The Response of South Africa's Policy Landscape to Global and Local Trends - The Case of a Rural-Based University

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Abstract: Globalisation is a highly contested term and has become a site for tension. Whilst globalisation in the context of Higher Education must be lauded for giving students and scholars access to work on a global platform, it has also reinforced inequalities that are already prevalent and has even created new ones. The negative impact of globalisation is evident most explicitly in developing countries such as South Africa and in smaller institutions of Higher Learning such as the University of Zululand. To compound the already precarious situation, one finds that in addition to accommodating elements of globalisation, institutions of Higher Learning have to also accommodate local trends such as the Africanisation of Education. Whilst globalisation has swept across the world and has impacted almost every sphere of life, the *foci* of this paper is on how policies in Higher Education, with special reference to the University of Zululand, have responded to global trends and local needs. This is a qualitative study. The methodology used is document analysis. This study interrogates the Language and Research policies of the University of Zululand to illuminate on how the aforementioned institution responds to global and local needs. The main finding of the study is that institutions of Higher Learning, in crafting their policy documents, are incorporating globalisation and are finding innovative ways of embracing local trends at the same time.

Keywords: Globalisation, Local Trends, Internationalisation.

INTRODUCTION

There are numerous definitions of globalisation but for the purpose of this essay, Albach's (2004) definition of globalisation will be used since it articulates directly with the impact of globalisation on the Higher Education context. To Albach (2004, p.5), globalisation is, "the broad economic, technological and scientific trends that directly affect higher education and are inevitable". The operative word is 'inevitable'. Institutions of Higher Learning are compelled to embrace globalisation and to find ways of responding to these trends. Failure to do so will render their institutions obsolete. These trends include internationalisation and its numerous manifestations such as information technology; multi-nationalism; new neo-colonialism; language; Africanisation; marketisation and new managerialism.

Whilst it must be acknowledged that internationalisation has become key to the idea of the university and has gained a pivotal role in the arena of Higher Education, there are local needs that must be considered and implemented in the functioning of universities. Jozwi (2012) claims that the prime rationale for African universities to engage in internationalisation is principally academic and aimed at institutional strengthening, enhancement of knowledge production and research capacities. However, internationalisation of education, whilst impeding Higher Education in some ways, is critically important in widening access to African scholars and providing several opportunities for growth and development. Higher Education must also respond to local needs which will strengthen its participation in the emerging market for international education. There are canons of knowledge where African universities have the edge and should use this to place themselves in the knowledge society.

Universities have to respond to both local and global needs to remain viable and relevant. Sometimes, universities can become a site of great tension as global trends and local needs may not be in tandem with each other. To alleviate this tension, universities need institutional policies that will harmonise with institutional strategic objectives. To assist the process further, academic co-operation among institutions of Higher Learning in both the local and international context must be cultivated. For African universities to be able to compete in the global market they first need to establish their own identity and establish their own niche areas of thought, knowledge production and research. The blueprint for these endeavours lies in the policies that institutions develop to respond to both international and local needs.

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CURRENT GLOBAL TRENDS THAT IMPACT HIGHER EDUCATION

Internationalisation

Whilst many researchers have proffered multiple definitions of internationalisation, for the purpose of this paper Knight's (2004) definition will be used as it encapsulates the Higher Education context. Knight (2004, p.11) defines internationalisation as, "the process of integrating an international, intercultural and global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education". Ellis (2005) proclaims that internationalisation is a response from Higher Education to globalisation.

Neale-Shutte and Fourie (2006) have identified the myriad of forces that drive internationalisation. They have categorised these into external and internal factors. The external factors are as follows: government funding of or involvement in cooperative development projects; international trade; military imperatives such as global terrorism; pressure from population diversity; the internet; marketisation of education and the development of distance learning technology (Neale-Shutte & Fourie, 2006). The internal factors can be itemised as follows: international study (study exchange programmes); diverse study body; research and income generation (Neale-Shutte & Fourie, 2006). Zeleza (2005) espouses that for internationalisation to be effective, mutual exchange has to take place on three levels within academic institutions of Higher Learning: students and academic staff; institutional collaboration and policies and curriculum (foreign subjects, themes, topics and languages must be incorporated).

In the realm of Higher Education, Albach (2004) declares that internationalisation encompasses specific policies drafted and programmes developed and undertaken by institutions of Higher Learning to manage or to exploit globalisation. It is cogent to emphasise that institutions of Higher Learning have the latitude to determine exactly how they want to accommodate globalisation, thereby indicating that there is a level of autonomy and initiative afforded to institutions as has been espoused by De Wit (2002). What this translates into is that institutions of Higher Learning need to be creative in their approach to globalisation so that they are not subsumed by it.

Stemming from internationalisation is the trend of multinationalism. Albach (2004), very succinctly defines multinationalism in the Higher Education context as

academic programmes of one country being offered in another country. This is referred to as 'twinning'. In effect this is franchising of Higher Education.

There is also the flow of academics between countries on a global scale which is unprecedented. Academics travel the world on scholarships to study, on visiting fellowship programmes and to work at other institutions of learning. This is made possible by the fact that many universities are benchmarking their academic programmes according to international standards and that most qualifications are now recognised worldwide (Albach, 2004). However, the reality of academics flowing around globally is that the flow is predominately one directional – from the less developed countries to the more developed countries. Albach (2004) points to the fact that most of students studying abroad do not bring back the skills acquired to their own countries which usually are in dire need of these skills but rather plough these skills back into their host country. Further to this, many of these students are growing the economies of the host country and draining the resources of their home country. If these students return to their home countries they, consciously or unconsciously, become conveyors of international culture which may be at odds with local culture and values.

New Neo-Colonialism

New neo-colonialism was evident in the Cold War era when the two super powers, America and the Soviet Union, used economic, political, cultural and other pressures to manipulate other countries and its people. Albach (2004), claims that in driving this agenda they used Higher Education by, for example, spending large sums of money on student exchanges. This ensured that the recipients were inextricably tied to the donor countries with long-term dependence.

Currently, the paradigm has shifted to a situation where politics is no longer the key driver of neo-colonialism but rather market-driven policies, hence the term 'new neo-colonialism'. Albach (2004) portends that the new neo-colonists are multinational companies and some leading universities who dominate, manipulate and exploit for commercial gain. Whilst participants are not compelled to succumb to the pressures, the benefits of participating in the larger world of scholarship is very tempting and inevitably results in the loss of intellectual and even cultural autonomy by the participants.

The Role of English

English has become the *lingua franca* of the current period. It occupies a pivotal position in most countries and is the language of commerce, knowledge dissemination and interpersonal and intra-personal communication. Crystal (1997) points out that the dominant role played by English is a major factor of globalisation. Besides, it is a truism that in many countries of the world, English is the main language and is the most used second language in the world.

It is also of note that English is the medium of almost all scholarly journals. Internet websites on scholarly writing operates in English. Most international students go to universities where the language of instruction is English. Universities worldwide are aware that they have to offer academic programmes in English to attract foreign students and to improve the English language proficiency of local students so that they can be competitive in the global arena.

For globalisation, English impacts on Higher Education policy and the work of individual academics and students. Hence, countries where English is the main language are advantaged. These writers are writing in their mother tongue which means that they are proficient in the language. Since publishing is of paramount importance in academia, not only for purposes of validation, but also for commercial gain, speakers of English are privileged. Even international conferences organised for academics to disseminate their research findings are in English. So, in effect, what this does is to place speakers for whom English is the first language at the centre of the privilege pool and for those for whom English is an additional language on the periphery.

Neo-Liberalism and Marketisation

Lynch (2006) asserts that the marketisation of universities is posited in neo-liberal politics and is premised on the view that the market can supplant the democratic state as the primary producer of cultural logic and value. The neo-liberal position's prime focus is on creating privatised citizens who care primarily for themselves (Tooley, 2000). This conception, according to Giroux (2002), when applied to Higher Education has serious implications as it conceives of education as just another commodity that can be sold on the market to those who can afford to purchase it. Neo-liberalists justify this view by claiming that this affords people the element of choice. However, Lynch and Moran (2006), correctly point out that in unequal societies only those with the resources have the luxury of choice whilst the poor have no choices at all. All this does is to widen the chasm between the rich and the poor, thereby entrenching the divisions in society based on economics.

Universities are being pressurised to transform from being a centre of learning to a business organisation in response to a major global movement. This in effect means that universities are imbibing the values of the commercial sector and this is exemplified in such ventures as joint conference ventures between universities and businesses and more tacitly with the focus on productivity.

The drive to the marketisation of Higher Education is clearly evidenced in the funding of patenting and money for articles published in accredited journals. Further to this, Dill and Soo (2005), have drawn attention to the creation of global league tables for universities which is a powerful marker that market values have been integrated into universities. It is of significance that those responsible for compiling the rankings are not from universities but rather commercial operations.

Ek, Ideland, Jonsson and Malmberg (2013, p.1306) express concern that the marketisation of universities has resulted in a change from relative autonomy to 'business deals'. They proffer as examples the fact that external examiners evaluate and rank university results, using indicators that can be quantified. On the point of autonomy, Lynch (2006) asserts that the marketisation has led to performance evaluation which affects the role of the university as a free and critical voice. Ek *et al*. (2013) point out that when academics are evaluated and rewarded for communicating with each other through peer-reviewed publications then other forms of communication such as public lectures are pushed to the periphery.

Jozwi (2012), on the trend of marketisation, comments on its deleterious impact on African countries. He explicates this view by drawing attention to the emergence of university rankings. According to Jozwi (2012), whilst these university rankings may accelerate competition between universities, these rankings may in fact be unrealistic for African universities. While rankings are important to some universities for some purposes such as market positioning, relationships with government, prestige, governance and management and stakeholder relations, they are unnecessarily straining to African institutions.

New-Managerialism

New Managerialism is seen by Deem (1998) to represent a new way of trying to categorise and impose managerial techniques – those associated with medium and large profit making businesses onto the general public. Deem (1998, p.49) asserts that techniques highlighted by 'new managerialist' theorists include the use of internal cost centres, the fostering of competition between employees, marketisation of public sector services and the monitoring of efficiency and effectiveness through the measurement of outcomes and individual staff performances.

For Laurillard (2008), new managerialism has propelled a shift towards a more entrepreneurial culture in Higher Education. Deem (1998) argues that the new managerialist approach brings about a better understanding of institutional culture and organisational and management change in a university setting. Deem (1998, p.7) also states that new managerialism, as an ideology, captures the 'extent to which contemporary business practices and private sector ideas or values have permeated publicly funded institutions and work practices'. Thus, the term 'new managerialism' refers to ideologies which underpin the application of techniques concerned with the provision of public services, and to the actual use of those techniques in publicly funded organisations (Clark & Newman, 1997).

Ntshoe (2002) claims that in the late 1990s there was a major shift from the conventional model of governing and organising Higher Education, towards new managerialism which accentuates efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of institutions of Higher Education to the public. Warner and Palfreyman (1996, p.6) claim that such changes were marketed to the public as a means of 'curbing of corruption and extravagancy'. McKay (1995) suggests that these changes have resulted in the balance of Higher Education and business now being tilted from internal academic concerns to extend to issues concerning institutional policies, missions and even plain survival.

The result of this is the university-state relationship being redefined in terms of a contract and the creation of a new relation between institutions and students. Jay and Parker (1998) identify one of the most significant changes as the replacement of undifferentiated block grants to Higher Education and students to performance driven formulae. Whilst funding, in the age that preceded new managerialism, was used simply to fund universities and students, now funding is used as a mechanism for enforcing accountability; control of

teaching and research and covertly as a strategy for challenging the institution of Higher Learning. Resource allocation is used to promote a market culture by linking funding to research output. In the past, autonomy of universities was seldom questioned but with the globalisation trend of new managerialism, it is exerting pressure on the Higher Education sector to become more accountable, cost effective and efficient (Halsey, 1992).

In the South African context this applies to the historically disadvantaged institutions receiving funding from predominately one source, namely the state. This then makes historically disadvantaged institutions indebted to the state which can now wield power over them. This may be exemplified in major decision making processes such as the appointment of vice-chancellors at institutions. The state now 'owns' the institution and can exert power to have its preferred candidate selected for the important post.

In the post-apartheid context, historically disadvantaged institutions receive their funds from government whilst the historically advantaged institutions have other funding streams in addition to government such as external entrepreneurs. Current government funding is based on student enrolment, type of programmes registered for, levels of studies and institutional research outputs.

Local Trends that Impact Higher Education Africanisation

Whilst it is a reality that internationalisation of Higher Education makes an important contribution to capacity-enhancement, Hagenmeier, Lansink and Vukor-Quarshie (2017), contend that curricula interventions in Africa should not be limited to the infusion of international and intercultural elements into teaching. Rather, it is necessary to enhance local relevance and focus on content knowledge that will respond to the specific human capacity needs of the continent.

The calls to Africanise education in Africa, including that of South Africa is becoming deafening. Botha (2007) claims that the call to Africanise education is strongly influenced by African students and academics on both national and international campuses. The primary aim of the discourse on Africanisation is to support the needs, interests and aspirations of people living in Africa. The *foci* are on creating a sense of awareness in students regarding the special needs of their own societies, paralleled with preparing those

students for global citizenship. Hanenmeier *et al*. (2017, p.87) refer to the process of creating continental and global awareness as 'dynamic symbiosis' – a process which should run concurrently. Africanisation calls for curricula to be nationally and internationally relevant and this requires transformation. This entails that the research and teaching and learning agenda should be determined by both national and international demands and should serve the special interests of the African people.

Mtukela (2004) is adamant that African experiences must find expression through the indigenisation of knowledge production and taking into account the experiences of Black members of staff and students at universities. Pandor (2005, p.3), a previous Minister of Higher Education, portended then the following, "We need to ensure that our commitment to Africa and to African solutions is reflected in the culture, organisational ethos, and curriculum framework and content of our higher education institutions". Moulder (1995), in addressing the issue of Africanising Higher Education, identifies the following key cornerstones where change can be effected, namely: changing the composition in terms of demographics of academic, student and administrator bodies; changing the curriculum and the criteria of what constitutes excellent research. It is cogent at this juncture to aver to what Coetzee (1999) construes Africanising of universities to mean. Coetzee (1999), sees the process of Africanising universities to straddle three dimensions, namely: the first which encapsulates decolonisation of Africa, thereby ensuring that African universities are connected to Africa, as well as promoting an African philosophy and culture at institutions of Higher Learning; the second refers to the relevancy of these institutions to Africa in that they should be addressing the needs and expectations of African people and the third points to the legitimacy of universities in Africa in terms of their *foci* on the needs, circumstances and aspirations of Africans.

Whilst African concerns take centre stage in Africanisation, Le Grange (2014) suggests that in Africanising the universities there should not be an exclusive focus on Africanisation. In fact, Makgoba and Seepe (2004) claim that African universities should contribute to a world canon of knowledge in the same way that world renowned universities such as Harvard has done whilst maintaining its own identity.

To many educationists, Africanisation of the curriculum means the incorporation of indigenous knowledge. Hoppers (2002) states that indigenous knowledge must be considered to correct the epistemological disenfranchisement of local people; Suttner (2006), in proposing the importance of indigenous knowledge, claims that South Africa requires an inclusive culture that reverses the suppressed creativity of African people and Lebakeng, Manthiba and Dalindjebo (2006) believe that it is important that indigenous knowledge be revived to reverse academic dependency. These researchers, in crying out for the inclusion of indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, see it as a marker of historical justice.

Language Needs

Globalisation is the key reason for English becoming the most used *lingua franca* of the world. The raison d'être for this is that people communicate on the internet in English although it may not be their home language. English dominates every realm of life including academia.

At almost all universities in South Africa, English is the language of teaching, learning and research although it is not the mother tongue of the majority of students in South Africa. Hence, when students complete their university education, they abandon research (Seepe, 2000). Thus, there is a call to use mother tongue as the medium of instruction at educational institutions.

The dilemma faced by universities is whether to use, develop and preserve mother tongue education to appease national needs or to use English in the race to create global citizens. One must note that South Africa has a policy of multilingualism which allows its citizens to maintain their own language in spite of the onslaught of globalisation. Whilst policies laud the importance of mother tongue education, believing that students learn better, English still continues to dominate the academic landscape. The extension of multilingualism in Higher Education has the potential to contribute significantly to improving the quality of the Higher Education sector. This multilingual policy is crucially important and, according to Brand (2003), for managing the tensions between the following: educational quality, equity and justice, student responsibility and educator accountability; state planning and academic freedom; international competitiveness and community development and research and social relevance. The extension of multilingualism contributes to the simultaneous achievement of all these goals.

POLICIES THAT ADDRESS GLOBAL AND LOCAL NEEDS

A Critical Analysis of the Language Policy of the University of Zululand and Findings Thereof

The Language Policy of the University of Zululand is premised on key principles. The first principle is posited in the university recognising and acknowledging the multiple languages that function in South Africa and uses as its point of departure the need to prepare students to participate fully in a multilingual society where multilingual proficiency and awareness is essential. This first principle is a response to the national need of addressing multilingualism. This is an important imperative in that for every student to be employable and to be able to fit into South African society, multilingualism will be very advantageous.

In terms of the second principle of the policy, everyone is expected to exercise good judgement in their use of language and to ensure that it does not cause offence to others. This is an important response to local needs as language is a very sensitive issue in South Africa. This is a truism as South Africa is a multi-lingual society and language is closely tied to identity.

The third principle of the policy states that the language policy must not cause persons to be denied access to Higher Education. This responds to local and national needs as South Africa's past is tainted by historical injustice which led to the majority of people being denied access to or being given limited access to Higher Education. The third principle states that the university accepts responsibility to assist students and staff of all backgrounds in improving their communication skills in more than one language. This principle responds to both local and global needs. It addresses the local need for multilingualism and since the majority of students at this university are second language speakers of English, it addresses the global need for developing proficient communicators of the English language.

The fourth principle inherent in the policy avers that the university promotes the development of foreign languages which are strategically important from economic perspectives such as trade, tourism and diplomatic relations. This principle articulates directly with the global need of creating global citizens who can fit into the global community.

The overarching aim of the policy is to take cognisance of the multi-lingual and multi-cultural context of South African society and to commit itself to the development of multilingual awareness, multilingual responsiveness and multilingual proficiency. In realising this aim the university adopts the goal of becoming a dual medium institution with English continuing to be the medium of instruction and isiZulu being developed as a medium of instruction. This aspect of the policy addresses both global and local needs by ensuring that English, the international language of communication, continues to be used, hence, widening access onto the global platform whilst at the same time addressing local need of using the isiZulu language. Some may see this as a veiled way of privileging English whilst others may view it as a masterful way of reducing tension between global and local needs.

The policy also stipulates that in conducting its administrative business the university will make it possible for communication with employees and parents to take place in ways which accommodate their language ability. This definitely addresses the local need of inclusivity. Again, given South Africa's history of excluding certain groups of people, this policy makes all realms of civil society accessible to all.

Another tenet of the policy states that the university will recognise in effective and functional ways the importance of other indigenous languages. This addresses local needs. In the historical past, the government of the day only recognised the importance of the English and Afrikaans languages which were spoken by the minority of the population. In post-apartheid era, in the local milieu, there has been a chorus of calls for all indigenous languages to be given its due importance. This tenet of the policy gives credence. to all indigenous languages.

The final tenet of the policy states that the university will recognise in effective and functional ways the importance of foreign languages such as French and German which are strategically important in the region from an economic perspective. This articulates directly with the global trend of marketisation. The university plans on creating citizens who can function in a market related environment.

A Critique of the Research Policy of the University of Zululand and the Findings

The overarching aim of the Research Policy of the University of Zululand is to promote research as a core

university activity and to build research capacity. In pursuit of this aim it recognises the need for research to address local, regional, national and international needs. A major imperative is to engage in a critical dialogue with partners to build research in realms which complement the university's niche as an African rural-based university whilst ensuring internationally recognised excellence. This aim encapsulates succinctly how the University of Zululand responds to both global and local needs. The university recognises its social responsibility of conducting research that will benefit the poor, rural community in its surrounding areas whilst at the same time ensuring that the research conducted is in congruence with international standards.

The policy explicates the University of Zululand's vision to be that of a leading comprehensive university which aims to produce graduates who are globally competitive and also able to be relevant for the human capital needs of the country. It is evident that this policy endeavours to address both local and global needs. This is very well-thought of because if the university produces graduates who can only be relevant in the local context, then it will be short changing the graduates who want to be also equipped to take advantage of global opportunities. By the same token, if the graduates are only prepared for the global environment then then it will have a deleterious impact on the local context resulting in a shortages of skills.

An important goal, as stated in the policy, is that research is considered to be an integral part of its mission and the expectation that staff undertake research and produce quality output which impact on the South African society generally and the region in which the university is situated in particular and also to supervise postgraduate students. This imperative meets the local need of producing research that will help and uplift societies in the local, regional and national contexts.

The policy advocates that research practices should be nationally and internationally benchmarked to do the following: promote critical engagement and the production of knowledge; produce research that is responsive and that can provide leadership to society and to produce research that is formative, transformative and innovative. Once more it is evident that the policy is all encompassing in addressing both local and global needs.

A vital tenet in the policy is that the research strategy will be facilitated by an enabling and rewarding

research context supported by human capacity development, internationally benchmarked quality assurance practices and networks as well as by professionally facilitated and administrative support systems, processes and policies. The fact that research is rewarded articulates with the global trend of marketisation and new-mangerialism. In addition to this it is made explicitly clear that the research must meet international standards.

Some of the strategic goals of the policy are as follows: An enabling environment enhancing measurable excellence, quality assurance and the provision of incentives; to create inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary Research Niche Areas (RNAs); to stimulate collaborative international projects; to improve the University's patent registrations and to increase the number of projects that have resulted in entrepreneurial and innovative endeavours and to stimulate community engaged collaborative projects with research stakeholders, including communities, and industries amongst others. These strategic goals are explicitly promoting the marketisation of Higher Education.

CONCLUSION

Globalisation cannot be completely avoided at institutions of Higher Learning. Added to the dialectic is the imperative to include local needs. History bears testament to the fact that when universities do not take cognisance of global and societal trends then they risk becoming obsolescent. Institutions of Higher Learning in South Africa have become very mindful of accommodating both global and local needs. To this end the policies drafted by institutions, such as at the University of Zululand, are explicit in stating that everything is benchmarked against international trends whilst at the same time ensuring that they make all endeavours to fulfil local needs. Whilst for some, universities may appear to be a site of contestation as global needs and local needs might not always be in sync, one finds that if policies are drafted against the backdrop of growing global trends and then infused with local needs, it becomes transformative in the Higher Education context.

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