

The Islands of Sanity in the Killing Fields of Inequalities: A Juxtaposed case in Management, Leadership and Governance Practices

“When the gazelle wakes up, it knows that it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning, when the lion wakes up it knows that it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It does not matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle, when the sun comes up, you better start running!”

(The African folklore)

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Abstract: This article was motivated by the conversations which ensued at ECMLG 2021 after a presentation on a similar topic. The question from the audience was whether the researcher and analyst still had tenure in the insider research project he had just shared. The response was in the affirmative, although serious concerns were expressed about the quality of the tenure, symbolized by the brutality and dehumanising tendencies of the then University Regime. Therefore, this project-based article at ECMLG 2022 continues from that debate. Mirrored on the national events as a result of the Justice Zondo Commission about State Capture in South Africa, the article focuses on one case of a university institution, which was arguable under a capture during a particular regime of a Vice Chancellor and Principal. The case of “The Killing Fields of Inequalities” is very typical of the national contexts, which is still steeped in settler colonialism and in a structured racist system, strangely almost thirty years into constitutional democracy. Such a case is juxtaposed with what can be referred to as “Islands of Sanity”! The two African folklore illustrate the case as reported in the article. Firstly, that the system can be changed but it will first try to eat you up! Secondly, that when the hyena wants to eat its own children, it first accuses them of smelling like rats. Therefore, the main argument, which serves as the anchor for the article, is to problematise the taken for granted claims about management, leadership and governance practices in university education spaces. This can be done by means of realist oriented scholarship projects, which ought to dig deeper than what appears on surface as leadership for the idea of university education as the public good. In this regard, the article suggests a realist social program, which is anchored on the critical realist philosophy, in accounting for the cited practices and in ways that can shed more light for the transformative outcomes than those reported in the article. It is envisaged that the article will have as the result, promotion of systemic conversations about the default position and fault consciousness in the idea of university education in general and how such an idea should be better managed, led and governed in the national development plans (in the case of South Africa, for example).

Keywords; State Capture; Justice Zondo Commission; Historically Disadvantaged Universities; Walter Sisulu University; Public Good

1. Introduction

The enduring challenges of historically disadvantaged universities (HDUs), and the transformation project of public university education in South Africa, are well documented in literature (MoHET, 2019, 2021; CHE, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021). The research, on which this article is based, had its setting a particular case about the Vice Chancellor and Principal (henceforth, The VC-P) at University of the North Eastern Cape¹ (henceforth to be referred to as, UNEC). The research focussed on a series of events which would later be captured in the form of an Institutional Forum Report about the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU)-MR X Unresolved Dispute (to be referred to as the IF Report). The events leading to the report dated back to May 2018, and the Report served at the University Council of 8th April 2022. The case had its roots at the very first year of the VC assuming duties at UNEC, which would reflect serious contradictory positions and inherent inconsistencies, at least from the critical realist perspective about the nature of complexity in open social systems. Several times since NEHAWU had declared the labour dispute about the case, the Council would remain obfuscating about the case until the new Council came into existence in November 2020, which was then followed by the VC-P ostensibly going on sabbatical leave in January of 2021, and finally vacating the Office in March 2021. The article thus makes the observation about how the IF Report could be juxtaposed with the VC's Regime, at least in a particular case of how the university policies were breached in service of the power relations and the materialist interests of the day. This could be described as yet another case about the “Pretenders to the Throne” (Dwayi 2021). How the case played out promises to be an interesting area of research to the scholars

¹ Not the real name.

of humanities and social science in general and of the leadership, management and governance, in particular. Therefore, in illustration of the title, I refer to this particular case, where the report itself promised what could be the case for “Sanity”, when the university space, purposefully or inadvertently, directly or unwittingly” can also be managed, led and governed in service of the systems of domination and control. Unfortunately, such cases can arguable reflect the case of the “killing fields of inequalities” (Therborn, 2013), when their extremity entails the perpetuation of historical and structural disadvantage about the Other. Therefore, juxtaposition in the context of this article refers to leadership and leader as dialectically related in two ways,

- Firstly, as the question of structure (roles, duties and functions) and agency (choices or none choices, projects or none projects, about the matter of concern). This can be the case of how systems of domination and control can play out at the expense of the Other.
- Secondly, it can be the same question of the domination, but this time with an additional element of the cultural system (the beliefs, norms and standards), as the dominant explanations about MLGs in mutually inclusive ways.

2. The Complexity of Power Relations in the South African Transformation Project

The South African constitutional democracy is still bedevilled by the legacy of settler colonialism and the structured racist system (Bundy, 2019). It is against such a background that the Council on Higher Education, a national regulatory body for quality management, has commenced the second phase of Institutional Audits in 2022. The first, after Constitutional Democracy, took place from 2004 to 2011. Such a phase is sufficiently deconstructed by social science scholars who draw from the critical realist perspective (Luckett, 2007; McKenna & Quinn, 2012; Boughey & McKenna, 2015). Such a body of knowledge was in line with what were the global trends about systemic reviews (for example, Clegg, 2005). For me, this is what I would regard as the developments that do not only find expression in the South African context, but also in the unique case of its transformation project as characterised by the HDU phenomenon.

2.1 2.1. The Killing fields and the particular case of the University of North Eastern Cape (UNEC)

The case of “The Killing Fields of Inequalities” (Therborn, 2013) is very typical of the complexity of the South African contexts, as already alluded to above. When Therborn *ibid* invokes the imagery of “The Killing Fields of Inequalities” he argues that,

“Inequality is not just about the size of our wallets. It is a socio-cultural order which, for most of us, reduces our capabilities to function as human beings, our health, our dignity, our sense of self, as well as our resources to act and participate in the world....inequality is literally a killing field, with millions of people dying premature deaths because of it. These lethal effects of inequality operate not only in the poor world, but also, and increasingly, in rich countries”

On his parting note to the university community, the UNEC VC-P had this statement to make (WSU, 2021),

“For me, this chapter of my life and a career spanning just over four decades is about to close and I am pleased to hand over the baton to the new VC. I bid you farewell with much appreciation for the support I received and for the good times we had together”.

However, upon his assumption of the Office five years before, he had made a powerful promise that he would take this particular University out of the intensive care unit and to the high care. It was quite coincidental, or was it, that when this case would unfold, South Africa was also grappling with the serious challenge of managing the unintended consequences about her democracy, as emanating from dangers of kleptocracy. During the year that the VC retired from UNEC, the nation was gripped by the “state capture phenomenon”, which would be later reported in the Justice Zondo Commission findings, per Reports One to Four (The Presidency, 2022). In summary, the Reports outline the endemic corruption which has permeated all the Organs of State through the deliberate undermining of policies, namely Public Management Act, with regard to the procurement systems, etc. In a nutshell, these Reports outline the State Capture cases as having been systemic, historical and quite perpetual of the dominant of systems and control. While such discussions seemed to be about the public service, not much was well documented about how the Hallowed Walls of University Education might have been the subject of the same phenomenon.

The strange phenomenon is that similar cases had long been reported about how the university education sector seemed to undermine the management, leadership and governance systems and processes to the point of

subjecting these University into Administration Regimes (Dwayi, 2021, Dwayi, 2022). During the time of finalising this article, the HETSA sector was still bedevilled by yet another sad news about maladministration and corruption which can threaten the very idea of University Education and its academic project. This related to the case of Fort Hare University (UFH) when The President of South Africa had to make a proclamation about the UFH state of affairs. In the subsequent media statement that sought to welcome the proclamation, University management made the following statement,

"the proclamation is very important to the University's new Council and Management Executive Committee (MEC). Both these bodies have been pursuing the complete destruction of corrupt ties, criminal networks and individuals and/or entities that at times attempted to make the institution ungovernable in order to stifle investigations, sanctions and the rule of law, including threatening the leadership through shootings" Dispatch-Live 6th August 2022).

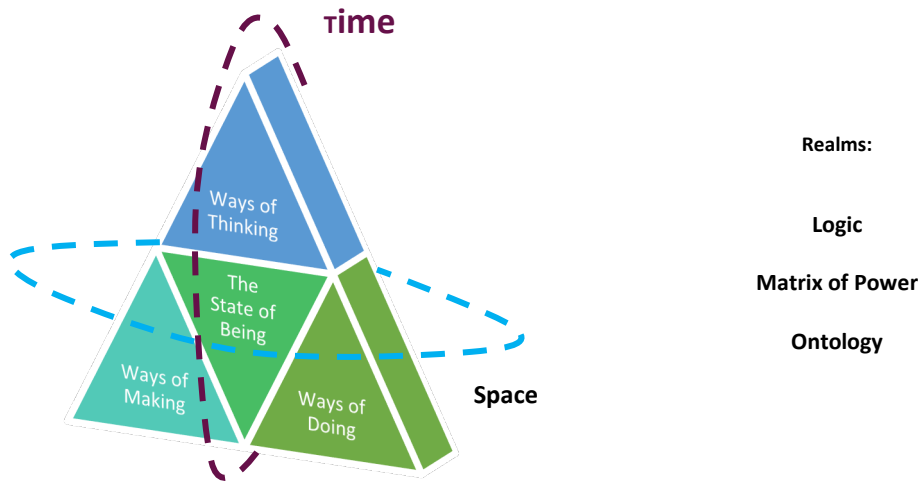
The Institutional Forum (IF), according to the regulatory framework for HETSA, is a statutory committee which advises Council on policy matters. The IF finally reported its findings and recommendations about the case of NEHAWU-Mr X unresolved dispute. The contents of the report can be seen in the analogy of the Killing Fields of Inequalities. In a nutshell, the report portrayed this particular and strange picture about the systemic way in which forms of domination and controlled played against the Other, as briefly summarised below,

1. According to the policy in hand, the incumbent gets to occupy the upgraded position. The former Vice Chancellor flouted this policy. The exclusion of Mr X from the SD: LTD position happened via increasing academic requirements: a generic PhD qualification was required, not Masters which Mr X possessed at the time. Here the VC used a subordinate principle (academic requirements) to justify flouting the imperative of the job grading policy. This was, it can be concluded, a tactical mischief!
2. Another breach happened against the Statute and policy on Recruitment and Selection. The person who presided over the shortlisting of the SD: CLTD was not an external person as required by the policy. The VC usurped the powers of Council when he presided over the shortlisting.
3. When NEHAWU simultaneously approached CCMA and university Council to intervene on the matter, the then university Council invoked the principle of sub judice to avoid taking responsibility. However, CCMA said that, until an appointment to the SD: CLTD position is actually made, the matter remained internal. While CCMA and Council were not acting, HRCC was processing the interviews of shortlisted candidates and the employment of the successful candidate.
4. It is recommended that the mishandling of the matter of Mr X be acknowledged, and that some form of retrospective recourse be done in his favour. Additionally, prospective recourse could be done. Strict compliance and abandonment of arbitrary practices is recommended. Finally, HR policies – for example, Job Grading Policy, Grievance Procedure – must be reviewed. Importantly a dispute resolution policy requires construction and clarification, especially how matters that are sub judice are handled and whether and the extent to which management and university could proceed to process matters about which a dispute has been declared and challenged. This needs to be done to enable proper oversight and justice for disputants.

For research purposes, the main point of analysis was how the events surfaced the contradictory positions and the inherent consistencies about the matter of a qualification which the VC-P used as an excuse for excluding Mr X , and in the process, usurped the University Council powers, while the Council, on the other hand, abrogated its fiduciary duties. This is one case in which MLG systems and practices can fit the analogy of the Killing Fields.

3. Surfacing the Ontological Assumptions about what ought to be good performance and sustainable value creation

The value of calling on the realist social program, which is anchored on the critical realist philosophy, is for its power of providing an explanatory account about the social world (the research and practice terrain of corporate governance and leadership). In such cases, the nature of complexity in open and social systems need to be simplified by means of scholarship towards what should be sense and meaning making about a social phenomenon as a matter of concern. In such projects, the particular challenge about Agency needs to be problematised. Agency will always inherit the conditions of culture and of structure, which are not of own making. These are events and processes that, at the time of Agency being active, the systems were already in action and in ways that both the elements of structure and culture will always predate Agency at macro level, while Agency always responds at micro level.



Agency as the Criticality-Reflexivity-Praxis Chain/Logic

(Diagram 1: Dimensions & realms about the Idea of Being where University Education as the Public Good has to be enacted as Agency, adapted from Dwayi, 2021)

Therefore, Diagram 1 reflects how the idea of being, when it applies in the social world, can assist towards representing the dimensions and realms as already is the case to many scholars of humanities and social science. In the light of what the context indicates, and drawing from Diagram 1, an inference can be made that the matrix of power in the context of HDUs need to be a subject of critique in time and in space (contextual profiling). The idea about university education, as the ways of thinking (cultural system) need to be made analytically distinct from those of making (structural system) and of doing (human systems) . There needs to be scholarship projects that can be more critical about the present in the idea of university education in South Africa in general and the question of HDUs, in particular, if praxis artistry in such contexts has to earn and maintain its value.

Therefore, in order to carry out this project, I had to think of the following research questions,

1. Firstly, How do MLG role, duties and responsibilities engage the apparent systemic challenges in the ideal about the university education as the public good?
2. Secondly, as emergent from the first: Could the University Council role of strategy, performance and reporting, per Principles 4 and 5 of the Code of Corporate Governance and Leadership, be said to translate into good performance to sustainable value creation?

Thinking about the two questions, for a study that employs critical realist philosophy and the realist social program, could shed more light about the challenges that the HDUs in general, and the particular case of UNEC, continue to grapple with. The light would have to be shone on the potential disjuncture about the pursuit for human flourishing, as the idea of university education as the public good, juxtaposed with the reality for systems of domination and control, as the antitheses to the latter. The insights as developed from such analysis would therefore emerge from a realist critical understanding of the interplays of structure, culture and agency about the matter of concern in three ways,

1. The interplays from the position of structure (Council and management roles, functions and duties);
2. The interplays from the aspects of Culture (beliefs, norms and standards);
3. The interplays from the dimensions about Agency (choices or none choices, practices or silences)

The ability to understand and explain these interplays would therefore be significant for theorisation of management, leadership and governance practices in the typical South African context.

Therefore, thinking of this particular case of the IF Report at UNEC would be the bigger goal of trying to elaborate on the current projects that draw on realist social program as an explanatory theory (Dwayi *ibid*). The additional value would be the matter of theory advancement, the demonstration of how to ensure the internal coherence in a scholarship project as the Theory-Methodology-Practical Program chain!

4. From the Socio-cultural Conditions to the Social and Socio-Cultural Interactions

Informed by the implicit assumptions of structure, culture and agency, as briefly introduced above, and also as extensively illustrated elsewhere (Dwayi *ibid*), I had to explore the constructs of leadership, management and governance according to Principles 4 and 5, where the ideal outcome ought to be good performance for sustainable value creation. Content analysis therefore took the critical discourses analytical approach, which entailed deduction and abductive reasoning about the reported case. Validity would be tested against how the systems of domination and control can work by having the events juxtaposed along the analogies of “the islands of sanity” and “the killing fields of inequalities”. Such an approach therefore took two forms,

1. Firstly, working with the hard data in the form of texts about how the UNEC case, per the findings of the IF Report, was managed, led and governed, which would therefore surface the institutional culture of corporate governance and leadership.
2. Secondly, interpretation of such texts in ways that can take the abductive logic, where the alternative explanations about the subject focussed only on one aspect about the code of corporate governance and leadership, that is, Principles 4 and 5 about good performance for sustainable value creation, therefore surfacing what could be argued as either silences or superficialities of MLG systems and practices as indicated by the texts.

4.1 The Islands of Sanity: Surfacing the fault lines about MLG systems of domination and control

Elsewhere, I make the following argument about the challenges of class, race, power and privilege in the idea of university education and the public good, especially in the context of the South Africa.

“While institutional autonomy means the protection of academic freedoms and rights in how the academic enterprise, in particular, can be led managed and governed, public accountability and disclosure thereof means such rights and freedom cannot be dispensed unmediated, especially in contexts of social inequalities and injustice” (Dwayi, 2021, p.2)

In the context of the picture as portrayed above about the MLG practices, the systems which can invoke the analogy of “the killing fields of inequalities”, the counter point thereof, as a juxtaposition, is when the analogy of the islands of sanity can actually help to ameliorate such forms of brutality and dehumanising tendencies as evidenced by the IF Report. Citing Margaret Wheatly (2017) comes in handy, then, for such a comparative analysis,

“An island of sanity can be a literally bounded group, such as a team, function, or community. It can also be an interior space bounded by our integrity: we know who we are, what we value, and what we stand for. Sanity is in treating people.....as human beings.”

Further, how the cases reflect the workings of systems of domination and control, can be inferred from the following reference about the notion of the Dominant and its Constitutive Other (Gunnarsson, 2016, p.1).

“This refers to the contradictory relation whereby the powerful and “independent” existence of the one is premised on that which is other than it, as well as on the denial and obscuring of this constitutive dependence”

It was quite instructive to read the findings of the IF Report when it moaned about the absence of the dispute management policies, the grievance procedures, and worse still, the Office of the Ombudsman. The same way that the state capture involved the deliberate undermining of polices, namely Public Management Act with regard to the procurement systems, etc, UNEC demonstrated strong cases about the systemic, historical and quite perpetual of the dominant of systems and control. The contradictions of position and practice, coupled with their inherent inconsistencies, refer to this particular case about the institutional leader and his leadership practices, which would have to be treated as analytically distinct, hence the case as the subject of inquiry. Drawing the parallels between the State Capture, as reported in the Justice Raymond Zondo Commission in South Africa and a particular University Education Regime as in the UNEC case, would sound unfamiliar. But it is this very unfamiliarity, the natural necessity but the inadequacies thereof, that always interests the researchers of humanities and social sciences!

4.2 The Islands of Sanity in pursuit for Human Flourishing

“The Heads Must Roll!”; “The Consequences Management Policy must apply!”, such were the calls by the Members of National Parliament, Portfolio Committee for Higher Education and Training, during the

presentation by the UNEC Management, about the crisis which had led to the postponement of the graduation ceremonies in May 2022. Whether, indeed, the heads had to roll would have to be understood and explained within the simple logic that each action invites a reaction! In the case about “The Killing Fields”, the next logical question would be, “To what extent and for how long?” In any event, should the UNEC spaces be about “The Killing Fields” when UNEC ought to be about the idea for university education as the common and the public good? Well, the IF Report indicated the case which could be argued as being antithetical to the ideals of the public good. Such goods ought to promote the social world for “Human Flourishing!” (Bhaskar, 1989, Archer, 1995). Therefore, thinking about the latter proponents for social justice and equity in pursuit for human flourishing, if the UNEC case were to continue unabated, what would be the value about Humanity? Thus these would have to be understood as the ideological questions where the UNEC Governance/Board of Directors would have to be reimagined as the discursive spaces. Thus, the juxtaposition about the case would entail the MLG systems and practices, which are represented in the IF Report as the killing fields, in ways that should allow for absencing such dysfunctional systems or malpractices, in pursuit for the potential sanity. Such absencing would have to think about the “presence” beyond what could be described as a natural necessity, that is, when the apparent MLG systems and practices (University Council decision or none decision), can masquerade as normalised practices, while in fact they reflect the systems of domination (the antitheses to Principles 4 and 5).

Therefore, in the next three points about the role of structure, culture and agency, I highlight what turned out to be the developed insights about the UNEC case, which therefore highlight the possibilities for The Islands of Sanity, as represented by the Report, against The Killing Fields of Inequalities, as reflected in how the policies were breached in service of the Dominant and its Constitutive Other (Gunnarsson, 2016). In the literal sense, the rolling heads would be feeding into this particular narrative about the “Killing Fields of Inequalities”. However, the alternative literatures to the systems of domination and control would have to be called upon if the “Islands of Sanity”, and the pursuit for human flourishing, are to be mutually constitutive.

4.3 Making Loud the voice for social justice and equity

One particular call by the IF Report was this issue about the interface of management and leadership functions with those of the University council, that is, the Separation of Powers and the Delegation of Powers between the two. The Report was quite instructive about how the VC-P seemed to have the expectations that the position accorded him the unmediated right to dispense power in misrecognition of Institutional Rules and Policies. Therefore, engaging in this project allowed me to develop particular insights about the UNEC case in terms of three elements of social systems, which I describe quite extensively elsewhere (Dwayi *ibid*).

1. At the point of structural systems, the case seemed to indicate the enduring systems of domination and control which were quite the characteristics of settler colonialism, a structured racist apartheid system, power and privilege in the South Africa.
2. At the point of cultural system, the case seemed to reflect the dominant explanations about quality when the VC-P seemed to show extreme and dangerous passion about meritocracy.
3. Implied by both points (a) and (b), would be the question of Agency, which I address later. Suffice to ask some critical questions about the exercise of agency, especially by those who are always on the receiving ends of the disabling power of domination. In the case where the claims per point (a) and point (b) are granted, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (Spivak, 2015). If so, in “whose rules of use?” (Pennycook, 1994)?

Therefore, being reminded by the latter two social scientists, I would then elaborate on the questions by raining on the point as whether “Such rules could be made explicit, and also accessible to all in the UNEC case, in particular, and in the general case of the HDUs in South Africa? The VC’s claims seemed to be drawing on the literatures, which revolve around the deficit model about student learning abilities, staff teaching competences, as a result of the neoclassical approaches about the social world. Such claims do not exist in the absence of the alternative literatures, unfortunately. Contemporary literatures about integrated academic development (Dwayi, 2014) are making loud the voice about the dangers of the deficit model in the university education practices, especially of the autonomous and decontextualised models about learning (McKenna and Boughey, 2016). About the case as the subject of analysis, though, the apparent dangers of the deficit model is when it applies to the MLGs systems and processes. That is, if the body of knowledge could be problematic about the three main elements of the academic project (teaching and learning for epistemological access through students, staff and curriculum delivery), such approaches also have the direct implications to the level above those constituent parts, and in emergent ways. The nett result about the three elements of the academic project would therefore at the point of emergence, the MLG capacity as the enabling system for university education as the social world. Therefore, the engagement of the antecedent literatures about quality enhancement has to

have a focus on MLG systems and practices as Agency. Such would be the need for having expanded islands of sanity in the sea of the killing fields of inequalities.

5. The Potential for The Islands of Sanity

With the power of agency as acting both on structure and on culture, respectively, the “system can be changed, although “it will always first attempt to eat one up!” For such possibilities about agency in mitigating the plethora of systems of domination, and also in the dominant explanations about the social world, there needs to be concerted efforts for the advancement of scholarship of engagement in dealing with the understudy of MLG systems at the two positions.

1. Firstly, MLG systems as the default position of being and becoming. Such possibilities require a reflexive-dialectical process which problematises the current ways of thinking in ways that can allow for transformative agency to emerge.
2. Secondly, as the faulty consciousness about MLG systems. This is typically the case when “the hyenas can first accuse its children of smelling like rats”, only to justify themselves why such children “need to be eaten”. The UNEC VCs-P seemingly undermined the very idea of university education as the public good, at least per the case as discussed in this article.

The case of a VC-P at UNEC has been the subject of analysis in this article in ways that the systems of domination and control could be identified as the structural mechanisms. Such mechanisms are always in interplays with the cultural mechanisms (the dominant explanations about quality). The unfortunate result about domineering systems here is that disabling powers can be meted out to the “Subaltern” and in ways that promote “The Killing Fields”. Therefore, the possibility for “The Islands of Sanity would have to take the following considerations, at least as evidenced from the IF Report,

1. Firstly, identifying the *modus vivendi* about the MLG systems at UNEC. That requires systemic engagements about the IF Report beyond what works and doesn't, but about the social and socio-cultural conditions of the current choices and practices.
2. Secondly, and at practical levels, there needs to be answers to the questions about these MLG Actors in the UNEC Case. The Members of National Parliament called for the “Heads Must Roll”, for the “Consequences Management Policy and Strategies” to be rolled out.

The Report was quite explicit that the VC-P didn't only undermine the Council powers, the Council itself abrogated its responsibility to the management level. It was quite unfortunate that the VC-P and his management team, especially the Directorate of Human Resources, were reported as having failed the integrity test. At UNEC, Integrity, Wisdom and Excellence remain the institutional values which are captured in the Academic Crest (the graduate academic gowns and certificates). However, what seems to be increasing complexity levels is for the Council to be reported to have failed in its fiduciary duties, especially on Principle 4 and 5 about good performance for sustainable value creation.

What would be of great concern about this case, and at practical level, is whether the case was indicative of the already dysfunctional institutional culture which feeds into the systems of domination and control in other HDUs in South Africa? Such a culture would definitely continue unabated even after the “Good Bye Message” of the VC-Ps, as briefly alluded to earlier. Such actors would have to be capacitated so that they could be able to engage the conditions of structure and of culture in ways that can allow more for the transformative outcomes, than the currently transactional and transformational outcomes. Such a situation can thus call for what I argue elsewhere (Dwayi, 2003) as the need for impact tracking for sustainable value creation by means of the Ability-Capacity-Capabilities Logic, and for the purposes of this article, the Criticality-Reflexivity-Praxis Logic (Diagram 1). In November 2019, UNEC established a Directorate for Short Learning Programs whose main agenda is to develop policies and strategies for Centres, Bureaus and Institutes as the structural mechanisms for capabilities development in a university that is in pursuit for excellence. Against such developments as the transformative mechanisms for a potentially socially responsive university at corporate level (Dwayi, 2022, a, forthcoming), the IF Report is quite instructive about what seems to be the missing links in the required capabilities in systemic ways,

1. Firstly, at the point of structural arrangements (the systemic gaps in the policies and strategies (point 2.1).
2. Secondly, at the point of logical connections (the value systems where both quality enhancement and human resource development ought to be the defenders of the current popularised UNEC Vision 2030).

6. The Practical Alternative: Reflections and Conclusion

The idea of university education in the particular case of HDUs, as exemplified in this article, continues to reflect the unfortunate acts of intimidating and bullying into submission. It can be an ugly and naked misuse of power. The IF Report indicated serious gaps in the UNEC MLG systems, namely the grievance procedure and the dispute management policies, and better still, the Office of the Ombudsman, as is the normal practice in other institutions. Strangely, as reported in this article, both the Appointment and Selection Policies and the Job Upgrading Policies, while official and active, were deliberately undermined, which therefore raises serious cases about “corporate social responsibility” and “great leadership practices and good leaders” (Dwayi, 2022, a, Dwayi, 2022, b, both forthcoming). In this particular case, all the parties who were implicated in this case dismally failed the integrity test and therefore cannot begin to claim to being men of honour and women of virtue. They dare not claim to belong to the islands of sanity as clearly so described by Wheatley (*ibid*).

The significance of the discussion in this article reveals the character of the HETSA transformation project and why some HDUs continue to experience unrealized potential as the current university education profiles seem to be instructive. This is a particular case about MLG systems and practices as the conflation of position and practice. As it has been the main argument in this article, and from previous research, Agency, as the truth about, and the emancipatory choices and projects for, the Other, is what ought to matter in the MLG systems and practices, in particular, and the general case of university education as the public and common good. Therefore, while new MLG regimes would always be significant at the change of guard, what shall remain as a matter of serious concern in the South African National Democratic Revolution, especially for the academic project for the progressive and socially reconstructive agenda, will always be this particular issue about the unity of theory and practice in practice. Unfortunately, such forms of scholarship, by means of praxis artistry, remain as serious inadequacies for the HDUs in the HETSA transformation project, albeit with the project as a natural necessity post the constitutional democracy. As the way of ameliorating the current killing fields of inequalities, and at best, of having them abolished, we still need more iterative cycles of research if the MLG systems and practices are to finally serve as praxis artistry in the pursuit for human flourishing.

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