

The Small State, Markets and Tertiary Education Reform in a Globalised Knowledge Economy: Decoding Policy Texts in Botswana's Tertiary Education Reform

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Abstract

A number of global discourses have gained currency in national education policies. The need to reform education systems is coated in economic terms, the rationale of which is efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. Education is assigned the task of producing a competitive workforce in the global market. In these reforms, education is commodified. It is no longer a service but is a cost. The basis of all these is neo-liberalism, an ideology and political system that has displaced welfarism associated with the economics of Keynes. Tertiary education is neither insulated against this markets tide nor is it immune to its processes. This tide has led to the convergence of education reform worldwide. The convergence equally extends to higher and tertiary education. While instigated by economic liberalism, it is also a product of the saleability of market ideals through “institutional capitalism” and their purchase by public policy makers and governments. In this article, I seek to explore these discourses in Botswana’s tertiary education reform, anchored on consultation. I argue that Botswana’s tertiary education policy making reflects a global-local nexus in which the global sits on the local - the local is influenced and informed by the dominant global tertiary education reform agenda. The article draws on interview data of policy making elites and stakeholders. It also draws from the analysis of a corpus of key documents of this policy process.

Introduction

Let me set a premise for my analysis in this article. The premise of my analysis is that tertiary education reform is explained by the desire to have a competitive edge in global capitalism (Torres and Schugurensky, 2002). ‘From this perspective, reforms are the result of a process of cultural diffusion in which strategies flow from country to country through networks of experts who borrow policy alternatives from a dominant policy agenda’ (Torres and Schugurensky, 2002, 234). The limitation of this explanation though, Torres and Schugurensky, rightly observe, is that it assumes that in policy diffusion, all are equal, underestimating the power of institutional capitalism. Persuasively, they call for an analysis of higher education reform that considers the inner workings of power in the global economic system – specifically the role of the corporate magnates and supra-governmental agencies. Therefore, the analysis of tertiary education reform must be linked with the locus of power of

institutional capitalism. The World Bank is an embodiment of that power, operationalised directly or indirectly and crystallised in ideologies of the market and performativity that the article examines. Therefore, I first frame my discussion within the global circuit in which these documents are constructed. I then proceed to specifically highlight the policy rhetoric and practice of the World Bank and its operationalisation in the developing nations. It is within this framework that I place the views of policy makers as discerned from interview data transcripts and the content of Botswana's recent tertiary education reform documents.

Globalisation and Education Policy

Globalisation is an all embracing concept that is in abundance in current policy documents and policy analysis (Ball, 1998). But there is the problem of lack of a precise definition that renders the term less useful (Tickly, 2001). A corpus of literature on globalisation and education policy exists (Ball, 1998; Carnoy and Castells, 2001; Dale, 1999; Green, 1997; Jones, 1998; Levin, 1998; Marginson, 1999; Marginson and van der Wende, 2007; Tickly, 2001). Therefore, an extensive examination of the literature will not add any new dimension to the subject. Rather, for the purpose of the paper, globalisation embraces the changing role of the state in response to the pressures of the reorganisation of modern capitalism that has led to new forms of governance, and a changed workplace that requires a new versatile worker. In this change, education is captured by economic imperatives and notions of competitiveness. The concept of globalisation also focuses on new agendas for education by the World Bank (Jones, 1998). These agendas include decentralization, accountability, and choice, the private versus public, reduced role of the state, an emphasis on outcomes and standards (Jones, 1998). These are enforced solutions reflecting an ideological position that seeks world integration through marketisation (Ball, 1998).

Policy formulation in modern nation states is therefore subjected to the global ideological discourses on education and structures that are beyond the borders of nation states. Ball (1998, 122) identifies five elements that 'serve and symbolize the increasing colonisation of education policy by economic policy imperatives' as ideologies of the market, new institutional economies, performativity – 'be operational or disappear,' public choice theory and new managerialism. These discourses are traceable to new directions in development theory rooted in neo-liberalism and marking not only a shift from modernisation but also a negation of the welfare state associated with the ideas of Keynes. The discourses

are floated about by multilateral agencies like the World Bank, the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other globalisation ‘clubs’. They mark a shift in education policies where welfare and social mobility has been displaced by economic rationales (Levin, 1998) Therefore, policy agendas that emerge through globalisation aim first ‘to tie education more closely to the national economic interests...and decoupling of education from direct state control’ (Ball, 1998, 125). How do these discourses translate into discourses of the dominant policy agenda?

The World Bank and Discourses of the Dominant Policy Agenda

The World Bank is just that, a bank and financial institution (Samoff and Carrol, 2004). Dominated by economists, its ‘financial objective is economic efficiency, freeing of markets and the globalisation of capital – all of which lead to an emphasis on quantitative methods of measuring success of policy’ (Torres, 2002, 376). Thus even the research that informs and sells its policy priorities is informed by a given epistemological orientation – positivism, which has very little or no regard for non- quantifiable aspects of education. A critique of this epistemology and its limitations is provided by Torres (2002).

Our understanding of Botswana’s tertiary education reform and the themes that the documents and policy makers construct must be located within this context. It is therefore, necessary to elaborate on the global higher education reform environment and agenda. This is not to say it is an environment where the local is extinct. On the contrary, it is there but dominated by agendas flowing from the North, the carrier of which is the World Bank, other multilateral organisations and policy experts. In reference to Africa, Samoff and Carrol (2004) provide an overview of the Bank’s policies, identifying key phases of its evolution. The first phase is the Human resource or Manpower (*sic*) planning phase that featured in a decolonising continent in the 1950s – 1960s. In this phase, the role of higher education in national development had support from both national governments and international agencies. In the case of Botswana, education was assigned the task of personnel provision to replace expatriate employees in the immediate post-independence period. The first development plan asserted that ‘The primary aim in the field of education is to create in the shortest possible time, with such financial means as may be available, a stock of trained local manpower (*sic*) capable of servicing the country’s economy...’ (Botswana, 1966, 8).

Human Capital Theory still informed the World Bank up to the 1970s – 1980s. But in the context of Africa, it was also a period of political turbulence and economic meltdown, resulting in diminishing public expenditures in higher education (Samoff and Carrol, 2004). It is then that the World Bank set in with its structural adjustment programmes and other economic austerity measures. Given limited budgetary allocations to education, higher education could not expand. Then the World Bank diagnosed the ills of education as quality, disjuncture between education and employment, and financial limitations. Samoff and Carrol indicate that the constructs that were floated by the World Bank and uncritically adopted by governments and those who evaluated education systems were ‘internal efficiency’ and ‘external efficiency’, respectively measured in terms of ‘attrition and repetition’ and unemployment of school leavers. The argument further goes, higher education was not part of that equation save for the mention of graduate unemployment.

Another important dimension of this was that in the same period education now came to be linked to poverty alleviation as arguments revolved around basic education as a vehicle for poverty reduction (Samoff and Carrol, 2004). In point, higher education was still largely ignored as the period was marked by the ascendancy of the Rates of Return Analysis. One of the influential and unwavering proponents of this research claims that it established that ‘the returns of primary education were higher than those of investing in vocational or tertiary education, and also that the returns of investing in woman’s education were higher than the corresponding returns for men’ (Psacharapoulous, 2006, 332). On the basis of this somewhat self serving research, it was argued that on account of dwindling financial resources, it makes financial sense for those resources to be spread to ‘more students at the bottom than at the top of the education pyramid’ (Samoff and Carrol, 2004, 6). In a sense this was presented as equitable as more resources would be redirected from the privileged few in higher education to the majority levels, and this made a sound financial argument (Samoff and Carrol, 2004). Notwithstanding this argument, there is tension between the bank’s mantra of poverty reduction and its markets ideology. The bank’s structural adjustment programmes and other economic austerity measures exacerbated poverty levels in states of the South.

The 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, institutionalised inclination towards basic education, Samoff and Carrol accurately explain. Stretching from the 1970s well into the 1990s and up to the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, the World Bank’s policy was informed by the Human Capital Theory and Rates of Return Analysis that place emphasis on primary education (Samoff and Carrol,

2004). By extension of influence and technical expertise, policies in sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the developing world reflected this orientation. Botswana was no exception as evidenced by the massive expansion of basic nine-year education in the 1980s, subsequently raised to ten years in the 1990s (Botswana, 1977; 1993; 1994). In short, higher education was killed on the altar of efficiency and equity. The period of focus on primary education was also one of a decline of higher education in Africa and worldwide (Samoff and Carrol, 2004).

Nevertheless by the 1990s, a renewed link between economic development and higher education surfaced, reincarnating this education sector. The World Bank's policy text, *Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience* (World Bank, 1994) represents self criticism by the bank, questioning adherence to the Rates of Return Analysis and pointing to the neglect of higher education (Samoff and Carrol, 2004). As would be expected Psacharopoulos (2006) argues that this neglect is a fallacy. He qualifies his defence by linking the bank's support for higher education to cost recovery and user fees. But the argument does not hold if funding and policy rhetoric is considered. *The Lessons of Experience* acknowledges this fact. On the whole it argues that HE participation correlates with economic development.

First, the document identifies a crisis in developing nations' higher education: its expansion has created a strain on resources, with implications for quality and equity; a macro economic crisis that has led to declining expenditure on higher education; shrinking resources; inadequate facilities and decaying infrastructure. Compounding the resource limitation is the internal and external efficiency of the system. On internal efficiency, resources are not utilised to the maximum. There are a range of small, fragmented institutions, duplicating programmes and pushing higher education unit costs up. Moreover, the costs are scaled up by low output, student dropouts, repetition and low student-staff ratios. Add to that the problem of subsidies for non-core educational expenditures that go to high income students.

The external efficiency of the system revolves around graduate unemployment. It is argued that this is a product massive higher education expansion and a distortion of the labour market through 'inflating the private returns from higher education' (World Bank, 1994, 21) e.g. higher salaries in the public sector, high subsidies that make higher education attractive even when employment opportunities are limited, automatic employment in the public sector and higher education programme offering that is not attuned to the market, with more students congregated in the arts and the humanities and less in science and technology. The document also notes that in many developing nations, higher education is still

predominantly elitist and access is skewed in favour of men, with women largely settling for what Weis (1990) terms the occupational ghettos of domestication.

It is on the basis of this crisis that the document sets the agenda for reform. While still echoing the Rates of Return arguments, it advocates for a balanced attention to all education sectors as they complement each other. The agenda for reform entails diversifying higher education to include non-university institutions, viewed as cheaper, flexible and responsive to markets. Distance education is also singled out as a venture that can expand access to less privileged groups. Most importantly, the document argues for the promotion of private higher education sector on account of its flexibility and responsiveness to students' needs and labour market demands. Private higher education is presented as another avenue for reducing public expenditure, increasing access and broadening programme offering. Still on costs, the introduction of user fees in higher education is advocated for. Furthermore, there should be less regulation of fees by government and subsidies for non-educational services should be terminated. Higher education institutions should also strive to seek alternative sources of funding. In all this, the state is pushed to the background role of regulation and oversight.

The new role of the state is that of providing policy vision, and not that of control. 'Rather than direct controls, the government's responsibility is becoming that of providing an enabling policy environment for both public and private higher education institutions and of using the leverage of public funding to stimulate these institutions to meet national training and research needs' (World Bank, 1994, 56). Funding then becomes the carrot and stick for inducing reforms as the state assumes the guardian role of market regulation.

This is the new recipe for higher education reform in the developing world. However, it must be noted that in reference to some of these reforms, the World Bank documents appeal to advanced democracies such as the OECD, that have successfully adopted neo-liberal reforms to respond to the funding crisis of higher education. In the developing world, Chile, the pacesetter of Thatcher like neo-liberal reform in Latin America, emerges as a success story for higher education reform. These waves of reform are the ones referred to by policy makers in this study.

Higher education prescriptions for reform are reiterated in the other text, *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges of Tertiary Education* (World Bank, 2002). The new insertion here is the knowledge economy theme. It advances the case for knowledge driven economies; knowledge is at the core of successful modern economies. In substance, we see a

return to the human resource planning of the 1950s – 1960s, this time informed by cutting edge advances in technology, ushering knowledge economies.

Although the concept of knowledge societies can be traced to the 1960s, it has only recently gained currency and become ubiquitous in politics and governance (De Weert, 1999). Theorisation on the emergence of knowledge driven societies designated either post-industrial or post-capitalist, has knowledge as its common denominator (Drucker, 1969, 1993; Bell, 1973, Stehr, 1994). In his pioneering work, Drucker (1969) argued that the US national economy had changed into a knowledge economy in which knowledge was at the core of production. Contrary to the classification of “knowledge industries” as the “services” knowledge has actually become the “primary” industry; the industry that supplies to the economy the essential and central resources of production” (Drucker, 1969, 264). Therefore, knowledge as a factor defining a country’s economic competitiveness is not a new discourse. Drucker argued then that “today, it is the foundation and measurement of economic potential and economic power” (265). This society, characterised as post-capitalist is “a society of organizations” whose principal resource is knowledge (Drucker, 1993). Politically, there is also a shift to the ‘post-capitalist polity’ in which the nation state is weakened as power is devolved to the transnational, regional and tribal spheres (Drucker, 1993).

The concept of post-industrial society focuses on the economic and occupational transformation of Western societies, and the relationship between theory and practice, especially in the field of science and technology (Bell, 1993). Bell, argues that in this society, most labour force is in the service sector, occupational distribution changes as the professional and technical occupations rise while blue collar workers decline. Bell acknowledges the primacy of knowledge in any given society at any given historical epoch, but argues that what makes the post-industrial society distinct is that it is “organized around knowledge for the purpose of social control and the directing of innovation and change” leading to the emergence of “new structures” that require political management (Bell, 1993, 20).

Abundant in public policy and academic literature as the concept of knowledge society is, there is vagueness surrounding its meaning (De Weert, 1999). De Weert explores the debate on knowledge societies from sociological, epistemological and economic perspectives. This debate, rhetorical as it is, policy wise, entails the expansion of higher education enrolments on the grounds that the technological and economic changes require commensurate high skills levels (De Weert, 1999). De Weert contends that despite the elevation of knowledge, there is no clarity in its meaning. There are different forms and

meanings of knowledge leading to its opportunistic usage. The other common argument about the debate on knowledge societies is that the university is no longer the only enclave of knowledge generation as non-university actors are also principal players in its production. An impetus of this development is the increase of highly educated graduates in the employment and organisational settings. Knowledge is also democratised and accessible to a large section of the population, linking those who generate it to the consumers (De Weert, 1999).

Tertiary education is located within this discourse. As Samoff and Carrol (2004, 16) opine, the centrality of knowledge in new economies means that higher education is critical for ‘social capital building’ in which it becomes a ‘global public good’. Tertiary education institutions are then tasked with information and knowledge generation. In the knowledge economy, there is an increased demand for labour possessing tertiary education qualifications. In addition, the changing workplace and innovations in a knowledge economy has implications for lifelong learning. Tertiary education, it is also argued, performs a social and nation building function.

The tertiary education institutional structure as set out in this reform agenda for knowledge economies, embraces borderless tertiary education, flexible institutions that are free from bureaucratic control, and internationalisation. Such institutions must also be linked to the labour market. Private institutions are part of this. The rise of private institutions is not just linked to diminishing state funding, but it is also associated with countries that have embraced economic liberalism. It is important to point out that privatisation policies are not strictly policy prescriptions of the World Bank. Rather, they are part of the neo-liberal current of market reforms in higher education (Samoff and Carrol, 2004).

Briefly, ‘through the development of a new international consensus, new agendas for research, policy and planning are being disseminated, a new ‘institutional common sense’ is developed, and new routines, laws and regulations are implemented worldwide in higher education’ (Torres and Schugurensky, 2002, 434-435). My analysis of Botswana’s consultative tertiary education policy making reveals the contours of these new agendas. The local context prevailing, the global influence is, in the least grandiose.

Methods and data

The study from which this article draws focuses on Botswana’s tertiary education policy formulation process that started in November 2004 and evolved over more than a three

year period. The aim here is to show how a variety of social forces, economic and political lead the state to respond in a particular way, based on political calculation of using consultation and all that goes with it. Methodologically this study employed document review. An examination of a policy discussion document produced by the *Working Group on the Tertiary Education Policy for Botswana (WG)*, the draft reports of the policy as it developed, the final policy report, and an assemblage of documentary material like minutes of meetings, and submissions were analysed so as to discern what voices emerge in these texts and determine processes involved in drawing recommendations, and what interests they represent.

Coupled with that, key players and stakeholders in the consultation and policy formulation process were interviewed to provide an account of their role. Some *WG* members, Ministry of Education officials, policy reference group members, civil society group representatives and individuals who made submissions were interviewed as key players in the gestation and policy formulation stages. In all 18 key policy makers and stakeholders were interviewed.

Global benchmarking

When the *WG* deliberated and brainstormed to set the framework within which the policy consultation process should take place, it was not just informed by the analysis of the internal situation. Globalisation represented by the benchmarking of Botswana with her peers in the region and globally, either in terms of access or other aspects of tertiary education, topical issues in higher education in other countries, and the literature emerging from Multilateral agencies like the World Bank and UNESCO. All policy makers interviewed unanimously attested to this influence in policy making.

Humble: So, we certainly took into account the fact, for example, that fairly recently, the World Bank literature has shifted. The World Bank as a major institution which affects global policies and national policies traditionally has been fairly antagonistic...well, I think antagonistic to governments investing, and the World Bank itself supporting higher education, on the argument that the essential is to get primary and junior secondary education on a good foundation and that

in some ways higher education was a luxury, largely. But the World Bank has changed its views on that, partly, I think obviously because of economic imperatives that modern economies have changed so completely.

As one of the policy makers notes, institutions such as the World Bank and UNESCO are leaders in these areas: “I mean these are, whether you like it or not, you may not always agree with them. But these are leaders in several of these sectors. So, you look to them as some kind of up to date kind of benchmarking processes” (Moloto, October 20, 2006). Policies of multilateral agencies like the World Bank therefore bear pressure on nation states regardless of how such nation states perceive them. The policy making process had to follow the tide of shifts in policies of these agencies. It is not just these agencies selling their solutions for states in the periphery; there is the learning curve through international visits. Some of the key participants undertook extensive travels to other parts of the world as learning exercises for purposes of benchmarking.

Moloto: We also collected a lot of literature including making files for the reference group on material from UNESCO going far back to the mid '90s, material from the World Bank on tertiary education. I had had the privilege of travelling extensively prior to this decision to start the policy. I had visited the Irish Republic Higher Education Authority, The Scotland Funding Council, England Funding Council, New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission, South African Council on Higher Education. I had of course been consulting with the Ghanaian Tertiary Education Commission and several others.

International Experts and Peer Review

The making of tertiary education policy in Botswana, although not outsourced to international consultant as it is the case in many developing nations, had influence from external experts. South Africa, Botswana's southern giant neighbour, had recently undergone a major higher education restructuring process resulting in mergers of institutions and the

breaking of racial boundaries between these institutions (Sehoole, 2005). This process was led by experts of the South African Council on Higher Education (CHE). One such expert acted as peer reviewer of the policy as it was being drafted.

Armstrong: So, apart from these internal workshops in TEC, I did, we did engage, and he did for free in the end. There is a man called Dr Nico Cloete. He is the Director of the Centre for Higher Education Transformation in Cape Town. He was the knowledgeable person to me in 1994 on the National Commission for Higher Education.

MP: In South Africa?

Armstrong: Ya, which wrote this sort of thing. So, it's that sort of thing then that eventually became the Council for Higher Education and led to the whole process of transformation. {...} He was the research director for all that, you know. So... and I knew him and he is a brilliant academic and a great writer and a fast writer. So, I would send him comments and drafts to him, 'Nico give me some expert input into this', ok.

This international expert had a connection with the policy makers through academic circles. So, he brought in the South African higher education influence to the tertiary education policy making. The key question then is what was that influence? Asked about how and why the authorities at the Tertiary Education Council (TEC) sought his input into the document, the expert revealed that he is the Director of the Centre for Higher Education Transformation in South Africa, and coordinates the network of higher education expertise in Africa as well as teach in one South African university and the University of Oslo European Higher Education Erasmus Mundus programme (Cloete, 2007, personal communication). Added to that he was the research director of the South African National Commission on Higher Education set up by the then new Mandela government in 1994 and hence wrote the new Higher Education White paper of 1997 (Cloete, 2007, personal communication). Thus he brought in the global perspective to the policy and the South African experience of higher

education restructuring. Evidence of this will be discerned from document analysis that follow showing that the key issue of institutional mergers while informed by economic ideas of the World Bank that emphasises economies of scale, it was also a borrowing from South Africa.

In short, policy makers were conscious that they cannot make tertiary education policy for Botswana without reference to and an understanding of international trends. Thus a negotiated balance between the local and the global started at the policy initiation stage. To what extent does this influence emerge in the policy texts?

The Global-Local Nexus

To augment interview data, this section seeks to tease out key themes of the documents arising from the policy consultation process, arguing that global influences in this policy making are observable, albeit balanced with the local interests of the state and its constituents. Related to this is the framing of the documents and the ideologies and discourses that they privilege. In pursuing this task, I seek to explore the concepts that the documents reiterate and ideas that they appeal to and draw from. My analysis will focus on three related texts that build on each other to produce the final policy text. The policy making process was initiated through a consultation document titled *Tertiary Education Policy for Botswana: Challenges and Choices* (Tertiary Education Council (TEC), 2005). Following consultations with tertiary education interest groups a synthesis of stakeholder submissions was blended with the first document to produce a policy report *Towards a Knowledge Society: A Proposal for a Tertiary Education Policy for Botswana* (TEC, 2006a). An Executive summary (TEC, 2006b) of this report was forwarded to government as policy proposals. While these documents appear to be stand alones, they are inseparable. They represent a flow of the policy making tide. Therefore they should be decoded as a whole rather than as discrete texts. It is to these three key documents that my focus shifts to.

The Consultation Document (Document 1)

The document sets the scene by providing a context for the policy. Key aspects of this context are identified as globalisation, the social demand of tertiary education, the national context of Botswana as a small state, influenced and impacted by globalisation. What is significant here is the positioning of globalisation in the document. It is the first item in the

discussion, identified as the driver of social change and transformation, tertiary education inclusive. The argument is that globalisation has instigated public sector reforms, forced countries to strategically position their education systems, assigning tertiary education a role in economic growth thus ‘encouraging tertiary education to become more businesslike, more market oriented and more entrepreneurial’ (TEC, 2005, 7). Beyond this, the new role of tertiary education is that of promoting a knowledge economy, with new forms of governance and expanded access through massification (TEC, 2005). To buttress its case on globalisation as a key theme in tertiary education, the document further points to its ubiquity in policy texts of multilateral organisations such as UNESCO and the World Bank, and points to its manifestation in national systems of developed countries and emerging economies such as Singapore and South Africa.

The social demand revolves around increased participation rates and the shrinking labour market returns that place more pressure on the sector and increasing the number of stakeholders in tertiary education. Within the national context the document appeals to key public policy texts such as the National Development Plans, Botswana’s long term vision document called *Vision 2016*¹ (Botswana, 1997a) and pronouncements made by the political leadership. The document then identifies key indicators of the tertiary education sector in terms of participation rates and provides an overview of its governance, providing imperatives for reform. Reference is made to the state and bureaucratic control of the present tertiary education structure. It is argued that globalisation has led to steering by national governments, in which ‘buffer’ institutions have been established to oversee and govern the tertiary education sector. The establishment of the TEC in 1999² is placed within this context of a changing role of governance of tertiary education. In general, the key theme of this

¹ In 1997 Botswana adopted a long term vision with seven main pillars to be achieved by 2016. Two of these: ‘Building an educated and informed nation’; ‘A prosperous, productive and innovative nation’ echo globalisation notions of knowledge societies characterised by innovation, knowledge generation, high productivity and growth.

² The Tertiary Education Act (1999) established the TEC, with a mandate to formulate policy on tertiary education and oversee its management and development. The process of policy formulation started in November 2004 with the constitution of a *Working Group on the Tertiary Education Policy for Botswana* which produced a consultation document in February 2005. Following that a nine month consultation process ensued culminating with tertiary education policy report presented to the government in October 2006. Within government, further consultation took place, concluding with the formal adoption of the policy by Parliament in April 2008.

document is globalisation and competitiveness, with sub-themes as the changing role of the state, the knowledge economy, neo-liberalism and new managerialism.

It is within the context of globalisation that the document identifies seven challenges for tertiary education policy as the knowledge economy, social and cultural development, social demand, the changing role of the state, funding, internationalisation, private and offshore provision of tertiary education. The knowledge economy concept is traceable to the World Bank. It is also linked to the discourse on new economies, that is, the ‘new capitalism’ (Fairclough, 2002) or network capitalism (Carnoy and Castells, 2001; Castells, 2006). The document advocates investment in human resource as a knowledge resource base citing successful nations that have invested on knowledge workers. Furthermore, knowledge is linked to competitiveness. Technology, associated with the knowledge economy is also seen as providing opportunities for lifelong learning to meet the challenge of the ephemeral nature of the workplace in the knowledge economy. However, I need to clearly point out that while the agency of the knowledge economy is Multilateral agencies like the World Bank, the Botswana state had consciously embraced these concepts well before the initiation of this policy. In that way the policy document also articulates state interests represented by the public sector reforms and privatisation as articulated in key public policy documents (Botswana, 1997b, 2000; 2002; Bank of Botswana, 2006; Public Enterprises Evaluation and Privatisation Agency (PEEPA), 2006a; 2006b). In fact neo-liberal and managerial sentiments are well pronounced in this document. Public tertiary institutions are presented in a negative light while their private counterparts are seen as well positioned for the knowledge economy. ‘In general public tertiary institutions have been slow to respond to changes in the labour market, have been poor in terms of establishing linkages with the market... Private institutions have been more responsive to the labour market demand’ (TEC, 2005, 17).

On the societal and cultural development challenge of tertiary education, the document cautions against the instrumental conception of tertiary education in which its economic and market orientation displaces the social and cultural values. This is then tied to the concept of equity where it is argued that opportunities have to be spread to pool human resources from a range of talents. Regarding social demand, this text advances the concept of the massification of tertiary education. Reference is also made to life long learning that is linked to the changed workplace and the emergence of a flexible knowledge worker in new economies. Still, this is an indication of the permeation of globalisation and the new language of the World Bank in this policy, examined earlier.

As stated earlier, the changing role of state and systems of governance in higher education is one of the key challenges of tertiary education identified by this document. The document identifies new management principles in tertiary education as a challenge to the traditional collegial system through which higher education institutions are governed. The erosion of collegiality in a move towards the new managerialism - all in the name of efficiency is not new in Botswana's higher education as the University of Botswana embarked on that exercise in the 1990s, the outcome of which was a shifting balance of power between academics and managers (Tabulawa, 2007). In the name of competitiveness, responsiveness and strategic positioning, it is opined that the local tertiary education institutions have to rise to the challenge of 'steering and oversight over a range of functions that has not been previously the case' (TEC, 2005, 24). The need to reform the fragmented governance structures of tertiary education is placed within this context of steering through institutions like the TEC. This is then linked to the challenge of funding in which concepts like the introduction of user fees, Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) are presented as new avenues for funding tertiary education as there is 'a growing worldwide shift of tertiary education costs from governments and taxpayers to parents and students' (TEC, 2005, 25). The last two challenges relate to internationalisation and private provision, where issues of cross broader provision and quality are raised, located within the parameters of international agreements like the General Agreement on Trades in Services (GATS) that call for liberalised trade embracing tertiary education provision.

Throughout this document, globalisation is the key to the justification for the market discourse. It is presented as an imperative for reform. In all the challenges of tertiary education identified here, they are preceded by a review or projection of changes taking place worldwide. Before arguing its case for change the document presents international change as a justification for reform in the local context. In simple terms, the document asserts that other countries are moving in a certain direction and there is a need to move in the direction of global policy currents. Failure to do so would signify lack of competitiveness and strategic positioning in the global network economy.

Lastly, *Document 1* identifies policy objectives of the vision, organisation, funding, regulation of the tertiary education policy alongside policy inception questions and possible policy responses that have to be explored through consultation. The framing of some of the questions and possible policy alternatives tended to restrict the stakeholders in their submission to this document. Some of the alternatives were presented as a given, offering minimal critical input from the stakeholders. For example, a policy inception question like

‘should the Tertiary Education Council restructure the current tertiary education system, which is fragmented, inefficient, and ineffective, with little co-ordination or common goals and no strategic plan, into a single integrated system?’ elicits a possible response: ‘the tertiary education system in Botswana could be restructured through mergers, incorporations, institutional closures and the establishment of new ones to encourage both efficiency and effectiveness as well as a diversity of institutional missions and providers’ (TEC, 2005, 33-35). Here, mergers are presented as panacea for institutional inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Yet as the case of South Africa shows, ‘merger policy... is seldom merger practice’ (Schoole, 2005, 174). Schoole’s study shows that mergers are contingent upon the interaction between micro politics at institutional level and macro politics at state level. The argument I am advancing here is that, the document appears to embrace the ideas of globalisation uncritically. There is virtually no projection of the negatives of these new pressures, e.g. funding models, the changing role of the state, user fees and private provision.

It is the above document that formed the basis for consultation with tertiary education interest groups, the outcome of which was the policy report. The report evolved through a number of drafts, three of which the researcher had access to between May and October 2006. In terms of themes, there is no significant deviation from the original document. Any changes that were effected between the May and October drafts largely had to do with the structure of the documents. Therefore, my analysis focuses on the final draft and the changes effected on it following approval by the TEC Council.

The Policy Report (Document 2)

The report is divided into nine parts: Part 1 – 4 are introductory, including a new addition of text on the TEC’s mandate and one part that reviews the consultation process and provides key issues emerging from policy consultation. The substantive recommendations of the report are in the last five parts.

The first recommendation specifies the need for a tertiary education policy. This part, drawing from World Bank and other related literature outlines the old and new conceptualisation of the role of tertiary education and argues for a renewed link between tertiary education and development in a knowledge economy under new capitalism. In advancing this argument, the document draws from the international context.

The best-known model in a developed country is that of Finland, which, following the deep recession of the early 1990s, selected knowledge, information technology and education as the major cornerstones of the new (economic) development policy. Ireland, Australia and New Zealand have also followed this route successfully.
(TEC, 2006a, 20).

It is also argued that economies of Asia ‘have shown that if poor countries want to participate in the globalised knowledge economy, investments in higher education are crucial, at the same time as improving access and quality in schooling’ (TEC, 2006a, 20). These statements appeal to globalisation to advance knowledge economy argument. TE is perceived as a key element of making Botswana ‘a winning and competitive nation’ (TEC, 2006a, 21).

Turning to human resource development the report recommends that ‘as a key component of the National Human Resources Development Strategy, the tertiary education system will educate creative, innovative and competent graduates for the successful transformation of Botswana into a Knowledge Society’ (TEC, 2006a, 22). Not only that, the language of the market is ubiquitous here as ‘tertiary education institutions around the world are now being given a key responsibility for meeting the needs of an increasingly market-driven, knowledge-based economy...’ (TEC, 2006a, 24). The tertiary education system has to meet the human resource challenge through a ‘match between supply and demand’ ‘delivery, customer focus and relevance’ ‘a culture of Lifelong Learning’ (TEC, 2006a, 24) to provide for the economy of the country. Furthermore, the attack on the public sector of tertiary education evident in *Document 1*, like other market sentiments, is retained here. Public tertiary education institutions are failing, as compared to their private counterparts, to meet the exigencies of the market. Although it is acknowledged that there are problems of quality in the private sector of tertiary education, it is eulogised as more attuned to the market in terms of its programmes and flexibility.

On the social demand of tertiary education, the document draws on both the local context and global influence to argue for the massification of tertiary education. Arguing from the globalisation discourse in which the ephemeral nature of the workplace in new capitalism demands learning as a lifelong activity there is a view that ‘this has become increasingly critical as the nature of work has changed, job mobility has increased, and the

need for upgrading to higher-level skills has become a constant necessity' (TEC, 2006a, 26-27). Therefore, Botswana is said to be susceptible to these changes. It is against this background then that the document argues for significant expansion of the system.

To illustrate that the document is couched in economic language and neo-liberal discourses whose primacy, is efficiency, cost effectiveness, performativity and a fit between tertiary education and market rigours, the document only devotes one page to the social value of tertiary education and equity. In fact equity takes only two paragraphs. However, as in the initial document, a case is made against the utilitarian and economic conception of tertiary education which displaces the social and cultural value. Thus tertiary education should be 'open and accessible to all who can, and wish to benefit, regardless of background or circumstance' so that it draws from a wide pool of talent for human resource development (TEC, 2006a, 28). Worth projecting here is that equity groups identified by the document do not extend beyond gender and special needs groups.

Research and innovation is another area identified for the advancement of a knowledge society. The recommendation is that research plays a principal role in transforming the country into a knowledge society. Botswana is benchmarked with peers with similar economic standing using the World Bank index of knowledge economies, arguing that Botswana performs low on conversion of research outputs and tertiary education enrolment. Benchmarking is also done on Information and Communication Technologies, a key component of knowledge economies.

The report also proposes a restructuring of the system through mergers in which multi campus institutions are established from the fragmented system characterised by small institutions. The document outlines the problems of structure as governance, size and inefficiency. 'A key issue is undoubtedly that of affordability and economies of scale' (TEC, 2006a, 46). On that basis it proposes a reconfiguration of tertiary institutions. The argument for this restructuring is undoubtedly economic.

This will necessitate a consolidation of what currently exists around larger more comprehensive institutions that will benefit from economies of scale in terms of academic breadth and depth, the bringing together of staff expertise, the greater diversity of student life through optimising enrolments and better cost efficiency.

(TEC, 2006a, 57)

A proposal is also made for a new open and distance learning institution. The arguments advanced for it are opening up access. More importantly this reflects the influence of the perceived view that the workplace has changed making it necessary for the knowledge worker to emerge. Reference is also made to tertiary education definition where there are multiple and conflicting definitions of tertiary education littered in different policy texts and legislation. In view of this the document argues for an expansive and inclusive definition, still drawing on international practice.

International practice indicates that those countries that have moved towards universal senior secondary education (as Botswana is clearly heading towards), a widespread trend has been to consequently develop a more inclusive definition of tertiary education that embraces higher education and vocational education and training.

(TEC, 2006a, 50-51)

The report also makes a case for new forms of governance and management presented as new strategic orientation of tertiary education. It spells out new forms of governance that relate to the changing role of the state, globalisation and neo-liberalism. As stated earlier, these ideas originate in the initial consultation document.

Tertiary institutions need to be an integral part of society through the establishment of more market orientated processes, consideration of students as customers, and contract research. This will be brought about through industry and community linkages, partnerships of interdisciplinary research, contracting in and outsourcing teaching, academics holding secondary appointments in industry and reciprocally, business and industry personnel being recruited into the tertiary sector.

(TEC, 2006a, 67).

The last recommendation of the report deals with policy implementation and calls for the establishment of a Human Resource Development Council and Ministry of Education and Skills with a policy coordination department of tertiary education. Contextualising this within Botswana as a small state in which a proliferation governing or regulation bodies

would be undesirable, it also recommends a major restructuring of the TEC itself and the Ministry of Education together with the establishment of new structures to steer policy implementation. Here the local influence is also balanced with influences of globalisation and a desire to follow the tide of international practice. At a local level, the influence is from state reforms initiated by the Public Enterprises Evaluation and Privatisation Agency (PEEPA) in which semi state companies and entities are rationalised (PEEPA, 2006a; 2006b). It argues against the establishment of new bodies that may conflict with the new thinking at state level. It also draws from the experience of South Africa and UK in balancing the quality assuring and funding roles of buffer bodies like TEC. ‘This is increasingly being manifest through the combination of education and skills into single government departments or ministries (e.g. The Department of Education and Skills, UK) and the establishment of Human Resource Development Councils (e.g. Mauritius)’ (TEC, 2006a, 81). In addition the rolling back of the state through steering, articulated in the consultation document, is elaborated here. There is a call for institutional autonomy that will devolve the governance of institutions from the ministries to the TEC, the merging of structures that previously governed institutions in various ministries into one department of Tertiary Education for purposes of policy coordination at the Ministry of Education level. All these radical reforms within the public sector tertiary education system are said to be following international practice of reducing state expenditure and the public sector, maximising efficiency, performance, cost effectiveness, devolving management and making institutions responsive.

The document, *Towards a Knowledge Society: A Proposal for a Tertiary Education Policy for Botswana*, whose title is in itself revealing on the global influences of this policy, formed the basis of an executive report presented to government as a policy proposal from the TEC. The executive report therefore summarises the main report. Almost all aspects of the main report are retained in this text.

The forgoing analysis reflects the tenor of this policy making in terms of its influence and interests. Clearly, global influences from different circuits are observable. But these are also mediated, though not significantly, by local interests of the state. The documents draw from national public policy texts such as *Vision 2016*, National Development Plans and pronouncements made by the political leadership. But it should be observed that the pronouncements politicians make and what is articulated in public policy texts similarly

represent a response of the state to the changing economic landscape of capitalism. As such this is a local response riveted into the global.

A case has been made that political rhetoric and pronouncements in public policy texts are informed by discourses of globalisation, the substance of which is neo-liberalism, with their conduit as policy experts, the World Bank and other multilateral agencies. Therefore, given the convergence of tertiary education globally, it is not easy to disentangle South African higher education developments and general global influences on this policy. Furthermore, it is beyond the scope of this paper to do a comparative analysis of documents of the two countries. This is a subject that can be done justice by a separate paper. But a reading of the South African higher education transformation key policy texts, the 1997 *White Paper No. 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*, the *Higher Education Act of 1997* and the Council on Higher Education (CHE) document, *Towards a New Higher Education Landscape* (2000) echoes sentiments in the World Bank documents examined earlier. Therefore to argue that Botswana's tertiary education policy is South African influenced may be helpful to a limited extent. Obviously the role and influence of the South African policy expert mentioned earlier cannot be discounted. But what is emerging here pushes the arguments about a state that has apportioned policy making to non-state actors, including supranational and multilateral bodies, further. It is a state that is under immense pressure from globalisation, perhaps signalling its impending loss of relative autonomy in the face of network capitalism, identified by Carnoy and Samoff (2001). This however does not displace and vulgarise local factors. But the core of these policy texts is the market and efficiency ideals that are central to the reform agenda. In Botswana, even without one possessing the mystic of divining bones, all indications are that the state is rolling back and opening tertiary education to the vagaries of market forces. The proliferation of private institutions in recent years and the conscious decision by the state to support it as articulated in the examined texts, and practiced through funding students to enrol in private institutions, points to this reality. Furthermore, a new funding formula tied to performance and accountability is being developed by the TEC. The state also aggressively pursues TE beneficiaries to service their study loans. As the World Bank notes, in Botswana educational support services have been privatised (World Bank, 2002), and the new science and technology university is set up through PPPs (Botswana, 2007).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the themes explored above form the core of the key texts in Botswana's consultative tertiary education policy making. Crucially this article shows the pervasiveness of global influences in this policy. The policy texts sing from the same hymnbook with the World Bank. In this policy, as it is the case in other developing nations, the influence of multinational institutions cannot be understated. Policy makers in this study acknowledge this fact. As Torres and Schugurensky (2002) convincingly argue, the World Bank's influence is not necessarily tied to funding - it also deploys and diffuses technical experts and data to education personnel, policy makers and the political leadership worldwide. 'In this process, the World Bank is considered an intellectual and financial complex because it is extremely influential in defining the themes, variables and dominant terminology in research on international development in education' (Torres, 1995/1996, 299). The potency of the World Bank's documents in this policy has been elaborated. They were the first port-of-call for policy makers when they initiated this policy. To be more precise, they form the basis of Botswana's tertiary education policy.

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