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Postgraduate research training: A case of the South African doctoral consortium of universities

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CHAPTER 2: GLOBALIZATION, INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND DOCTORAL RESEARCH TRAINING TRENDS AND THEORIES

2.0 Introduction

The literature review points to the fact that under the forces of globalization, higher education is forced to come into partnership with other institutions to pursue the educational goals. To some extent, driven by new funding programmes that are given by donors, the face of higher education has changed completely. The review will focus on the following issues: globalization and the challenges it poses to Higher Education; the rise of partnerships in Higher education; the South African debate; organizational theories; theories and eruption of partnerships in higher education and forms of institutional collaboration; Models of postgraduate research training / The American and British model; Emerging Curriculum Practices in Postgraduate Research Training. As Higher Education and universities have to continuously respond to the demands of globalization, they also have to answer and deal with the influences placed upon them by a range of other stakeholders of higher education. The literature that follows focuses on showing that higher education in South Africa and the developing world is indeed changing. It will attempt to highlight the major issues that shape education policy in the context of higher education reform, with partnerships issues seeking to change the face of higher education through globalization. Beginning with a generalized appreciation of the prevailing circumstances of globalization, the literature review focuses on higher education per se and thereafter it focuses on the emerging issues of partnerships in higher education in South Africa as an organizational feature of globalization. From this argument, I intend to draw out the implications of partnerships within universities in South Africa.

2.1 Globalization and the challenges it poses to HE

In times of intensified globalization, educational policy formulation and implementation world-wide is increasingly influenced by powerful international agendas. While such influences can be beneficial, there are also dangers that locally perceived educational

priorities and concerns can be overlooked, under-represented or marginalized. There is increasing evidence to suggest this can be particularly problematic for many small universities, where investment in local research and evaluation capacity is difficult to resource and sustain (Crossley & Holmes 1999, 2001; Baldacchino & Farrugia 2003). Ways of strengthening local educational research and evaluation capacity within universities in South Africa and effectively focusing existing research investment and expertise is, therefore, widely seen as a development priority from the perspective of the Spencer foundation. Globalization has changed everything and it is going to continue changing our lives, work, education, opportunities and countries. In a bid to highlight this, Castells (2001) gives an overview of the major features of globalization. In his argument, he states that these are the interdependence of financial markets through the deregulation of financial markets and electronic trading, the transformation of international trade, the internationalization of production and the globalization of science and technology. These four vital features of globalization change the nature upon which the world has been understood. According to Castells (1996, 1997, and 1998) and Carnoy (2001) the globalized economy is organized on the basis of networks:

> … a set of interconnected nodes. These networks are networks that are within the large corporations, they are decentralized as networks. Small and Medium businesses connect to each other forming networks and these small networks connect to these de-centralized networks of the corporation, forming a network of net works (Castells, 1998: 10).

From this view, Castells goes on to argue that these networks have fundamental implications to our understanding of the world. “This new economy is organized in networks throughout the world. These networks, which have a technological and organizational basis, have one particular quality. They search for everything that is valued or can be valued according to the criteria of networks, ultimately money-making, to integrate into these networks, and discard from these networks everything that has no value from the point of view of these networks” (Castells, 2001: 6).

Considering the uneven nature of society, Castells concludes by suggesting that the coexistence of extreme poverty and extreme wealth is a result of the inclusion and exclusion in the network society, making the system unsustainable. There are global social movements that are fighting exclusion and thereby making the system socially and politically unmanageable. The result of these developments is a change in the fundamental relationship of the state and higher education. Castells goes on to argue that the economy of the world has been influenced by the capitalist economic system of the 20th and 21st century that was global, informational and had the capacity to generate relevant knowledge to increase productivity and competitiveness for firms, regions and countries. Such an economy calls for an adequate supply of knowledge and knowledge workers, who can be produced through higher education. Economies are continuing to be built on a foundation of information, learning and adaptation. It is the power of modern information technology that enables global economy and a new technological base (Scott, 1997; deWeert, 1999).

Furthermore, the global economic crisis of the late 1960s, capital, responded to this, by re-aligning the state's supply to social welfare and it put higher education on the spotlight. From this time, higher education institutions have been experiencing decreased subsidies from the state. "The public sector in general has had to deal with diminishing budgets. Universities have had to face under-funding at the same time as increases in enrolments" (Orr, 1997). Orr goes on to argue that one of the ways in which governments are able to exercise this pressure is through increasing services for certain areas such as research that is beneficial to the economy and reducing funding in other areas that had more revenue than others. This confirms how the nature of globalization has brought with it changes in the context of higher education. For instance, these changes have affected higher education in the sense that universities are now working together to improve research, especially through the program of the Consortium. The governments of developing world find themselves pressured to increase spending to produce a more educated workforce, which has the ability to attract foreign investments to their particular countries (Carnoy, 1999:8). Of note, is that the forces of globalization discourage public spending and promote private spending on the expansion of education.

It is apparent that education in developing countries and Africa has not been spared by the overreaching grasp of globalization. To substantiate this, Carnoy (1999:4) appears to agree with Castells (2001) when he asserts that, the potential effects of globalization are many and far-reaching, due to its nature. He argues that globalization has major implications for regional economies and national economies as these in turn affect economic growth potential, resources available, work requirements and the role of the state. It is from this argument that he asserts that, globalization has major consequences for the development of education systems. In Carnoy's words, "because of this fact, globalization has come, in many cases, to represent a 'straw man' for education policy-makers (Carnoy, 1999: 9)

Carnoy's analysis of globalization and its far-reaching effects on education systems of developing countries has been done in great depth in these following themes: the changes in labor markets and education systems because of the demand for highly skilled workforces, the ensuing demand for extra resources for educational policy environment hostile to the expansion of the role of the public sector; the after-effects of increased decentralization and privatization; the multiplication of cross-national measurements of education systems and the adoption of information technology to extend educational opportunities to new target groups; and the improvement of educational quality through computer-supported instruction and access to the internet. Through Carnoy's critical analysis, he makes a call to developing countries to invest in their human resources and in quality education and training systems throughout their education systems.

One of the ways in which Carnoy sees a globalized education system is through information technology. This is a crucial issue that has been ushered in by globalization forces and it changes the way education is delivered. The use of technology in the classroom changes the way students learn, think, and work and access knowledge and their perception of the world (Carnoy, 1999). From this argument, Castells (2001:6) argues that through the emergency of knowledge economy and the importance of globalization, Information technology places new demands on higher education;

> In the knowledge economy, business and industry firms require a flexible and versatile work force. They, therefore, will express a continuous demand for courses in which their employees can be re-trained and‘re-tooled’. In other words, lifelong learning (LLL) will become an absolute necessity. Universities and colleges will have to play an important part in responding to the demand for LLL. Undergraduate programmes will have to prepare students for a labour market in which they could change jobs as much as four times during their working career. This means that students should acquire appropriate skills for this, and this will have to be reflected in the higher education curriculum – in its content, structure, length and mode of delivery. Postgraduate programmes and non-degree programmes will also be affected. As a result, the funding of higher education institutions, their organization and, therefore, their internal resource allocation methods and their (internal and external) quality assessment models will be forced to change accordingly (Jongbloed, 2000:69)

The argument above has implications for higher education’s research function, as it implies that higher education’s research function has to change to create multi-disciplinary research working groups. Through globalization, there seems to be opportunities that exist for higher education institutions to consolidate their role as knowledge producers in the global economy as there are other competitors that threaten their former monopoly.

Furthermore, Scot (1998) recognizes that globalization is taking place worldwide, especially, within the domain of financial markets. He asserts that it should be presumed that globalization affects all institutions in the same way just like it does to higher education. He goes on to illustrate possible ways in which globalization is impacting on higher education. This is in support of the studies done by Marks and Louis (1999) when they point out to the imminent changes in higher education due to global pressures. Scot mentions a number of aspects of the system that are affected by globalization of student exchanges and globalization of research and development. While there are flows of student exchanges between universities, this seems to be approaching an end, he notes. This suggests that universities are likely to suffer as more access will be in areas of distance education and ‘yet the life-blood of any university is based on postgraduate students, particularly doctoral and post-doctoral students’, argues Janks (2004). She further notes that

universities need to attract a large numbers of excellent research postgraduate students if they are to sustain themselves.

Due to the simultaneous massification of higher education specialized knowledge production has become increasingly distributed. Scot (1998) emphasizes the implication of this, is that knowledge is no longer the preserve of individual universities, but collaboration of these institutions promises better postgraduate research pedagogy. The implication of this is that those who have stakes in postgraduate research training should form collaboration with other institutions, departments and individuals and groups to further the aims of higher education in these times of change.

The studies conducted by Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) draw their theoretical framework from organizational theories and the analysis provided by Scot (1998:122) on the studies of higher education, suggest that an organizational theoretical lens is not enough, but higher education theories of change would be able to trace the nature of change. In this research project, I describe the changes in higher education in relation to postgraduate research training, but also show the experiences and implications of the model of the Consortium of South African Universities. Through integrating these perspectives, one is able to show the way in which organizations navigate the influence of their external environment to shape their curriculum practices.

2.2 The Rise of Partnerships in HE

According to views from contemporary literature, there is a force that is confirmed as imposing itself onto education policy agendas - it is the emergency of partnerships in higher education. The changes they are encouraging affect not only the formal curriculum, but also the research training pedagogy. Examining how partnerships work, Borzonsy and Hunter (1996) provide an overview of the key features of partnerships in higher education. These authors argue that university partnerships are designed to create equal opportunities for

university staff, students and employers. This feature of collaboration fundamentally changes the basis upon which universities have been understood.

The theories that frame the studies that have been conducted on teaching and learning practices in higher education are organizational theories. These theories "look at the different elements of the school system and their interrelatedness in order to understand where the particular strengths and weaknesses of the organization lie" (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1979:19). For instance, higher education in South Africa has a need for highly skilled researchers, especially in the field of educational policy in the schools of education and has taken strides in addressing the training of researchers through the doctoral program of the Consortium. On top of that, organizational theories emphasize the holistic and integrated view of the organization and the changes that take place in schools as well as in higher education. These theories view the environment as dynamic and changing and do not allude to the theory that all organizations develop best if they proceed along paths determined entirely by rational analysis (Knight, 1997:91).

The studies conducted by Leithwood, Leonard and Starrat (1998:384) draw their theoretical framework from organizational learning and leadership theories and they advocate for shared decision-making in organizations just like in the program of the Consortium. Hence, the analysis provided by Marks and Louis (1999:183) on the study of changes in higher education suggests that organizations such as universities and schools can no longer afford to work as individual entities if they are to make any meaningful impact on education. Hence, institutions of higher learning have been seen to be forming consortia where they can work together towards the improvement of research training.

On top of that, Gibbons et al (1994:6) have described globalization as the intensification of international competition in business and industry which is the driving force behind a significantly increased supply of and demand for 'marketable knowledge'. Therefore, organizations that are to compete in this global economy have to possess organizational abilities that enable them to maintain their competitive advantage in an unpredictable

market environment. One way of coping with this competition is collaboration (especially through mergers and alliances), including alliances with other knowledge suppliers.

While these authors acknowledge, that research and development globalizes in the form of global flows of information and the establishment of networks through which risks and opportunities can be shared. This will help in the development of knowledge that is not necessarily found within universities, but also outside of universities. Furthermore, Gibbons et al refer us to Pavitt and other authors who argue that knowledge still has local or national roots so that it is through this local knowledge processes that it can globalize. Through this way, higher education gets to be absorbed into a 'distributed knowledge system' and this seems to be one way in which globalization affects higher education.

Due to the simultaneous massification of knowledge of higher education, the generalization of instruments for the production of knowledge and the increase in the demand side for specialized knowledge, production has become significantly distributed. Gibbons et al emphasize the implication of this in that knowledge is no longer the preserve of individual universities, but a collaborative effort. Closely related to this trend is the implication that those who have stakes in higher education form collaboration with institutions, departments, individuals, and financial aid donors, who apparently have stakes in what is going on in universities. The rise of partnerships in forming what we call the 'networked university, Jongbloed and Goedbuure (2001:213) argue that a network university is a different university from the classic university in that, on top of being active in research and research-driven education of the graduate and the undergraduate kind it has new functions, missions and a new clientele. What this means is that the university is subjected to new systems of competition where demonstrable performance is the key and performance is operationalized in terms of a socio-economic and academic dimension. These authors argue that it is only through delivering results along these lines that the university can maintain its position in terms of institutional prestige and competitiveness.

Under globalization, universities are more likely to become more client or customer focused. The only snag here is that the client will increasingly be powerful donors or contractual industrial clients and students from upper and middle class families who can decide on the research topics (Hoppers, 2001:238). In contrast, cooperative globalization is said to be concerned with human values and full participatory democracy. Hoppers argues that globalization's impact on university policy in the case of South Africa, has transformed universities into partnerships in order to pool together scarce resources for the common good in a way that has not been possible before. Closely related to this, is what Orr (1997:8) argues as an education sector that has had to deal with diminishing budgets and therefore find itself with no option, but to form partnerships. However, Jongbloed and Goedbuure (2001:213-223) warn universities against mapping relationships with stakeholders as this can result in 'unpredictable, heterogeneous claims and demands' which could result in other partners losing their identity.

To illustrate their point, Jongbloed and Goedbuure (2001) have argued that there should be many manifestations of partnerships and strategic alliances, from corporate venturing and licensing to franchising all the way to downright mergers and acquisitions. They further argue that these alliances differ in terms of finance and organization, and the fact that higher education is driven by a market economy today may lead to enhanced research practices. These new partnerships are said to follow from the need to diversify support and funding and in an attempt to increase external revenue sources, universities develop closer links between each other, and the Consortium of South African Universities is a good example. This is to say that through these partnerships higher education institutions can become a key asset and powerhouse for the economic development of the region and the rest of Africa.

To these authors, globalization should lead to the promotion of shared understanding, values and cooperative actions at higher education level. Drawing from the work of Carnoy (2000), Castells (1999), Jongbloed and Goedbuure, (2001), one can conclude that partnerships in higher education are a result of the impact of globalization. Globalization

has brought with it a business concept that lies at the foundation of training, research and community services the university produces.

An important dimension of partnerships according to Mihalynuk and Seifer (2002:69) regards the formation of partnerships to serve as the foundation of learning programs in higher education which, according to them, can exist in different configurations depending on the nature of the program. Once these authors, have classified their conception of partnerships, they continue to argue that universities engage in partnerships in order to address collaboratively an array of complex issues and development problems. Drawing from Borzonsy and Hunter (1996:2), Mihalynuk and Seifer (2002) assert that partnerships strengthen their respective capacities for conducting educational missions in teaching, research and service to address development priorities that would not be possible for universities functioning as individual entities. In most cases, universities find themselves needing guidance on how to improve research training and they often ask how other institutions are doing it. Closely related to this, is the emergency of partnerships in higher education, a phenomenon that was associated with business all along, but now has found its way onto higher education. To illustrate this, Prof. Mthembu of WITS University argues that partnerships with higher education institutions in Africa give universities an opportunity to enter into collaborations as equal partners. Moreover, these partnerships have the potential to become complementary, equitable and mutually beneficial depending on the needs and capacities of each partner (ARENA, 2005:16).

Borzonsy and Hunter (1996) conclude their argument on partnerships by arguing that partnerships enhance the development of knowledge and advanced skills which are critical determinants of a country's economic growth and standard of living as learning outcomes are transformed into goods and services, greater institutional capacity and better investment climate. These authors' assertion is in line with what the World Bank policy encourages – not only a better quality from university education worldwide, but also the promotion of more efficient higher learning education through partnerships. In my opinion, these

partnerships may be good for universities for reasons of self-interest, of course – reducing tension with the community, attracting promising high school students, showing the institution's commitment to working on civic problems (World Bank Report, 1995), but regardless of those direct benefits and outcomes, these partnerships contribute to the common good in ways diverse and substantial enough to warrant recommending them for every university in South Africa and the region.

2.3 The South African Debate

Understood as a symbolic representation, Cross, (1999:2) describes a Consortium as a group of two or more agencies that enter into a cooperative agreement to share information or provide services that benefit students. His ideas are supported by The Horizon Report (2005:17) which asserts that participating groups are said to pool together their individual fiscal, human and material resources to take advantage of economies of scale, or arrange to share staff expertise. The report further describes a consortium as the coming together of two or more members of a natural assemblage in which each organism benefits from the other. It makes it clear that the group may collectively carry out some processes that no single member of the Consortium can accomplish on itself (The Horizon Report, 2005). This informs us that the consortium is an association of universities working together to improve research training for postgraduate students. One can therefore, conclude that the idea of concerted effort is paramount in the training mission of an institution.

According to Cross (1999:3), partnerships in higher education in South Africa are a necessity as global trends dictate that universities come together to provide a sustainable basis for the enlargement of educational research capacity throughout the country. Comments like these add weight to what The Horizon Report (2005) conviction that South African higher education is presently subject to a period of substantial change and the needs of the economy and workforce, together with the broader educational role of universities are leading to focus on lifelong learning as a tool for bringing together the apparently diverging needs of various groups. In my opinion, the author argues that putting an emphasis on lifelong learning and associated postgraduate, research training capabilities is

leading to opportunities for new partnerships between individual universities in a way that would help transform the experience of postgraduate research training.

Like their counterparts elsewhere in the world, South African universities are recognizing that their service role in the provision of highly skilled policy researchers and analysts who can ensure that education policies that are based on 'real behaviour' (rather than assumed behaviour) and 'real conditions' (as opposed to assumed conditions) can be developed and implemented effectively (Carnoy, 1999). Drawing from the writings of Borzsony and Hunter (1996:28), these university partnerships help improve the quality and speed of decision making; hence, the continuous, rapid change that has led many organizations to reconsider their worth in relation to global trends. Moreover, I would argue drawing from the above statement that partnerships are an attempt to move away from traditional structures and processes that are inflexible and hierarchical as they cannot harness the ingenuity required to solve unforeseen problems, and also grasp these unpredictable opportunities (Bruce, 1994:110).

While Borzonsy and Hunter (1996) recognize that partnerships add value to university education, they state that education policies rest upon certain assumptions about the aims of education and training in relation to socio-economic needs. A view illustrated in the World Bank Report (1999) which encourages the enactment of policies that would not only assume the aims of education, but would further them to enhance socio-economic needs. So for both Borzonsy and Hunter and the World Bank, partnerships help reveal a complex dynamic exercise that is deserving of wider attention across the South African education system, regionally and internationally. They seem to be largely positive about opportunities that university partnerships can bring to Postgraduate research training.

2.4 Theories and Eruption of Partnerships in HE

Borzonsy and Hunter (1996:22) provide an overview of the key features of partnerships in higher education. According to these authors, university partnerships are designed to create

equal opportunities for university staff, students and employers. This feature of collaboration fundamentally changes the basis upon which universities have been understood. According to Mihalynuk and Seifer (2002) partnerships serve as the foundation of learning programs in higher education and can exist in different configurations depending on the nature of the program. Once they have classified their conception of networks, they continue to argue that universities engage in partnerships in order to address collaboratively an array of complex social issues and development problems. Mihalynuk and Seifer's views on partnerships get to be supported by Borzonsy and Hunter (1996) when they assert that partnerships strengthen their respective capacities for conducting educational missions in teaching, research and service to address development priorities that would not be possible for universities functioning as individual entities. In most cases, we find ourselves needing guidance on how to improve research training and we often ask how other institutions are doing it. This suggests that partnerships should attempt to strike a balance between collaborations in order to be responsive to the needs of postgraduate research training, both in South Africa and in the region.

Borzonsy and Hunter (1996:29) conclude by arguing that knowledge and advanced skills are critical determinants of a country's economic growth and standard of living as learning outcomes are transformed into goods and services, greater institutional capacity and a better investment climate. These authors' assertion seems to confirm the World Bank policy which encourages not only better-quality from university education worldwide, but also the promotion of more efficient higher learning education through partnerships. According to this policy, higher learning institutions are able to deduce core knowledge together and respond positively to meaningful performance-based allocation of resources and accountability systems which in turn stimulate an outward flow of highly skilled human capital through the support of cultures of quality and productivity (World Bank, 1999). The case for the partnership being able to offer the potential for 'mutual satisfaction of interests' rests upon adopting a more central role for inquiry, as a way of knowing about teaching and as a stance within a community (Cochran-Smith, 1995). If both sides of the partnership adopt this view, the potential for mutual benefit is clear on a personal as well as an institutional level.

These partnerships, by their very existence, emphasize the civic mission of universities. In their organization and structure, they support the development or strengthening of relationships between universities and multiple constituencies within surrounding communities – schools, parents, non-governmental organizations, elected officials (Bruce, 2001).

2.5 Organizational Theory Approaches

At the heart of postgraduate training lie the theories of reflection, a much used but rarely defined term in the worlds of educationists (Day, 1997). The purpose of this part of the literature review is to examine the trends of the model of the consortia of universities. In doing so, it discusses the choices with which the university teachers are confronted concerning its purposes and processes and argues that if it is to be successful it is essential from time to time for them to engage in partnerships with colleagues from inside or outside their individual universities as a means of confrontation of thinking and practice which is itself a necessary process if the outcome of reflection is the possibility of change (Day, 1997). Day captures the most fundamental challenge of the Consortium in the context of postgraduate research training. The literature points to the global changes of higher education, what universities offer and how they offer their programs in partnership with which other institutions they offer their programs (Carnoy, 1999). Hence, from Carnoy's assertion, I can argue that the internal make-up of universities is changing towards working together with other higher learning institutions.

The economic case for expanding the provision of higher education is extremely strong. But as we expand, we must not compromise on quality, and we must make sure that the courses and patterns of study on offer really match the needs of our economy, and the demands of students themselves. We must not and will not pursue expansion for its own sake, simply by offering more of what has always been offered before. Drawing from the UCLA presentation, Malcolm (2001:1) argues that the Consortium of South African Universities represents the institutionalization of research training through a doctoral program that is relevant to South Africa's needs and that is also observant of international

best practice in postgraduate research training. To Cross (1999:1) “Three dimensions are critical for understanding the approach adopted by the Consortium to achieve its goals: (i) current modes of research training; (ii) contextual factors; (iii) the rationale for an alternative and innovative model (p, 1).” However, the pertinent question that is raised through Cross’s assertion is the ability for the Consortium to address its limitations. The limitations may come as a result of the individualistic nature that has been embedded in higher learning institutions for many years.

The Handbook for Doctoral Program in Educational Policy asserts that the postgraduate research students who participate in the program of the Consortium of universities often come from full-time jobs in the civil service, non-governmental communities and other universities at-risk and may not otherwise have had realistic training in research. This view seems to point towards some of the major limitations of the program of the consortium as illustrated by Bruce (2001: 109) when he asserts that, there are, obviously, many factors that can restrict access to higher education. While the Consortium projects cannot solve all of those problems, they can, at least, address certain questions of expectations and preparation to more optimistic beliefs that can sustain a commitment to graduating from the program of the Consortium.

2.6 Models of postgraduate research training / The American and British models

The fundamental truth is that research in developing countries gets to be framed by the British and American Models to research training. This is evident in Cross, (1999:1) when he asserts that the model adopted by the Consortium of South African Universities emulates the strong research skills of both the British and American models combined. The British approach emphasizes independency on the part of the researcher and according to Cross, (ibid) assumes that knowledge or learning is in place. On the other hand, the American model of research training emphasizes partnerships and support through coursework assistance and structured training. This model assumes that the learner requires support from the teachers of research and given such assistance, the learner can become an independent researcher.

Boles and Johnson, (2001) make reference to Cross who argues that the program of the Consortium retains and consolidates the primacy of research in graduate training by adding a structured curriculum with coursework elements, support through mentoring, practical research experience, and exposure to work-place experience through internships.

With reference to the South African context, Cross, (1999: 4) has described the curriculum practices in postgraduate training as one that can improve research training within South African Universities. He further argues that the model of the Consortium consolidates the primacy of research in postgraduate training and adds a structured curriculum with course-work elements, support through mentoring, practical research experience, and exposure to work-place experience through internships (American experience). If these curriculum practices are maximized to the fullest, they are capable of producing strong researchers in the field of educational policy.

Macmillan and Schumacher (2001) show through studying the changes in the nature of research training in Britain and the United States that research is a basis for knowledge about education and for influencing decisions, programs and policy. They argue that both quantitative and qualitative research modes contribute effectively to our knowledge of education.

After having empirically reviewed the quantitative and qualitative research enquiries in the United States and the UK, they conclude by arguing that the present form of educational research draws from both the traditional and the recent models of research. What Macmillan and Schumacher are putting forward is the notion of fundamental principles of educational research which include qualitative and quantitative research approaches, and trying to comprehend if there is a systemic way of understanding a research article. The underlying assumption of this ideology is that educational research has become a valuable source of information to a number of diverse groups such as students, teachers, parents and our communities and the nation (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2001). What these authors are saying is that research is a source of information and knowledge and therefore should be inculcated into postgraduate research training.

2.7 Emerging Curriculum Practices in Postgraduate Research Training

With reference to the South African context, Cross (1999: 4) has described the curriculum practices in postgraduate training in the Consortium of South African Universities. He argues that the Consortium gives priority to research training and research productivity through the adoption of a hybrid model of research training through doctoral studies in education policy. This model has combined the strong research emphasis of the British/South African tradition and the coursework support and structured training of the American tradition (integrated program of enrichment, academic support and professional skills development) adapted to the peculiarities of the South African context. Furthermore, the model of the Consortium consolidates the primacy of research in postgraduate training and adds a structured curriculum with course-work elements, support through mentoring, practical research experience, and exposure to work-place experience through internships (American experience), (ibid). It is worth noting that, (i) not always do students posses the necessary primacy knowledge, skills and work ethic to succeed in the program; (ii) the lonely relationship that exists between student and supervisor has proved to be inadequate; (iii) financial support has been a major constraining factor in postgraduate studies and (iv) the predominance of part-time students require more innovative and contextualized strategies. And if these curriculum practices are maximized to the fullest, they are capable of producing strong researchers in the field of educational policy.

Cochran-Smith (1995), argues that knowledge is refracted through a variety of lenses, not the product of some singular truth, but it is the understanding that research is accomplished from a variety of social locations such as engaging in collaborations and partnerships. Cochran-Smith's view supports the knowledge-creating function of universities as institutions of higher learning, and indeed extends it to other universities. Her view resembles Maxwell (1997) that universities are re-orienting themselves in organization, form and structure. Bruce (2001:110) argues that part of this orientation is towards post modernity; that is, a movement to a multiplicity of ways of knowing and away from a belief in an individualistic approach to research training. With this view in mind, I argue that the

consortium, through its model seeks to answer to the needs of the South African people in postgraduate research training.

On the other hand, Maharasoa (2003) argues that students in universities more often seek study programmes that will facilitate their competitiveness and marketability. This, he argues, is a result of the uncompromising demand to which South African universities have to react to or slowly get vanquished. This argument seems to point towards working together as universities to fortify the curriculum practices that are envisaged by the program of the Consortium. However, the importance of critical thinking "has for a long time been associated with an alternative curriculum… which prepares people for total human liberation; one which helps people to be creative, to develop a critical mind, to help people to analyze; one that prepares people for all participation in all social, political, or cultural spheres" (Higgs and Higgs, 2001:2). The Consortium seems to be the answer to the renewal of curriculum practices as it attempts to give priority to research training and research productivity through doctoral studies in education policy by combining the strong research emphasis of the British / South African tradition, and the course work support and structured training of the American tradition (Cross, 1999). The views of Higgs and Higgs (2001) and those of Cross (1999:3) stress the need of modified curriculum practices in postgraduate training in order to meet the needs of the South African people. The growing need for university partnerships has led to the formation of the Consortium of South African Universities. Cross (1999:2) for example, contends that the doctoral consortium seeks to adopt a more structured approach to the doctoral program which will make use of coursework and consolidate the learning that the students of the program already posses in a more systemic way. In essence, this program will utilize the British and American models of research training.

2.8 Conclusion and Theoretical Framework

The literature review has argued that under the forces of globalization higher education is forced to come into partnership with other institutions to pursue educational goals. In addition to that, the literature further points to the fact that driven by new funding programmes that are given by donors; the face of higher education has changed completely. The theories that frame studies that have been conducted on research training in higher education are globalization theories. These theories look at the different elements of globalization and its effect to higher education. With the program of the Consortium as my central, but not exclusive focus, I suggest that these reforms can be understood using the conceptual lenses of globalization. At its broadest level, globalization refers to the description and explanation of social processes that transcend national borders. On the one hand, economic globalization stresses the imperatives of market competition and global capital in promoting a convergence of institutional arrangements among states and thus among education systems (Davies, 1997:436). This suggests that the ever-expanding web of market relations fosters a standardization of knowledge systems in all industrialized nation-states. Since nation states organize and distribute knowledge through formal education, this logic implies a tendency for education systems to converge across these developed nations.

Davies' view is supported by Carnoy and Castells (2001) when they argue that;

> In State, Power, Socialism, Nicos Poulantranzas, conceptualized a state that materializes and concentrates power and displaces the class struggle from the economic to the political arena (p1).

Carnoy and Castells argue that economic relations have been transformed by economic globalization, work re-organization and the compression of space, time and knowledge transmission through an information and communications revolution. The analysis provided by these authors suggest changes in higher education which are a direct result of

globalization have necessitated the formation of the Consortium, where institutions of higher learning work together to enhance research training in South Africa.