1

SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION BEFORE AND AFTER 1994

A POLICY ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

Driekie Hay & 'Mabokang Monnapula-Mapesela

ABSTRACT

In this chapter the authors describe some theoretical underpinnings of policy analysis with specific reference to one distinct approach, namely evaluative policy analysis. This is followed by an explanation of why the study of policies and policy analysis is important and of how governments steer higher education through policies. Both the South African and the European higher education systems are used to illustrate how steering and policies influence each other. The main focus of the chapter, however, is on the complexities, reasoning and forces behind policy development and implementation in South Africa, both before and after 1994. The chapter concludes with the challenges of policy development, implementation and evaluation facing South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of a new democratic era in 1994 the history and development of South African higher education received intense attention and was embraced by many South African scholars. One could argue that not enough has been done to analyse the manifold policies with the intention to evaluate their appropriateness at a given time, as well as their success in delivering what they advocate. In this chapter we deliberately shift the focus from a mere political tracking of higher education policies and we provide a means to policy evaluation and analysis.

For any person studying higher education, the South African history and current practices provide interesting perspectives and background to the complexities, reasoning and forces behind policy development and implementation. The chapter will commence by providing theoretical underpinnings of policy analysis with specific reference to

PART ONE • ISSUES OF POLICY

one distinct approach, namely evaluative policy analysis. An outline is provided to clarify why the study of policies and policy analysis is important and to illuminate what the trends are in policy development in South Africa. The chapter also explains how governments steer higher education through policies. Both the South African higher education and the European higher education systems are used to provide perspectives on government steering.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF POLICY ANALYSIS

Policy analysis in higher education is a process prone to various approaches and models depending on circumstances in which it is required. It could be discipline-specific, context-specific or even ideology-driven.

In this chapter only one approach to policy analysis – the so-called evaluative policy analysis – will be explored. One interesting definition regards policy analysis as a form of evaluative research employed to improve or legitimise the practical implications (both positive and negative) of a policy or a policy-oriented programme. It is used where there is hope that the process can emancipate the policy by bringing about its review and change.

This approach (evaluative policy analysis), which is fast gaining recognition among scholars and education practitioners, has its roots in the works of renowned philosophers of Greece, Persia and Italy, such as Aristotle, Montesquieu and Machiavelli. Aristotle is known for his logical discourse and speculations about the origins and merits of different types of governments and their mutual obligations to society. In his naturalistic accounts the great political philosopher Baron de Montesquieu focused on various forms of government, the reasons why they existed and why their development was often advanced or constrained. Montesquieu argued that the best government was one that attains its purpose and acknowledges the needs of its people. Niccolo Machiavelli's treatises on realistic political theory may be regarded as unrealistic and brutal by many, for he advocated the employ of brute power in order to achieve practical, essential and good policy purposes (Kemerling 2006; Bok 2003; Richardson 2003).

Since one of the greatest virtues of higher education is to serve the public good, policy evaluation becomes a worthwhile approach to investigating the validity and course of policy development and implementation in higher education worldwide and in South Africa in particular. However, because higher education is a unique interdisciplinary field of study with a focus on various disciplines, two important challenges regarding policy analysis are apparent. On the one hand, it can easily fall prey to confusion

CHAPTER 1 • SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION BEFORE AND AFTER 1994

when a choice of one method of analysis is taken to be an absolute, since no one size can best serve the distinctiveness of the disciplines entailed in higher education. On the other hand, one may argue that the sector has been spoiled by the choice of approaches and methods to policy analysis since a variety are at its disposal. Regardless of the existence of the manifold approaches and models none presents itself as an absolute that provides all the answers.

EVALUATIVE POLICY ANALYSIS

Sometimes referred to as policy or theory evaluation, policy analysis is an integral part of higher education systems worldwide. In evaluative policy analysis the overall aim is to evaluate the appropriateness of the policy course, its objectives, its rationale, as well as the route taken to meet the objectives and finally to ensure that appropriate interventions such as policy review, its cessation or improvement are put in place. The point of departure in the process is close scrutiny of the policy aims and objectives, its assumptions and its intentions (Van der Knaap 2004:1). In higher education, policy evaluation or analysis provides timely but appropriate interventions ensuring that institutions address the intended needs of the society they serve (students and communities). According to Blamey and McKenzie (2007:439), the outcome of evaluative policy analysis does not necessarily provide all the answers, but it can identify policies that are redundant – those making a significant contribution to service – and it can also expose shortfalls in policy. It can also create opportunities for policy managers to identify ways that work better.

Since evaluative policy analysis has to allow policy development and implementation to run their course, it is usually slow in bringing results. One of the impeding factors is that the social issues at which the policy is aimed are often resistant to change. This is so for reasons ranging from a lack of buy-in by consumers and implementers of policy, poor policy planning and sometimes a lack of resources (financial or human). In South Africa one of the biggest issues in the transformation agenda has been the development of a profusion of policies for higher education. The policy development process on its own has lasted well over a decade and seemingly more work is still to come. Due to the underlying democratic participatory policy-making process characterising all spheres of the South African society, the implementation of the proposed policies, acts and initiatives has been rather slow (Mapesela and Hay 2005:113), oftentimes forcing policy analysts to engage in policy analysis even before implementation is complete.

PART ONE • ISSUES OF POLICY

Over 30 South African higher education policy initiatives have been promulgated in a very short space of time after 1994. Their voluminous nature, lack of clarity of implementation steps, the vast number of coordinating bodies, as well as the wrong assumption that institutions and academics have enough capacity and support to implement these policies have created and continue to create, among others, a stagnation in policy implementation, fears of encroachment in academics' sphere sovereignties, and sometimes animosity and resistance to change. Blamey and McKenzie (2007:439) appropriately argue that however slow the policy process may be, over time the cumulative increments of evaluative policy analysis are not insignificant, and are indeed worth waiting for.

Policy analysis must happen at various levels of the system, from the highest to the lowest echelons. Although policy introduction frequently radiates from government as the macro- and political/steering level, all stakeholders in the sector have a shared responsibility in developing, implementing and evaluating policy. A critical expectation in evaluative policy analysis is that policy analysts remain dispassionate and emotionally uninvolved in order to achieve objective accounts/results from the process.

On the contrary, the lack of objectivity during policy analysis most often jeopardises policy development and implementation processes. Evidence of this is observed in the manifestation of the manifold problems and misunderstandings of what a university in a transforming country like South Africa should be, and how it should conduct itself, for example in allocating and utilising its resources for its diverse stakeholders (students and staff), and how it should ensure acceptable institutional culture(s), as well as good ethical conduct in the lecture rooms during teaching and learning.

However, all is not doom and gloom, since to a large extent the same policy expectations that were introduced by government after 1994 have been highly instrumental in the advancement of transformation – the absence thereof could easily send this country back to the era of global repudiation and sanctions.

It is therefore understandable that the lack of policy implementation and evaluation, as well as the economy of the country, are often blamed on retarded human resources and skills development. All citizens have to pay the price – the hardest hit being the voiceless, the powerless, the poorest of the poor and the less privileged who are seldom part of policy analysis teams and experts. However, problems in policy development and implementation are not unique to South Africa and occur throughout the world. Ample examples exist throughout the world of how governments, for example, steer higher education systems to achieve the governing ideologies and objectives of the day.

REASONS WHY GOVERNMENTS STEER HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS THROUGH POLICIES

Every government has a fundamental obligation to define clearly, through a process of public debate and affirmation, the purposes it expects higher education to achieve. Governments need to ensure that the funding of higher education institutions are commensurate with the purposes it expects those institutions to help achieve, balancing mandates with incentives to bring into alignment a state's public interests with the interests of institutions. Besides, governments also have the responsibility to ensure that higher education institutions perform well, deliver graduates of high quality, address short skills and research areas and contribute towards the socio-economic demands of a particular state. Through a well-balanced steering approach governments can create a climate that is conducive to economic development through initiatives that create partnerships among higher education, the private sector, and state government; invest in strategic and cumulative ways for improving infrastructure; and provide structures that encourage and reward collaboration among higher education providers within and across sectors.

TYPES OF STEERING

There are typically two types of steering: control by government (classical steering) and supervision by government ('new' steering) (Maassen and Van Vught 1994). The classical steering is based on the idea that society can be manipulated and in this approach steering is done through command and control of internal processes. The problem with classical steering is that higher education systems are too great for detailed top-down steering and that government has no monopoly on steering society. On the contrary, the new steering mechanism provides universities with greater autonomy and improves transparency of inputs and outputs. It furthermore enhances institutions' accountability and has the possibility to strengthen university managements.

In an attempt to further refine and explain the divergent ideas and views on the role of the state, Gornitzka and Maassen (2000) distinguish between the sovereign state, the institutional state, the corporate-pluralist state, and the classical liberal state (state supermarket model). The *sovereign state steering model* views higher education as a governmental instrument for reaching political, economic and social goals. Higher education is thus a strong ally to implement the state's higher education policy agenda. The *institutional steering model* provides higher education institutions with the task of protecting academic values and traditions against political instabilities. The *corporate-pluralist state steering model* acknowledges that there are a variety of often competing

PART ONE • ISSUES OF POLICY

centres of authority and control with respect to higher education. In the *supermarket steering model* the role of the state is minimal. This approach ensures that the market mechanism in higher education is not imprecise. In their study Gornitzka and Maassen (2000) found a predisposition towards the supermarket steering model. What seems even more interesting is that in most systems a blend of models is found – also referred to as a *hybrid steering approach*.

THE LINK BETWEEN GOVERNMENT STEERING AND HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Government steering in higher education is a concept that refers to the attempts of a government to influence the decisions and actions of other actors according to its goals by using certain mechanisms or ‘tools’. These ‘tools’, which are usually funding, regulation, planning and evaluation, often find their impetus in policies (Maassen and Van Vught 1994). Since 1980 quality assessment (Westerheijden 1998) and lately the ranking of universities have also become powerful steering mechanisms. In responding to increasing government steering, it is argued that although socio-political demands and expectations of higher education are increasing, government expenditure is either stagnating or decreasing. Many higher education institutions simply do not have the capacity to deal with all the demands.

We know that universities as institutions have always performed certain roles that were predominantly influenced by the cultural and ideological, social and economic, educational and scientific roles allocated to them. Yet, it is accepted globally that the ‘modern’ university as a project of the nation state with its cultural identity finds itself in uncertain times, since universities are involved in almost every kind of social and economic activity and are highly dependent on government for the bulk of their income. Universities today are increasingly urged to ‘modernise’, ‘adapt’, ‘marketise’, to become more ‘efficient’, more ‘service-oriented’ and more ‘societally relevant’. All of these transformation issues can only be successful if the traditional steering relationship between state authorities and higher education institutions are in tandem – implying a rearrangement and renegotiation of relationships between the state and the public sector. Not surprisingly, an increasing strand of research is also noticeable in the field of higher education policy. It seems appropriate then to explore, on a concrete level, practical examples of how governments steer higher education.

EXAMPLES OF HOW GOVERNMENTS STEER HIGHER EDUCATION

The following international examples are provided to illustrate how governments abroad steer higher education towards certain goals:

- The Bologna process with its implied changing degree structures as a European example of government steering;
- Internationalisation and globalisation;
- The changing organisation of research;
- Financial accountability and responsibility;
- Interactive governance.

The Bologna process and changing degree structures

In 1999, 29 European ministers in charge of higher education met in Bologna to lay the basis for establishing a European Higher Education Area by 2010 and promoting the European system of higher education world-wide. In their declaration, known as the Bologna Declaration, the ministers agreed to:

- adopt a system of easily readable and comparable degrees;
- adopt a system with two phases: the undergraduate and the graduate;
- establish a system of credits;
- promote mobility by overcoming obstacles;
- promote European cooperation in quality assurance; and
- promote European dimensions in higher education.

The Bologna Declaration is an example of intergovernmental steering and not of steering in one particular nation state only. The steering of the Bologna declaration is obviously to the advantage of all participating countries and hard to separate from internationalisation and globalisation imperatives.

Internationalisation and globalisation as steering mechanisms

It is accepted that in order to make internationalisation and globalisation succeed, intergovernmental relationships, planning and steering mechanisms are required. The implication is that even though the nation state is powerful, some of its capacities are likely to change, shift and be shared with other players, such as international and supranational role-players – even outside the academic and education sector

PART ONE • ISSUES OF POLICY

(Beck 2000; Castells 2000). In Africa, South Africa has assumed custodianship of the other countries, particularly in the Southern African development countries and their regions.

In Australia, for example, the government's decision to adopt a neo-liberal policy has forced higher education to become market driven, with the result that individuals are increasingly required to pay for their studies. Furthermore, a unified higher education system has been developed. It is not yet clear what the unintended consequences of neo-liberalism may have for the university sector.

Changing research infrastructures

In 2000 the European Union initiated a process intended to be in place by 2010 as "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". In order to operationalise this goal a number of new policies, including education and research, were formulated – leading national governments to review, amongst others, their research infrastructure. As a result of these initiatives, universities began to coordinate their research activities effectively and to expand relationships with the 'outside' world. The rationale for the first theme was to focus and prioritise research activities in order to achieve excellence in the most efficient way.

Shifting financial arrangements

Within the realm of the theme 'finance' there are two international issues. The first one is the shift towards more individual responsibility for students, implying that they will bear an increased financial burden. There are a number of countries in which there are no tuition fees and where they are not on the agenda. In addition to the shifting responsibilities of government/higher education institutions with regard to students, there is also a trend towards greater responsibility and accountability for institutions regarding the efficient use of resources. Several measures have been introduced to stimulate universities and other higher education institutions to become more 'productive'.

Another important mechanism by which governments steer higher education is the use of base and non-base funding. Base formula funding is funding provided by the government to continue the basic operation and maintenance of higher education institutions. It is usually enrolment-driven and it provides operational stability. Non-base funding comes in addition to the funding provided through the base formula and

CHAPTER 1 • SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION BEFORE AND AFTER 1994

is usually a pool or pools of resources directed at specific purposes. Non-base funding includes earmarked funding, which is funds dedicated or earmarked for a specific programme.

Interactive governance

In terms of organisational governance one can detect a push towards a 'new openness' of universities in terms of their surroundings. The increasing autonomy, together with the push towards openness of universities and other higher education institutions, has made the governance of 'the university' very complex.

Having touched upon international trends in this field it is necessary to provide an overview of policy development and implementation as a result of government steering in South Africa. In order to understand recent developments better it is also necessary to touch briefly upon the period before 1994.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNMENT STEERING IN SOUTH AFRICA

As expected, government steering before 1994 was aimed at mainly advancing white South Africans. The apartheid dispensation left South Africa with a highly contested and racially segregated higher education system, consisting of a typology of historically white and historically black universities (which also included two separate universities for Indians and 'coloureds'). This system originated in the establishment of colleges that were precursors of the University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch.

Against the background of the political situation in the early 20th century, white universities were established in South Africa on the basis of language of tuition. This resulted in a classification of historically white Afrikaans and historically white English universities. Apart from language differentiation there was also a noticeable distinction between the academic, intellectual and socio-political cultures and epistemic alliances of that time – the historically white English universities in the Anglo-Saxon historical tradition and historically white Afrikaans universities in the Dutch and German philosophical and theological traditions.

The proliferation of Afrikaans universities should also be viewed against the rise of Afrikaner nationalism in the early 1900s and the coming to power of the National Party in 1948. The establishment of the so-called black universities was based on the policy of separate development or segregation. This distinction was justified in the extension

PART ONE • ISSUES OF POLICY

of the University Education Act of 1959 passed by the governing party of the time. Black universities had to adopt curricula and management models used by Afrikaans universities. Apart from race, universities were also classified according to ethnicity. The underlying ideology in this divide was to preserve the cultural identity of only a small part of society, namely white, and in particular Afrikaner, people.

A further distortion of the higher education system before 1994 was the lack of equity in the distribution of resources to institutions, huge disparities between historically black and historically white institutions in terms of facilities and capacities, and a skewed distribution of the student population in certain disciplines, with no more than a handful of non-white students in fields such as the sciences, engineering, and technology. The same stratification existed in the governance of these institutions. In a nutshell, the system was highly characterised by fragmentation, inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNMENT STEERING AFTER 1994

The year 1994 will always be known as the year of the culmination of liberation, transformation and the breaking away from a past whose corollaries are still endured by people today. The reality of 1994 was that, with a new government in place, a new but massive transformation agenda was set. High expectations were expressed to universities to refocus their roles and to fulfil their traditional role, namely that of contributing towards social, political and economic development, since during their conception they were earmarked as places where leaders were trained, minds shaped and ideas formed. In contrast, the inherited system was inherently unequal, its academic input outdated in many respects and not in step with the emerging ideas of the democratic South Africa. A further debilitating factor was the culture of research in many universities, which seemed to be incompatible with the progressive agenda of the new South Africa and the culture. Although the transformation agenda was fair, it also alienated a large majority of people with its technicalities. The subsequent challenge for the new policy makers was – and still is – to deal with the legacy of the past, and yet also to shape and prepare South African universities to embrace the future in a global world.

MOST PROMINENT POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1994

Since 1994, South African policy development has largely been driven by the new constitution of the country. Its mandate is to realise a system of education that is transformed and democratised in alignment with the values guarding human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism, and one that ensures

CHAPTER 1 • SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION BEFORE AND AFTER 1994

the right to basic education for all citizens. Subsequently, the objectives of these policies are valid in light of the country's history, subtle undertakings of segregation/discrimination, the inherited legacy of inequality that still looms in all sectors of work and that seems to be mutating into many different forms. The array of policies which saw the light after 1994 was supposed to bring hope for the nation – cutting across all sectors. The hope was expressed that with a number of well-grounded policies in place the South African society would soon see the benefits resulting from their implementation. However, soon their implementation became a colossal stride which some critics describe as a blind leap into the sea. Nonetheless, the legitimacy of such an overhaul is seldom questioned, particularly by those who stand to benefit from the proper implementation of such policy.

Policy development for the era after 1994 commenced with the appointment by former President Nelson Mandela of a National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) whose role was to develop a policy framework for the transformation of South Africa's higher education sector which by that time comprised universities, technikons, and nursing, agriculture and teachers' training colleges. This process, which started in Parliament in 1995, culminated in the Higher Education Act of 1997.

The most important recommendations made by the NCHE in trying to transform the system were the following:

- An expansion of student enrolment and broadened access to reach a wider distribution of social groups and classes, including adult learners;
- Greater responsiveness to societal needs and interests;
- Increased cooperation and partnership in structures of governance, both at the system and institutional levels;
- A higher education system designed, planned, managed and funded as a single coordinated system comprising universities, technikons and colleges;
- Alignment of qualifications with the National Qualifications Framework allowing adequate channels, flexible entry, as well as exit points and horizontal and vertical mobility;
- A strategic public funding framework taking into account the number of students in different fields and levels of study; and addressing the special needs of institutions, such as equity, redress and research infrastructure;
- Establishment of a higher education quality committee responsible for programme accreditation, institutional auditing and quality promotion;
- Distance education and resource-based learning.

PART ONE • ISSUES OF POLICY

These recommendations feature in the Higher Education Act, as well as in a number of policies and papers, namely the Education White Paper 3: *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (1997), the Council on Higher Education (CHE) report entitled *Towards a new higher education landscape, meeting the equity, quality and social development imperatives of South Africa in the 21st century* (2000) the *National Plan for Higher Education* (2001) and the South African Qualifications Act (SAQA) Act of 1995. These policies were, amongst others, an attempt to steer higher education institutions towards driving and meeting transformational targets and strongly held beliefs. In the following paragraphs the Education White Paper 3, 1997 is used to illustrate how the post-1994 government steered the higher education system to achieve the transformation agenda which was set then.

THE EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 3, 1997: AN EXAMPLE OF GOVERNMENT STEERING HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Education White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997) made it clear that in addition to funding for redress and student financial aid, there is a need to encourage innovation and adaptation, and to build capacity in new areas. In order to transform the entire South African higher education landscape, a number of key goals were formulated for the system. These include stabilising of institutions and the higher education system, improving efficiency, encouraging inter-institutional and regional cooperation, improving student equity, enhancing institutional planning capacity, encouraging mission differentiation, improving staff equity, enhancing quality and promoting development. The White Paper describes these goals and explains how they are supposed to contribute towards government's steering goals.

Stabilising of institutions and the higher education system and improving efficiency

In order to achieve this aim, a number of policy initiatives, such as the 3-year rolling plans, were put in place. By means of enrolment planning the South African government wanted to ensure that equity targets would be met and that there would be a more efficient way of enrolling students into particular fields of science, engineering and technology. Part of the motivation/steering in this case was that the subsidy that institutions would receive per student who graduated in these areas would differ from those in categories that were lower in priority.

In an attempt to move towards a more unified higher education system, the 36 institutions were merged and/or incorporated into 23, doing away with the technikon sector and

CHAPTER 1 • SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION BEFORE AND AFTER 1994

moving towards introducing universities of technology. Another reason behind this move was to do away with the legacy of apartheid which divided the system into historically black and disadvantaged institutions and historically white and advantaged ones. In addition, the government started to adjust cost units between higher education institutions and provided funding to improve the current infrastructure of the institutions. In 2008, an amount of R3,2 billion was earmarked for this purpose.

Another way of achieving greater efficiency in the system was for government to add time limits for funding of students and to add premiums for progression/graduation rates.

Encouraging inter-institutional and regional cooperation

Although not much has happened regarding regional cooperation the arrangements as proposed by institutions' programme and qualification mixes (PQMs) forced institutions to inform each other about their programme offerings and intended new programmes they would like to offer.

Improving student equity

By expanding the allocation of the national student financial aid and support many more students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were afforded the opportunity to enrol for higher education. In addition, extended curricula were introduced in order to provide students with a better opportunity to obtain their degrees.

Encouraging mission differentiation

Mission differentiation was achieved through introducing the concept of universities of technology. Accordingly, institutions were provided the opportunity by the Higher Education Quality Committee to be evaluated and audited by them on their vision and mission statements – thus providing institutions the opportunity to differentiate.

Improving staff equity, enhancing quality and promoting research development

The South African government has invested in different strategies and projects to address the inequalities of the previous system and to strengthen in particular the research capacities of academics coming from designated groups and within the technikon sector. The Thuthuka Programme, which is part of the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) directorate of the NRF, serves as an example. The

PART ONE • ISSUES OF POLICY

strategic objectives of Thuthuka are to improve the qualifications of participating researchers to doctoral and postdoctoral levels, to accelerate the progression of participating researchers into the mainstream of national and other research support opportunities, to contribute to the sustainable development of participating researchers and to increase the number of NRF-rated researchers from participating researchers at national level. In addition, the NRF has also implemented a mentoring programme, which interacts with mentees who form a substantial population of South Africa's academia. This project is a result of the lack of commitment that often exists from both the mentors and mentees to stay committed to such an intervention. The reality is that even today research expertise still resides largely in the white and white male 'seasoned researchers' most nearing retirement.

Three sub-programmes have been implemented by Thuthuka. Two of these are 'Researchers-in-Training' (RiT) and 'Women-in-Research' (WiR). The RiT is intended to develop entry-level researchers to be in a position to participate in other NRF funding streams with established researchers on a competitive basis, whilst the WiR should support women researchers in the advancement of their research careers and enable them to become more representative and to contribute to research discourses. The third project is that of the Research Development Initiative for Black Academics (REDIBA) which is aimed at preparing black South African researchers for positions of scientific and academic leadership, thereby diversifying, strengthening and sustaining the nation's research capabilities (NRF 2007).

Regarding quality, a number of developments took place, such as the introduction of quality audits by the Higher Education Quality Committee and programme reviews of which the evaluation of MBA programmes and teacher training programmes were a major part. In an attempt to ensure that all academic programmes and qualifications met minimum criteria and were accredited by the Council on Higher Education, the National Department of Education and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) were developed. The impact of legislation and policies regulating the accreditation and registration of academic programmes led to, amongst others, new posts being created within institutions, new committee structures to deal with curriculum issues and many administrative tasks for academic and administrative staff.

The introduction of teaching and learning development grants was another initiative to ensure the equity of success and the overall improvement of learning and teaching in South African higher education. Based on the success rates of institutions, a specific

CHAPTER 1 • SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION BEFORE AND AFTER 1994

amount earmarked for the improvement of institutions' throughput rates was allocated to institutions. This money can be used for the expansion of tutorial systems, academic advising, academic support including academic language proficiency development, supportive educational technology, to name but a few.

DISCUSSION

Although the system can be hailed for significant milestones made in transformation, serious discrepancies are still the order of the day, hence the continuing transformation agenda, policy analysis and review. On the other hand, and despite the negative consequences of the apartheid legacy, the system as a whole is still currently the best developed in Africa, with substantial resources. Most institutions enjoy international attention and recognition since they have developed internationally competitive research and teaching capacities. These valuable features and achievements have been retained. But the system's inequities, imbalances and distortions still have a long way to go before being truly and sufficiently addressed.

A number of challenges for policy analysis in South African higher education still exist, as outlined in the following:

- Misconceptions about policy issues and their value by members of society hamper policy development, implementation, analysis and review.
- Certain stakeholders still deny their role in policy issues. This denial is usually accompanied by negative critique, engagement in deliberate confusing petty debates about what matters and what does not matter. This often shifts focus from the real purpose of policy.
- There is fear or unwillingness to take bold steps (make hard choices) in the advancement of transformation, particularly in cases where non-supporters have little to lose.
- A lack of faith and resistance to policy analysis, planning, and implementation by other stakeholders delays emancipation through evaluation.
- In many higher education institutions the already dwindling funds are misdirected and are not used for genuine transformation issues. This implies a continued cycle of mediocrity in implementation, as well as a never-ending game of blaming the government.

PART ONE • ISSUES OF POLICY

- Policy needs to be scrutinised for the good it intends imparting to the stakeholders and not according to its origins or the evaluators' diverse worldviews and ideologies. This renders the process free of bias to a certain extent.
- Among other challenges, poor policy planning and inability to forecast accurately the essential requirements of managing transformation of the higher education system as a massive and highly complex project can also be regarded as debilitating forces in reaping policy dividends after 15 years of policy steering by government.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter described the importance of policy development and implementation in higher education. It argued that often not enough is done to ensure that policies are adequately financed and capacitated with human resources, monitored, evaluated and re-adjusted. It was acknowledged that if dealt with in a pragmatic way, policy steering is a powerful mechanism to ensure that the social, economic and educational needs and aspirations of countries and higher education systems are met. Consequently the need for higher education practitioners and academics worldwide – and in South Africa in particular – to familiarise themselves with the nuts and bolts of policy analysis and to influence policy development and discourses cannot be overemphasised.

From this chapter a number of conclusions can be drawn regarding policy development and implementation. There seems to be a general move to a 'supermarket steering' model. The state is becoming less dominant in steering higher education and the (quasi-)market is becoming more influential. However, in none of the countries studied for this purpose a 'pure' market approach has been introduced. The current steering approaches with respect to higher education should rather be described as hybrid. Whilst higher education institutions appear to have increasing autonomy, governments, through regulation, appear to wish to ensure that this autonomy is used by institutions to achieve specific political expectations. This view is based on observations that innovations in national higher education policies have recently led to a partial 'de-instrumentalisation' of higher education and a renewed interest in other, e.g. social, and cultural, roles of higher education.

Effective structures for monitoring the implementation of national higher education policies or programmes are still rare. Yet, institutions are grappling with the idea of higher education as a social space and are therefore only now learning what it means to be a public service enterprise. Moreover, they are still in the process of developing approaches and methods to manage their resources effectively. Factors

CHAPTER 1 • SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION BEFORE AND AFTER 1994

such as inherited staff and resources, common practice and values, subject mix, and management approaches have constrained institutions and profoundly affected their market position. The impact of governments on academic programme development in first-degree education is limited. Governmental attempts to influence university and college developments in the area of lifelong learning can in general be described as wishful thinking. Especially in continental Europe the traditional bilateral relationship between higher education and the state is rapidly becoming a multilateral relationship between higher education and various external actors, including the Ministry of Education.

Lastly, higher education policies that achieve accountability and link institutional performance to societal purposes are very much needed in South Africa. At the same time they must permit a wide scope for institutional autonomy, taking into account the primary roles of higher education institutions such as the building of knowledge bases (primarily through research), the creation of capabilities (primarily through teaching), the diffusion of knowledge, the maintenance of knowledge, societal needs, as well as the expectations of industry, employers, individuals and communities. The challenge is thus to deal with the tension that exists between the servicing function of the individual university to external interests and the innovative pursuit of knowledge generation.

REFERENCES

- Asmal K. 2002. Press statement by the Minister of Education on Transformation and reconstruction of Higher education system, 30 May 2002, Pretoria, South Africa.
- Beck U. 2000. The cosmopolitan perspective: Sociology of the second age of modernity. *British Journal of Sociology*, 1:79-105.
- Blamey A & McKenzie M. 2007. Theories of change and realistic evaluation: Peas in a pod or apples and oranges? *Evaluation*, 13(4):439-455.
- Bok H. 2003. Baron de Montesquieu, Charles-Louis de Secondat. Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy [Online]. Available: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/montesquieu> [2008, 13 January].
- Castells M. 2000. Materials for an exploratory theory. *British Journal of Sociology*, 51(1):5-24.
- Gornitzka A & Maassen P. 2000. Hybrid steering approaches with respect to European higher education. *Higher Education Policy*, 13:267-285.
- Kemerling G. 2006. Aristotle (384-322 BCE) [Online]. Available: <http://www.philosophypages.com/ph/aris.htm> [2008, 13 January].
- Maassen P & Van Vught FA. 1994. Alternative Models of Governmental Steering in Higher education. In: L Goedegebuure & FA van Vught (eds). *Comparative Policy Studies in Higher Education*. Utrecht: Lemma.

PART ONE • ISSUES OF POLICY

- Mapesela M & Hay HR. 2005. Through the magnifying glass: A descriptive theoretical analysis of the impact of the South African higher education policies on academic staff and their job satisfaction. *Higher Education*, 50:111-128.
- NRF (National Research Foundation). 2007. Overview of grants, scholarships, fellowships and the rating of researchers [Online]. Available: www.nrf.ac.za [2008, 18 January].
- Richardson B. 2003. Niccolò Machiavelli. Wikipedia [Online]. Available: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/nicco%20machiavelli> [2008, 13 January].
- RSA DoE (Republic of South Africa. Department of Education). 1997. *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*. Pretoria: Government Publishers.
- Van der Knaap P. 2004. Theory-based evaluation and learning: Possibilities and challenges. *Evaluation*, 10(1):16-34.
- Westerheijden DF. 1998. Quality assurance and steering in higher education. In: A Rip (ed). *Steering and effectiveness in a developing knowledge society*. Utrecht: Lemma.