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The Modern University in Transition

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AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES AND THE IMPACT OF COLONIALISM: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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INTRODUCTION

The University, anywhere and everywhere, is an entity in transition. It carries with it what made it what it is, that is, its own ideal and image as a seeker and teller of the truth - veritas. Yet, as it does so - and indeed inspite of that, it does respond to and even contends with a myriad of factors and forces of change within its environment which affect its thinking, its attitude, its methods and strategies. And this it does in order to adapt itself to changing situations. Thus, any comparison of any two points separated by the transition process is itself a comparison not of two static points but rather of dynamic points in transition.

The modern African University shares this universal quality of transition. It continues, or strives to continue, to be the best its pre-colonial prototype was in its cardinal mission of knowledge production through research, teaching and consultation of the highest order. Yet, in the pursuit of this mission, it has adapted

and continues to adapt its approach and methodologies in order to cope with the exigencies of changing times in a changing polity and a changing social economy. If this is true, then the process has in reality been or meant change. Thus the modern university in Africa has par excellence been characterized by real change in apparent continuity.

This paper will consist of three parts. It will first examine the intellectual and other historical attributes characterizing continuity and tradition in the enterprise of the African university, which identify it with the global community of world institutions of higher learning. In the second part, the paper examines the major features of imperial rule and the associated colonial interlude as regards the development of university-level education in Africa. The third part revisits the post-independence challenges of nationhood in Africa and examines the role African universities have played in an effort both to guard their status as university institutions and yet to adapt themselves to changing circumstances.

TRADITIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY MISSION WORLD-WIDE

Hinting at the historical universality of the physical mobility and the intellectual sojourns and labours characterizing the basics of the mission of a university institution, a writer's recent note helps to relive the historic roots:

> Do you recall names like Athens, Constantinople and Toledo? In different centuries these centres of learning attracted people from far and near. At other times and on other continents there were similar centres, for example in India, Egypt, and Timbuktu - the small desert town in today's Mali. Such centres of learning were intellectual fora, international in nature with a transcending understanding of national and cultural borders. We have all heard of the "wandering" scholars, students and researchers of former times, travelling far and wide to seek the best [of a] scientific environment, discuss with and learn from famous colleagues, and receive stimulation and reactions to new ideas. They left their homes and beloved ones to undertake strenuous and long-lasting journeys in pursuit of wisdom and truth (Hetland 1984:p.107).

The scholarly activity of international dimensions implied in the quoted note above would include the historical study travels of men such as the Persian Al Mas'udi (Abdul Hassan ibn Hussein ibn al Mas'udi) to the east African seaboard in the tenth century for a study of the socio-political and economic life of people in what was described as the land of the Zanj (from the Horn down to Mozambique). It would likewise include Ibn Battuta (Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Battuta) to Mali in West Africa and Kilwa in East Africa, and to India and China in the fourteenth century, as well as Leo Africanus, a north-African scholar, to the School of Timbuktu in the 16th century, in search of a deeper taste of book learning and for an account of the civilization of the Western Sudan and the political and economic structures of the Songhay empire (cf Davidson 1964: pp. 39, 87-91, 98).

Simply put, the mission of the university - any distinguished institution of higher learning, in the past and now - has consisted in research (i.e. in a relentless but systematic quest for knowledge), in teaching (inculcating and propagating the scientific knowledge so produced by the endless searches and enquiries) and in public service (through informed consultation and professional advice rendered to others for public good). This tripartite mission has for ages been upheld as a sacred duty and tradition to be upheld and continued for posterity. Cases, examples and evidence of the value placed on such a mission abound throughout history.

With respect to research - to a methodical and relentless search for truth about events and phenomena - two products of early university training are classical historical cases in creating knowledge about Africa through their dispassionate research into what had been known as the 'dark continent'. Al Mas'udi, in the tenth century, gave a dispassionate description of the religious and cultural life of the indigenous coastal peoples of east Africa, the Zanj (cf Davidson 1964: p. 117). And later, in 1352/3, Ibn Battuta, the most travelled of all the Muslim scholars and writers of the Middle Ages, described the perspectives of west African society in no less objective terms. According to his scholarly search, the people of the kingdom of Mali

> are seldom unjust, and have a greater abhorrence of injustice than any other people.

> Their sultan shows no mercy to anyone who is guilty of the least act of it. There is complete security in their country. Neither traveller nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers of men of violence. They do not confiscate the property of any white man who dies in their country, even if it be uncounted wealth. On the contrary, they give it to the charge of some trustworthy person among the whites, until the rightful heir takes possession of it. They are careful to observe the hours of prayer, and assiduous in attending them in congregations and in bringing up their children to them.....
>
> (Quoted in Gibb 1929: pp 329-30)

It was from such researchwork, motivated and further enhanced by a taste for purposeful reading of literature and personal enquiry and consultation, that the resultant scholarship was hoped and expected to produce "intellectual giants" for society, capable of investigating, analyzing and comparing things, theorizing about them, developing clear argumentation and disputation around them and finally establishing a basis for plausible conclusions and educated projections into future trends.

Centuries after the humble beginnings of university institutions around the eleventh century have seen a steady growth and endurance of this tradition across continents and societies and they have seen the emergence and spread of intellectual giants in dons such as the Oxford University-trained English political philosopher and royalist Thomas Hobbes in the 16th-17th centuries, the similarly Oxford trained medical scientist, educational and political philosopher John Locke in the 17th century, the Heidelberg philosopher and professor George Hegel in Germany in the

1810s, Hegel's pupil and subsequently his philosophical critic Karl Marx later in the mid-1800s and the American progressive educationist, scientist and philosopher John Dewey of the Chicago School of Science well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Of Karl Marx the lawyer, philosopher, economist and socialist, a close associate and one-time housemate Ruge, back in 1843, made the following intimate characterization:

> He reads a great deal; he works with extraordinary intensity and has a talent for criticism, which occasionally degenerates into dialectic. But he never finishes anything; he is always breaking off, and then plunges into an infinite ocean of books ... He may well have been born to be a scholar and a writer. ...
>
> (Ruge, in a letter to Fuerbach in 1843. Quoted in Blumemberg 1972: p. 54).

With respect to the teaching function of the university, the concept has derived from the basic assumption of the mutuality and close relationship between the research output and practice or policy. The argument has been: What is research (that is, reading, investigation, "searching") for if this cannot help to create new knowledge and contribute to a repertoire of perspectives through teaching? And what is that teaching-learning process that cannot seek to draw from research information vital for theory building and theory testing?

Thus, the modern university, anywhere and everywhere, shares the age-old tradition of teaching through knowledge delivery systems appropriate to the nature and intellectual level of the subject matter, namely tutorials and seminars for small student groups and expository lectures for larger classes, the use of the latter system increasing with growing sizes of university student enrolment in the latter years of modern formal education.

The high premium placed on the value and tradition of university teaching and brain-training is to be found exemplified in many universities of the modern times. For instance, as late as the 1950s, Whitney Griswold, President of Yale University, insisted on revising and strengthening of the University's curriculum, building an academically strong teaching faculty and a conducive student learning environment so as to produce "A Socrates in every classroom!" (quoted in Time, January 11, 1951 by Simpson 1964: p. 163). It is in a similar vein of seeking to develop student powers of clear thinking, well-researched argumentation and informed disputation that a valedictory lecture to a graduating class on the African continent, as much later as the late 1980s, implored the graduands to continue in the noble professional habits that distinguish a university-trained person and, generally, a person of education and learning, namely to "Read, think and write; [to] enquire, write and read; [to] write, think and read ... "(Ishumi 1988: p. 24).

This is, in spirit and deed, what Dean Roscoe Pound had been labouring to impress upon his students at the Harvard Law School, Harvard University, more than three decades earlier, in the 1950s and 60s:

> When you read, read! Too many students just half read. I never read without summarizing - and so understanding what I read. The art of memory is the art of understanding. ...
>
> (Roscoe Pound, Dean Emeritus, in an address to stucents; cited in Reader's Digest, February 1961. Quoted in Simpson 1964: p. 255).

By the logic and 'the complementarity of the research and teaching functions in university education, public service, or consultancy, is reckoned to have remained an organically ingrained function consisting in moving ('extending') vital information and knowledge from the confines of the university campus out to the public by way of data reporting and informed advice. Though not without a myriad of upstream hurdles, this part of the old university tradition, like the others, can also be heard impressed upon the growing generation of university-leaving men and women:

> Academically speaking, you are the light of the world, the light of Tanzanians. A well-educated, professionally committed and socially adapted person cannot be concealed; on the contrary, such a person will stand out in distinction to give guidance and exemplary service to others for the benefit of the future. Let, therefore, your intellectual light, your desire to seek wisdom and your commitment to service so shine before men that

> they may see your good deeds and praise your Alma Mater, the institution that will have produced you with such noble professional objectives in mind. ... "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its flavour, where else can it be salted? It is good for nothing except to be thrown away for people to trample on it ..." Please, keep your flavour, your saltiness. Read, think, investigate, write, serve.
>
> (Ishumi 1988:p.24).

UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

It is not an overstatement that, with the onset of imperial rule and formal colonialism in Africa in the nineteenth century, any semblance of indigenous growth and continuity of independent university systems and intellectual centres of excellence - of the kind of the Timbuktu prototype - was severed. For varying periods of time during the long colonial interlude of one hundred years or so, higher-level learning and scholarship were stunted, only rejuvenating later and sporadically under a new guise of insulated university education in reorganized "colonial" extensions from the major systems in the colonizing metropolitan countries in Western Europe (cf Mazrui 1975: pp 191-210).

Thus, for instance, pre-independence Sierra Leone's Fourah Bay College was accorded the status of an affiliate university college of England's Durham University in 1876; pre-independence Algeria's Université d'Alger was founded in 1879 essentially as an extension of the French University system; Nigeria's University College

Ibadan began as an affiliate university college of the University of London in 1948; Uganda's Makerere Technical School developed into a university college in 1949 as an affiliate college of London University; and Senegal's Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, was established in 1949 similarly as an extension and under tutelage of the French university system. Similarly, a University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, founded by a royal charter in 1955 in what are today Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi, was basically an affiliate outpost of the University system in the U.K.

What did such an académic arrangement mean? It meant several things. Suffice it here to underline only three.

Firstly, it meant that, while possibilities for student enrolment into the highest-level institutions of learning were somewhat opened for Africans on African soil, they remained essentially few and limited to a select few. The proportion of such high-level university places was almost negligible in comparison with a country's population, as is demonstrated in Table 1, which recalls the situation for Tanganyika (now Tanzania) in 1947, about one and half decades before her independence.

Table 1. Enrolment of Tanganyikans in Schools and at Makerere College in 1947 and 1956

Level/Grade	1947 (actual)	1956 (Projected)	As % of estimated 1956 territorial population of 9 million
Standard 1-4	100,000	250,000	2.78
5-6	10,000	25,000	0.28
7-8	2,000	5,000	0.06
9-10	450	1,200	0.013
11-12	93	400	0.004
Makerere College	25	200	0.002

Source: Tanganyika Government (1947) A Ten Year Plan for the Development of African Education, Government Printer, Dar es Salaam, p. 12.

The 25 Tanganyikan scholars at Makerere in 1947 (two years before elevation into an affiliated London University College) were an even tinier proportion of the total population of Tanganyika Territory then estimated at 5 million. It was an educational situation that was highly restrictive of expanded enrolments, considering, further, that Makerere was the only highest institution of learning for the whole of East Africa (i.e. Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika and Zanzibar). As such, it must have been considered especially lucky for an additional select few to get beyond the local institutions into university colleges and schools abroad, in this case in metropolitan England.

The official colonial plan to control educational expansion, to patronize and influence the mind and taste of the limited few

graduates of the university system and to continue the colonizing scheme could be read "between lines" in the following written communication by a senior colonial administrator in the early twentieth century:

> ... Such in brief are the peoples for whose welfare we are responsible in British Tropical Africa. They have a fascination of their own, for we are dealing with the child races of the world, and learning at first hand the habits and customs of primitive man; not of some decadent and derelict aborigines of Australia but of a race which illustrates every stage in the evolution of man, from the hardly human 'Bushman' and the lowest type of cannibal to the organised despotism and barbaric display of a Negro Kingdom like that of Buganda, or to the educated native community, a few at least of whose members boast a training in the English Universities and Medical Schools ...
>
> (Quoted in University Echo, Dar es Salaam, August 3, 1969, cited in Ishumi 1981: pp. 9-10)

Up until independence in 1961 the almost negligible proportion of the few who got access to university-level education (i.e. the 0.002% Tanganyikan university college population of the 1940s and 50s) remained curiously the same, as is clearly indicated in Table 2.

Another feature of the extensionist approach to university development in a colonial setup was the preponderantly foreign outlook of the supposedly indigenous university institutions. The curriculum, the course structure, the examination system and the academic qualificational awards were all determined and regulated -

Table 2. Enrolment of Tanganyikans (Tanzanians) in schools and higher education in 1961

Level/Grade	Enrolment	%of National Popn of 10 mill	Remarks
Primary Std 5	19,721	0.2	
Secondary Std 12	700	0.007	The figure was for African pupils alone. Of the Secondary school age population, only 2.8% were actually in school.
University	Prob<200	0.002	Only 173 candidates were admitted into the University of East Africa in 1964

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture files

directly or indirectly - by the metropolitan university centres of affiliation. The academic staff of the "local outpost" was not only very small but also almost wholly expatriate. Course programmes and research agendas were not only expatriate-staff dominated but also largely coloured by concepts and interests obtaining in the metropolitan centres.

The corollary of this feature was a trained mind-set and a mentality among most African scholars of the colonial system that tended to be less sensitive and less sympathetic to the social and political problems of existence and survival in their own societies. They tended to uphold all ways of doing things and all

standards set in the metropole as universal, universally applicable and inviolable - something that has, in the post-colonial period, become one of the touchy areas of contention between university scholars and their post-independence governments with regard to certain matters affecting the identity, mission and academic freedom of the university.

THE MODERN AFRICAN UNIVERSITY AND THE POST-INDEPENDENCE CHALLENGES IN NATIONHOOD

With the exception of only one African country, Liberia, which never was colonized and which was founded as an independent nation as early as 1847, the whole of Africa had the experience of imperial rule and colonialism along with a real effect of most of their indigenous traditions of high-level enquiry, creative technology and practical thought systems being severed and/or discontinued. And except for only a handful of the colonized countries that became politically independent before 1960 - such as Egypt (1922), Ethiopia (1941), the Sudan (1956) and the Gold Coast/Ghana (1957), the majority of the African countries achieved independence between 1960 and 1968. Four of the last colonial territories to secure independence and nationhood include Mozambique (1975), Angola (1975), Rhodesia/Zimbabwe (1980) and Namibia (1990).

Along with the political change in the status of the colonized African societies into independent national states, was a rethinking about old assumptions and perceptions of reality and about the implications and demands of the new roles institutions of higher learning, particularly universities, were assuming in the development of the new nations.

Notwithstanding individual variations and differences in the detail of responses and in the modalities of action, there are certain post-colonial trends which reflect some commonalities among modern university institutions in post-independence Africa. A few of these trends and features will be examined with reference to the general plan of action at governmental decision-making level, as well as with special regard to the cardinal functions of teaching, research and public service, which modern universities in Africa, as elsewhere, are supposed to demonstrate.

A politically motivated plan of action

Among several of the objectives for the newly independent African states was the creation and imprinting of internationally respectable structures for institutions of higher learning, the universities (cf Nyerere 1966a:p.130; Okafor 1971:p.118; Yesufu 1973:p.39). In turn, such consciously constructed university structures were intended to help boost and recapture the image of African personality and a respect for the African society both lost during the colonial interlude.

When, for instance, a University College Dar es Salaam was first established in Tanzania in 1961, initially as an overseas constituent college of the University of London, it was housed in a then-magnificent building of the ruling political party within the capital city. It took only three years to have the college (now as a constituent college of the University of East Africa) transferred to and accommodated in a select and even more magnificent location, where it was expected to make its biggest contribution and impact intellectually, nationationally and internationally. The then head of state, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, drove the point home when he said:

> ... This college has been started in a rush. Recommendations for opening a University College in Tanganyika had put a much later date as the operative one, but my Government felt that this was a matter of the highest educational priority. It has been said that this was a political decision. It was.
> (Nyerere 1966a:p. 130).

Such a politically over-riding decision about higher education and particularly about creating national universities - as a key not only to national development but also to national image building - seems to have been the case elsewhere among new countries in Africa: Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia and many others.

A second aspect of a politically motivated plan of action was the sensitizing of university institutions, a number of which were

regional at independence time, to newly defined national development needs (cf. Unesco 1963:13, Nyerere 1966b). This was the case with the nationally located colleges of the University of East Africa (for Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda from 1963-1970, the nationally located campuses of the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (for the three BLS countries, from 1964-1975) and the remaining nationally located campuses of the University of Botswana and Swaziland (for the two countries from 1975-1982).

The third feature was a deliberate diversification of campuses or faculty programmes for single universities, as in the case of the University of Malawi (1964-79), the University of Zambia (1966-84), the University of Nairobi (1970-84), the University of Dar es Salaam (1973-84), the Universities of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (after the breakup in 1975 and 1982) and lately Makerere University (in the 1980s).

A fourth conspicuous aspect of high-level political decision-making has been the development of multi-university institutions within a single state, as is now the case with Kenya (in addition to Nairobi: Moi University since 1984, Kenyatta University since 1985 and Egarton University since 1987) and Tanzania (in addition to Dar es Salaam: Sokoine University of Agriculture since 1984). Pioneering in the movement towards multi-university development have been the more classic cases such as Nigeria (presently with 30

universities), Egypt (with 13 universities), Sudan (with 5 universities) and Ghana (with 3 universities).

Along with the political action plan for national image building within an international community, for sensitization to national development problems and challenges and for structural expansion, there has been a concerted effort towards expanding student enrolment at university level and thereby towards enhancing standards of educational achievement and improving the professional levels in the new societies. Table 3 illustrates this factor of growth of student populations at home universities, in addition to enrolments at university-level institutions overseas.

Thus, in consideration of the steady growth of higher education and of the participation of an increasing number in higher institutions of learning, it is to be acknowledged that such institutions have grown more and more open, steadily though perhaps slowly bulging the once steep structure of the educational pyramid. The stinging elitism observed among the 'educated' of the first two decades of independence (cf. Castle 1966:pp.50-51; Nyerere 1967:pp.2-10; Meena 1979:p.186), of "School Certificates talk[ing] only to graduates, And graduates only to God!" (Castle 1966:p.51) cannot really be said to be present today in those terms of the first generation.

Table 3. Trend of University-Level Enrolment and Training in Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia: The First 20 Years of Independence

Year	TANZANIA		KENYA		MALAWI		ZAMBIA	
	Local	Overseas	Local	Overseas	Local	Overseas	Local	Overseas
1961/62	178	1,146						
1962/63	157	1,238						
1963/64	265	675	523	3,800				
1964/65	330	720	867	4,506	n.a.	N.A.	n.a.	N.A.
1965/66	572	778	1,147	4,413	94		n.a.	
1966/67	785	807	1,017	3,643	498		312	
1967/68	1,313	713	1,297	2,852	672		435	
1968/69	1,498	611	1,470	3,604	847		706	
1969/70	1,975	812	2,089	4,432	977		994	
1970/71	2,086	1,522	2,368	4,331	987		1,231	
1971/72	2,099	1,561	3,123	4,561	1,040		1,567	
1972/73	2,240	1,720	3,899	n.a.	1,085		1,665	
1873/74	2,345	1,600	4,916	n.a.	1,059		2,244	
1974/75	2,337	1,974	6,159	2,821	1,123		2,612	
1975/76	2,402	2,226	5,491	2,751	1,146		2,354	
1976/77	2,828	1,070	5,779	2,488	1,179		2,151	
1977/78	n.a.	n.a.	5,861	n.a.	1,153		2,607	
1978/79	n.a.	n.a.	7,006	n.a.	1,386		3,185	
1979/80	3,400	n.a.	7,832	6,844	1,619		3,928	
1980/81	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,722		3,986	
1981/82	3,357	c.1,400	n.a.	n.a.	1,829		3,680	
1982/83			n.a.	n.a.	1,810		4,068	
1983/84			n.a.	n.a.	n.a.		4,258	
1984/85					n.a.		n.a.	

Source: Numerous contry records as consolidated and cited in Ishumi 1990:p.50, Table 4.1.

Note: i) Student enrolment figures for some home (national) university institutions for certain years are not available (n.a.)

ii) Overseas enrolment records for Malawi and Zambia, for a whole stretch or for a major part of the first twenty years of independence, are not available (N.A.), although these countries, like several others in eastern, sourthern, western and northern Africa are known to have had varying numbers of their nationals enrolled in or graduating from overseas institutions of higher learning.

iii) For Tanzania and Kenya, the 'Local' category includes students enrolled outside the country but in either of university colleges of the same University of East Africa (ie. Makerere in Uganda, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, or Nairobi in Kenya).

In this regard, it seems correct to assert therefore, that, partly because of the reality of the steady higher education population growth, with the resulting 'mass production' and a corresponding demystification of ivory-tower academia, and also because of a grown social political consciousness coupled with self-adjustment, tertiary institutions and particularly the universities of the 1980s and 90s have already 'returned' to the psycho-social frame of mind that was strategically advised more than a decade ago by the Commonwealth Secretary General, in 1979:

> ... The demands of education on scarce national resources are being more rigorously assessed against the competing claims of other sectors. ... [Also] an emerging issue is the distribution of educational expenditure between the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of the educational pyramid. In both respects, the pressure for reallocation of resources works against the universities ... Elitism ...[is a stick] likely to be wielded more frequently unless universities are demonstrably more successful in proving their relevance to the felt needs of their communities ... It would be unsafe any longer to take it for granted that the case for the traditional university is accepted as axiomatic ... Every facet of university activity will come under questioning and appraisal. Validity and relevance will need to be established and confirmed again and again. If our universities are to hold their own ... in the competition for resources, they must be able constantly to demonstrate that they deserve to be esteemed. (Ramphal 1979, quoted in Coleman 1984:p.88).

Teaching

While the act and art of teaching per se may not be problematic at university level, providing that the relevant teaching staff are adequate, quantitatively and qualitatively, what to teach - that is the content - may be problematic and may fall in need of review at any moment, particularly at crucial historical watersheds as, for instance, at a transitional period from colonialism to independent nationhood.

This was the case in many countries in the initial years of national independence. 'Since for the whole period of colonialism the university curriculum and syllabi had been designed from or with the vetting influence of the metropolitan main centres, and since the perceptions and conceptions of reality and the teaching styles were influenced by the models in the mentropole, the early years of the African countries' independence were bound to be preoccupied by an incessant search for local relevance in the teaching material, for practical applications to indigenous African situations as well as for locally valid instruments for assessing and approximating reality.

To be sure, such a search was not easy and not without struggles, debates and contentions between and among teaching staff of different intellectual orientations and ideological leanings. The trying transition has taken varying periods of time for the

different national universities. However, eventually, for almost all of them there was a shift in the teaching from emphasis on "traditional" and often theoretical concerns and issues about society to emphasis on "problem-solving" and practical concerns of underdevelopment and development processes in the new societies.

This trend has continued and succeeded with the years as the teaching staff positions became more and more localized (as opposed to a staff that had been predominantly western and expatriate). For most universities, the situation has already stabilized.

As for the act of teaching, educating, training and producing graduates for service in the different sectors of the national economy, there is general satisfaction expressed with the performance of the last three decades. And this is both from the point of view of the general public, the consumers, and from the viewpoint of the university administrators, who, as linkmen in the transaction between the producers (the teachers and trainers) and the consumers, should be taken to be fairly objective in assessment. In a 1982 assessment of the past performance, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam observed that, notwithstanding a few operational shortcomings,

> the University of Dar es Salaam has made remarkable contributions both in terms of the number of graduates produced and the variety of fields of specialisation. It started with only one faculty in 1961, that is the Faculty of Law. It now has 7 other faculties: Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences,

> Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Science, Commerce and Management, Engineering, Science and the Faculty of Medicine. In addition the University has three institutes and two research bureaux. In ten years, the University has produced about 8000 graduates, and about half as many people with diplomas and certificates.
>
> The establishment of any faculty or institute has entirely been based on needs as stipulated in development plans, and after long discussions and consultations with the government ... (Kuhanga 1983:p.319)

In fact, for Dar es Salaam, only a decade since the 1982 assessment, the University has given birth to a second national university, Sokoine University of Agriculture (since 1984) out of her former faculty of agriculture, one more faculty, the Faculty of Education (since 1989), two more research bureaux (the Bureau for Industrial Cooperation within the Faculty of Engineering, since 1990, and the Bureau of Educational Research and Evaluation within the Faculty of Education (since 1991), and a University College of Health Sciences (since 1991) out of her former faculty of medicine.

This sense of satisfaction seems to speak, generally, for the other universities of the region in terms of generally expanding graduate outputs from departmental and faculty course programmes. As examples, Tables 4 and 5 show trends of university graduate outputs in Kenya and Zambia.

Table 4. Graduate Output from the University of Nairobi, Kenya, by Degree and Diploma Award and by Faculty, 1971-79

Faculty	First Degrees and Diplomas	Masters Degrees and Post-Graduate	Doctoral Degrees	Total Number of Awards
Agriculture	388	67	7	462
Architecture, Design and Development	782	185	1	968
Arts	1,887	232	17	2,136
Commerce	1,060	32	1	1,093
Education	2,515	178	4	2,697
Engineering	1,260	32	1	1,293
Law	391	6	-	397
Medicine	752	70	12+2M.D.	836
Science	949	131	29	1,109
Veterinary Medicine	541	27	11	579
Institute of Adult Studies	104	-	-	104
School of Journalism	127	-	-	127
Grand Totals	10,756	960	85	11,801

Source: Kenya MoHE(1981:14)

Table 5. University of Zambia Output (Graduates) by Faculty Specialization, 1969-1980

	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Master of Arts	-	1	-	2	-	-	2	1	1	-	1	6
Master of Education	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	4
Master of Laws	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	1	1	3
Master of Science	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3
Bachelor of Arts	44	49	35	59	-	46	89	81	112	118	122	121
B.A. with Educ.	11	10	45	35	-	69	103	101	112	111	117	161
B.A. Library Studies	-	-	-	-	-	6	7	6	13	9	10	16
B. Social work	19	3	1	2	-	8	9	1	5	6	6	10
Bachelor of Laws	23	12	14	13	-	26	53	42	50	60	47	37
Bachelor of Science	3	13	11	18	-	37	31	33	39	58	20	19
B.Sc. with Educ.	-	-	8	14	-	22	37	30	22	47	31	46
B.Sc. Engineering	-	5	6									
Bach of Engineering	-	-	-	13	-	26	29	23	28	21	31	38
B.Sc. Human Biology	6	20	14	20	-	23	42	28	35	44	25	38
A. Agric. Science	-	-	-	4	-	3	27	27	25	24	11	17
Bach. of Medicine	-	-	-	15	-	18	11	19	24	38	31	30
B. Mineral Science	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	10	11	13	35
B.Sc. Library Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Total	106	112	136	195	-	284	447	401	447	549	467	584 + 1Ph.D

Source: Zambia MoEC (1982:112-113)

Note: There were no graduates in 1973 because of a change in the University' calendar.

In view of this positive trend of graduate output of university degree and pot-graduate qualification, there can be little doubt about the positive contribution universities have made in their teaching and training function. The contribution can be seen even more visibly in a progressive staffing of lower tertiary institutions with personnel of university degree qualification, thereby raising educational and professional levels of the institutions so staffed as well as the pedagogical level at which they impart knowledge and skills to their trainees.

To say all this, however, is not to be oblivious of certain problems that have confronted and continue to confront the university teaching industry and the goals of tertiary education in general. Three problem areas are worthy of mention.

i) Rate of output

Enrolment, particularly at university institutions, has lagged behind the required rate partly because of a narrowed pool of qualified university-entry secondary school candidates (Kuhanga 1983:136), itself originating from a constrained transitional bottleneck from primary to secondary level, especially in the eastern-southern African countries of Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia. Enrolment has lagged behind also because of the limits to the physical plant itself, with capacities of the often unexpandable teaching facilities - lecture theatres and rooms, seminar rooms,

laboratories and workshops - far outpaced by the size of the student groups to be accommodated. This latter-mentioned problem has been illuminated in a 1985-86 survey of university capacities conducted by the Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme (ESAURP). In this regard, the problem has been particularly acute at Sokoine University of Agriculture (Tanzania), Eduardo Mondlane (Mozambique), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and to some extent Lesotho and Malawi, among those universities in the subregion that responded to the survey questionnaire on the availability of physical resources (ESAURP 1987:pp.78-79)

ii) A waning intellectual tradition and declining rate of productivity?

What cannot be presently confirmed and vouched for is whether the current university products and products of higher education in general do continue in the virtue and habit of an intellectually stimulated inquisitive and creative worker they were meant to become upon graduation and entry into public service. This reservation is expressed in the light of emerging evidence in some countries (cf. Namuddu 1983:pp.225-31; Court 1983:pp.165-77; Ishumi 1988:pp.23-24; Mmari 1988:p.13) of university and college graduates resigning into a non-reading, anti-literate posture in preference for economically profit making subsistence activities (as is reported of Uganda), doing research, writing or consulting only when promised payment for it (Kenya) or even auctioning coursebooks

and lecture notes, let along misusing official book allowances, for momentary financial gains (Tanzania). Since, however, this evidence comes from only three of the eight countries of a recent survey, confirmation of the trend would require extended investigation of the problem in other countries as well.

With regard to related concerns about efficiency in manpower allocation, that is, with regard to deployment and utilisation of and optimum productivity by graduates in the national occupational structure, some recent research reports may help to shed light. The study by the Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme, ESAURP (Maliyamkono et al 1982:pp.206-217) does indicate that there have been cases of manpower misallocation, under-utilisation of trainees from some specialised training programmes and a correspondingly low rate of individuals' productivity (41 percent overall), although, on the other hand, some outstanding cases of success have also been identified (17 percent of all the subjects interviewed in the whole subregion) in terms of the congruence of one's job assignment with his/her field of training or specialization, one's possibilities and freedom of experimenting with new ideas, innovations and work modifications at the place of work, one's knowledge of job demands and job description, ability to train others, and other proxies.

iii) Political demands and surveillance

It is a fact of everyday life that most universities in developing countries have, since their inception, existed and operated in an ambivalent - if not precariously diffuse - political climate in their own national settings. Documentary evidence abounds to confirm this fact (cf Shils 1970, 1980; Barkan 1975; Mazrui 1975; Williams 1984). While the 'truth-seeking' mission of the university - any university - remains clear in the charter of its establishment, the image of it held by the public, and particularly the official attitude the ruling government takes towards the university, is not always clear, stable or predictable. More often than not, the government's attitude, especially in developing countries and particularly in Africa, remains guardedly lukewarm and ambivalent, frequently definable only with each event as it many come to pass. This same general observation holds true in the history and politics of university development in eastern and southern Africa in the last two and a half decades.

Two situations, or scenarios, have turned out to be problematic, drawing universities more and more into the arena of governmental surveillance and political demands, sometimes at the cost of the pursuit of 'veritas'.

The first situation or scenario is one of a suffering from a double-faced identity. Universities, especially in single

university countries, have enjoyed a prestige and an authority which make them objects of pride as well as of fear and suspicion. Both images, paradoxically, have a connection with the kind (or content) and method of teaching and the kind of methods of research the universities conduct or are supposed to conduct. The prestige-pride image is conferred on the institutions as the highest centres of learning and scholarship in the land, which by that fact alone, are believed or expected to exude enlightenment and excellence and to absolve a nation of any stigma of cultural and educational backwardness. It is this very credit given to universities, as centres of educational-cultural authority, that, paradoxically, provokes public fear and constant suspicion by the 'rulers of the land' just in case the universities and their scholars might hold views, arguments or beliefs contrary to the inclinations of the political authority.

In reference mainly to the 1960s and early 1970s Professor Edward Shils, a well-known student of social thought, writes:

> ... Intellectuals in the poor societies are frequently very discontented with their governments. They too are progressivists and believe in the virtues of modernity but they feel that rulers have fallen far short of their promises. They are therefore very critical even if they do not have much opportunity to voice their criticism publicly. In some of these countries, the government is utterly indifferent to the political attitudes of university teachers because they have such a low opinion of them. In other countries, particularly countries with a small elite and where the main or only university is in or near the capital, the leading politicians

> might be more sensitive to what the teachers think about them. According to one account, President Obote who was very hostile to the University in Kampala, used to invite Professor Mazrui to seek his approval for any measures which he wished to undertake, although he disapproved of Professor Mazrui and the liberal attitude he believed Professor Mazrui to have. (Shils 1980:p.52)

The phenomenon at Makerere in Uganda was not alone in the wider space of regional developments in Africa. Among others, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia have had similar experiences, sometimes to the bitter point of physical confrontation with and high-handed action by government. Table 6 gives only a few of some main events on university campuses across the subregion in a wide span of time. The table seems to indicate events having been more frequent or of a higher intensity on campuses in Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Kenya among the sample country grouping in eastern and southern Africa.

Table 6 Events and Acts of Government Intervention or Surveillance on University Campus

Date	Country	Event
1966 (October)	Tanzania	Government sends down (dismisses) 334 Dar es Salaam University College students for demonstrating against a bill proposing compulsory national service for university graduates and reduced salary levels for university graduates in public service, with no mention of action on salaries and privileges of already serving public officers.
1966/67 (Nov-Jan)	Uganda	Government curbs or surveils student demonstrations in solidarity support of the Dar es Salaam students.
1972-78	Uganda	Government provocations and reprisals against student demonstrations (several) against insecurity, food conditions and molestations by military agents. (This was during Idi Amin's military government rule).
1974/75	Zambia	Government holds or expels university students on suspicions of incitement by radical lecturers and agents, in connection with protests against government policies. Also action against "identified" radical university teachers.
1978	Tanzania	Government marches on university students demonstrating against Parliamentary bill raising salaries and fringe benefits for Members of Parliament and Ministers, against background of low incomes for workers and peasants in the country. Expels a few, rusticates some, later re-admits some on signed agreement of loyalty.
1982 (February)	Kenya	Government refused permit for performance of a Gikuyu musical "Maitu Njugira" (Mother Sing for Me) by a well-known Kenyan writer and university teacher Prof. Ngugi wa Thiongo, prepared with a cast of peasants to dramatise documentary of colonial labour and pass laws of 1920s/30s and local community efforts to repulse these laws and other colonial injustices.
1982 (Aug-Nov)	Kenya	In the aftermath of an attempted coup d'etat by members of the Kenya Air Force, during which university students demonstrated support in the streets of Nairobi, the University of Nairobi was closed indefinitely, students were banished to their homes and restrictive travel orders were issued for lecturers. Government announced the intention to disband the university and to institute in its place a new one which would be loyal and not a "source or instrument of destruction".
1987	Kenya	Government acts on Kenyatta University students boycotting classes and demonstrating against proposed legislation of differential salaries for university graduates from Nairobi and Kenyatta, with graduates of the former receiving higher salaries than those of the latter (all of whom would have trained to be graduate teachers within the country's education system).

Source: (1) Press reports from the different countries indicated, as carried by the countries' public news media during the dates and periods indicated.

(2) Interviews with officials and faculty in the respective university insituttions

Research

Two decades after independent national existence for most African countries, an economist and expert on the economics of education, Professor Peter Williams, made the following comment in the early 1980s:

> [T]he research environment in many [developing] countries is rather fragile. Research which is contentious or reveals group differences, comments on social and economic injustice may not be welcomed by those in authority ... The questioning that lies at the heart of research may not endear itself to a Government which sees itself as the arbiter of truth and certainty.
>
> Moreover the commissioned research relationship between [a] Government Department and the University is not an easy one, and the potential is more often anticipated than actually realised. Governments want quick answers, definite conclusions, and control of the results particularly when based on confidential data from government files. Universities complain how little they are used, but while anxious to have the finance, prestige and data, find it difficult to work to the Government minister's or civil servant's time scale. One needs a long period for the necessary essential relationship of trust to develop.
>
> (Williams 1984:pp.53-54).

Although today - ten years after that comment - one notices some improvements in several countries, yet in a number of African countries Williams' statement is still valid.

Research is a slow but methodical (or scientific) process, whose products nourish and strengthen the intellectual capacities of the high-level human-knowledge industry that exists in universities. As such, research and teaching in a university are two necessarily complementary processes that make any respectable university what it is. This is so because research creates power and confidence to speak the "facts" as verified - veritas; power and confidence to argue and try to convince; power to subdue others on the strength of research evidence; and power and courage to carry on looking for the truth of a matter. And because of such a scientificity and concern for objectivity, research may not always nor necessarily be popular, and not all may wish to support it, especially when it may seem headed towards challenging predilections within an authoritarian or totalitarian system of governance.

How has the performance been with respect to the research process in Africa? A look at the situation in eastern and southern African countries will help in drawing a few points and conclusions generalizable to the whole of post-colonial Africa.

Table 7 quantifies the size and trend of documented research activity in six countries for which country surveys and reports spanning the period from the 1960s to the mid-1980s are available. While some compilations are admittedly biased to one disciplinary area, others cover wider multidisciplinary areas ranging from

Table 7. National Research Activity by Number of Documented Research Projects and Year Periods

Country	Year of Indep.	Up to 1970	1971-77	1978-80	1981-83	1984-86	Undated	Total
Tanzania	1961	20	50	59	46	34	1	210
%		9.5	23.8	28.1	21.9	16.2	0.5	100
Kenya	1963	n.a.	n.a.	470*	-	85**		555
%				84.7		15.3		100
Zambia	1964	27	20	30	52	21	10	160
%		16.9	12.5	18.8	32.5	13.1	6.3	100.1
Botswana	1966	n.a.	9	37	54	40	7	147
%			6.1	25.2	36.7	27.2	4.8	100
Lesotho	1966	3	15	7	8	14	2	49
%		6.1	30.6	14.3	16.3	28.6	4.1	100
Swaziland	1968	5	10	32	35	27	1	110
%		4.5	9.1	29.1	31.8	24.5	0.9	99.9
Average %		6.2	13.7	33.4	23.2	20.8		

* Span from 1979-81, ** Span from 1983-86

Source: Various country records and research reports as consolidated and cited in Ishumi 1990: p. 69, Table 4.14

education and the social sciences to the natural sciences, agriculture and medicine. With reference to the distributions across periods of time and in the light of foregoing discussions about political interventions, a few statements can be made about the trend and character of the research industry in eastern and southern Africa.

i) For the first decade of national independence, the research community remained small, revolving around a nucleus of university academics and rarely extending the spirit and flavour of research beyond university premises.

ii) Mainly from the mid-1970s, the research community gradually but consistently grew larger, more as a result of an expanded recruitment into the university teaching and research staff posts, these including a proportionately increased number of expatriate staff, local nationals returning from staff development programmes overseas, and local nationals trained and practised in research in fulfillment of postgraduate degree programmes at their local university.

iii) By the mid-1980s, though still small in proportion to the rapidly increased size of the national population and also in proportion to the total enrolment and output of tertiary education institutions, the community of researches in the nation had steadily expanded and, by the present date, it involves individuals and groups serving in a number of

tertiary institutions and parastatal organisations outside of university bounds. Staff in such locations, many with their first or second degree, have interested themselves in research issues and problems. Thus, while the university remains a major reference point with regard to ability and experience in research methods, the nucleus of the research community is slowly but steadily expanding beyond university centres.

iv) It seems undisputable, however, that for most of the countries, the six-year period from 1978 to 1983 has been the most active, reflecting a conspicuous growth towards critical mindedness and scholarship and a reciprocal institutional response and/or ability to sponsor research activity.

v) It also seems undisputable that, beginning in the early to mid-1980s, such critical mindedness or researcher interest, and institutional research funding response or ability began to decline. This negative development shows a significant coincidence with the years in which most universities have encountered (and are continuing to encounter) financial difficulties as their budgetary requirements are slashed year after year.

vi) Why the research activity has not declined to a completely low ebb (and probably will not do so to a complete halt) is because of one vital element, namely external funding. This

has been brought out clearly in several surveys of the research climate in developing countries (cf. Court 1983: p. 171; Nkinyagi 1983:pp. 200-206; ESAURP/PADIS 1990), the latest survey in Tanzania showing that of all the research projects conducted in the country between 1985 and 1988, 18.4 per cent were financed exclusively by external (international) donors, whilst another 35.2 per cent benefited from joint local and external support. Less than half of the projects were funded by institutions within the country, something that is not really encouraging especially when even in projects of joint sponsorship the local input has usually been the nominal proportions formalistically required as gesture of local official support.

The potential dangers of over-reliance on external funding of research can be guessed. One could be a derailing or even complete reversal of research priorities defined as of 'national' importance; second, a temptation among researchers to disregard aspects of public service that do not offer attractive material facilitation or rewards. Thirdly, there is a possible eventual institutional neglect of the research training aspect for younger scholars, since much of the external funding tends to go to projects by senior and more experienced researchers, who, because of this advantage, also benefit from contract research and consultancy.

Public Service and Consultancy

Universities render public service through three main ways. One way is the publication and distribution of research products, with particular emphasis on making the research findings available to individuals and offices that require such information or stand to gain by getting such information.

A second way is the physical transfer of the university's researchers, upon request, to a relevant public office on leave of absence from the person's university position in order to help translate one's research and intellectual experience and knowledge into public policy formation and implementation as may be pertinent to the scholar's office of "temporary emigration". This arrangement has frequently supplied a number of university economists, engineers, political scientists and others to public service in government, parastatal organizations and other arenas for varying periods of time. And it has proved useful not only in terms of exchange of insights and experiences between the university and the environment outside it, but also in terms of a meaningful mesh of theory and practice that is bound to result.

The third modality of public service is consultancy, arranged with specific clients on specific issues on the basis of which studies and reports are contracted and submitted. This is otherwise reckoned as contract research which, unlike ordinary

research, is a faster and client-tailored process. Its quality depends very much on the scholar's research experience, his/her knowledge of the issues at stake and his ability and skill to pool and analyze data, to synthesize emerging issues and marshall arguments and points as appropriate. Seen from this perspective, consultancy could be an important part of the research-and-development (R & D) process is society.

Of the three major directions or foci of the university mission, public service seems to have developed or crystallized last, after mainly undergraduate teaching and research. The African university's contribution to public service has varied along the three modalities; and any specific degree of success or failure with any of these modalities could be ascertained only with an incisive study of individual cases.

Levels of excellence in public service have necessarily grown with time, roughly along the stages of growth of the research culture and research industry. It seems clear, in turn, that sustained public service in future will depend on the tenor and extent of the individual scholars' intellectual stimulation, their interest and initiatives in the myriad researchable issues within the African environment, but it will also depend on the extent to which the public renders support - morally and materially - to the still fragile research culture.

CONCLUDING NOTE

On average, the modern African university is a young institution that, with only 25-35 years in existence, has not yet had sufficient time to develop, crystallize or even harden its own traditions. Yet, it has had the advantage of adopting some of the universally acceptable ideas and principles by virtue of its interaction with the other and older universities of the world, during and after the colonial period.

As such, the modern African university cannot be claimed to be an ideal (if original) university-type, just as it cannot be denied reckoning as a new institution that has adapted itself fast to the demands and tenets of the university mission - teaching, researching and public service. The paper has attempted to show how, in the pursuit of the tripartite mission, young universities in Africa have had sometimes to take bold decisions and risk mistakes, dilemmas or even confrontations that usually go with an attitude of "learning to be".

The modern African university is thus an institution of higher learning that is currently, and for some foreseeable future, a compromise between the high ideals of a utopian philosopher on the one hand and the practical options of a problem-solving realist on the other; between convention and innovation; between tradition and radical change.

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