capable and developmental state to a higher priority, by means of developing a professional civil service; and these principles are rooted in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, in terms of and the struggle for a democratic society. In other words, the role of the state as a key agent of transformation must be acknowledged by politicians, its bureaucracy and society as a whole. It, therefore, must be clearly understood and recognized that South Africa has not suffered from a lack of policies, but rather a lack of the ability to effectively implement and has succumbed to self-serving politicians, shameless bureaucrats and given credence by some sectors, organizations and a few individuals in civil society. The three main problems identified by the NDP are:

- High policy turnover of staff;
- A critical shortage of technical skills; and,
- No effective staff development policy.

Manuel further added (2013) that “through laxity, we fail our people repeatedly and nineteen years into democracy our government has run out of excuses. In other words we cannot continue to blame apartheid for our failings as a state. We cannot plead ignorance in respect of mediocre services over two decades, and therefore the time for change, for a ruthless focus on implementation and accountability has now arrived.” It is obvious that without a professional civil service rewarded for its competence and commitment to the constitution, South Africa does not stand any chance of transforming, the country.

Manuel in reality performed “heart surgery” on the country by courageously admitting to South Africans, what voters have been begging our leaders to recognize. By the same token, Business Schools, Management Schools in general, the mining sector, the agricultural sector, large
corporations, the public and private sectors have to take stock and, lead from the front in respect
to a buy in into the NDP and support government and the country to deal with corruption,
nepotism and so on. They have the responsibility to assist with a frontal attack upon poverty,
inequality and unemployment. They have a moral responsibility to tackle the boundaries of
demic corruption and usher in, a charter for sound values and ethics in respect to management
principles, international business, public and private sector morality and so on. This can in some
ways be dealt with by means of professionalization of management echelons across sectors and
therefore, Business Schools in South Africa must be charged with the responsibility to take a
leadership role in this regard.
Trevor Manuel, it can be interpreted is merely stating that as South Africans and with particular
reference to the civil service and to government in general that, after nineteen years of
democracy, the government cannot blame apartheid, plead ignorance or inexperience for its
failings, and that South Africa must be hard on itself on the basis that whatever else this practice
may masquerade as, it is not empowerment, it is theft, and therefore, there should be no blurred
lines. The Minister is merely reminding us as South Africans that given the challenges that
remain, we as a people and a country have been less than assiduous in applying ourselves to
obtain different outcomes. Is this not a case of poor leadership and management? Is it not a case
of our leaders and the management echelons of our private and public sectors, coupled with
government that has lost the moral compass, necessary for reconstruction, after nineteen years of
democracy? Is it not the case for regrouping and thus ushering in a new era of service delivery,
given our past history and indeed the struggle against apartheid? Is it not time for Business Schools
to take the lead and confront these issues head on and, within the ambit of their teaching
programmes and therefore, set the agenda, in preparing future managers who join the public and
private sectors, and who are responsible for shaping these services in terms of the morals, values
and ethics required, with a view of playing an important part in reshaping and reconstructing
management principles based on morality, fairness, and service, coupled with a finite
responsibility of restoring the moral compass, that has in many ways, gone totally astray in a
short period, over the last two decades?
Our challenge therefore, is to build a non-racial society while taking the required steps to
address the inequities of the past. Without moral leadership at all levels and without a strong and
effective government, we will not be able to reverse the effects of apartheid in respect to
opportunities available for all South Africans, but in particular to the historically disadvantaged.
This is the nub of the issue, and therefore, it is incumbent upon all role players that define
themselves as patriotic South Africans, that they all lead from the front, in making this a reality.
In this regard, all education institutions, be they schools, universities, Business Schools can make
a salient and necessary contribution of speaking out in respect of inefficiency and poor service
delivery, corruption, nepotism and so on, in order to set the trajectory for nation building by
ordering management principles, in a direction necessary for public and private sector ethics and
the morality required in terms of governance. It has to be acknowledged and recognized that
markets on their own will not reverse centuries of subjugation and oppression. The role of the
state is to intervene decisively, in order to provide opportunities, and therefore, it achieves this by providing high quality services to the poor and historically disadvantaged, especially services like the provision of water, housing, education, health and so on. In wanting to achieve this, the state has a moral duty to regulate private business in order to prevent exploitation, environmental damage and uncompetitive rent seeking. There is nothing wrong with these propositions? It talks to Business Schools and the type of graduates they produce, and who take up management positions within the public and private sectors of the country. These propositions further speak to the values, ethics, and morals and to the dictates of the very management principles that MBA graduates undergo in their training, and therefore, there has to be some sort of a professional charter or association like other professions, for management graduates to be registered, and, if they transgress the charter or the rules of the association, explicit punitive action and sanctions must be placed upon them. This will rid the South African management system within both the public and private sectors of malaise and rot in terms of the nuances that need to permeate decorum and behaviour within the echelons of management, within organizations and institutions, from the perspectives of sound leadership based on the rule of law and encapsulated in terms of high morals and values. It will also reduce the processes of entitlement and usher in an era of dealing with complacency, the culture of indifference within all aspects of management.

There has to be a deep understanding of the role of the state, and this role must inspire the government and its civil servants, it must inspire the managers within the private sector, it must inspire universities, colleges and Business Schools to champion the fight against past inequalities, promote the general good and enhance the quality of life of all South Africans, irrespective. All of this, according to Manuel (2013: 21) “is due to a complicated intergovernmental system, but is more often the cause of a risk averse public service, that thrives on passing the buck.” In other words, the type of managers employed the quality of decisions taken by them, incompetent and self-serving managers with little experience and a lack of academic training and tied to politicians, in respect to their appointments to powerful positions, and a host of other similar factors, breeds corruption, nepotism, and cronyism. It devastates the state and paralyses the government and, sets in the processes of collapse which can be the precursor to a failed state. This is precisely happening in South Africa and, it is our responsibility to deal with these issues because through our own laxity we fail our people and the country and, therefore, South Africa can easily become a pariah of the world. What we require is a semblance of patriotism, an understanding from where we come, an understanding that thousands lost their lives for the democracy we live in and for restoring our dignity. Therefore, we simply require common sense for getting things right. In other words, there has to be consequences for our leaders and particularly civil servants, managers in general and, those that transgress the limits of the rule of law and the accepted norms of good practice and management principles. If this is not rectified soon, then we sit on the abyss of doom and, a point of no return and therefore, according to Manuel (2013: 21), “all of this, most certainly bedevils the best of policies.”

CRITICISMS AGAINST MINISTER MANUELS THESIS
It is only natural, in a country like South Africa that the National Planning Minister’s thesis discussed above, received political blows over his comment that the government cannot blame apartheid for service delivery failures. The National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) general secretary, Fikile Majola branded Manuel as “a maverick,” and for regarding himself as a “super minister” and part of a new breed of “service delivery activists” (Merten, 2013: 5). This unprecedented attack on a cabinet minister by a member of the African National Congress (ANC) executive committee (NEC) is a question of interpretation and thus, it is necessary to place in context these criticisms. When, there is an attack on government, we find that the alliance partners appear to close ranks and criticize one of their own. Majola said that “Manuel’s comments were no different from the opposition Democratic Alliance’s open society vision and the insistence, by the foundation of former president FW de Klerk that South Africans serve the constitution not the other way round. That Manuel is frustrated and he aims to get out of the collective leadership of the alliance, and always preferred to be the one who sets the agenda.” (Majola, 2013:5). However, it has to be clearly understood that Minister Manuel is no stranger to speaking out. In early 2011, he described then government spokesman Jimmy Manyi as a “worst order racist. It has also to be remembered that it was the same Manuel, in spite of his revolutionary credentials, who stated or asked “who is the Dalai Lama at the time the government refused the Dalai Lama a visa to enter the country. As long as Manuel maintains the status quo there is no problem within the alliance. This is contradictory and goes against the grain of democracy. In some instances Manuel has been chastised in some instances for behaving like a free agent by his very comrades when he goes against the status quo. Is this not the question of double standards on the part of the alliance and the African National Congress? It must therefore, be asked also, is there a rise of African Nationalism within the ruling party? Majola (2013:5) went on to say that “we are unapologetic that government should be accountable to the ruling party the ANC, and implement alliance adopted policies.” There is a very serious problem with Majola’s response because the ruling party is accountable to all the voters and by implication to all the citizens of South Africa. This fundamental tenet of democracy perhaps is being eroded and being paid scant reference to. In contrast, Manuel had stated and cautioned the summit in his prepared speech that civil servants in most developing countries became “a self – serving elite, interested only in their own welfare, their own empowerment and their own bank balances” (Merten, 2013:5). Manuel, unflinchingly stated that civil servants are not accountable to the ruling party, certainly not directly, and certainly not as civil servants.

It is obvious that the alliance is at a cross road in respect of service delivery, that the labour unions influence is waning with ordinary workers, that their backs are against the wall, because they fail to understand that management principles in reality and, for all intents and purposes strengthen governance of a country and, therefore, are apt to selectively interpret information in a point scoring exercise. They have not clearly understood that civil servants must be professional, politically neutral and accountable officials, as set out in the National Development Plan (NDP) adopted by the Cabinet, Parliament and the ANC at its December Mangaung national conference. There had been unnecessary and unprecedented attacks on Manuel by Nehawu and
that such criticism in the popular press is generally unfounded or for that matter, Manuel is being misquoted and misunderstood. He is stating the reality as it exists. However, we cannot deny that, the past determines the present. But then this cannot be accepted as a truism and cannot be accepted as justification of the leadership crisis within the country. It is unfortunate that politicians who are public leaders with a responsibility to respect the truth can be so dishonest in the pursuit of their own narrow and parochial and selfish interests, to justify their views. It has to be understood that no amount of accusing apartheid two decades into democracy will alter the situation and understanding that irrespective, we need to fully understand that the present under our current leadership and its bureaucracy, will determine our future. If we fail to heed our problems and take immediate management action, the future will be bleak and we will have lost the impetus of creating a satisfied population and a winning nation. In this regard the arguments constantly put forward in respect of the innumerable structural problems inherited from apartheid, the centuries of oppression and colonialism are real, but should not hold us bondage, but rather prepare us to deal with these issues in a coordinated manner and secure our future. History must not be forgotten, but it is not history that places the bread on the table. It is the resilience of pride and hard work that must guide us, as a nation. The question arises can our leadership and its management echelons sacrifice what is needed for the plight of the nation or will they remain indifferent? Indifference on the part of our leaders, the unions, our managers and so on that might cause the next revolt in this country and, this is what Minister Manuel is attempting to address. By and large the criticism leveled upon Minister Manuel do not hold ground and his critics besides being emotional and personally attacking him, do not provide solutions to rebuilding a decaying civil service and indeed do not acknowledge that our management core, by and large is very poor to engineer meaningful change and to administratively run the complex machinery of the state and government.

HARD WORKING CIVIL SERVANTS IMPROVE SOUTH AFRICA PRESIDENT ZUMA

On Monday April 8, 2013 the South African President Jacob Zuma, stated in the Star that “In today’s global and competitive world, a country’s success is determined by many things and key among these is a patriotic, effective and efficient cadre of public servants that translates government policies and programmes into tangible benefits. In this regard he added that our resolve is to continue tackling poverty, unemployment and inequality, on the basis that, the time and resources, and therefore, we must improve the way we work and get better results within government services by building a caring and efficient public service. There is still a long way to go before we reach our destination of a fully effective developmental state, outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP).” These statements are in tacit agreement with the words of Minister Trevor Manuel, for which he is being criticized. On October, 11 and 17 the Star and the Mercury reported President Zuma and Manuel go head to head and Manuel’s view on apartheid wrong says Zuma. The Presidents subtle attack on Minister Manuel is in stark contradiction to his statements on the importance of civil servants, in South Africa today, in
respect of achieving a developmental state that the President so passionately labours and expounds.

It is obvious that many of our leaders including the upper echelons of government bureaucracy have failed to provide a better life for all and are prickly because of their own inadequacy, have taken offence (Thabi, 2013: 2). How does the president account for public funds wasted in the years since the ANC came to power? And then there are those in denial about the long term damaging effects of apartheid, are twisting Manuel’s comments and, as expected, singing their “move on chorus.” Manuel’s critics felt he needed a lecture on apartheid. Manuel did not say apartheid was not damaging and he most certainly did not argue that the effects of exclusion and oppression could be reversed in 20 years. “How disingenuous for the president to deliberately distort Manuel’s warning and attempt to deflect from the failings of this government” (Thabi, 2013:2)? The reality is simple in almost 20 years of democracy and freedom there has been a lacklusture performance of government in almost all spheres of democratic engagement, coupled with poor management and administration leadership. Every year the auditor – general continues to unearth billions in unauthorized, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure. This cannot be the fault of apartheid but directly the fault of the type of civil servants that make up the civil service of South Africa. How long can we justify the mediocrity of the civil service? South Africans, its political leadership, corporates and managers in general must own up to the past and indeed to the corruption and malaise since the dawn of democracy in 1994, by acknowledging its ill effects, and attempt to build the country and thus create a better life for all.

According to an article on April 12 in the Daily News, “journalists caught up in crossfire” (Dodds, 2013:2) reports that there is “no contradiction in Zuma, Manuel’s views: government.” President Jacob Zuma’s spokesman, Mac Maharaj said, “Apartheid denialist reporting” had ignored 99 percent of the president’s speech to mark the 20th anniversary of the assassination of SACP leader Chris Hani. He said there was “no contradiction” between Zuma’s remarks and those of Planning Minister Trevor Manuel. SACP deputy general secretary Jeremy Cronin, Democratic Alliance spokesman Mmusi Maimane, and United Democratic Movements Bantu Holomisa also weighed in on the debate. “Cronin said that Manuel had been set up by “shoddy journalism” and “crude ideologues” in coverage of his remarks. The general slant gave the impression that comrade Trevor was exonerating apartheid. He pointed out that Manuel had in fact said “an effective and strong government was needed to “reverse the effects of apartheid, on the opportunities available to all South Africans. He further states that the use of the word “blame” had been unhelpful and that the issue was merely “to take active and collective responsibility for transforming the country. He added that, “the continued, systemic impact of a colonial, semi-colonial and apartheid past. Maimane indicated “that all are aware of the legacy of apartheid, but the democratic government had not delivered in its responsibility to combat this legacy by providing education and fast economic growth. The slow rate of delivery cannot be blamed on apartheid, but only on government itself.” Holomisa said “apartheid would remain “an important reminder of what not to do in building a nation. However, the time for the ANC led government to blame its failures on apartheid is over. The government had to take full
responsible for the failures and scandals such as “the dysfunctional education system, crumbling infrastructure, Sarafina 11, the arms deal, the Oilgate and Nkandlagate scandals, the Tatane and Marikana incidents, as well as the Central African Republic fiasco. I shudder to think what will happen to our country if government fails to arrest these problems and continues to blame them on apartheid” (Dodds, 2013:2).

CAN THE ALLIANCE PULL TOGETHER IN A PERIOD OF SINISTER PLOTS OR IS IT TIME TO GO IT ALONE

Disagreements within the tripartite alliance range far and wide, particularly between Cosatu and the governing party, amid an unfolding chess game of seizing overall command and control. These disagreements are volatile and therefore does not augur well for governance, the necessary leadership, the management and administration of the country, that is required in these troubled times in South Africa. The question arises are the issues that Minister Trevor Manuel raises amidst a host of other problems and challenges confronting the government and its alliance partners, a smokescreen to the greater and wider rifts within, the political alliance of the African National Congress.

The National Development Plan (NDP) which Mangaung adopted as South Africa’s development vision until 2030, following the adoption by Cabinet and Parliament, is met with reservations from Cosatu, while the metalworkers union, Numsa, arguably the largest and most militant affiliate, and the much smaller Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) have rejected the NDP. Is this one of the reasons that government is perhaps pandering to the unions and like a sacrificial lamb, castigated Minister Manual for his utterances? Cosatu shop steward councils in many provinces have discussed a series of marches in support of Cosatu campaigns against e-tolls and labour brokers and for fundamental socio-economic transformation. All of this has the real consequences of a strained political alliance, and the talking point now, as the fray continues over whether apartheid could still be blamed for service delivery failures, given the legacy of inequality, poverty and unemployment, under the present government. There are resounding issues between Sadtu and government in an array of areas that will have to be resolved by government. Its call for the resignation of the Basic Education Minister and her Director General, the issue of making teaching an essential service, removing the right to strike and so on.

Cosatu has vigorously opposed the proposals for a youth wage subsidy. “The issues are in reality endless within the tripartite alliance and an intricate power play is the order of the day within the ANC, buoyed by a display of unity behind Zuma, as he attempts to crackdown on ill discipline and lack of delivery from Limpopo to the Eastern Cape and, the youth league, while Cosatu deals with its own challenges, including social distance between leaders and members” (Merten, 2013:19). According to Merten (2013:19) a manifestation of this power play is the accusation of mismanagement against Cosatu general secretary Vavi, whose outspokenness against tenderpreneurs and corruption within government ranks, has rubbed many up the wrong way and according to Professor Buhlunga the contestation around Vavi was a “proxy for the bigger war, within the alliance. Buhlunga further states that “what is happening is the knives are drawn and people are in their little corners. The alliance is in serious, serious trouble. The ANC feels a
militant Cosatu is too big and too uncomfortable to have around. There is really a clear but subtle, attempt to domesticate Cosatu” (Merten, 2013:19). Merten (2013) further adds that “if Vavi is gotten rid of, according to Buhlungu, then a compliant Cosatu would be on the cards as the governing ANC continued to control levers of power and patronage.” However, this could backfire: Cosatu affiliates themselves are divided and federation wide shifts are under way. There are indeed a host of other issues and nuances that have to be dealt with that go beyond this review. What is certain is that all of these issues are causing serious problems within the country, its civil service, within government and its management, upon the management of the private sector and contributes to inefficiency and lowered productivity, and to the detriment of the South African population.

Independent labour market analyst Terry Bell (2013 in Merten) states that the “alliance was in trouble amid moves to isolate and possibly remove Vavi and Numsa general secretary Irvin Jim. This divide is about strategy, tactics, and leadership amid a cloak of unity.” There has been a great divide between the SACP and Cosatu historically under post 1994 democracy. The reality is the all embracing fact that alliance relations have ebbed and waned, but at crucial moments when tensions and public acrimony seemed to herald a split, partners have drawn back. This is a major drawback, this does not assist the consolidation of democracy, it does not heighten service delivery, it does not allow for the invoking of management principles within the civil service, but, it allows for a free for all and therefore gives credence to the government and its bureaucracy, it allows the ruling party to behave as it likes and, to define the South African political agenda on its own terms, thus lessening the processes of accountability and negating the rule of law. After nearly 20 years of democracy, the time has arrived for labour unions to flex their muscles and call the government to order, or remain silent and allow the state to govern without accountability and hamper the emergence of proper constitutional democracy, in fact allow the country to slide dangerously, into a one party state and possible dictatorship. Is it not time for the labour unions to go it alone?

Appointing Manuel to head the NDP portfolio is seen as a slap in the face in some circles. To many this is a major problem. Can the government deal with it or is it allowing Manuel to be used by nefarious forces and its own inadequacies to sacrifice him for political expediency? “Will Cosatu stake its hopes on being able to persuade the ANC to produce what it calls the Lula moment? The reference to ex Brazilian president Luiz Lula da Silva’s second term until 2010, when he brought about sweeping socio–economic change, became shorthand for a push for speedier and fundamental change in South Africa since the Cosatu national congress last September” (Merten, 2013:19). There does not seem to be a unity of purpose within the political alliance and it does not seem that that the Lula moment will be invoked by government because, it will not be allowed to do so by many within the ruling party, because they would want to maintain the status quo and entrench themselves further into nepotism, cronyism, corruption, cadre deployment and seize control of the state coffers. This, therefore, leaves fertile ground for contestation in the election year that is around the corner, in 2014.

CULTURE OF INCOMPETENCE UNDERMINES SOUTH AFRICA’S FUTURE
In our quest to be the fairest of countries, protecting the weak against the strong, we have created a system that often protects such incompetence (Wijnberg, 2013:16). This is precisely what Minister Manuel has attempted to place on our political and management agenda. Wijnberg (2013) indicates that in a recent article explaining that almost 40 percent of piped water was lost on its way to customers is a stark metaphor for the cost of inefficiency and that this water loss is estimated to be in the region of some R7 billion in unrecovered billing and not to mention the environmental cost. This shines the light on a tiny portion of the billions lost to the country due to inefficiency and poor service generally. The efficiency campaign by Public Service and Administration Minister Lindiwe Sisulu shows the government has moved from silent worry to intent to act. This Minister also faced unnecessary criticism from the unions as alliance partners. Such criticism in South Africa has become a culture that does not serve the country well and does not bode well in respect of service delivery and to redress mediocre service delivery that has taken root in almost all spheres of business in South Africa.

However, it is just not a government problem. According to Wijnberg (2013), “inefficiency and sub – standard delivery is prevalent throughout the corporate world and even bump their nasty heads against the small business sector.” Inefficiency in the corporate sector is expressed through bank managers who do not return calls, cell phone companies that systematically overcharge and then do not refund the monies and in mines whose poor production methods cause acid water that destroys whole swathes of land. Think of the last time you needed a repairman asks Wijnberg. She states in this regard, typically only half will arrive on time, if they arrive at all, half of those will deliver the promised quote and it is extremely unlikely that the job will be done on time and to specification. This is the work culture in present day South Africa both in the private and public sectors. This is a deep systemic challenge that is draining away both our ability to create the future we dream of and the belief that we will ever get there. Where does it come from and how do we solve them asks Wijnberg? (2013:16). In reality we have created a workforce according to Wijnberg that is starting to expect to be rewarded no matter their ability to produce the goods.

In the public sector we can see repeated examples where underperforming chief executives are “retrenched” with massive payouts. Corporations that promote managers in order to fix their black economic empowerment scorecard rating and then do not train, mentor, guide or address incompetence and poor performance are just as complicit. The result is, layer upon layer of people in managerial positions who lack the critical skills to do the job effectively and who are left ignorant of their own shortcomings because these are never addressed. This is where management and Business Schools must play a leadership role. This role must be actually defined by them in order to lift the standard of management potential within the work environment. People who are not qualified are being promoted to meet scorecard challenges and those around them are fearful of speaking out, for the consequences for doing so appear to outweigh the cost of having to work around them.

The Commission for Conciliation, Arbitration and Mediation (CCMA) has been established to help the employee the employer. Unfortunately, its flaw is that it is designed to default to protect
the employee, as only the employer ever pays. For the employee, the worst case is that they come away with no compensation, but more often than not, just to get rid of the irritation the employer ends up paying out. The system rewards inefficiency, makes peers and managers afraid to tackle incompetence and perpetuates a belief that the employer is by default the one that ends up paying. “The CCMA claims a 70 percent settlement rate, meaning that in 70 percent of cases the employer is encouraged to get rid of the problem, whether justified or not. The system encourages companies to ignore poor performance rather than risk the consequences of dealing with it, and more disconcertingly, it stands in the way of job creation” (Wijnberg, 2013:16).

While big business may be reluctant to employ staff because of the unions, many small and medium enterprises (SME’s) are reluctant to employ new staff because of their fear of the CCMA. When people are promoted but not called on to perform at that level of effectiveness, the institution perpetuates an expectation that poor performance is acceptable. This is the culture that has been accepted in both the private and public sectors of South Africa, exacerbated by overtly inflexible rules, regulations and laws. This has to be seriously looked at and within reason overhauled, in order to restore a winning work culture across all sectors within the country. When the system builds in a mechanism that protects this poor performance and entrenches non – delivery as a norm, the pain of creating a new job outweighs the pleasure of growing a business, and without business, and without business growth there is no tax income for the country to fix the leaky pipes. Is this not the reality in present day South Africa? Is it not a case of taking things for granted? Is it not a case of poor management and a lack of accountability? Is this not a culture that has creeped into our social, political and management fabric of democratic South Africa? Is this not a true reflection of the generally poor management personnel employed within the different sectors of the country and exacerbated by poor political leadership? These are the questions that South Africa has to grapple with.

Inefficiency will now grow faster than the economy does unless we reject incompetence. In the SME sector, that means demanding work performance, and if needs be, standing up to the unbalanced system of the CCMA and fighting for employer rights also. If this is not done, then South Africa will slide further into the abyss of incompetence, inefficiency, and lowered economic growth. This is precisely what Minister Manuel has attempted to squarely place on the political and management agenda of the country, but much to his peril. The next time an employee takes a company to the CCMA the employer must fight for employer rights and must not settle for “getting rid of the irritation.” A demand for a refund of salaries, the cost of recruitment and training, and compensation for time and that of staff attending to the matter should be factored into the equation. Democratic rights are a two way street and cannot be the prerogative of workers and employees only. It is essential that this be done in order to develop a work culture, but more importantly to consolidate management principles without fear, let or hindrance. It is a question and matter of consolidating democracy in order to make South Africa a winning nation.

However, this stand will be all in vain unless corporates and the public administrative services of government start demanding efficiency and performance right across their management teams,
and unless Minister Sisulu does the same and supports Minister Manuel and, demands from her highest management, including fellow ministers. Unless we all make a stand now, it will be our future, not just water that leaks into the sand.

CORRUPTION HAS CREATED ITS OWN POLITICAL ECONOMY

Mark Heywood (2013:27) states that “after 1994 political commentators should have been wise to the likelihood that corruption was abandoned.” One guesses that its halt was related to corruption: another dodgy tender to another incapable contractor. A corpse that bears witness to the findings of the auditor general on municipal mismanagement is the stark reality in South Africa. After 1994 political commentators should have seen that corruption would become blight on our new democracy. The arms deal shows how the new government was immediately prey to an established global elite of corruption, people well trained in statecraft, aware of opportunities for grand theft. Observers would have done well to point out, then, that the government would be at risk from a new generation of home grown criminals, who would make corruption a growth industry and a redistributive system. Heywood (2013) points out that “good business planning would turn poorly managed government institutions, bad municipalities and corporations, provinces and government departments into personal financers. All that would be required would be a lack of morality and, occasionally, the willingness to kill. Had political scientists stressed these risks at the time, our then bona fide government and its exhilarated, trusting citizenry might have been less naïve.”

Corruption is defined by Corruption Watch as the abuse of public resources for private gain and, indeed, the reports of the auditor general, public protector and others show that the state’s resources offer easy pickings. Public – sector corruption robs the public purse of an estimated 10 percent of the government’s annual procurement budget. This amounts to about R25 to R30 billion each year. In other words corruption has established its own political economy. It is here that we got to realize that this is only the tip of the iceberg. It is here that management schools can play a pivotal role in identifying the causes of corruption and to teach managers how to deal with this scourge. It is their duty to do this and thus create a new breed and brand of managers who will fill managerial posts within both the private and public sectors, ushering in, a zero tolerance for acts of corruption and invoking management principles of the highest integrity. It has also to be realized by government and corporations that corruption flourishes because of short – sighted planning, which leads to economic stagnation.

Unemployment is massive and upward mobility within employment is restricted. Heywood (2013) points out that in this regard “people who cannot find productive employment in the private sector find it in the state, where controls are lax.” He further points out that unbridled corruption creates a vicious circle that deepens the economic impasse. Corruption involves the theft of value created through real economic production. It is the theft of money originally collected as tax, intended for reinvestment in economically or socially productive parts of the economy and society. This is the reality that Minister Manuel implies and alludes to in respect of the civil service and its leadership, and it is because of this reality and truth that his analysis is criticized. This situation bedevils the housing agenda, stifles education and health services.
delivery and keeps the poor in bondage. Manuel is merely saying that the power is in our hands and is making the case for required social justice.

HOW DO WE RATE WITHIN FINANCIAL MARKETS?
When rating agency Standard, and Poor’s decided last month to maintain a negative outlook on South Africa’s sovereign credit rating, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan angrily accused it of not acknowledging the adoption of the NDP at the ANC’s policy conference in Mangaung. This issue is cardinal, in that, it appears that in spite of the adoption of the NDP “there seems to be much division within the ruling party and its alliance partners. This stems from the tensions between the president and his ministers in terms of data points and interpretation to Standard and Poor’s analysis” (Barron, 2013:15). Standard and Poor’s director in South Africa Konrad Reuss, a graduate from Germany and an economics graduate states “it is not the adoption of the NDP that matters, but its implementation” (2013). With this in mind the agency will be closely watching the relationship between President Zuma and National Planning Minister Trevor Manuel. When Gordhan chastised the agency for not acknowledging its adoption, he may have been speaking too soon. Because, since then, Manuel and his NDP have been badly savaged by powerful elements in the ANC alliance and he now seems to be on a collision course with Zuma over remarks he made about apartheid.

The last thing Reuss wants to suggest that South Africa’s future rating might be dependent on the fate of any one individual and so he refuses to give a straight answer when asked whether he is concerned about the relationship between Zuma and Manuel. However, what he does say is that “as part of our analysis we assess political risk and dynamics within the government from a political and policy perspective are an important part of assessing political risk” (Barron, 2013:15). This is the nub of the issue, in respect of the arguments and dynamics of this paper, in that, the political situation in South Africa is very fluid, there seems to be no cohesion nor a oneness of political and management purpose and perspectives; that there is infighting and a fraying alliance; a rise of some sort of African nationalism within the ANC; poor service delivery; a poor cadre of civil servants; poor management structures; exacerbated by cadre deployment, and an internal hegemony of the ruling party, bickering among ministers, a frontal attack upon Manuel, who is one of their own; and this frontal attack is basically a scoring points exercise against Minister Manuel, without taking the realities of South Africa into consideration.

Reuss states “that you need strong champions like Manuel, who are important and therefore strong champions for the NDP to deal with implementation” (2013). Gordhan has argued that that Standard and Poor’s should have waited for Mangaung which brought the kind of policy certainty, the agency wanted to see. This is not wholly true given the attack on Manuel by the ANC and the president, and therefore as matters stand now, there is no certainty in respect of the implementation of the NDP. This is indeed a grave concern and does not augur well for South Africa in terms of consolidating the developmental state that it desires. Reuss disagrees on the basis that “for a long time, consensus on overall policy direction, especially with regard to economic policy was a strong underpinning factor for South Africa’s sovereign rating. This has certainly weakened somewhat over the last year or two” (Barron, 2013). This will emerge in
terms of downgrading not being premature, on the basis that there has to be prudent policy making and cohesiveness behind policy, which is not being experienced currently, but is being experienced in the debate between Manuel and Zuma. In many ways all of this weakens the civil service to deliver and places the bureaucracy in a limbo, in terms of implementation of the NDP and affects the management consensus and drive, in the private sector of South Africa. The tragedy will be an ideological divide within the ANC and its alliance partners, given the different views, a refusal on the part of some parties to endorse the NDP. Further that a damning report now spurs the ANC to address its shortcomings before the 2014 elections may in some ways have sparked the vitriolic attack upon Minister Manuel.

Manuel, in spite of the criticism and savage attack upon him is adamant that the role of the private sector in the NDP, saying that public companies should lead the change. There is no doubt therefore that Minister Manuel is looking to corporates and their management teams to lead from the front. There is thus a massive opportunity for Business Schools in South Africa to provide the leadership required in this regard, based on sound management principles, values and integrity. South Africa needs to learn from its business community and its Business Schools, because the arrogance of having it all has worn very thin. There is therefore, no doubt as Manuel has indicated and said that “due to a lack of accountability, we fail our people repeatedly and therefore, called for a clear divide between party affiliation and professionalism: the time has come for ruthless implementation” (Weavind, 2013:15). The question arises, if there is no consensus in the implementation of the NDP - will this further lead to greater corruption and ethically weak leadership that could lead to a rogue state status been accorded to South Africa?

The other issue is the interpretation of the NDP by some within the country – has the NDP replicated the much maligned Gear policies or is it a thinly veiled mirror of the policies of the Democratic Alliance? One thing that is certain is that the plan offers policy certainty, and will invoke and bring to realization the management and administration principles and discipline required within the civil service, in order to make South Africa, a winning nation.

The comprehensive discussion undertaken in this paper was not aimed at choosing sides but rather, to set the trajectory in respect of showing the importance of both the public and private sectors in terms of their importance to all facets of sound and impeccable management required within the country, and to stem the tide of policy uncertainty on the one hand, and on the other, to deal with all facets of corruption, nepotism, patronage and to pursue applicable and desired norms, values and ethical behaviour, to reconstruct democratic South Africa. It was aimed at applying sound management techniques and principles across the South African management structures based on the highest integrity and honesty. It is aimed at arguing the case of turning management in South Africa, into a formal profession, with guiding principles and an association or body that will formalize this call in terms of regulating the professional standards, behaviour and integrity of managers that serve the country, and to discuss other issues that may have a direct relevance on this vexing issue. The idea is simple that “among other things, to serve “the greater good,” “act with the utmost integrity” and guard against “decisions and behaviour that advance narrow ambitions but harm the enterprise and the societies it serves” (Harvard Business
School Review, 2009:1). This is underscored by the proposed, Hippocratic oath for managers by various Business Schools in the United States of America.

THE HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL DISCUSSION ON MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALIZATION

One may snigger at the above, but in 2009 the graduating class, at Harvard Business School, taking the pledge was around half of the 400 graduates. This was a triumph for a campaign that attempts to formalize management as a profession. What are some of the factors that have led to this rush to professionalize?

- “The current economic crisis;
- Students and graduates alike want to distance themselves from earlier generations of MBA’s, whose moral compasses were seen to have contributed to the turmoil, especially on Wall Street, the biggest employer of MBA’s in the United States;
- To rebrand as being virtuous managers by putting their marketing lessons into practice;
- They are entering the worst job market worldwide for graduating MBA’s in decades;
- Many see non-profit and government jobs as their best bet;
- Embracing the “values agenda could prove useful;
- They want business education to operate in a different way and want higher expectations from faculty;
- Maximizing shareholder value does not satisfy graduates anymore;
- They want to get away from the cartoon image of business that they are taught in the classroom, but to get useful practical advice on how to lead a firm in the 21st century;
- MBA professionalization and the accompanying oath is part of a larger effort to turn management from a trade into a profession;
- To create something along the lines of medical and law schools in respect of recognition and acceptance of management qualifications, for purposes of practicing as a manager” (Harvard Business School Review, 2009:2).
- To produce an MBA graduate that can uphold the integrity and importance of the qualification, in order to produce a graduate for purposes of meeting the imperatives of the African Renaissance; and
- To create a graduate who can deal with the socio-economic and political nuances, in a period of globalization and the changing paradigms of business and corporate initiatives in South Africa and Africa as whole.

The last two bullets above are therefore given shape and meaning as follows:

- “An individual who fully comprehends the meaning of education, that it is not an event but rather a lifelong process.
- A trailblazer assisting in addressing some of the key problems and challenges of economic development, in emerging economies.
- That he/she has transferrable skills, applicable across a wide range of sectors.
Is sensitive and capable of captaining and managing industries and organizations, with an intrinsic understanding of the relationship between business, society and the political economy.

One who is acutely aware of issues such as ethics and governance, environmental and resource sustainability, with a view of creating a socially just local, regional and global society?

One who understands that businesses do not operate in a vacuum, but are closely connected to government and civil society in terms of their operations.

A person who understands the complexity of the real world within which business operates and is able to use multidisciplinary approaches to deal with the challenges and problems.

An individual who is able to grasp the difference between management and leadership and make the leap when challenged.

Is well balanced in terms of analytical aspects of business education as opposed to social and emotional aspects.

Must be in a position to think critically and be able to solve problems and confront challenges in the real world environment where the luxury of time is almost non-existent and demands are extensive.

One who is humble enough to listen carefully to all stakeholders and their concerns and able to use the information gleaned from them to bring about appropriate solutions” (Regent Business School, 2013).

These are the issues that perhaps Minister Trevor Manuel is raising in the context of the civil servant and indeed managers within the public service. These are the issues that Business Schools must reflect upon, if they are to contribute significantly to management processes in South Africa. These are some of the issues that require careful deliberation in the context of the professionalization of management as a profession. There is no doubt that these issues are complex, but they have to be given special attention, in order to streamline the management profession. To this end there is a moral responsibility placed upon Business Schools to begin the debate and place it squarely on the agenda. To this end the South African Business Schools Association (SABSA) can play a cardinal role in this regard, rather than being a mere talk shop nursing its own and very fragile ego.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

It has not been an easy task to articulate these sensitive, intricate, complex and difficult issues within the ambit of this paper. While protecting the needy and encouraging free enterprise, these measures lead to improvements in education, health, transport, communications, housing, services and employment. The desire is to live with dignity. The struggle for democracy is only beginning. The struggle did not emanate from a memory of democracy, but the pursuit of an ideal. With apartheid defeated, now and only now starts the struggle for democracy, and do not be amazed if those in power are not on your side.
The moral inventory methodology is applicable to many different areas of our socio-economic life, according to Jack (2013:3). This needs to be applied to why we are not getting the results we want from our public service. This has to be used in looking, at why our Business Schools and our business leaders are not seeing the tangible socio-economic impact that our civil service and companies are capable of achieving. This moral inventory is needed by politicians, leaders, managers within the civil service, by Business Schools, in fact across the business landscape to assess, why they are not providing the leadership that is needed in times of the current crisis based on substantive issues.

Is it not time therefore, to begin the debate and discussion, in respect of, wanting to make management a profession. Irrespective of the outcome, this issue needs to be placed firmly on the agenda of South Africa Business Schools and the South African Business Schools Association. When shall we begin?

The issues discussed in this paper are not all encompassing and, would require robust discussion among South African Business Schools, in the immediate future. The issues raised above were abandoned, not least because there was no agreement in the United States and particularly at Harvard Business School, because there was no agreement about how managers should behave. A set of shared values is one of the defining features of a profession. Business Schools tend to embrace Milton Friedman’s claim that the only responsibility of business is to maximize profits, with the sole mission being to increase shareholder value. This nuance is now not wholly true and applicable in today’s world. One of the two main criticisms of the oath in terms of professionalization of the MBA as a profession is that, it is either unnecessary or actively harmful. Crimes such as corruption are punishable by law and shareholders that feel that managers have not acted in their best interests can sue them. In this regard the public and society that, is served by managers in government and the general civil service must also have this right.

Is it a case that by promising to “safeguard the interests” of colleagues, customers, and society, are the captains and future captains of industry simply short—changing their shareholders?

It has been argued that the goal of maximizing profits and shareholder value has become a justification for short—termism and, in particular, rapid personal enrichment. It must always be the concern of managers to secure the health and business viability of their organizations. The second issue is can we manage in good faith or in an ethical manner? Management must be spearheaded by means of peer review to hold managers accountable. These are meaningful interventions but it requires tacitly, a board or association that must register managers based on a set of rules and regulations, in order to deal with values and integrity of the profession, defined as management.

In many countries the taking of bribes has become a feature of management and South Africa is no exception in this regard. It would therefore challenge unethical behaviour. A way has to be found by the profession and by MBA graduates to work out a way to add teeth to the management profession. It will also allow for keeping managers abreast of the latest thinking in their field, developing a professional license or accreditation and setting up this organization will assist to punish unprofessional behaviour and curb corrupt practices.
The issue that no self-regulating professional body for managers could possibly monopolize entry to the profession. This can be catered for in the charter for professionalization. There are always exceptions to the rules. A professional license, accreditation or registration, will be a useful qualification, even if it were not a requirement for all managers. The differences between practicing management and say medicine, law or for that matter engineering should not deflect upon the onward march to make the MBA and other management qualifications a formal profession. There has to be a way to scrutinize effectively managers. There has to be in an era of transparency, the process of accountability, which is a requirement for trust, and will become a powerful force for business success. In addition, the Harvard Business Review (2009) states that “the financial crisis, the Enron saga and the recession will doubtless spark more scrutiny of managers and therefore, turning management into a formal profession may not be so naïve after all.”

An MBA oath encompassing a management oath in general and formalizing management as a profession can inspire future business leaders to think more about business ethics and therefore, will be an exceedingly worthwhile initiative. It will certainly not be a panacea but, it will be a starting point and a catalyst for a useful and probably necessary increase in the overall focus of business and government leaders and corporate social responsibility in South Africa.

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