Political Economy of Higher Education: South Africa in a comparative perspective

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Higher/Tertiary Education

Major linchpin of
- Economic,
- Social and
- Political development

Produce both public and private benefits

Private benefits

Better employment prospects
Higher salaries,
Greater ability to save and invest,
Better health and improved quality of life,
Higher life expectancy...

Public benefits

Benefits society as a whole

Good Education = Higher earnings = Higher tax revenues
Greater consumption = Benefits to producers

Better teachers = Better education systems

Advanced knowledge and decision-making skills = Robust civil society

Opportunities for economic advancement = Higher productivity
The role of the state

Making education policy,

Funding education
(directives from external institutions and trends)

World Bank

Long standing belief that primary and secondary education are drivers of social welfare and thus more important than tertiary education

1985-1989: 17% of the World Bank’s worldwide education-sector spending was on higher education

1995-1999: 7%


Consequent Trends

Inadequate government funding for universities

Loss of autonomy,

Infrastructural decay,

Falling academic standards,

Politicization and privatization of education

In Africa

Large classes, but low enrolment levels overall,

Academic research output in the region is among the lowest in the world

In Africa

Large classes,
Creating the middle class

Tertiary education is an investment in the creation of a middle class

Important for social, political and economic reasons

Role in increasing the economic productivity in Asian countries

Correlation between university enrolment rates and labour productivity growth

$2 per day or more:

- 57% (Asia)
- 34% (Africa) (2010 stats)

The literature review

Reveals a recurring problem of quantifying the rates of return of investment in tertiary education

The inability to measure or account for social benefits/externalities/spillover benefits

Often hard to identify and even harder to measure individual’s human capital enhancing the productivity of other factors of production through channels that are not internalized by the individual

= social rates of return are higher than private rates of return to education

Knowledge for Development (WB, 1999)

Recommendations:

- Developing countries could use knowledge to narrow the income gap with rich world economies
- Correlation between education in mathematics, science, and engineering and improved economic performance
- Private rate of return to tertiary education, at 20%, was similar to that for secondary schooling
- Train teachers using distance learning and create open universities that use satellites and the Internet to deliver courses

Task Force on Higher Education and Society (TFHE) (WB, 2000)

To monitor its new emphasis on knowledge

Knowledge Economy Index (KEI) to measure:

- Favourability for knowledge development within the economic and institutional regime;
- Education;
- Innovation; and
- Information and communications technology.

Most African countries languish near the bottom of the KEI. South Africa, Botswana, and Mauritius record scores near the middle
Spread of distance-learning institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa

Open Learning Network (University of KwaZulu-Natal)
Universite Marien Ngouabi (Congo-Brazzaville)
Tanzania’s Open University
Zimbabwe Open University
Open Universities in Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia
Southern Africa Regional Universities Association (SARUA): 46 members from 13 countries

Tertiary Education in South Africa

Education system profoundly shaped by social, political and economic inequalities of class, race, gender, region and institution

New constitution and policies emphasize higher education as human resource development and as a crucial arena vital to economic, social, and political transformation

Cont... Tertiary Education in South Africa

General decline in public subsidies to universities and financial pressures
Higher opportunity costs of deferred income for first generation graduates
‘The legacies of intellectual colonisation and racialisation’
Rapid urbanization and higher population density

Universities exist at the intersection of state, market and civil society
The core purposes and functions of universities cannot be to serve purely utilitarian ends
An instrument of social transformation and as catalysts of public intellectual debate
In our ‘Knowledge Society’ they have become instruments of the economy, the labour market, and skills production.

If this is so, what do we do?
1st year students: 2011
University of the Witwatersrand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of students</th>
<th>Class A</th>
<th>Class B</th>
<th>Class C</th>
<th>Class D</th>
<th>Usage during class for etc...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smart phone</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture phone</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text phones</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>&lt;2</td>
<td>B/C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop/computer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>B/C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A - All the time  
B - Frequently  
C - Seldom  
D - Rarely
Student:
1. A2K
2. ADD
3. Skill deficiency: Which System?
4. Money of knowledge: Student to staff ratio

A2K – Addiction to Keyboard

Skill deficiency:
Study Skills:
- Note taking –
  “I have the handout/notes therefore by osmosis I have the knowledge”
- Note making – Highlighting text in books
- Working/Revision
  “monkey-see- monkey do”
  “watch the magician”
- Summarization
  WHAT???
There are two aspects of fluid mechanics, which makes it different to solid mechanics:

1. **For Solid** - Strain in a function of the applied stress
   
   The strain in a solid is independent of the time over which the force is applied. Deformation disappears when the force is removed.

2. **For Fluid** - the rate of strain is \( \propto \) to applied stress
   
   A fluid continues to flow as long as the force is applied - will not recover its original form when the force is removed.

In fluids, we usually deal with continuous streams of fluid without a beginning or end.
There are two aspects of fluid mechanics, which makes it different to solid mechanics:

1. For Solid, - Strain in a function of the applied stress

- Elastic region

The strain in a solid is independent of time over which the force is applied – it will not recover to its original form when the force is removed.

In fluids, we usually deal with continuous streams of fluid without a beginning or end.

2. For a Fluid – the rate of strain is ∝ to applied stress

A Fluid continues to flow as long as the force is applied – will not recover to its original form when the force is removed.

In fluids, we usually deal with continuous streams of fluid without a beginning or end.
Cellphone Assisted Teaching (CAT)

PHASE 2: Class Attendance
Security of notes

Local area Wi-Fi (LAWiFi) ONLY

Downloadable
only via LAWiFi & during Class

Lecture-ppt & Notes

Daily login Password
File login password protected

Security:
PDF files
(i) save only
(ii) Non transferable
(iii) Non forward able
(iv) Non printable

Student cell phone

Resolution:
Block cellphone/3G/4G signals – unconstitutional

Address
(a) A2K – loosing battle
   i. Engage with keyboard

(b) Note taking/making – interactive approach
   i. Campus notice boards
      ii. Web pages

(c) Extension to Open University
   Local area course identifier (LACI) and connectivity – student identifying classmates in vicinity

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