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# Globalizing Higher Education for Neo-liberal Development in Postcolonial Mozambique

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## Abstract

This article examines the ways in which neo-liberal discourses of globalization and development have been used to imagine and enact higher education in Mozambique. It argues that higher education developments in Mozambique in the past fifteen years are not only reflective of free market economy logic, but also ignore the social and historical contextualities, a course which deepens social inequalities. Using a postcolonial perspective to de-naturalize neo-liberal regimes of knowledge production, the article analyses how the course of higher education in Mozambique is indicative of broader social (trans)formations. It shows how the policy framework evokes and puts to work a set of technologies such as self-empowerment, self-regulation and a culture of managerialism to enforce the belief that individuals can make choices to fulfil their hopes of improving lives through higher education. It also argues that this belief does not take into account how such technologies of hope are configuring power relations which may lead, in the long run, to social inequalities because very few households can afford access to higher education.

## Résumé

L'article examine la manière dont les discours néolibéraux de la mondialisation et du développement ont été utilisés pour réformer et adopter l'enseignement supérieur au Mozambique. Cet article soutient que l'évolution de l'enseignement supérieur au Mozambique durant les quinze dernières années n'est pas seulement le reflet d'une logique économique de liberté de marché plutôt étroite, mais ignore également un contexte social et historique qui aggrave les inégalités sociales. Revenant sur l'approche postcoloniale de

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production de connaissances promue par des régimes néolibéraux, cet article montre comment le contenu de l'enseignement supérieur est révélateur de facteurs sociaux de (trans)formations plus larges. Il analyse la manière dont le cadre politique évoque et met en œuvre un ensemble de technologies (telles que autonomie, autorégulation et management culturel) pour imposer la croyance selon laquelle les individus peuvent faire des choix pour répondre à leurs espoirs grâce à l'amélioration de l'enseignement supérieur. L'auteur soutient que cette croyance ne tient pas compte de la manière dont ces technologies ne sont que la configuration de rapports de force ; ces rapports de force peuvent entraîner, à long terme, des inégalités sociales, car très peu de ménages pourront avoir accès à l'enseignement supérieur.

### **Introduction**

The end of the twentieth century prompted a very significant body of literature preoccupied with the fate of African peoples and the course of development of Africa, with special emphasis on the sub-Saharan region. Indeed, the field of African studies in its many disciplines raised debates on the state of development in Africa, its main problems and challenges. For some scholars, the twenty-first century could be the 'African century', because, with the intensification of globalization processes, finally Africa could have the opportunity of lifting from the bottom. One of the main points that have been made is the 'Africanization of knowledge' as the cornerstone for the development of the continent, the main supporting argument being that development processes in the continent so far have been carried out mainly from Western perspectives, which ignore the contexts and peculiarities of African societies. Central to this view is the need to rethink Africa's development while at the same time Higher Education (HE) is given a pivotal role as a privileged space of knowledge (re)production and dissemination. Most of the studies on HE in Africa focus on the development of this subsystem of education and issues related to the liberalization process, such as tuition fees and loans (Johnstone 2004), academic freedom (Altbach 2005; Chachage 2006; Kanywanyi 2006; Mama 2006; Sall and Mangu 2005; Zeleza 2003), privatization of HE (Levy 2007; Mabizela 2007; Otieno 2007) among others. In the case of Mozambique, the sharp growth of HE in the past fifteen years has also been subject of several studies and is still being debated. For example, Beverwijk (2005) and Beverwijk, Goedegebuure and Huisman (2008), using the Advocacy Coalition Framework, analyzed HE policy developments in Mozambique from 1993 to 2003. The analysis undertaken in both studies aims to understand how HE policy after 1992 in Mozambique was developed not entirely by the government, but with a coalition of other social sectors based on similar beliefs on the course HE should take. On the other hand, Mário, Fry, Levey and Chilundo (2003) conducted a case study which surveys HE developments as a consequence of the liberalization process

in the 1990s, stressing issues of access and equity, relevance and quality, finance and governance, among others. Other studies such as Meneses (2005) and Cruz e Silva (2005), starting from the presupposition that HE in Mozambique has been experiencing significant changes, analyse how higher education institutions (HEIs) in the country face new challenges of knowledge production, with special emphasis on the social sciences. These studies on HE in Mozambique have as a point of departure – the transformations Mozambique has been experiencing since independence against the backdrop of global changes. However, all these studies do not fully address how such transformations of HE in Mozambique are re-configuring power relations in the broader society. In taking a postcolonial perspective to de-naturalize neo-liberal regimes of knowledge production, this article analyses how the course of HE in Mozambique is indicative of major social transformations. To that end, from government documents and interviews with HE senior administrators, I analyse neo-liberalizing policy and discourses which are put in force through a set of techniques to drive HE in Mozambique in a particular direction.

In section one of the article, I unpack the ideological assumptions underpinning current patterns of development in Africa and analyse why neo-liberal globalization has gained prominence in the development process of the continent. In the second section, drawing on the notion of ‘re-narrativization’ (Tikly 1999) in order to historicize (Rizvi 2007) the neo-liberal development discourse which is the basis for HE policy framework and the techniques used for policy enforcement, I argue that an analysis of the role of HE in Africa should be extended to the cultural politics of development within the context of postcolonial experiences. In unsettling the forms and techniques of HE policy enforcement, the analysis uncovers the social (trans)formations connected with such a policy. Finally, in section three, I analyse HE in Mozambique, contending that because the transformations of HEIs are driven by neo-liberal and technologist conceptions of development, less attention is paid to the social aspects and human contours of the process.

### **Globalization: Conceptual (in)Definitions**

A quick review of the globalization literature shows that globalization processes in both material and discursive dimensions are experienced from different contexts and locations, and this leads to different interpretations. Despite such a variety of perspectives, I will look at some of the working definitions to understand the discursive map of globalization. Robertson (1992) described globalization as ‘the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole’; while from a cultural perspective, Appadurai (1996) proposed a view of globalization as a set of flows (people, finance, technology, media and ideas) which are fluid, irregular and shape our

cultural goods at the international level. Tomlinson (1999), on the other hand, also commenting on the cultural dimensions of globalization, proposes the idea of globalization as a complex of connectivities as we live in a 'rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnection and interdependences' (Tomlinson 1999:2). Globalization as connectivity, Tomlinson argues, allows us to understand how distances in time and space have been shortened. In the same tone, Held and McGrew (2008) make it clearer that globalization is

a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the *spatial* organization of social relations and transactions, expressed in transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and power (2008, original emphasis).

However, a slightly different understanding of globalization is offered by Scheuerman (2006), who highlights the acceleration of time as structurally crucial to the transformations of human existence. Both views of Held and McGrew (2008) and Scheuerman (2006) seem very important in understanding how transformations at different dimensions are effected because they see globalization as a set of changes of a very significant level embodying human activity in a complex configuration of networks and transactions across regions, defining forms of power.

For the purposes of this article, I take globalization as a '*syndrome* of processes and outcomes that are manifested very unevenly in both time and space' (Dicken 2004:8, original emphasis). This perspective is very important because it has far-reaching consequences in understanding development processes. In fact, Dicken reminds us, first, that globalization has limited explanatory value because most of globalization discourses do not describe material processes and outcomes. Second, Dicken's argument is that the newness of these material processes and outcomes comes not from the increase of its volume when compared with the beginning of the twentieth century, but from qualitative changes of its production and spatial distribution that have occurred (Dicken 2004:8).

However globalization is defined or conceptualized, three points stand out from the various theorizations. First, globalization as a set of processes and material outcomes is not new and has been ongoing for some time. However, the scale and intensity of these processes have increased over the past few decades. Second, globalization has made possible free flows of capital across nation-states and regions. Finally, although globalizing processes have intensified connectivity and interdependence of spaces, globalization has different impacts on different spaces and different peoples. In fact, the intensification of global processes, interdependence and free capital flows does not necessarily mean that peoples can also circulate freely, because physical, economic, cultural and even political boundaries are still experienced by millions of people around the world.

### **Global ‘Solutions’ for Local Problems**

Commenting on the different spatial experiences of globalization, Dicken (2004) observes that we live in a world market economy governed by neo-liberal rules. However, there is no one single form of capitalism and each form of capitalism is determined by the way the main actors of global capitalism interact in the network and the power relations between them. This leads to different processes and outcomes of globalization. Institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank (WB) and other bodies exercise more authority in some regions than in others as they are key players in the development stakes. These institutions govern the world economy through normative regulations, adopting a universal policy approach to development for countries which have vastly different political, social and cultural contexts and experiences. Dicken concludes, then, that globalization varies across geographical regions because global actors in the world market economy vary in the ways that they exercise power relations. Also, individual states vary in their capacity to bargain with global actors. Dicken’s argument implies that we cannot speak of powerless states in a neo-liberal world economy; what does exist are different outcomes of global economic processes, as they depend on the power relations and network configurations (Dicken 2004:12).

It is from this perspective that we can understand why the international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the WB and the IMF have for some decades taken neo-liberal globalization as the pattern and that it is synonymous with development and modernization. This has led the IFIs to steer the world economy towards neo-liberal ends by developing a creed on the benefits and effectiveness of neo-liberal principles. As Mkandawire (2002) critically observes:

For those of neo-liberal persuasion the greatest promise of globalization is improvements in economic welfare through more rapid growth. In the more axiomatic presentations open and ‘market friendly’ policies lead to rapid growth that was labour intensive and, therefore, poverty reduction. The set of policies needed were said to be now quite well established and were available in the form of stabilisation and structural programs administered by the BWIs (Bretton Woods Institutions) (Mkandawire 2002:118).

The Washington Consensus, mainly consisting of ‘policy imperatives of privatization, trade liberalization, deregulation, tax reform, and the introduction of market proxies and benchmarking into the public sector’ (Carrol and Carson 2003:31), was the most visible move of this trend to neo-liberal policies. Despite its discursive metamorphosis into ‘post’-policies, supposedly more socially friendly, there are signs that the forms of thought that shaped the Washington Consensus remain in the imaginations of policymakers. It is in this sense that, apart from the influence and prescription of IFIs on neo-liberal policies, there are other factors: first, most of government economists from developing countries were educated and continue to be educated in the Western ‘centres’ of learning and economic departments

dominated by very particular regimes of knowledge; second, the flow of policy ideas is also determined by government and treasury officials when they embrace a particular line of development.

It is important to look at how globalization in its neo-liberal forms has become the governing drive for the world in very subtle ways. As Joseph (2006) says:

The ideologies of neo-liberalism and globalization today act to justify deliberate policies by suggesting that there is no alternative but to follow the flows of capital and the logic of the free market (Joseph 2006:413).

One of the presuppositions of free market ideology is the freedom of individuals to engage in entrepreneurship, with a consequence that some of the government's responsibilities are transferred to the private sector. It is in this sense that we can understand Joseph's assertion that neo-liberal ideology has led governments to encourage the governed to conduct their lives and interests according to the exigencies of economic and social forms of organization that rest upon free entrepreneurship. However, the most important argument Joseph makes is that this has come to happen because globalization is evoked to legitimize policies set out by institutions and enforced through technologies of governmentality (Joseph 2006:414-415).

The most prevailing technique of global governmentality has perhaps been the invocation of knowledge as the new driver for the world economy. Since the early 1990s, the WB has been preaching and persuading governments and HEIs administrators that HE is at the core of the new economy. From an analysis of the crisis of HE around the world, the WB proposed a set of reforms in HE, with special regard to the development of private institutions, diversification of funding mechanisms, and the redefinition of the state in regulating HE systems (World Bank 1994). This publication was followed by another two (World Bank 2000, 2002), all of which consistently re-affirmed the importance of reforming HE systems in order to respond to the world economy driven by knowledge. These publications are not surprising as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) was already an indication of the direction in which education at large and HE in particular should take.

As Fitzsimons (2000) argues, different notions of globalization have given different and varying attention to the importance of education. Neo-liberalism seems to prevail over and stand for other forms of globalization, even if neo-liberalism is just one aspect of globalization processes. Tracing the links between the nodes of the triangle of neo-liberalism, globalization and the knowledge economy, Olssen and Peters (2005) maintain that

In the age of knowledge capitalism, the next great struggle after the 'culture wars' of the 1990s will be the 'education wars', a struggle not only over the meaning and value of knowledge both internationally and locally, but also over the public means of knowledge production (Olssen and Peters 2005:340).

From this literature on globalization, we draw some points which are important in understanding HE responses to globalization processes in Mozambique. The first point is that globalization processes are not experienced in the same ways in different regions and nations: there are many ways globalization is materialized, depending on the network configurations at stake for each location. The second point is that, for the past few decades, globalization has been shaped mainly by a particular set of policies. Therefore, an analysis of the outcomes of globalization processes should take into account alternatives to this dominant form of neo-liberal globalization. We cannot expect that all countries will win the race for knowledge production for the world economy. The success of HEIs in this race will largely depend on the ways HE systems are articulated within the broader social, economic and cultural framework of each country. Such an articulation means a certain and contextualized perspective of social realities.

### **Interrogating Neo-liberal Developmentalism: A Postcolonial Perspective**

The contextualization of development in Africa has to be thought within the postcolonial condition as a set of experiences embodying social, economic, political and cultural transformations in the continent. One of the challenges, though, for African scholarship is how to articulate the development aspirations of African peoples and the experience of postcoloniality. Sylvester (1999) is very insightful in looking at the origins of development studies and postcolonial studies, arguing that both fields were born from Western knowledge. While postcolonial studies are a reaction and an alternative to colonial empire, development studies as a field was born as a form of imposing modern narratives of progress through Western political economy and developmentalist discourses. Despite these similarities, the argument goes, postcolonial studies have more potential to be freer from Western regimes of knowledge. The reason for such potential is that the field of postcolonial studies, from its hybrid thinking, is able to criticize development ideologies at the same time as it is empathetic with everyday postcolonial societies' predicaments and aspirations. That is why a postcolonial lens is useful as a theoretical stance from which to examine globalization as both a set of processes and discourses on development. The importance of such an examination is twofold. On the one hand, postcolonial studies show that globalization is not just a shibboleth in world academia for thinking and theorizing purposes, but has become, for most ordinary citizens, an important experience in practical and material everyday life. Any understanding of social transformations in Africa must take into account how globalization has been impacting development processes. On the other hand, postcolonial studies invite a critique of unsettling naturalized regimes of knowledge on development and modernization that neo-liberal globalization has been responsible for in the past thirty years or so.

A closer analysis of the relationship between globalization and development shows how these two discourses have been inextricably linked in the post-Second World War period. It is not a coincidence that the agenda of modernization of Europe after 1945 took place at a time when the decolonization process of Africa, a prototype of the underdeveloped world, was underway. At the same time, globalization must be understood as one of the forms through which neo-liberal policies and the discourse of free market economy came to pervade development policies. In order to solve the crisis of world capitalism in the 1970s, the end of the Keynesian welfare state and the liberalization of world markets were thought to be the key elements of the whole process (Arrighi 2002). This is very much evident in the course of African development if we look at how IFIs such as the WB and the IMF construed and implemented a neo-liberal development agenda for Africa from the 1970s onwards. The failure of continental development projects of self-reliance, such as the Lagos Plan for Action, shows how Western universalizing conceptions of development have been deployed through the policies of the IFIs. In particular, the introduction of IMF policies in Mozambique in the late 1980s meant a development no longer based on state centrally planned model, but which takes individuals and the so-called civil society as active agents, and it is through the IMF's Structural Adjustment Programmes that Mozambique entered into the neo-liberal world space of a free market economy.

Following political reforms, HE in neo-liberal Mozambique has been translated into the introduction of private HEIs and a free market oriented role for this sub-system of education in the development of the country. However, this role of HE has been presented as a natural and inevitable one in the sense that Mozambique had no choice other than adhering to neo-liberal policies if the country was to achieve significant levels of development. It is due to this perspective that, since the Constitution of 1990, Mozambique embarked on a series of reforms following international trends of neo-liberalism. Thus, the naturalizing discourses of development and neo-liberal globalization were appropriated by Mozambican political leaders, managers, business entrepreneurs as well as HEIs administrators and most projects of development in the country fall within the neo-liberal precepts, which makes it difficult for alternative models of development to emerge. Indeed:

The underpinning logic of discourses of globalisation and neo-liberalism as the only alternative make it very difficult, as the NEPAD case shows, to imagine alternative forms of development in Africa (Mercer, Mohan and Power 2003:424).

At the educational level, HE reforms in Mozambique are being undertaken within this capitalist conception of knowledge (re)production according to the demands of the free market economy. One of the problems with such an

understanding of development is that the historical and social context of African societies at large and of Mozambique in particular is not taken into account, because the success, if any, of neo-liberal policies in other regions is taken for granted in the Mozambican context. This is a recurrent way in which the West has been dealing with its 'others' by universalizing its experiences to peoples and places totally different. Underneath such universalized experiences are the modern conception of development and the civilizing mission of Europe. This is why postcolonial theory is important in enabling us to question such assumptions of the possibility of universal experience of development as conceived by the West. The analytical importance of postcolonial theory is to interrogate the Eurocentric model of development, to see it as contingent and to denaturalize its universality. It is in this sense that Slater and Bell (2002) conceive that the aim of the postcolonial discourse is

to destabilize Western discourses of modernity, progress and development, always making connections with the continual salience of colonial and imperial imaginations (Slater and Bell 2002:330).

The aim of postcolonial theory in unsettling colonizing regimes of knowledge embedded in development policies and neo-liberal prescriptions leads us to the questioning of how globalization discourses are Eurocentric and hegemonic in the sense that they offer a view of globalization processes, although in new forms, that perpetuates imperialist patterns of North-South relations. In questioning such hegemonic relations, we are in a position of elaborating alternative and diverse forms of knowledge, challenging the current trend which draws geographical boundaries through the discourse of development. In fact, postcolonialism:

refers either to a condition, or a set of approaches and theories that have become ways of criticizing the material and discursive legacies of colonialism that are still apparent in the world today, and still shape geopolitical and economic relations between the global South and North (McEwan 2009:18).

McEwan's elaboration of the postcolonial is very insightful because it helps to discuss the issue of development from the perspective of developing countries. An analysis of development from a postcolonial perspective can help to see that the Western development model is not the solution for Africa's problems; rather, this model aggravates and perpetuates the current conditions of material and cultural domination because of its capital-centric nature. As McEwan puts it:

Postcolonial theory is deeply critical and suspicious of the 'development project', since this is part of what postcolonial theorists see as the dominant, universalizing, and arrogant discourses of the North. In particular, the extent to which Northern 'development' agendas claim that they alone can define and solve development 'problems' is seen as profoundly problematic (McEwan 2009:27).

The problematization of Western-centric development should start at the level of knowledge (re)production in HEIs. The epistemological matrix from which most of, if not all, knowledge is being (re)produced in African HEIs is Western. So, why is it that alternative epistemologies seem impossible to emerge as valid? The main task of postcolonial theory is to look at HE as a liberating site from which narratives of development and neo-liberal globalization are questioned.

In the remaining section of this article, I start with an analysis of how education at large and HE in particular were designed to serve the socialist revolution in post-independent Mozambique. I then move on to look at how this centralized developmentalist practice collapsed with the end of the Cold War, opening the doors for political changes and HE liberalization. Finally, I discuss how the agenda of fighting against poverty in Mozambique has been used to reconfigure the HE system aligned with a process of liberalization driven by market rationalities.

#### **Mozambique: The Policy Framework of HE and Knowledge for Development**

The transformations experienced by HE in Mozambique since independence can be read as a reconfiguration of governing rationalities by the Mozambican leadership. The political orientation of Mozambique after independence required a vision and provision of HE that served the revolutionary cause. In fact, soon after independence it was acknowledged that the country needed a skilled labour force with higher qualifications. However, access to HE was conditioned by 'political consciousness', alongside with 'intellectual ability' (Delegation from Maputo 1976:334). In Law 4/83 of 23 March 1983 about the National Education System, HE was asserted to be used as an instrument in re-structuring class relations. Thus, priority was given to the children of peasants and workers, combatants and members of cooperatives (GoM 1983: article 36). In a sense, it can be said that this policy of affirmative action was consistent with the strategy and resolution adopted at the FRELIMO's<sup>1</sup> third Congress in 1977 of allying workers with the peasantry to form the vanguard front, establishing cooperatives in the rural areas as forms of improving production and marketing. Accordingly, HE was a conduit to achieve revolutionary goals. However, in privileging certain classes of people, the principle contradicted the premise of equality claimed earlier (Delegation from Maputo 1976). In fact, despite stipulating equal intellectual requirements as the basis for access to HE, in practical terms candidates from peasant families and from families of cooperative workers as well as from families of combatants and vanguard workers were at an advantage to those candidates from the rest of other classes of the society. More than that, because of low levels of graduation in secondary education, the then only HE institution, the Eduardo Mondlane University

(UEM),<sup>2</sup> managed to allow the entry to the university of candidates without the required qualifications (Mendes 1982). This measure was aimed at increasing the number of enrolments and, as a consequence, of the qualified labour force, given the fact that most of the settlers had fled the country after independence.

### ***Higher Education and the Predicaments of a Socialist Development Model***

With the exception of the re-structuring of departments, courses and curricula to fit the new challenges facing the country, HE in Mozambique in the immediate post-independence period was more concerned with the professional development of teaching staff and regulatory arrangements (Mendes 1982). However, since the 1990s, there has been a shift regarding the main preoccupations of HE institutions, a shift introduced by the debate about the new role of the state in the provision and financing of HE. The debate was prompted by the introduction of private institutions of higher learning. In effect, if during the socialist regime central planning was undertaken by the state, the introduction of democracy alongside the liberalization of HE in the private sector posed the need to re-position the state in the whole education system. Thus, the Law 5/2003 of 21 January 2003 reaffirms some of the general objectives of education contained in the Law 6/92 of 6 May 1992. These two laws introduced a new complexity regarding what HE's contribution might be to development: if central planning implied a single and exclusive conception of development – that is socialist as claimed by the FRELIMO regime – with these laws, by extending education provision to the private sector, development became a multidimensional concept, leading to diverse practices and inspiring different purposes in HE provision. The fragmentation of the meaning and practices of development is evident in the diverging directions of reforms taking place in HEIs, as I discuss later on.

In the context of the revolutionary goals of FRELIMO after independence, HE was remodelled so as to meet the socialist goals of the post-independent developmentalist state, although such a model failed because of the fact that FRELIMO's socialist ambitions were based on a very fragile class formation. As Saul (1993:148) asserts, the FRELIMO state 'overestimate[d] both the clarity of its vision regarding the modalities of societal transformation and the symbiotic nature of its link to the popular classes – notably the peasantry'. Secondly, the model failed because the supposedly new forms of social organization, which were intended to erase the colonial legacy, such as rural political authority based on *regulados* (customary authority), were more disruptive rather than transforming (Pitcher 1998). At the 1984 fourth Congress of FRELIMO, it was decided to adopt a more flexible approach to development to overcome the then ongoing production and marketing crisis in the rural

areas. This small shift, as Saul (1993) suggests, was a timid response to popular dissatisfaction. However, this happened at the time the IMF was exercising its authority to institutionalize a neo-liberal economic agenda. In fact, the IMF has been around for a long time and the limited changes in the rural development strategy were eventually broadened by accepting IMF's package of economic liberalization:

As capitulation to the IMF and the World Bank loomed large for the FRELIMO leadership, the subtleties of pursuing a more flexible and realistic socialist strategy had given way to full-scale retreat before the logic of capitalism (Saul 1993:152).

It is within this context of the failure of FRELIMO's socialist development model for the rural areas that political changes occurred at the constitutional level, a step which took place in 1990. Although the IMF's package of economic reforms started with the first Structural Adjustment Programme negotiated in 1987 (Plank 1993), the neo-liberal economic order was crowned in 1990 by introducing labour reforms, a free market and private ownership as the bases for the economy, reserving to the state the role of a regulator (GoM 1990: article 41). The Law 6/92 of 6 May 1992, which re-adjusted the National Education System to the new social and economic conditions, stated that HE had to 'ensure the formation at the highest level of cadres and professionals in various areas of scientific knowledge necessary for the development of the country' (GoM 1992: article 20). The political transformations of the constitution of 1990 marked a significant change in Mozambique's postcolonial course. It is a fact that many factors contributed to the transformation, including the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, and the fall of the Soviet Union, which until then was the model for Mozambique's socialist revolution. However, these changes did not by themselves create the conditions for the socialist development model to fail, but should be read as part of an international agenda to supposedly integrate Mozambique into the global market economy. The Mozambican leadership came to regard HE as central to development, with development and labour market needs featuring in most policy document. One of the visions of the Strategic Plan of HE in Mozambique consists of

expanding opportunities of access to higher education in consonance with the increasing needs of labor market and society, so that an increasing proportion of Mozambican citizens will be able to acquire and develop high level knowledge and skills needed for rapid economic and social development (MESCT 2000:2).

The importance of HE for development is repeated in the legislation of 2003, replacing that of 1993. This instrumentalization of HE for development must be seen in the broader framework of Mozambican governance following international trends. More precisely, HE policy after 1992 has been designed to

fit the development agenda of international institutions, namely the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs)

### *The Strategies of Fighting Poverty and the Agenda 2025*

The unsuccessful experiences with the Structural Adjustment Programmes led the BWIs to introduce the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in many countries. In the specific case of Mozambique, there have been two PRSPs (2001-2005 and 2006-2009),<sup>3</sup> and two different official definitions of poverty are given. In the first PRSP, poverty is said to be the ‘*inability of individuals to ensure for themselves and their dependants a set of basic minimum conditions necessary for their subsistence and well-being in accordance with the norms of society*’ (GoM 2001:10, emphasis in original). In PRSP II (2006-2009) the definition does not differ significantly from the first, although the second definition acknowledges that the inability may be due to incapacity or lack of opportunity in having access to basic conditions of living. Both definitions are based on an individualized understanding of poverty and, by extension, locate poverty alleviation within the agency of individuals. More precisely, the responsibility of overcoming that condition is seen to lie with individuals themselves. It is in this sense that the government defined six key strategic areas in the PRSP I to fight against poverty. Such areas of action were: education, health, agriculture and rural development, infrastructures, good governance and, finally, macroeconomic and financial policies. The reason given to these priority areas was because ‘the social sector occupies a central place in government activity, given the objective of poverty reduction [and consequently] public activities in the social sector have a direct redistributive effect on income and wealth’ (GoM 2001:42). In both PRSPs, HE’s role is limited to the expansion of opportunities and contribution towards gender and regional equity. Three strategies were subsequently proposed: opening new HEIs in the provinces which lacked these services (Tete, Manica and Gaza); introducing a HE loan scheme; and allowing the private sector to provide HE services (GoM 2001:48). Summarizing the outcome of this push to enable HE to contribute towards greater social equity: private providers have been operating since 1995; in 2009 each of the three provinces – Tete, Manica and Gaza – had more than two HEIs; and a loan scheme was approved in 2007 by the government. Both the PRSP I and II imply that education more generally, and HE in particular, is a blueprint to put an end to poverty. However, the fact is that for more than a decade now, from 1999 to 2010, Mozambique has been consistently ranking among the ten last and least developed countries in the UNDP’s Human Development Index.

From 2001 until 2003, a wider debate was carried out and conducted by leading figures from a variety of sectors of civil society: academics, religious leaders, economic agents, NGOs and political parties, and the process resulted

in Agenda 2025. The Agenda, as a guide to the development of the country until 2025, starts with an analysis of the situation of the country, and then identifies twelve strategic sectors for poverty reduction, such as rural development, social-cultural and historical heritage, infrastructures, health, education, science and technology, among others. The Agenda does not give a special treatment to HE as a strategic sector in the country's whole vision. Higher education appears within the social capital section and it is seen as one of the strategic pathways, along with the stimulation of investment, training for self-employment and others that should be taken to achieve the envisioned and desired social capital for the country until 2025. The Agenda says that the country should

... promote interaction between higher education and the labour market, to value graduate cadres [and] consolidate the expansion of higher education at the provincial level, aiming at the reduction of regional asymmetries of access at this level, in order to strengthen national cohesion (Committee of Counsellors 2003:134).

These three documents, the two PRSPs and the Agenda 2025, take for granted that HE expansion and gender and regional equity are enough in the fight against poverty. The main problem with these documents is that they take the market as a self-regulated entity, believing that individuals will succeed in the labour market as long as they possess higher qualifications. However, the importance given to the market is not only at the policy level. In fact, most of HEI senior administrators are convinced that the responsiveness of HE to market needs in Mozambique is the blueprint to development through an education which is immediately 'useful' – as one of my interviewees from Saint Thomas University of Mozambique (USTM) stated:

What we think that could help them [graduates] is that they have to come out of traditional approach of university education which is very theoretical and come to technically oriented approach whereby, even within the university, they make contact with society. (...). So we think we can contribute and make a difference in Mozambique by giving our students a technically oriented higher education (USTM, senior administrator, male).

In a case study published some years ago, the idea that HE should respond to labour market needs was already strongly defended by Mário, Fry, Levey and Chilundo (2003:55) based on a study of the then Maputo's two main employers (Ports & Railways of Mozambique and Mozal Aluminium Smelter) and served as an argument for HE curricula reforms. The belief that HE should respond to market needs cuts across both public and private HEIs. For most of HEIs, senior administrators, the fulfilment of HE's role for development is intertwined with curricula reform (what they call 'curricula relevance'), meaning that:

We have to do an analysis of African problems, we have to develop the new expertise in Africa, we have to develop that kind of curriculum that will be

able to provide that holistic approach to education to Africa that we are not getting (USTM, senior administrator, male).

There are two main lines of curricula reform ideas among HEI senior administrators in Mozambique. The first line of 'curricula relevance' advocates that, during their studies, students should have contact with the daily problems that communities face, such as drought and floods, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, public sanitation in suburb areas, among others (USTM, Catholic University of Mozambique [UCM] and Higher Institute of International Relations [ISRI]: senior administrators, males). However, at the same time HEIs should initiate students in scientific research so that after graduation they can continue to search for solutions through research (USTM and ISRI senior administrators, males). The second line of the 'curricula relevance' argument refers to the need to reform curricula, addressing poverty as transversal issue in all the social sciences on the one hand, and by defining research priority areas such as environmental problems, gender issues and cultural dimensions of HIV/AIDS on the other (UEM, senior administrator, male). However, according to UEM's senior administrator, defining research priorities in HE should not jeopardize academic freedom.

For both ways of conceptualising 'curricula relevance', two main points stand out. First, HE has to deal with real problems in helping ordinary people in the communities to find solutions. Secondly, such a relationship between HE and communities will be effective through research as a way of better understanding such problems. Both points are apparently unproblematic because they place HE in Mozambique within its mission as elsewhere in the world: to contribute to social welfare and knowledge (re)production.

However, in fulfilling this double mission, there are a number of challenges. Most of my interviewees agree that one of the main challenges has to do with how research is financially conditioned by international donors in the sense that they set development priorities. The other challenge is that HEIs in Mozambique are seeking to integrate into the regional context. All of my interviewees agree that an African model of HE is needed, a model not based on the professorial education of the traditional university, as one of them defended:

One of the problems of HE in Africa is that we still follow the classic European model of a university and we forget that the model was developed in a given context: that's why even the European model is now in change after Bologna. I think we should seek an African model of HE which pays more attention to the context (UCM, senior administrator, male).

However, instead of developing an 'African model of HE', most of these HEIs take precisely the Bologna Process as the model. In fact, some of the well-established universities such as the UEM and the UCM are already reforming their curricula following the Bologna Process model by abolishing the four-year

licentiate degree which was followed by a two-year masters degree and four years of doctoral work to introduce the so called 3+2+3 (bachelors, masters, doctorate) system. The intriguing point is that this wave of HE reforms following the Bologna Process is occurring against the backdrop of an HE system in the Southern African Development Community which is not yet harmonized. Other HEIs are developing an 'African model of HE' by introducing new courses which genetically resemble European courses:

We are aiming at introducing Development Studies, a course which is offered in Western universities although it is mainly about developing countries on how they develop until they get to the level achieved by developed countries (ISRI, senior administrator, male).

There is a point to be made about the extent to which this conception of development, a modernist conception of development as progressing towards a certain point, can really emerge from an 'African model of HE'. These reforms are indicative of the interest of Mozambican HEIs in integrating into the global HE. However, such reforms are taking Europe as the master to follow, a strategy which has always been part of postcolonial experiences in Mozambique, first during the socialist regime and now within the neo-liberal order. In the next sub-section, I discuss how the liberalization process of HE according to free markets precepts has been marked by discursive practices which underlie the knowledge economy.

### *Liberalizing Higher Education*

Poverty reduction through widening access to HE for gender and regional equity is just one aspect to which HE policy in Mozambique has directed its attention. Apart from widening access, HE policy in Mozambique has also focused on the market logic of a managerialism culture. For example, by reducing state budget expenditure per capita (Porter and Vidovich 2000:456), the Mozambican government intended to achieve 'the decrease of unit costs per student and the improvement of internal efficiency of the whole sub-system' (MESCT 2000:5). As a consequence, the government's role is confined to the regulation of the sub-system at various levels, such as the private-public interface, demand-supply balance by opening new HEIs, accreditation of HEIs and courses, among others (MESCT 2000).

It may be argued that the (re)production of knowledge for development has been one of the top objectives of HE in Mozambique since independence. If independence was aimed at liberating people, development seems to be one of the most consequential challenges for the new Mozambican state in modernizing the country in both socialist and neo-liberal historical contexts. However, the difference lies in the underpinning rationalities and the social

order aimed at in such a development process. The pull-out of the state in the Constitution of 1990, from being the main driver to becoming merely the regulator of the economic order, points to a situation where people are encouraged to be self-reliant as consumers at large, and as HE consumers in particular. In fact, a series of discursive practices sought to reconstitute Mozambique into a knowledge economy. At the same time, selectively identified particular labour market needs determine the deployment of a certain configuration of HE. Within such discourses, the country's social and economic order is interpreted as being in crisis and nothing can be done other than capitulating to the policies of the BWIs. However, it is only recently that the market has gained such importance in underpinning the policy making process. During the socialist regime, the market was not taken as something to which public choices should be directed. It is with the BWI reforms that the market, as a variable, is being taken into account in policy making processes, and public choices have gained real importance.

The insistence on the importance of responding to market needs points to the very central presupposition of neo-liberalism, that the market has its own internal logic of self-regulation. What is more, if 'neo-liberalism is both a political discourse about the nature of the rule and a set of practices that facilitate the governing of individuals from distance' (Larner 2000:6), we can see that the HE policy in Mozambique is putting in place a set of technologies of self-empowerment and self-regulation. Such technologies are enforced primarily by evoking the market as a self-regulating entity. Under neo-liberalism, markets have become a new technology by which control can be effected and performance enhanced in the public sector. These technologies of self-regulation also extend responsibilities of policy implementation to other sectors:

There are a number of participants, who have a role and must join efforts to implement the development and expansion policy of higher education: Government (at central, provincial and local levels), Civil Society (families, companies, several organizations) and the higher education institutions (HEI) (MESCT 2000:5).

Because 'the universe of political discourse is not monopolized by hegemonic groups' (Larner 2000:11), the agency of individuals and private/particular associations is given a role in reshaping the (trans)formations and the re-structuring of the social order of the post-civil war and the neo-liberal period in Mozambique. This has led to a certain configuration of HE in Mozambique where some of state's responsibilities to its citizens are put in the hands of other actors in the society, namely, the private sector. However, this does not mean less government – quite the opposite – it means the state is re-structuring power relations by bringing new actors to enforce technologies of the self (Lemke 2002:58-59).

### *Financing Higher Education Policy*

The HE Strategic Plan identifies a loan scheme as one of the measures to be taken in order to fulfil the expansion of HE objectives. In 2007, the Council of Ministers approved a Resolution on the National Policy for Financing Higher Education, consisting of three main mechanisms: a basic fund, an institutional fund, and a student fund. The financing policy approved by the Council of Ministers in 2007 is constructed around the practices of accountability, efficiency and cost sharing. The very introduction of this financing policy is said to promise the advantage of more choices, because students will not be conditioned by costs concerns but by vocational interests.

The government estimated that the cost per student per annum would be around US\$2,500, which includes an annual fee of US\$1,500. This fee may be paid by those students eligible for bursaries on the basis of need and academic merit, or by students themselves, if they are not eligible for bursaries. The fund is directed to students enrolled at public HEIs and initially would benefit around 90 per cent of students. However, it was hoped that by 2010 this figure would decrease to 80 per cent because the number of students who could share the costs would increase as a consequence of economic growth of the country and the improvement of families' livelihoods (GoM 2007:9).

The policy presupposes that the number of students who can afford to finance their studies by their own means would increase from 10 per cent in 2008 to 20 per cent in 2010. The projection that by 2010 there would be an increase of students who could pay full fees would enable the government to spend less on the HE sector. However, it is not yet clear that Mozambique's economic growth increased wealth and income among the general population. The first reason is that the economic growth that has earned Mozambique international praise is largely due to foreign investment in major projects. These projects are the Australian BHP Billiton's Mozal Aluminium Smelter in the aluminium industry, the South African SASOL plant for natural gas extraction, the Australian Riversdale Mining Limited and the Brazilian Vale, both in the coal mining industry, and the Irish Kenmare Resources PLC in the Moma Titanium Minerals Project. In a report on the extractive industries, the WB acknowledges the importance and role played by the extractive industry for local development (World Bank 2004). It is in this sense that projects like Mozal Aluminium Smelter, Kenmare Resources PLC and SASOL, as part of what is called Corporate Social Responsibility, have built schools and medical centres to benefit surrounding communities. For example, Kenmare Resources PLC, through its Kenmare Moma Development Association, has implemented projects on horticulture, poultry, HIV/AIDS and education for local and surrounding communities (Kenmare Resources PLC 2008). The Mozal Aluminium Smelter Project 'created 15,000 jobs, mostly for Mozambicans, during both phases of

its construction [and] currently provides jobs for 1,150 permanent staff, 1,600 contractors, and 10,000 indirectly through locally owned contractor firms' (IDA 2009). However, the increase in Government's tax revenues and GDP as a result of these investments does not have a direct impact on the broader population of the country. Moreover, all these projects are by multinational owned companies, with the exception that the Mozambican National Company of Hydrocarbons which has a 15 per cent shareholding in the exploration of the SASOL project (Gulfoilandgas 2006). At any time, these projects can close and move to other countries, which would have a direct impact on the contribution they make towards employment and GDP for the national economy.

The second reason is that the projected economic growth of the country was not achieved because of the 2008 world economic crisis. In fact, recent data show that in 2009, Mozambique's exports reduced by 30 per cent as a consequence of the consistent decrease in the GDP from 7.3 in 2007 to 6.7 in 2008 and 6.3 in 2009 (Banco de Moçambique 2010). More, the international world economic crisis is having direct negative impact, for example the reduction of international donors' direct contribution to the state budget, which is still over 50 per cent, from US\$942 million dollars in 2008 to US\$856 million dollars in 2009, with a parallel decrease in public investment funds donated by international partners from US\$398 million dollars in 2008 to US\$388 million dollars in 2009 (Banco de Moçambique 2010). Although the Central Bank of Mozambique claims that there were positive consequences of the crisis in terms of Foreign Direct Investment which increased from US\$592 million dollars in 2008 to US\$881 million dollars in 2009, the fact is that most of such investment was in mega-projects (Banco de Moçambique 2010), about whose limitations regarding their real contribution to ordinary people's livelihoods I discussed shortly above.

The government has claimed that this model of financing HE has a number of advantages: first, it is based on the real costs of courses and is thus a more sustainable model of offering quality services. Second, it creates the conditions for an improvement of governance and increases choice and diversity by responding to the demand. Third, students will choose courses on the basis of their vocation and not on the basis of affordability because all HEIs will apply the same fee for each course. Fourth, it will increase the competitiveness of HEIs which will motivate them to respond to consumer demand and in doing so, increase efficiency and productivity (GoM 2007:10).

Public policy rationalities in general, and those that shape HE in particular, are reflective of a broader neo-liberal agenda. A discourse of choice, flexibility, efficiency and responsiveness to the market logic of supply and demand help to embed this agenda; these features resonate with the ambitions of institutions to improve, and with the aspirations of citizens for whom education continues to be a technology of hope. However, such a discourse of choice does not take

into account the real conditions of most of the population of the country. The discourse assumes and takes for granted that, in a market driven environment, all people will be able to succeed and take advantage of the opportunities offered by such an environment. The fact is that these rationalities actually aggravate social inequalities because not all citizens have access to knowledge.

### **Conclusion**

This article analysed how neo-liberal rationalities of globalization and development are shaping HE in Mozambique. It suggests that HE in Mozambique was always seen as a tool for the development of the country: first within the socialist regime framework and, in the past two decades, within neo-liberal settings. Using postcolonial theory, the article unpacked how neo-liberal globalization discourses on development gained prominence among HE policy makers and HEIs administrators. It was argued that the configuration of HE since the liberalization of this subsystem of education is reflective of free market economy principles where people are encouraged to make choices according to governing rationalities of self-reliance and entrepreneurship. More specifically, the politics of poverty reduction agenda, the role of the state in regulating the subsystem and HE financial policy put in place point to HE where individuals make choices based on free market economic logic. Such a logic is materialized through a set of technologies of the self such as self-empowerment and self-regulation and the culture of managerialism. The article contended that the belief beneath this configuration of HE ignores the social contextualities and historical complexities: in the long run, HE in Mozambique could be the shortest way of deepening social inequalities.

### **Acknowledgements**

My thanks go to Ravinder Sidhu for her helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article and to Desidério Loti for his editing suggestions. Any remaining errors are of my entire fault.

### **Notes**

1. Mozambique Liberation Front (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique).
2. The abbreviations used in this paper for higher education institutions are as they are commonly known in Mozambique.
3. Negrão (2002) has strongly argued that although the IMF did not impose conditions in the elaboration of the papers, the fact is that IMF's macroeconomic policy conditionalities had to be observed, which makes the papers not a strategy, but rather a tactic of decentralization of the state, governance and democracy.

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