

The Impact of the Resurgence of Consultants on the Role of the Universities in Public Policy Research

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Abstract

The paper has investigated the impact which the resurgence of consultants has had on the role of the universities in Public policy research. The assumption was that the involvement of private consultants at the expense of the university faculty in the policy process has interfered with the very reason why the research institutes especially at the public universities were created. Using a comparative analysis, we carried out an interview of 13 consultants drawn from public universities in East and West Africa based on the trend of the public policy research done by consultants either as private consultants or as a member of university team. The study established that the resurgence of the consultants in the public policy making has compromised the role of public universities in public policy research to the extent that more public policy researches are done by private consultants at the expense of public institutions/universities.

Keywords

Consultants, Public Policy Research, Public Universities, Policy Making Process

1. Introduction

Although there is no obvious consensus on what the term consultants mean, more often than not it is used to refer to the provider of expertise or advice to an individual or to an organization/institution. Policy consultants are external analysts who provide paid policy-related advice to governments on a contractual basis (Howlett, Migone, & Tan, 2014). This can be done individually, collectively (groups of persons) or as a corporate. In whatever the case, consultants are sup-

posed to be experts in the disciplines/areas or sectors for which their services are sought. Overtime, consultants have been drawn from the public sector, private sector and the International Organizations. Public sector consultants include government institutions like Public Universities, Training Institutes, Research Institutes and Think Tanks. Experts in policy making operate in various systems including Policy advisory systems, epistemic communities, and knowledge creeps which perform different roles in the process. For example in Canada, policy advice and advisory systems are both within governments (Howlett & Newman, 2010) and by policy consultants (Howlett & Wellstead, 2016). The Private Consultants include private individuals or companies and government employees acting on individual capacities. The international Organizations which provide consultants include the World Bank and its affiliate organizations, The International Monetary Fund and its affiliates and the International Governmental Organizations associated with the United Nations. In one way or another, the consultants, either individually or collectively, have participated in Public Policy making in various ways ranging from problem identification, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, policy monitoring and evaluation, policy communication and termination depending on the clients' needs. The policy consultants contracted with governments to undertake policy-related activities act as invisible civil service, which, as a group of external advisors potentially can compete with internal advisors in the provision of both strategic and operational types of advice (Boston, 1994). Although the consultants are "external" actors, they occupy space in policy advice systems between policy insiders and outsiders whose impact and influence on policy making and outcomes is more ambiguous and difficult to define (Howlett, Migone, & Tan, 2014). They provide advice both to the highest levels of government as well as to middle and lower echelons (Elgie, 1997).

In the immediate post independent Africa, the Policy making process was dominated by the International Organizations, especially the World Bank, whose main objective was to develop and modernize the independent states. A Policy making script that was used in Post War Europe was transferred to Africa. Under modernization approach, it was taken that the states required policies that could deal with Urbanization, Housing, Poverty, Health and Ignorance. The prescriptions were done by the International Organizations policy experts either seconded to the states or in form of blue prints prepared by the experts to be implemented by respective states on the basis of which Sessional Papers, Policy Documents would be prepared and implemented (Mitullah, 2021). The consultancy reports were based on the prevailing Policy and development thinking, for example Development Administration in 1960s, planning for Rural Development and Agricultural Development in 1970s. During the era, public policy formulation and Problem Identification were dominated by Foreign Experts, commonly referred to as Expert expatriates who were fronted through Technical Assistance Programmes under the International Development Agencies including DANIDA, USAID, ODA, SIDA, and NORAD, more often than not working

with the Research Institutes or individual researchers based at the Universities.

Public Universities gradually got into the fray in agenda setting through public policy debates on issues through support from International Organizations. For example, regarding the agricultural Development, Land question, and capital development, there emerged the Kenya debate as fronted by Collin Leys, Steve Langdon, Nacholai Kaplinsky, and Apollo Njonjo regarding the state of capitalism in Kenya, all of whom were active research fellows at University of Nairobi's Institute for Development Studies. Although the initial policy researches were championed by the individuals sponsored by the Development Agencies, it gradually led to the institutional researches by relevant units of the Public Universities. For example, The Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi was set in 1976 to spearhead Development Planning Policy research whose outcomes were Occasional Papers and Working Papers. More institutes were equally established including for Populations Studies, Anthropology and African Studies. In Africa, a number of universities dedicated particular departments/institutes for policy research. These included: University of Nairobi's Institute for Development Studies (IDS), Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER), Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR), Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), Centre Ivoireien de Recherches Economiques et Sociales (CIRES); Institute for Development Research (IDR); and Development Studies and Research Centre (DSRC) were established. The Public Universities therefore became the Government Think Tanks and rational planners on matters Policy. The ensuing trend was the one in which most African countries relied on their national universities through their designated research institutes or schools to carry out public policy research on the basis of which the government would formulate appropriate policies. The universities became the rational planners for the governments, whose actions resulted into the preparation of respective national and regional development planning from 1960s through 1980s. Gradually, this policy and advisory research roles have been shifting to private consultants in the form of being invited from various policy advisory systems including government think Tanks, Committees, working groups as individual, at the expense of the Public Universities as institutions. It has been argued that the consultants are more efficient and good for cost-cutting to the extent that the policy advisory roles of the institutes have largely been taken by policy consultants, who more often than not are university staff either on private capacity or contracted by other policy advisory systems. Although the Universities are no doubt having the highest concentration of the respective specialists within their faculties, they are vulnerable to stiff competition posed by the resurgence of private consultants in the public policy making.

With the emergence of neo-liberalism approach in the 1990s and gaining momentum in early 2000s, many governments in Africa are increasingly warming up to private sector involvement as Consultants in Policy making. The private consultants are not necessarily those in exclusive private practice only but also those from Public Universities contracted on individual capacities to serve

in various roles including Policy advisors, agenda setters, analysts and Policy Studies/Review. The neo-liberalism approach is favoured by International Institutions/Organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary fund (IMF) as it presents Public Policy making as a competitive enterprise in which government should place calls for competitive bidding. Notwithstanding the critical role of the Consultants in the Public Policy making process, it has at times appeared as duplication of the universities roles to the extent that they challenge the very role the universities were created and sustained by the government, hence by and large, a threat to the survival of public universities institutional culture in research. By conducting a trend analysis amongst faculty from public universities who have consulted for the government over the last 20 years, the paper has investigated the extent to which the involvement has affected Public Universities.

2. Theoretical Framework

Neo-liberal economics views most forms of government intervention as intrusion into the voluntary contractual arrangements between individuals (Saad-filho & Johnston, 2005). The current neo-liberalisation of many societies is shaped by economic globalization and international capital mobility, and characterized by fewer restrictions on business operations, extended property rights, privatisation, deregulation, erosion of the welfare state, devolution of central government, uneven economic development and increasing social polarisation (Duménil & Lévy, 2004). Neo-liberalism sets new premises for analyzing concepts such as globalisation, depoliticisation, welfare state, market liberalisation, and discipline/governmentality. Through its new public management programme for transforming the public sector, neo-liberalism engenders comprehensive changes of institutions and organisations that are the framework of public planning (Sager, 2011). Neoliberalism in higher education, better known as academic capitalism, includes not only market and market-like behaviors of post-secondary institutions and faculty, but also market ethos and ideologies such as privatization and individualism that govern organizational life (Talbur, 2005). These neoliberal behaviors and adopted ideologies in turn reinforce and reproduce power asymmetries among academic agents (i.e. faculty, administrators, and academic professionals) and impact academic production (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997).

We use the theory in this study to account for the opening of Public Policy research to not only the academics from the public universities but also the International Organizations, Individual experts, Non-Governmental Organization and Business companies to competition for the government contracts. The push was catapulted by neoliberal theory arguments which put emphasis on market forces coined in competition based value for money pegged on the principle of using limited resources for efficient delivery from the most qualified bidder based on pre-identified criteria. The neo-liberal policies implied shift from gov-

ernment to (partly) private strategies, or a conversion from publicly planned solutions to competitive and market-oriented ones, or at least the serving of business companies and their favoured customer groups (Sager, 2011). The universities do not necessarily have direct access to government contracts but have to face competition from international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, the IMF, donor governments, NGOs, developing countries and various individual experts. In the last three decades, international consultants have been involved due to the fact that they a visible role and their activity as spearheads of transnational institutions important carriers of management concepts; carriers of the ideas; and active generators or just disseminators of such ideas (Ciumara, 2012).

The preference of private consultants over public universities was therefore based on the consultants' being seen as legitimate disseminators of managerial knowledge, who do their best to help in the development of the respective countries; economic agents interested only in the profit they can extract from the development missions; and as "agents of propaganda", that help the donor countries push their agenda in the developing world (Ciumara, 2012). It is within this context that policy agenda setting initially, a preserve of the state and public universities, was opened up to individual consultants. The exercise, therefore, is a threat to the survival of public universities particularly due to the fact that the advice provided by the two groups may be complementary or enjoy some other sort of relationship (Howlett, Migone, & Tan, 2014). The fundamental question is whether consultants are duplicating the work of government officials in order to help "triangulate" internal advice, or whether there is more of a complementary or supplementary approach in place between these two sources of advice (Craft & Howlett, 2012).

The theory argues that competition from the private consultants in the public policy making process through open tendering, headhunting and networks subdued the role of public universities at the risk of compromising not only the quality of the policy formulation process but also threatened the survival of the public universities

3. Methodology

The study was purely a qualitative approach using Interview method in which questions were presented to the identified interviewees, purposively selected. This approach was preferred because it enabled the interviewer get the required information from those who had a firsthand experience from which they could testify. The public universities selected were the oldest in the respective countries and had been existence from the time when the state universities dominated public policy making process consultancy in the 1970s. The study obtained data from 13 consultants from three (3) Universities, namely, University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University and University of Yaoundé, who have been involved in or experienced government Consultancies in the last 10 years. Twelve out of 13

thirteen respondents were from Universities in Kenya. Over 90% of the respondents registered carrying out consultancies several times, more than ten times in the last 10 years. The consultants were identified based on the respective university records regarding their consultancy roles for respective governments and were also willing to grant interviews on the same. This showed that they were people who had sufficient experience to authoritatively comment on consultancies for government. A survey interview guide was used to obtain responses through a Survey Monkey technique. The consultants 2 African countries, 1 each from East and West African regions were asked to share their experience in the procurement of consultancies from the government for the last 5 years. We obtained against each consultant: the number of consultancies done, the trend of government consultancies done by the Universities; Recruitment and selection of consultants by the government; the trend of faculty involvement as consultants for the government and their views against the perceived impact of the trend on public universities. Each of the interviewees were asked to state: the roles each played in government Consultancies; how he/she was Identified for Government Consultancy; the Government Agencies he/she had consulted for in the last 5 years; the period in which most government Consultancies had generally been awarded to Individual Consultants; the reasons which he/she thought accounted for the Award of Consultancies to Private Consultants; the period in which government consultancies were awarded to Public Universities, and the reasons for award of government consultancies to public universities; the ways of obtaining government consultancies by public universities; ways of obtaining government consultancies by private consultants; who in his/her view should carry out government consultancies especially on public policy research; the reasons for preferred agent to carry public policy research; the most effective provider of consultancy to government; and finally, the likely impact if public universities are kept out of government public policy research.

By taking each University as a case, we conducted a comparative case analysis based on the responses. The results were presented in table statistics. Although the study was intended to capture two countries, Kenya and Cameroun, in equal proportion, we only managed two responses from Cameroon out of the 13. The relatively small number of respondents from Cameroon may not reflect a quantitative representation of the scenario. However, the exploratory data has by and large captured the general trend in Cameroun.

4. Discussion of Results and Findings

The analysis was done and discussed in the context of the themes presented in the methodology.

Role played by Academics in consultancy

To understand the involvement of the consultants in the Public Policy research, the respondents were asked to state the roles they have played in the consultancies for the government. The responses were tabulated in **Figure 1**.

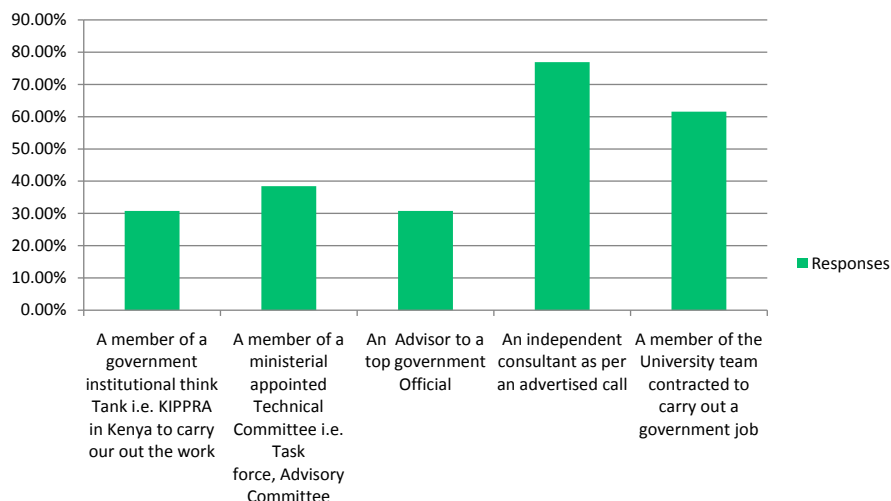


Figure 1. Roles played in government consultancies.

Figure 1 shows that most University Consultants (76.9%) offer consultancy services as independent consultants offering their services as per advertised calls. Some members of the faculty also participate in consultancies as members of the University team contracted to carry out a government job comes (61.5%). Others also participate as members of Ministerial appointed technical committees to work on the formulation or review of particular policies. Other University staff participate as advisors to top government officials where they serve as personal advisors to top government officials (30%) and also as members of institutional think tanks, for example Kenya Institute for Public Policy and Research Analysis (KIPPRA), a think tank for the government. This implies that University staff are still heavily involved in Policy making process in different capacities. However, their roles are prescribed by the government and narrowed down to the terms of reference. The government, therefore, sets the agenda for the academic researchers, in spite of their participation.

This confirms argument by [Mitullah \(2021\)](#) that the government has since independence dominated the problem identification and definition in spite of the attempts to open up the process to multiple actors. The government in away identifies deficits in internal expertise which they need to source externally. This far, the role of academics leans more towards a “complementary” relationship than towards the conventional wisdom that outside or external advice is sought to duplicate internal work in order to avoid or correct for biases in advice generated internally ([Halligan, 1995](#)).

In order to establish the space or freedom for consultants, the respondents were further asked to state how each was identified for the government consultancy each carried out. The responses were as shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2 shows that the most common way of identifying consultants for government works was through head hunting (80%) followed by consultancy networks and open tender bidding each at 64%. Whereas the headhunted consultants are invited directly by the contracting without prior application, for

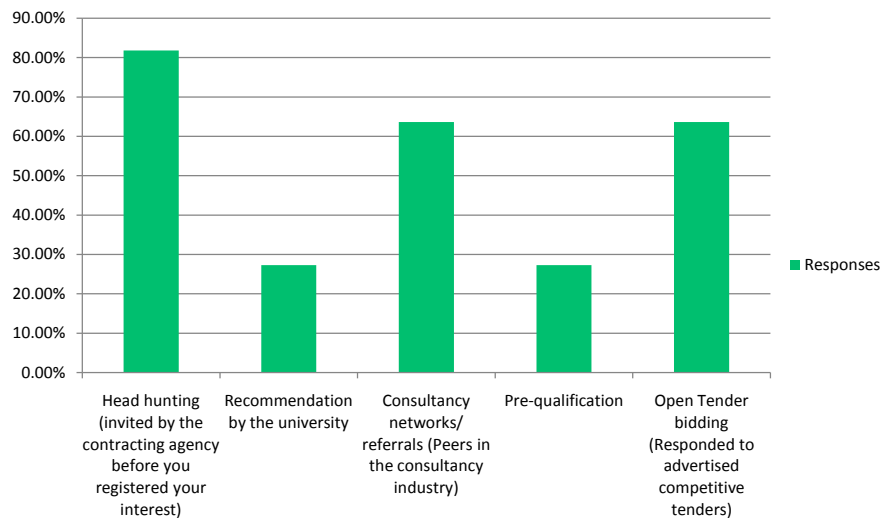


Figure 2. Identification for government consultancy.

open tendering casing cases, the contracting agency invites open bidding from which successful ones are competitively recruited. In some instances, the government requests the universities to recommend consultants for a given assignment in the government (27.7%). In some cases, academic staff from universities are prequalified, hence restricted tendering from the government (27.7%) each. This is an indication that governments haven't prioritized public universities as institutional consultants. In essence the role of the universities public policy research has been diminished to the extent that the consultancies are more associated with individuals and less to the universities as institutions. The individual consultants perform the consultancies in their private capacities and hardly on behalf of their respective universities. The priority has been on the lowest bid, which need not necessarily be from the experts but business companies.

Government Agencies offering Consultancies to University Faculty

The study furthers to sort to establish which government agencies provide consultancy opportunities to the members of the university faculty. The respondents were asked to state the government agencies they have consulted for in the last five years and the responses shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3 shows that at 70%, Government Ministries are the chief clients for Consultants from the Universities. At the central ministries, they act as advisors to top government officials, provide technical advice in the formulation of policies as well as conducting monitoring and evaluation of policies already implemented. This was followed by Parastatals at 62%, government commissions at 46%. Devolved government units provide the least consultancy opportunities at 38.5%. In all cases, the means of recruitment is through headhunting, open tendering, prequalification and recommendations from consultancy networks. This again confirms that all government units would rather deal with private consultants from Public Universities than the universities as institutions. When involved under such scenario, the university staff are at disadvantaged position to

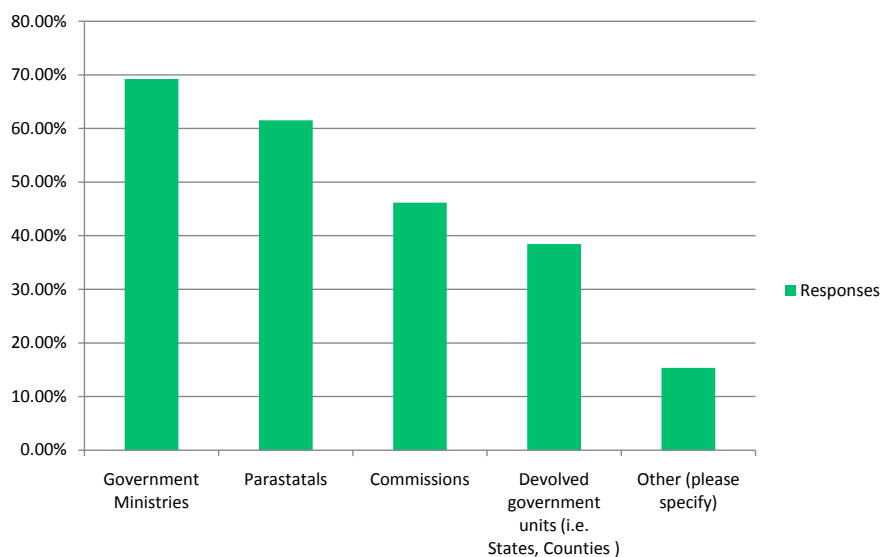


Figure 3. Government agencies consulted for in the last 5 years.

independently drive the public policy agenda setting or policy formulation beyond the respective terms of reference. The most competitive companies are profit driven hence would prioritize cost minimization at the expense of detail. Most public university faculty would hardly compete for the tendered positions. Even if they do, they can hardly compete favourably against the business companies of private consultants. At best, the individual members of the faculty, could be privately be contracted by the private consultants within restricted terms of reference, which they have little influence on the overall outcome of the policy report.

Trend of Award of Consultancies

We considered the trend of awards to establish whether or not there has been a deliberate effort to move towards a certain direction by the government while awarding consultancies. The consultants were asked state based on individual experiences, the period government consultancies were mainly awarded to individual consultants. The responses were as shown in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4 shows that most consultants (60%) received government consultants over the last 5 - 10 years as individual consultants. About 10% felt individual consultancies were more over 10 years ago. During the last ten years there, the tendering process had liberalized by the government hence more competition from private consultants. When asked what in their opinion, was the reason for the trend in which most government Consultancies were awarded to Individual Consultants, the responses were as shown in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5 shows that the choice of engaging consultants from the universities at individual levels was, in the opinion of the respondents due to the feeling that the universities had a high repository of experts (60%) and the best fit could easily be from amongst the experts. The next possible reason, according to the respondents, was the need to allow market forces in which people compete for the

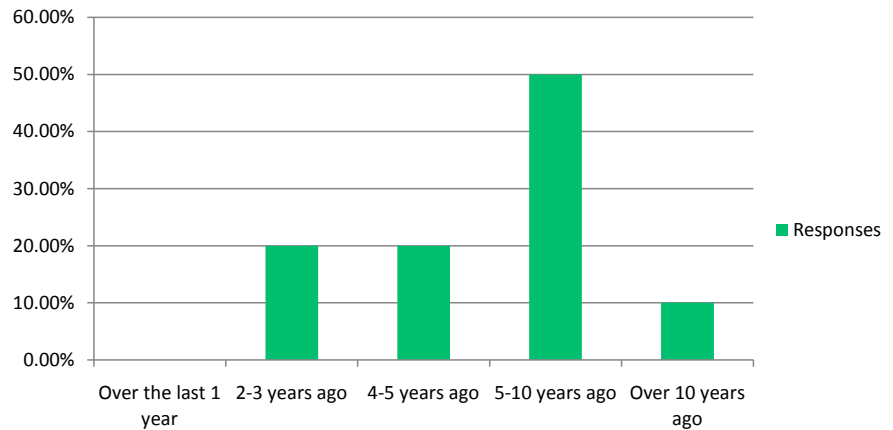


Figure 4. Period in which most government consultancies were awarded to individual consultants.

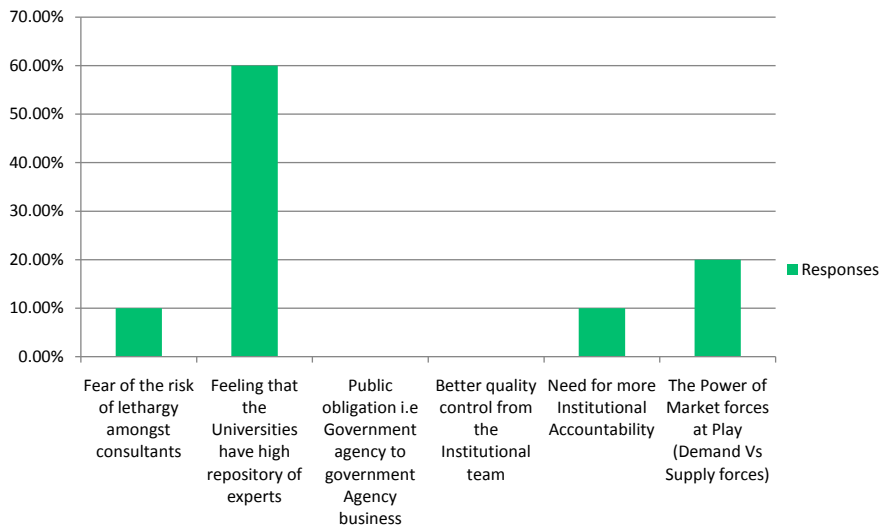


Figure 5. Reasons for the award of consultancies to private consultants.

opportunities at 20%. It is not however clear why the government agencies in spite of recognizing the existence of expertise at the universities, would still prefer to work with individuals rather as an institution (experts combined). The end result would be that a few individuals would repeatedly do government jobs while majority of the staff won't get the opportunity to participate in the public policy research. It was however possible that the high statutory requirement as opposed to the expertise alone quickly tossed the university faculty out of competition in favour of the private consultants with registered business companies. However, when asked to state which period, most government consultancies were awarded to Public universities, the responses were as shown in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6 shows that Public Universities experienced most institutional consultancies (45.5%) over 10 years ago while about 10% felt consultancies were more over the last one year. It is therefore possible to deduce that neo-liberal policies took more toll on the universities involvement in public policy research in the last 10 years. As rational planners for the government before the liberalism

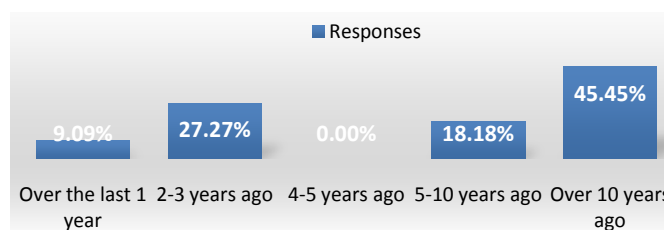


Figure 6. Period in which government consultancies were awarded to public universities.

age, the public universities were favoured directly granted the policy consultancies by the government. There was a downward trend on the government consultancies awarded to public universities compared to those awarded to private consultants. When asked what could have been the reason for the trend, the responses were as shown in **Figure 7**.

Figure 7 shows that the choice of engaging Universities as institutional consultants, in the opinion of the respondents, was due to the feeling that the Universities had a high repository of experts (60%) followed by need to allow market forces in which people compete for the opportunities at 20%. It is therefore clear that the expertise at the universities either at as individual or at institution level is never in doubt in the eyes of the government, even the though it has not been assigned a leading role in the same. The end result would be that a few individuals would repeatedly do government jobs while majority of the staff won't get the opportunity to participate in the public policy research. This is no different from a related study in Canada by Howlett and team which established that policy consultants undertake a very large number of process-related tasks in their work complementing the efforts of internal analysts (Howlett, Migone, & Tan, 2014). It was therefore important to establish how government awarded consultancies to either Public universities or to Individual Consultants. The results are shown in **Figure 8** and **Figure 9**, respectively.

Figure 8 shows that most government consultancies by public universities are obtained through head hunting (38.5%) and open tender bidding (23%). At 15% each, recommendation by university and consultancy networks were the lowest options. This showed that the government still recognized the role of the Public Universities in the provision of consultancy services. Equally, headhunting may imply that the Universities are reached out by the government for the provision of consultancy services as a last resort.

Figure 9 shows that most government consultancies by private individuals are obtained through consultancy networks and open tender bidding at 58.33% each followed by headhunting at 40%. This indicates that private were superior to university faculty in networks, referral and open tendering requirement. The university staff/consultants, not only require recommendations from their respective universities but also in consultancy networks, which they use to secure government consultancies. That explains why most of the consultancy works they won, were through tender prequalification mainly government to government agency procurement method. The consultancy networks include membership to

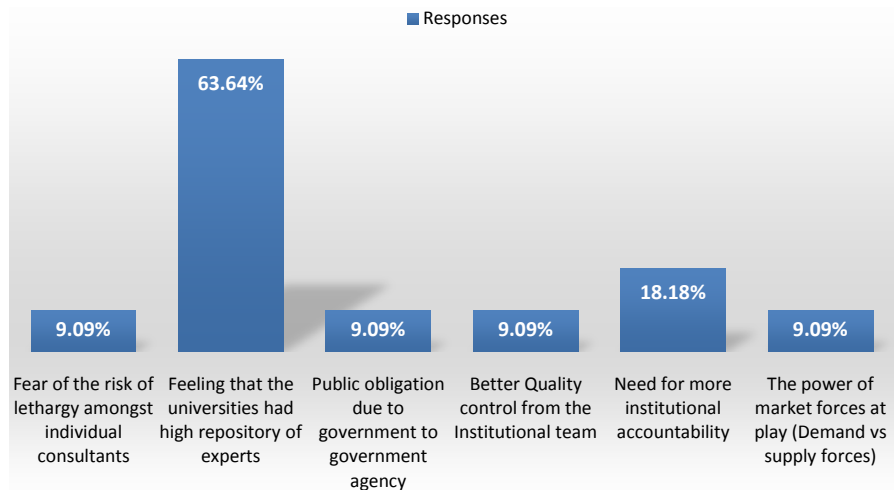


Figure 7. Reasons for award of government consultancies to public universities.

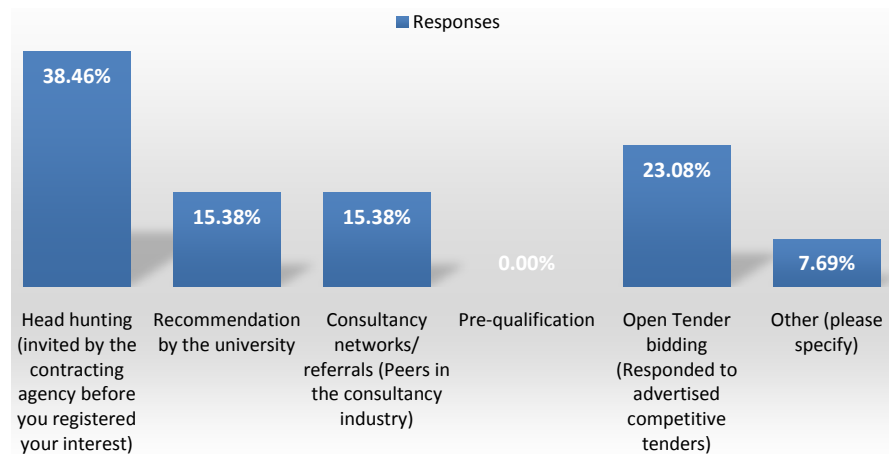


Figure 8. Ways of obtaining government consultancies by public universities.

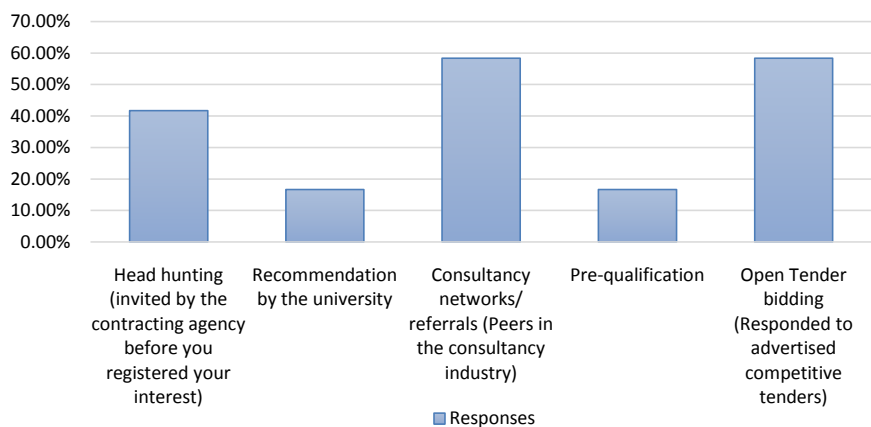


Figure 9. Ways of obtaining government consultancies by private consultants.

consultancy teams and peer consultants who are conversant with the expertise of a member of the faculty in a given area. When the respondents were asked to state who would they would prefer to carry out government consultancies espe-

cially those touching on public policies, the responses were as shown in **Figure 10**.

Figure 10 shows that majority of the respondents preferred individual experts identified through open tendering process (30%) to be the ones to carry out government consultancies especially those touching on public policies. The next preferred were open tender bidding for firms and relevant department of the public universities each at 23%. However, 15% preferred Government think Tanks, which carried out policy research and analysis for the government. Most of the experts contracted by the Government think tanks in Kenya are drawn from the faculty of the universities although mainly on individual consultancy basis. It was however ironical that most interviewees preferred open tendering method as the best in identifying consultants in as much as it favoured the private consultants more. This could however be attributed to the fact that the those interviewed were accomplished consultants who could withstand competition at the international level hence not only saw that as an opportunity above unaccomplished consultants from the company but were also ready for competitions for similar assignments beyond the national borders. They were then asked to state the reason for their choices. The responses were as shown in **Figure 11**.

Figure 11 shows different reasons which the consultants interviewed gave for various choices made while selecting consultants. The reasons ranged from competition which would guarantee the best choice from amongst the bidders (46.1%). This was particularly advanced by the consultants who supported open bidding process. The respondents who advocated for the government consultancies to be awarded to relevant departments of the public universities argued that the public universities should be doing the role for which they were set up and funded by exchequer (15%), also the need to preserve institutional culture in academic research 15.38% and also the fact that the universities are likely to do a better job due to the feeling that the Universities have a high repository of experts (7.69%). However, the respondents who recommended open tendering

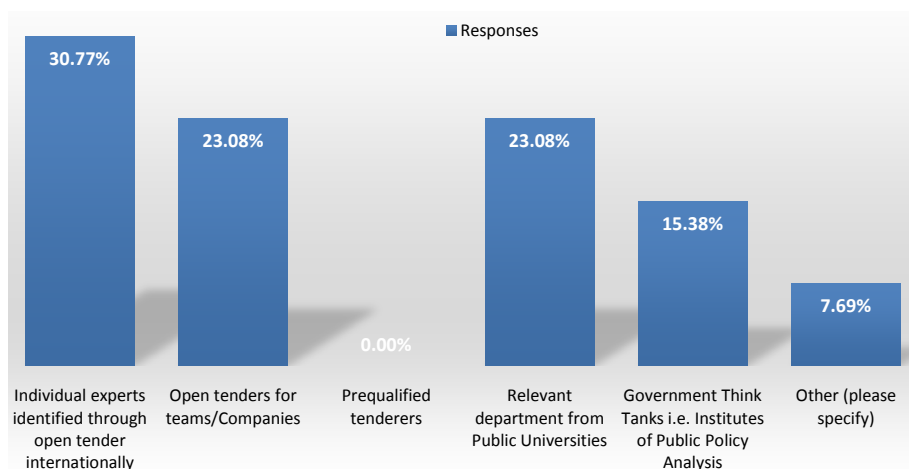


Figure 10. Who should carry out government consultancies especially on public policy research?

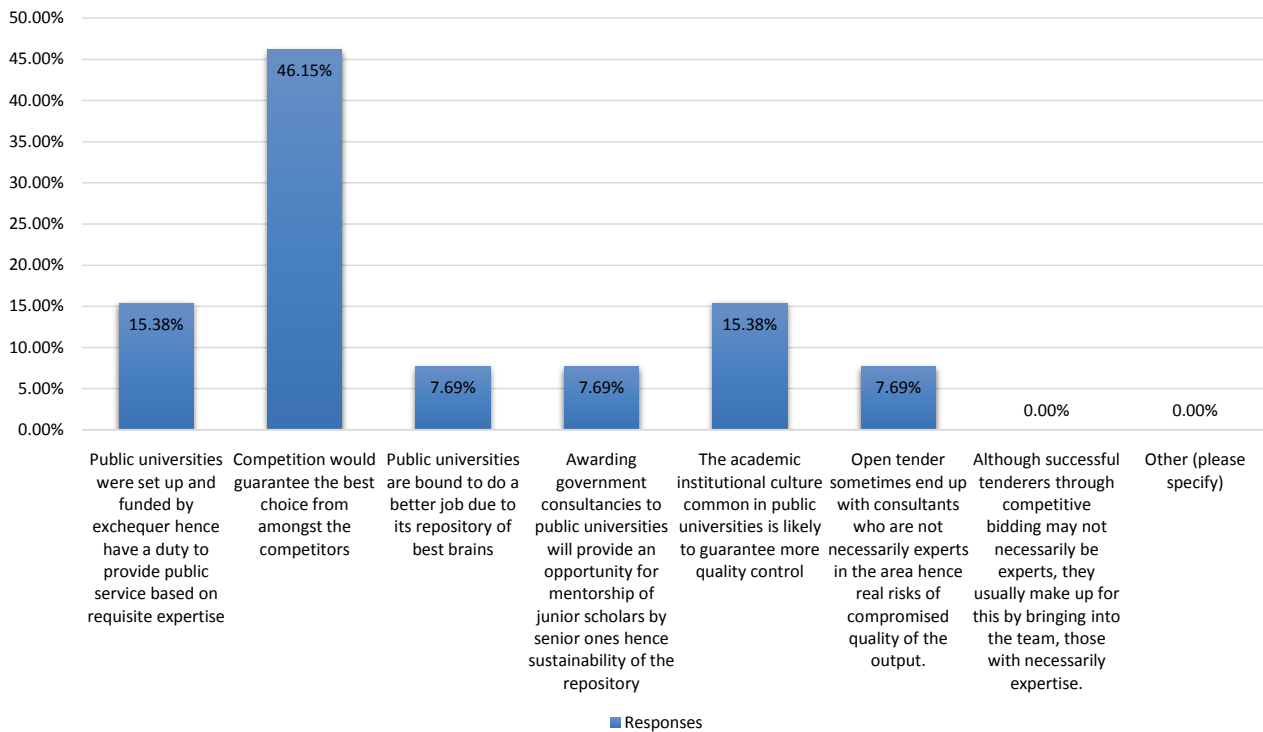


Figure 11. Reason for Preferred agent to carry public policy research.

argued for the need to allow market forces in which people compete for the opportunities at 20%. It is therefore clear that the expertise at the universities, either at as individual or at institution level, is never in doubt. The concern, however, is that much of government consultancies end up at the hands of a few individuals while majority of the staff remain idle in as far as participation in government sponsored public policy research.

Based on the reasons provided by different consultants interviewed on the reasons for the award of consultancies to various categories, we further sought to establish who in their opinion would be the most effective service providers for government consultancies. The responses were as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12 shows that all the experts agreed that the most effective providers of consultancy service to the government are relevant units of public universities and private consultants from competitive bidding each at 46.25% and to some extent Government Think Tanks (7.69%). The main reasons advanced were due to their institutional capacity and huge repository of relevant experts. Since the majority of consultancies are hardly awarded to public Universities, where most respondents believed, were the most effective providers, it is likely that the quality of public policy research is being compromised to the extent that the outcome is limited to the terms of reference for the assignment and hardly touches on the associated policy collaterals. Although some public universities faculty also bid and win as individual consultants, some don't due to reasons associated with business requirements like capital rather than the content. It is also possible to find non expert's leading a winning team mainly due to business requirements.

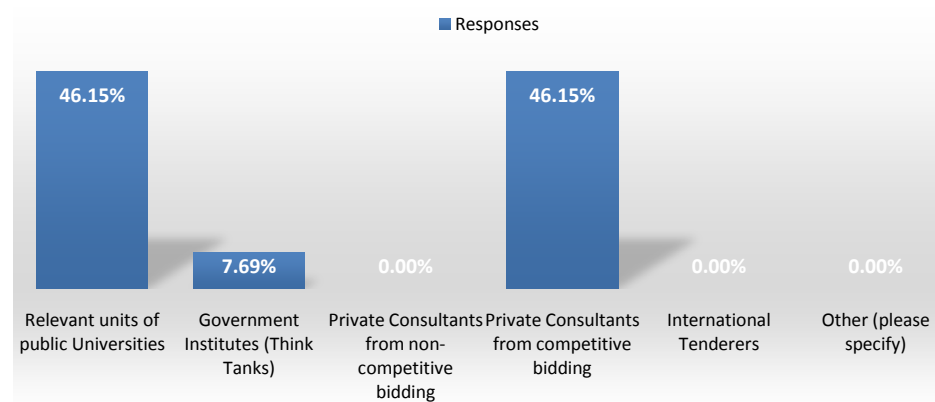


Figure 12. Most effective provider of consultancy to government.

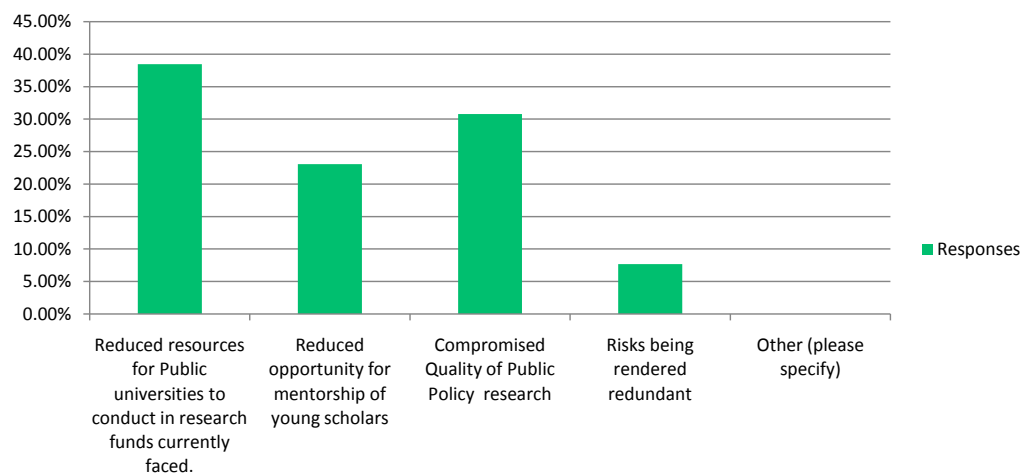


Figure 13. Likely impact if public universities are kept out of government public policy research.

Finally, the experts were asked to state the likely impact on Universities if kept out of the government’s Public Policy research. The response is as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13 shows that there are four likely impacts on public universities if kept out of Public Policy Research. The first one is reduced resources for public universities to conduct research (38.5%) due to the fact that failure to win contacts from the government implied no income arising therefrom as these are earned to the awardees. The second impact on public policy research according to the respondents was the likely compromise on the quality of Public Policy Research (31%) occasioned by the need by the experts to align to the not only the terms of reference of the assignment but also the need to moderate the findings, thereby avoiding what might be considered unfavourable to the wishes of the client. The third impact was reduced opportunity for mentorship of young scholars (23%). The consultancies are good grounds on which the mentees could learn the ropes and apply their book knowledge under the tutelage of senior scholars as mentors. Finally, the public Universities risk being rendered redundant due to both budgetary constraints and reduced research opportunities.

5. Summary of Findings

The study established that the resurgence of private consultants has been massive in policy due to the neoliberalism approach that has been adopted by the government of Kenya since late 1990s but more so in the last ten years. Secondly, the private consultants have flourished more in open tendering system in which they have succeeded more than university staff in winning the policy consultancies. Thirdly, the consultancies have been at both national government and local government levels. Fourthly, The procurement of the services of the public university researchers as government consultants have mainly been through: head-hunting, membership to consultancy network and recommendations from respective universities although more often than not the award have been more as private consultants at the expense of the university as an institution. There are still, highly competitive faculties who have been able to withstand the competition for consultancies both at national and international levels, and finally, the reduced government consultancies at the public universities have had negative effects on both income to the universities and also opportunities for mentoring young scholars at the respective universities in Africa.

6. Conclusion

The paper concluded that from the perspective of academic or university based consultants the public universities, the long held role of public universities consulting for the government in public policy research since independence is under serious threat from the resurgence of the private consultants to the extent that although the involvement is currently on a downward trend as the government has preferred either individual consultants or competitive tendering process through the neo-liberalism policies. Notwithstanding the involvement of the universities in the public policy research oscillating from institutional engagement to individual expert consultants, sometimes taking the form of think tanks of the government, more often than not, the involvement by the university staff is orchestrated through the International Organizations on whose behalf they carry out the tasks as agents, more as private consultants than as institutional consultants for and on behalf of the public universities. Although the direct domination by the government in identifying and defining public policy problems has reduced so as to incorporate multiple actors such as individual consultants and universities into working and technical groups, content determination has not changed since the government still controls the terms of reference in a strait jacket approach.

Finally, the resurgence of the private consultants has caused the public universities to cease being the top choice for public policy research for the Governments as an institution. This has resulted in reduced advisory role of public universities to the government, and the mentoring role to upcoming scholars and even a risk making its research role redundant due to creation of parallel wings for Public Policy research. Although it was not possible to establish compro-

mised quality of the policy research done through business procurement model, it was however clear that the risk is real to extent that their roles are restricted to the terms of reference only, which is usually narrow. This leads to a critical question where governments should get their policy initiatives/agenda. Should they emanate from research by Public Universities, policy advisory systems or epistemic communities? Although this was not within the scope of the paper, it however, emerged strongly as a concern that needs to be interrogated in the context of Consultants taking up the role of Public Policy research.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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